

A Civil Rights Agenda for California's Next Quarter Century



# Gentrification and Schools: Challenges, Opportunities and Policy Options

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## About the Series

### *A Civil Rights Agenda for the Next Quarter Century*

The Civil Rights Project was founded in 1996 at Harvard University, during a period of increasingly conservative courts and political movements that were limiting, and sometimes reversing, major civil rights reforms. In 2007 the Project moved to UCLA. Its goal was – and still is – to bring together researchers, lawyers, civil rights advocates and governmental and educational leaders to create a new generation of civil rights research and communicate what is learned to those who could use it to address the problems of inequality and discrimination. Created a generation after the civil rights revolution of the 1960s, CRP’s vision was to produce new understandings of challenges and research-based evidence on solutions. The Project has always maintained a strong, central focus on equal education and racial change.

We are celebrating our first quarter century by taking a serious look forward – not at the history of the issues, not at the debates over older policies, not at celebrating prior victories but at the needs of the next quarter century. Since the work of civil rights advocates and leaders of color in recent decades has often been about defending threatened, existing rights, we need innovative thinking to address the challenges facing our rapidly changing society. Political leaders often see policy in short two- and four-year election cycles but we decided to look at the upcoming generation. Because researchers are uniquely qualified to think systematically, this series is an attempt to harness the skills of several disciplines, to think deeply about how our society has changed since the civil rights revolution and what the implications are for the future of racial justice.

This effort includes two very large sets of newly commissioned work. This paper is the second in the series on the potential for social change and equity policies in California, a vast state whose astonishing diversity foretells the future of the U.S. and whose profound inequality warns that there is much work to be done. The second set of studies is national in scope. All these studies

will initially be issued as working papers. They will be brought together in statewide conferences in California and in the U.S. Capitol and, eventually, as two major books, which we hope will help light the way in the coming decades. At each of the major events, scholars will exchange ideas and address questions from each other, from leaders and from the public.

The Civil Rights Project, like the country, is in a period of transition, identifying leadership for its next chapter. We are fortunate to have collaborated with a remarkable network of important scholars across the U.S., who contributed to our work in the last quarter century and continue to do so in this new work. We are also inspired by the nation's many young people who understand that our future depends on overcoming division. They are committed to constructing new paths to racial justice. We hope these studies open avenues for this critical work, stimulate future scholars and lawyers, and inform policymaking in a society with the unlimited potential of diversity, if it can only figure out how to achieve genuine equality.



Gary Orfield



Patricia Gándara

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## Foreword

Gentrification – the phenomenon of higher income home buyers moving into established lower income neighborhoods and pushing out existing residents – is attacked as a menace harming less affluent residents and is sometimes actively fought. Yet it is happening in all of California’s major cities and many others across the nation. It is driven by markets, in a housing system that is overwhelmingly private, and changes with demand, supply, and finance. This is a paper about the impact of gentrification on schools and educational opportunity, a theme that has not been sufficiently considered by those most concerned about housing issues. Gentrification represents fundamental forces that we lack the tools to adequately control. The U.S. has created no major new housing or urban development policies in nearly a half century, and we only help a small fraction of low-income families with affordable housing. Land use policies and building codes prevent the use of manufactured housing or low-cost housing in many areas. We have a shortage of housing that even successful middle-class families can afford. This creates powerful economic pressures to upgrade old housing in neighborhoods long neglected.

Until and unless there are major changes, I believe gentrification, in metros with very high-cost housing, can rarely be stopped for long, so we need to think about how to reduce its damage and gain from sharing possible future advantages. One of those advantages could be in changing the extremely weak schools we have in many of our concentrated poverty neighborhoods, where families and communities deal with profound challenges and limited resources. Assessing potential gains requires understanding current realities. This paper takes on a very challenging task. It’s not about whether gentrification is good or bad but about change that is happening fast and how it affects the schools.

Many of California’s low-income city neighborhoods of color are being transformed by the sale of older housing to relatively affluent and educated individuals from other racial groups. In a

private market, owners tend to sell to the buyer who offers the highest price. This process produces a wide range of impacts and responses. Neighborhood groups often picture it as an invasion where rising rent levels are forcing out the poor and privileging more affluent people. Realtors and property owners see money and investments pouring into what have been unattractive markets, upgrading long-neglected housing. Property owners see their wealth grow dramatically and cities see tax revenues surge, whereas schools often lose students because the newcomers have fewer children and do not enroll in the neighborhood schools. Some local businesses may prosper, while others may be forced out by rent increases. There may be racial tensions. Communities that were characterized for decades as Black or Latino neighborhoods can lose their identity, and some of their basic institutions may not survive. Relationships are broken. Over time, many longtime residents move away. However, it is also a form of urban renewal as old buildings are turned into desirable housing for middle class families at no cost to the public sector. Safety and employment in the areas increase over time. Change often unfolds over the course of many years.

Gentrification is not caused by theories. It is a market response to housing shortages. A seriously deteriorated old home can be repurposed with skillful marketing for “urban pioneers” in an historic district. It is also driven, of course, by the large profits that emerge for realtors, contractors, banks, small businesses, and homeowners as it takes hold and accelerates. Eventually, after a neighborhood becomes redefined as a desirable middle-class area for young professionals, the gentrifying area becomes unaffordable and there is an incentive to move into more areas. When the stylish new wine and cheese shop replaces the last coin laundry, and the decrepit liquor store selling pints in paper bags is replaced by an elegant spot with Saturday wine tastings and book signings near the boutique hotel, in what was once a decaying apartment building, a community has changed. Is a neighborhood that has a school performing in the bottom decile going to become a place that can

prepare the kids of the highly educated newcomers for the competitive colleges the parents want? Or are they going to send their children somewhere else?

California is a highly urbanized state and the fate of the central cities matters greatly. Although most live in vast suburban spreads, the central cities are critical and they give character to metro areas for good or ill. Since the development of urban sociology, a dominant theory of cities involved the succession of arrivals, transformations and exits from various areas of the cities and suburbs. Since the great migration of people of color to the cities took hold more than a century ago, much of the story of cities was the replacement of the established white population by Blacks and Latinos in larger and larger areas and, by the 1960s, across entire cities. There were always exceptions – elite areas, like Beacon Hill in Boston, the Chicago Lake Front, Georgetown, and well-known counterparts in many other cities – but on a national scale these were few and far between. The idea of largescale white movement into communities that had declined economically and changed racially was not taken seriously.

Now there is almost no place in Los Angeles, and in a number of other cities, without housing speculation. Many communities have been redefined as their prices have doubled and redoubled. When many are moving out of the state because they cannot afford any decent place to live, families are ready to try something new. California cities are among the most expensive in the U.S., so the “fixer upper” has become a solution. But getting a home is only a partial solution for middle class families. What will happen with their children and the schools that lose previous residents, schools that have been serving poor children of color, not the kids of demanding young professionals? The families of color in the neighborhood also face school challenges. Will the schools get substantially better? Or will the failure of the new families to enroll their kids drive down the enrollment and threaten the school with closing? If newcomers’ children do enroll, will teachers



pay attention to the less affluent and privileged students? All families want to know how the schools will treat and educate their children.

Schools in the poorer city neighborhoods operate in fundamentally different ways than schools in the affluent suburbs. The decline of the city schools first took place as middle-class white families, followed by middle-class families of color, moved away from city neighborhoods. This left the school system serving predominantly poor families of color, in communities with declining resources and diminishing ability to attract and retain strong, experienced teachers and principals, and with families unable to supplement the weak resources in the schools. California schools became some of the most extremely segregated and unequal schools in the nation, with students of color in schools of concentrated, persistent poverty.

Given the strong evidence of better academic outcomes in schools that are integrated by race and class, can things get better when families with higher incomes and education move back into communities of poverty? If these processes continue for the next generation, will there be better outcomes for all students? Will lower income students of color get stronger schools? Will newcomers share schools with older residents? The latter is the complex and significant question this study asks, examining the patterns of gentrification in three important California cities.

With recovery from the Great Recession and the pandemic and the end of protection for low-income renters, what will happen as housing prices and rents become even more unaffordable from both a sharp rise in mortgage interest rates and the significant spike in household formation?

California is extremely diverse. White Californians often assume this means that race relations are positive. But California has no serious policies fostering or supporting school integration. A half century ago there were state policies that affected some cities, including Los Angeles and San Diego, and federal court orders to desegregate schools in San Francisco and San Jose, but both were abandoned in the 1980s and 1990s. The state constitution was changed to limit

urban desegregation rights. Since none of the cities in this paper, nor the California state government, have policies to require or to significantly aid desegregation, it is not surprising that this report shows only limited changes in school composition in communities undergoing change. (One of the serious limits of social science research is the evaluation of nonexistent alternatives.) The expansion of school choice without any diversity goals or limits means that charter schools and magnet choices can easily be used for whites or others to leave racially and economically diverse communities for those with higher proportions of white and middle-class students. This limits the possible benefits for schools in gentrifying neighborhoods. When we think about the future, we have to consider how policy might help change these outcomes.

This report recommends conscious policies to support school and housing integration. Though these policies do not exist now in California, except for rare locations like the city of Berkeley, one has to rely on experiments elsewhere or at an earlier period, when there were positive policies in federal court decisions and there was federal aid to help support integration policies. To produce better outcomes in our city schools, we will have to learn lessons from elsewhere and from our own earlier history.

Thinking about this study in terms of California's future, it is clear that the pattern of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the early 21<sup>st</sup> of just building homes further and further from the historic centers of our cities, and letting inner cities decline and eventually be largely abandoned, is not going to work. Aging, affordable, developable land in the suburbs is running out. In many cases suburban developments and even shopping centers, which were not built to last, are decaying. At the same time, the central cities can offer a more diverse, interesting, culturally rich lifestyle and convenient location to minimize distance for many kinds of work and recreation. Cities were often built in locations with considerable natural advantages; they are the location of many key institutions and facilities that cannot be moved.

Now that gentrification has become far more commonplace and has increased the number of middle-class city neighborhoods, it is likely to be a significant factor in the coming years. This study shows that gentrification produces the conditions and opportunities for significantly lowering California's extreme educational stratification. It is also evident from this study, however, that nothing much will really change under the existing policies and practices without serious new initiatives, different policy conditions, and support for successful and lasting socio-economic and racial integration. Fortunately, we do have enough experience and research to draw on, and they show both that integration can be done on a much larger scale and that it has solid lifelong benefits. It's time, past the time, for educators, urban planners, civil rights groups, business leaders and others to come together and to take steps that harvest the possibilities of these trends. At the same time, we must try to diminish the costs to long-term residents in gentrified communities by offering support to many older, poorer long-term renters and homeowners, through targeted housing subsidies, permitting more long-time residents to stay and be part of a community gaining possibilities.

*-Gary Orfield*

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## Executive Summary

Our study on neighborhood gentrification<sup>1</sup> in California cities highlights the complex interplay between gentrification, school choice, and school segregation patterns. We found that the relationship between gentrification and local elementary schools largely depends on the specific city and community being gentrified. Statewide, gentrified neighborhoods have become *more* racially and economically diverse compared to those that did not gentrify, but we found only modest changes in local schools. Our research reveals that these trends have played out differently across California cities and schools. Our analysis pays particular attention to Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego, three prominent and diverse cities in the state that possess unique desegregation histories and school choice dynamics. It is noteworthy, however, that California currently lacks any active state or federal desegregation policies. Furthermore, the state's educational landscape is characterized by a significantly large charter school sector, which often exhibits higher levels of segregation compared to traditional public schools. Additionally, certain policies that could potentially facilitate desegregation efforts are prohibited due to the constraints imposed by Proposition 1, a state constitutional amendment.

The rapid gentrification occurring in major cities may have a significant impact on California and the distribution of wealth and opportunity for its families, similar to the vast suburbanization that occurred during the baby boom era. The White flight from central city neighborhoods has far-reaching consequences, particularly in regard to school segregation, which became an often-intractable problem. However, there is substantial and growing evidence of the enduring benefits for children who attend diverse schools. This study aims to explore whether the return of White and

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, gentrification involves the reshaping of neighborhoods due to changes in factors, like education levels, types of housing available, and household income (refer to the methodology section for a comprehensive technical definition).

middle-class families to gentrified areas has the potential to help desegregate the schools or if it merely rearranges the geography of segregation for students of color, reinforcing racial inequality.

In our analysis of neighborhood demographics and school enrollment patterns in Los Angeles, by far the state's largest city, exposure to low-income students in gentrified neighborhoods has declined for *all* racial groups, with the steepest decline for Whites and Asians, a clear gain in terms of class diversity. In Oakland, one of the country's most rapidly gentrifying cities, we find that racial isolation in schools has declined for each group in areas that gentrified. In San Diego, however, where gentrification has become widespread as well, we find that racial contact in schools has remained relatively stable over time for most racial groups. We also find that there continues to be a substantial majority of majority-minority and intensely segregated schools in all three cities, with the most (by far) in Los Angeles, followed by Oakland then San Diego. Finally, our analysis reveals a highly bifurcated and racially imbalanced charter school sector in a state with a large and growing charter sector, with some charters serving high concentrations of minority students and others serving high concentrations of White students. Overall, our analysis suggests that gentrification's impact on local schools is largely contingent on the city and community being gentrified and may be related to local housing dynamics, student assignment policy, school choice policy, and demographic differences (see table on page 5). Neither the state nor any of these cities have any explicit policy on gentrification or segregation.

### **Key Findings:**

- Median home values in gentrified areas in California increased 110% in inflation-adjusted dollars since 2000, whereas low-income areas that did not gentrify, saw median home values increase by 29%. In the state's most intensely gentrifying areas, home values soared by over 380%.



- In Los Angeles, San Diego, and Oakland, over 50% of low-income neighborhoods have gentrified since 2000.
- Gentrifying areas of Oakland, Los Angeles, and San Diego have a larger share of charter schools than areas that were eligible for gentrification but did not gentrify.
- In gentrifying areas of Los Angeles, both White and Asian elementary school students have seen large declines in their exposure to low-income students, down 12 and 10 percentage points, respectively. Meanwhile, Hispanics and Blacks saw a much more modest decline in their exposure to low-income students, down 3 and 5 percentage points, respectively.
- In 2019, approximately 84% of all Los Angeles elementary schools were majority Black and Hispanic, a share that went largely unchanged from 2000. However, in the city's gentrifying areas, that share of majority Black and Hispanic schools declined, down from 92% of the total in 2000 to approximately 86% in 2019. This is compared to an increase of 2 percentage points in areas that did not gentrify.
- While the share of majority White elementary schools has increased across Los Angeles, approximately 1 in 5 charters is majority White, compared to approximately 1 in 20 non-charter schools. In the gentrifying communities, 10.8% of charter schools are majority White, in contrast to 4.6% of non-charters.
- Oakland's most intensely gentrifying communities have seen median values increase from \$150,000 in 2000 to over \$800,000 in 2019 and with the share of White households increasing by 28 percentage points.
- In gentrifying neighborhoods of Oakland, the White share of students has approximately doubled from 7.6% to close to 15%, the largest gain of all racial groups. Meanwhile, the Black elementary school population declined by over 21 percentage points in gentrified

areas. The Black enrollment in SF has also plummeted as has the share of Black students statewide.

- Whites are least exposed to economically disadvantaged students, although their exposure to low-income students has increased in each of the areas in Oakland. Asian students in gentrifying areas however have seen a substantial decline in exposure to low-income students (-7 percentage points).
- Black students in Oakland have seen their exposure to low-income students increase in both gentrified areas (+10 percentage points) and areas that did not gentrify (+12 percentage).
- The share of majority Black and Hispanic elementary schools has declined in gentrifying communities, down from 78% in 2000 to 58% in 2019.
- In both gentrifying and non-gentrifying communities of Oakland, there are zero charter schools that enroll more than 25% White students. However, in gentrifying areas, 23.5% of non-charter schools enroll greater than 25% White students, compared to 16.6% of non-charters in areas that did not gentrify.
- In San Diego, in 2019, the overall level of isolation for Hispanic students was slightly lower in schools in gentrifying neighborhoods (62%) than in areas that did not gentrify (67%).
- Across all types of San Diego's neighborhoods, Black students became less isolated with same race peers; in gentrifying areas in 2000, the typical Black student attended a school that was 25% Black and in 2019, the typical Black student's school in a gentrifying area was only 11% Black.
- However, in San Diego, Black students experienced increased segregation with Hispanic students across all types of schools; this increase was smallest in gentrifying areas where

in 2000 the typical Black student attended a school that was 44% Hispanic and by 2019, the typical Black student's school in a gentrifying area was 46% Hispanic.

- In San Diego, in 2019, the overall level of exposure to low-income students is lower, but still remains high, in gentrifying areas (72% low-income for Black students, 73% low-income for Hispanic students) compared to areas that did not gentrify (77% low-income students for Black and Hispanic students).

For the latter half of the twentieth century, American cities were characterized by decline, depopulation, and residential segregation by race and class. Over the last two decades, however, many US cities have undergone a transformation. They have seen large long-term declines in crime in spite of recent upturns, become more diverse, and have experienced reinvestment while increasingly attracting middle- and upper-class residents. While these changes have been a boon to many US cities, the vast majority of urban schools remain racially and economically segregated. Despite the emergence of more diverse schools in some gentrifying communities in California, schools remain demographically imbalanced compared to their gentrifying neighborhoods. While we believe this is an indication of some progress toward desegregation, much more work remains to be done.

Factors that may account for varied findings across cities include:<sup>2</sup>

### **Extreme Housing Costs**

- Rapidly rising housing prices across Los Angeles and Oakland (see Figures A-3-5) may hinder residential mobility options for White gentrifying families who may otherwise move as a means of avoiding local schools with high numbers of minority children.

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to reiterate that the objectives of this study were *solely* focused on providing a descriptive analysis. The possible explanations presented here are speculative and have not been tested.

## **Local Demographics**

- Los Angeles and Oakland may have a unique population of affluent white gentrifying families with distinctive political leanings and attitudes of racial tolerance. Although many of these families may prefer predominantly White schools, some may choose to enroll their children in slightly more diverse schools.

## **History of Desegregation**

- Varying histories of desegregation efforts could influence current desegregation levels.
- San Diego's longer history of desegregation efforts may contribute to relatively more desegregation compared to Los Angeles and Oakland.

## **Transportation**

- Accessible, reliable transportation is critical for facilitating school desegregation. All three metros are large in geographic size compared to other parts of the state, making transportation across the metros difficult, especially for low-income families.
- Compared to one another, Los Angeles metro area is substantially larger than Oakland and San Diego, and because an extensive public transportation system is not available in many parts of Los Angeles, as well as notoriously bad traffic that contributes to long and unpredictable commuting times, transportation across the metro could be prohibitive for facilitating desegregation.

## **Student Assignment Policy**

- Unregulated school choice policies that lack diversity goals often exacerbate segregation. LAUSD's inter- and intra-district transfer policy and Oakland's open enrollment policy are likely contributing to higher levels of segregation.

## Charter Schools

- Charter schools tend to be more segregated than traditional public schools and magnet schools. Larger shares of charter elementary schools in gentrifying areas (Figure A-15) of Los Angeles and Oakland than San Diego could contribute to greater segregation.

# Mapping Change: Gentrification and its Role in California's School Segregation Landscape

Kfir Mordechay, David Mickey-Pabello, and Jennifer B. Ayscue

## Introduction

The relationship between housing and schools is mutually reinforcing, with each impacting the other (Frankenberg, 2013; Owens, 2020). In California, the critical features of the housing and education sectors, such as the extreme housing crisis and high levels of school segregation, significantly impact Californians' access to opportunities. Without integration policies for either housing or education, these interrelated crises could worsen if the state continues on its current trajectory. However, other parts of the nation have demonstrated success through intentional and systemic efforts, providing a pathway for California to create a different future.

California is in the midst of a housing crisis that has been building since the 1970s. Since that time, the housing shortage has intensified such that, according to the 2020 Census, California ranked 48<sup>th</sup> [relative to other U.S. states] in terms of housing units per resident (McGhee, Paluch, & Hsieh, 2021). The state's housing supply has long struggled to match demand, but has so especially since 2008, when the global financial crisis and the collapse of mortgage markets caused the number of building permits issued for new construction to collapse (Mordechay, 2020). During the 2010s, California's economy added more than 2.5 jobs for each home that was built in the state, creating conditions for an extreme housing shortage (Williams, 2022). In 2019, the state's median home value was the second highest in the country (following Hawaii) and 2.4 times the median price of a home in the rest of the United States (Johnson, Mejia, & Lafortune, 2020). Therefore, less than one-third of Californians could afford to purchase median-priced homes (Johnson et al., 2020). The rental market is also exorbitant, with six of the nation's top 10- most expensive urban rental markets

located in California (Zumper, 2022)). Homelessness is also a major problem in California which has half the country's total unsheltered population (The Economist, 2021). The state's lack of housing has accelerated the pace of gentrification, with one recent estimate finding that the Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Diego metro areas ranked as the top three with the highest share of high-income homeowners living in low-income areas (Goodman, Seidman, & Zhu, 2020). Perhaps unsurprisingly, in our analysis of both Los Angeles and San Diego, well over half of all low-income neighborhoods have gentrified since 2000. Gentrification, in this context, is defined by the transformation of neighborhoods through changes in educational attainment, housing stock, and household income (see methodology section for technical definition). These factors collectively contribute to the shifting landscape of these communities.

Today, California's schools rank among the most segregated of all schools in the nation. California is the most segregated state for Latino students (Frankenberg, Ayscue, & Orfield, 2019). In 2016-2017, 58% of the state's Latino students attended intensely segregated schools that had enrollments of more than 90% students of color. The typical Latino student attended a school in which only 15% of their classmates were White. California is also one of the most segregated states for Black students (second or fourth most segregated in the nation, depending on the measure of segregation used) (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020). In 2018-2019, 51% of Black students attended an intensely segregated school that had an enrollment of more than 90% students of color (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020). The typical Black student attended a school that was only 16% White (Orfield & Jarvie, 2020).

Successful, stable integration in some other parts of the United States demonstrates that these high levels of segregation are not inevitable. Many school districts across the country are currently implementing enrollment policies to mitigate segregation through voluntary integration plans, socioeconomic-based student assignment policies, and school choice policies that

intentionally promote diversity (Diem, Holme, Edwards, Haynes, & Epstein, 2019). Such districts could also be instructive for California as is the recognition that the current context in which the state must address segregation is vastly different than the context was after *Brown v. Board*. Alongside policy changes in California since the 1970s, the United States Supreme Court has retrenched on supporting school desegregation. Many districts have been released from court orders (Reardon, Grewal, Kalogrides, & Greenberg, 2012) and current efforts are often voluntary (Anderson & Frankenberg, 2019). Given the shift in the state's policy context, as well as the Supreme Court's retrenchment on desegregation efforts, unlike the past mandatory desegregation that occurred in San Francisco and in Los Angeles for a brief time, many current efforts to address segregation must be voluntary. Such efforts must also take into account the demographic shifts in the state, the role of residential segregation, the housing crisis, and the spread of gentrification, as well as the shift toward unregulated systems of school choice.

In 1992, California was the second state to adopt charter legislation and over the last three decades, education systems across the state have experienced massive growth in the charter school sector such that by 2021, 11.5% of the state's students attended charter schools (California Department of Education, 2021). The growth in this sector has made California's education system one in which there is a substantial share of unregulated choice with no equity provisions. Choice systems can be used to facilitate integration, but if that is the goal, it must be with intention and civil rights provisions, such as targeted recruitment, communication in multiple languages, and free and accessible transportation, must be in place (Ayscue & Frankenberg, 2018; Orfield & Frankenberg, 2013). Without such provisions, unregulated systems of choice tend to exacerbate segregation (Cobb & Glass, 2009). If the choice system is to persist in California, it could be better regulated with explicit diversity goals.



Within this state policy vacuum, municipalities and local school districts have been left to devise their own plans and policies for addressing gentrification and school segregation. In this paper we explore breadth and scope of neighborhood gentrification across California and ask whether the demographic shifts induced by gentrification have increased contact between groups. We then explore how the process of gentrification and neighborhood change has unfolded differently across and within cities. We pay particular attention to Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego, three prominent and diverse cities in the state that possess unique desegregation histories and school choice dynamics. It is noteworthy, however, that California currently lacks any active state or federal desegregation policies. Furthermore, the state's educational landscape is characterized by a significantly large charter school sector, which often exhibits higher levels of segregation compared to traditional public schools. Additionally, certain policies that could potentially facilitate desegregation efforts are prohibited due to the constraints imposed by Proposition 1, a state constitutional amendment.

## **Gentrification and Urban Schools**

The phenomenon of gentrification, driven by the growing demand for city living, has become widespread in many urban centers throughout the country. While previously considered a rarity, it has been predominantly fueled over the past few decades by highly educated young professionals and knowledge workers attracted to urban lifestyles. (Ellen & Torrats-Espinosa, 2018; Florida, 2003).

While scholars have traditionally focused on gentrification's impact on housing-related issues, specifically displacement, recent research has highlighted the broader implications of this phenomenon, including its connection to local public schools, although extensive research suggests that contact between different groups in these schools is possible, but not guaranteed. The degree of

contact depends heavily on the city, community, and local policy context. Racial integration is important because it is associated with numerous positive outcomes, including improved academic achievement as well as short-term and long-term non-academic social benefits (Mickelson & Nkomo, 2012). In addition, the likelihood of upward social mobility for children is significantly higher if they grow up in communities characterized by greater cross-class interactions (Chetty, et al. 2022).

In this report, we explore the relationship between school composition patterns and urban neighborhood changes across California, by far the largest US state, and the fifth largest economy on the planet. We then zoom into three distinct cities, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Oakland, each of which is vastly different in size, demographic composition, and education policy landscape. Los Angeles, is by far the largest city in CA and by all standards a megacity that has been transformed by decades of migration. Oakland, a smaller city (not by national standards, but relative to LA and SD) on the eastside of the San Francisco Bay has been transformed by the region's tech boom and is currently in the midst of a major transformation. While San Diego is a city that is part of an international transborder agglomeration and in the midst a biotech boom. Indeed, these three cities are ranked among the most rapidly gentrifying in the country (Richardson, Mitchell, & Edleb, 2020). In exploring these cities, we ask whether neighborhood gentrification has increased contact between groups, both residential and in local elementary schools nearby and how trends might vary across and within cities. To do this we explore neighborhoods that have gentrified over the last two decades, with neighborhoods that were once similar, but did not gentrify. The answers have direct implications for educators, housing advocates, and policymakers concerned about stabilizing and revitalizing urban neighborhoods and incorporating equity-seeking objectives into the gentrification process.

Perhaps not surprisingly, our findings reveal widespread gentrification across CA, with close to *half* of all low socioeconomic status neighborhoods having become gentrified since 2000 and one in five becoming *intensely* gentrified. In small sized cities such as Oakland over 50% of all low socioeconomic status neighborhoods have gentrified, and in Los Angeles and San Diego, well over half have gentrified. This report zooms into three distinct cities that are at the forefront of this major force, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Oakland.

Our analysis suggests that gentrification's impact on local schools is largely contingent on the city and community being gentrified, suggesting a complex interplay between neighborhood gentrification, school choice, and school segregation patterns. We find that statewide, gentrified neighborhoods have become more racially and economically diverse than neighborhoods that did not gentrify, but with scant changes in the local schools. Our findings also reveal that these trends have played out differently across cities. In our analysis of Los Angeles, by far the state's largest city where 55% of all low SES neighborhoods have gentrified since 2000, exposure to low-income students in gentrified neighborhoods has declined for each racial group, with the steepest decline for Whites and Asians. In Oakland, one of the country's most rapidly gentrifying cities where over half of the neighborhoods have gentrified, we find that racial isolation in schools has declined for each group in areas that gentrified, but with White and Asian student isolation declining the most. In San Diego however, where gentrification has become widespread as well, we find that racial contact in schools has remained relatively stable over time for most racial groups. We also find that there continues to be a substantial number of majority-minority and intensely segregated schools in all three cities, with the most (by far) in Los Angeles, followed by Oakland, then San Diego. Finally, our analysis reveals that gentrifying neighborhoods have a larger share of charter schools than communities that do not gentrify. Overall, we find a highly bifurcated and racially imbalanced charter sector, with some charters serving high concentrations of minority students and others

serving high concentrations of White students. These findings underscore the increasingly complex nature of racial and economic shifts within rapidly diversifying communities across the state. Our analysis suggests that gentrification's impact on local schools is largely contingent on the city and community being gentrified, and may be related to development policy, local housing context, school choice policy, and demographic differences.

This brief begins with an overview of California and the state's demographic transformation. Next, we discuss the origins of gentrification and basic definitions, followed by a review of the literature on the relationship between gentrification and urban neighborhoods, and the connections to local urban schools. This is followed by a description of the data and methodology. We then present our analyses and findings, first of California, followed by Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego, three cities that are ranked among the most rapidly gentrifying in the country (Richardson et al. 2020). We close with a discussion of implications of the analysis and policy considerations.

## **California**

One in eight US residents lives in California. With almost 40 million people, California is the nation's most populous state, far larger than Texas (29 million) and Florida (22 million), the second and third largest states. While growth has slowed in recent years (and actually stopped recently with net outmigration), California's population is projected to reach 45 million people by 2050. The state is also incredibly diverse, with no single racial or ethnic group constituting a majority; 39% of state residents are Hispanic, 36% are White, 15% are Asian or Pacific Islander, and 6% are Black. Among the school population, a majority are Latino, and Whites makeup only about a fifth of the school population. The state's demographic transformation has also been accompanied by a shift toward urban living with many central city neighborhoods becoming more heterogeneous and less racially segregated. This demographic change has been particularly drastic in gentrifying communities in

some of California’s largest cities, particularly since 2000. The scope of this demographic shift has been large. In Los Angeles, by far California’s largest city with 4 million people, approximately 55% of all low socio-economic status neighborhoods have gentrified since 2000. Indeed, the issue of gentrification has spurred intense debate among activists, the media, and the general public. In this paper we argue for a widespread need for policies and tools to help communities manage gentrification. Specifically, the policy discussions need to be broad and need to include the education sector to truly harness the potential upside of renewed capital investments and migration flows into low-income and urban neighborhoods while minimizing the hazards, namely displacement, increased housing cost, and the potential for long-term resegregation.

## **Metropolitan America**

In metropolitan areas across the United States, economic changes, demographic shifts, and the physical evolution of urban and suburban landscapes have created advantages for some and hardship for others. These disparities often intersect within neighborhoods, which serve as crucial social settings that shape the opportunities available to individuals (Chetty, Hendren, & Katz, 2016; Logan, Oakley, & Stowell, 2008; Wilson 1987). As a result, scholars have devoted enormous time to analyzing neighborhood decline and subsequent revitalization efforts as a result of municipal governments and market forces. The term most often used to describe the ascent of urban neighborhoods is “gentrification.” Historically, gentrification research has primarily concerned itself with housing-related outcomes, but more recent educational research has begun to explore the relationship between gentrification and urban schools.

### **The Origins of Gentrification**

Gentrification has provoked considerable controversy because of the potential benefits and also the potential marginalization of vulnerable residents. Gentrification in its classic form entails an

influx of higher socioeconomic status individuals and outside capital investment into historically neglected, low-income neighborhoods. In the most general sense, scholarship has converged around neighborhood changes in educational levels, housing values, and income as the defining features of gentrification. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, some have argued that race has become a more central feature and that racial demographics of neighborhood populations, namely increases in the percentage of White households determine which neighborhoods gentrify (Ellen & Ding, 2016; Pearman & Swain, 2017).

Historically, gentrification has been a modest force of urban change, concentrated in a small number of central cities, such as New York and San Francisco. However, there is general agreement that gentrification has become much more substantial in a number of urban centers in the last two decades (Ellen & Torrats-Espinosa, 2018; Florida, 2003). The breadth and scope of this demographic shift has been large, with some estimates showing a major acceleration since 2000. Ellen and Ding's (2016) analysis finds that gentrification was far more common during the 2000s compared to the 1990s. They find that the share of college-educated households in low-income city tracts climbed from 25% during the 1990s to 35% during the 2000s, and the share seeing large increases in the percentage of White households rose from 7 to 18%. Another recent analysis found that in several cities with more extensive levels of gentrification, more than *half* of all neighborhoods have been gentrified (Maciag, 2015). Gentrification is now as widespread among small and medium sized metro areas such as Richmond, Virginia, and Denver, Colorado, as it is among superstar metros such as New York and Los Angeles (Landis & Reina, 2019). The increasing scope and pace is a reversal of decades of disinvestment and white flight, raising questions about whether this recentralization can lead to inclusive, diverse, mixed-income communities.

## **Gentrification and Schools**

While neighborhoods often become more racially diverse as a result of gentrification, the relationship between gentrification and school desegregation is more complex. Rather than enrolling their children in local neighborhood schools, gentrifying families often enroll their children in private schools or schools of choice (Pearman & Swain, 2017). When gentrifying families enroll their children in selected public schools or charter schools, they often do so in clusters with other gentrifier families (Kimelberg & Billingham, 2012). Recent research suggests that some gentrifying families are enrolling their children in traditional public schools (Cohen, 2021; Diem et al., 2019; Freidus, 2019; Mordechay & Ayscue, 2019, 2020, 2022; Posey-Maddox, 2013). Although neighborhood schools in gentrifying areas of New York City and Washington, DC are becoming somewhat more racially desegregated, they are not keeping pace with the more rapidly diversifying neighborhoods (Mordechay & Ayscue, 2017, 2019, 2020).

Desegregated learning environments are associated with numerous benefits for marginalized students and white students. Non-White students who attend desegregated schools have higher levels of academic achievement with no corresponding detrimental impact on White students (Crain & Mahard, 1983; Hallinan, 1998; Mickelson, Bottia, & Lambert, 2013; Mickelson, Bottia, & Larimore, 2020). Desegregated schools are also associated with enhanced critical thinking and communication skills for students of all races (Schofield, 1995). White students in desegregated schools benefit from more robust classroom discussions and develop cultural competency that is beneficial for entering a multiracial workplace and society (Siegel-Hawley, 2012). In the long term, there is strong causal evidence that students who have attended desegregated schools have large positive long-term impacts on a variety of educational and labor market outcomes (Anstreicher, Fletcher, & Thompson, 2022; Johnson, 2011, 2019). Students who attend desegregated schools are also more likely to live and work in integrated environments (Braddock & McPartland, 1989) and

pass these benefits on to future generations (Johnson, 2019). This suggests that in integrated schools where resources improved, later-in-life outcomes were improved for students of *all races*. Finally, meta-analyses of Allport's (1954) intergroup contact theory confirm that contact among students from different racial groups leads to a reduction in prejudice and stereotypes as well as enhanced friendships across racial groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Tropp & Prenevost, 2008).

## Methodology

To measure neighborhood gentrification, we use Freeman's (2005) method. A census tract is defined as *gentrifiable* if at the beginning of a defined period (2000 for this study), it had a median income and a share of recently constructed housing, both of which were below the 40th percentile of its city. A neighborhood is considered *gentrified* if it met the previously described criteria in 2000 and also experienced an increase in inflation-adjusted house values and a percentage increase in college-educated households that exceeds the increase in college-educated households in the city from 2000 to 2019. In addition, following Ding and colleagues (2016), to stratify by the magnitude of gentrification, at the city level we will classify gentrified neighborhoods into three categories (weak, moderate, and intense) based on their quartiles of median home values. The first quartile is weak, the semi-interquartile range is moderate, and the quartile with the highest home values is the most intense. We will employ these categories at the neighborhood level to allow for a more heterogeneous understanding of gentrification and to avoid a flattening of the gentrification variable into a binary one. However, for the school level data we collapse the three gentrification categories, aggregating the school demographics into a single category of gentrification.

To create our unique datasets, we merge data from three publicly available sources. Our first group of data comes from the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data (CCD) and includes enrollment data for all public California elementary school students by



race/ethnicity and free-and-reduced-priced lunch (FRPL status<sup>3</sup>). We restrict our sample to elementary schools because they are generally smaller and more geographically based than middle and high schools. We identified schools as elementary schools if they had a second grade. Our second and third groups of data characterize neighborhoods and are drawn from the United States Census of 2000 and the 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates. We chose the 2000-2001 and 2018-2019 school years as the time period for this study to show the school gentrification process, an often slow pattern that may take twenty years to reach maturity.

Connecting the data came with the challenge of identifying which tracts the schools belong to, and accounting for the differences between Census tract boundaries over time. To link schools to their corresponding census tracts, we used geospatial software to affix the schools to tracts based on their longitude and latitude coordinates. We were then able to analyze the schools as individual units of analysis when needed, and we also aggregated the school data to the tract level when we used the tracts as the units of analysis. Lastly, because Census tract boundaries undergo various changes between time points, we use the weights provided by Logan and colleagues (2014) to make Census tracts and their related covariates congruent over time.

Because census tracts and school attendance zones do not correspond perfectly, we use a geospatial buffer (0.5-mile zone) to determine whether a school is “nearby” a gentrifying neighborhood. Such buffers are a common approach to identifying schools “nearby” gentrifying areas (Mordechay & Ayscue, 2020; Pearman & Green, 2022). The final dataset has 6,181 elementary schools for the 2018-2019 school year across California’s 8,057 Census tracts.

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<sup>3</sup> For ease of interpretation, we refer to students on FRPLs as “economically disadvantaged” or “low-income” students interchangeably.

## Segregation Measures

Although there are multiple ways to measure segregation, the two most common approaches to segregation measurement involve absolute and relative measures. Together, these two dimensions emphasize different pathways by which segregation may affect student outcomes (Reardon & Owens, 2014). Our absolute measures are exposure and isolation, which capture the proportion of students who attend schools with various levels of isolation from or contact with other groups. These measures can be interpreted as the probability that a randomly drawn child is enrolled in schools with high or low proportions of the same racial or economic group. For example, a Black-isolation measure of 0.6 indicates that the typical Black student attends a school in which 60% of their schoolmates are Black. Isolation ranges from 0 to 1 as well, where the higher values indicate more segregation. Isolation indices above 0.70 (or, equivalently, exposure indices below 0.30) are indicative of “high segregation.” (Massey & Denton, 1989)

The isolation and exposure index were calculated using the following formula:

$$(1) E = \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{a_i}{A} * \frac{b_i}{t_i} \right)$$

The only difference in the formula is the value for  $b_i$ . In the isolation index the value of  $b_i$  is the same as  $a_i$ . For the exposure index the equation is exactly as written above, expressing how much exposure students of one racial group have to students of another given racial group (e.g., the exposure of Black students to White students). While isolation/exposure is a useful measure of potential peer interaction, it is also an imperfect measure, mainly because it is sensitive to the overall racial composition of a district or geographic area. It cannot discern how segregated the populations can be within a geographic area- particularly with White students making up an increasingly smaller share of enrollment (Fiel, 2013; Mordechay & Terbeck, 2023). Relative segregation measures on the other hand describe how evenly the population of a given group is distributed across schools, adjusting for the racial composition of the school system or larger geographic area. We use the

variance ratio index<sup>4</sup> which builds from the isolation measure but includes an adjustment for system-wide composition. It is defined as follows:

$$(2) \quad VR = \frac{K - Q_j}{1 - Q_j}$$

Where  $K$  is the isolation index value and  $Q_j$  represents the school-system level fraction of students of race  $j$ . In a perfectly integrated school system all schools would have a composition equal to  $Q_j$  so the value of the variance ratio (VR) would equal zero. In a perfectly segregated school system where each school is made of entirely students of a single racial group the value of  $K$  would equal one, so the variance ratio (VR) would also equal one. Because the variance ratio index considers a school that is racially representative of the schools within the larger geographic area to be ‘balanced’, it is also an imperfect measure of segregation. In other words, if a school is 90% Black and is in a district that has enrollments that were 90% Black, the school would be considered ‘balanced’ relative to the district because the average Black student is evenly distributed (but highly isolated). We are therefore in favor of employing both measures of segregation to better understand a complex process and to ensure that our findings are not driven by our choice of segregation index.

Lastly, we employ another absolute measure often referred to as “concentration”. Here we calculate the proportion of underrepresented minority (URM) students in a school at various levels of concentration (Orfield, Siegel-Hawley, & Kucsera, 2014). We calculated the percent of schools that are majority Black and Hispanic (enrolling 50% – 100% B/H students), intensely segregated (enrolling 90%–100% B/H students), and hyper-segregated (enrolling 99% – 100% B/H students). We employ a similar strategy to calculate the concentrations of Whites and Low-Income students.

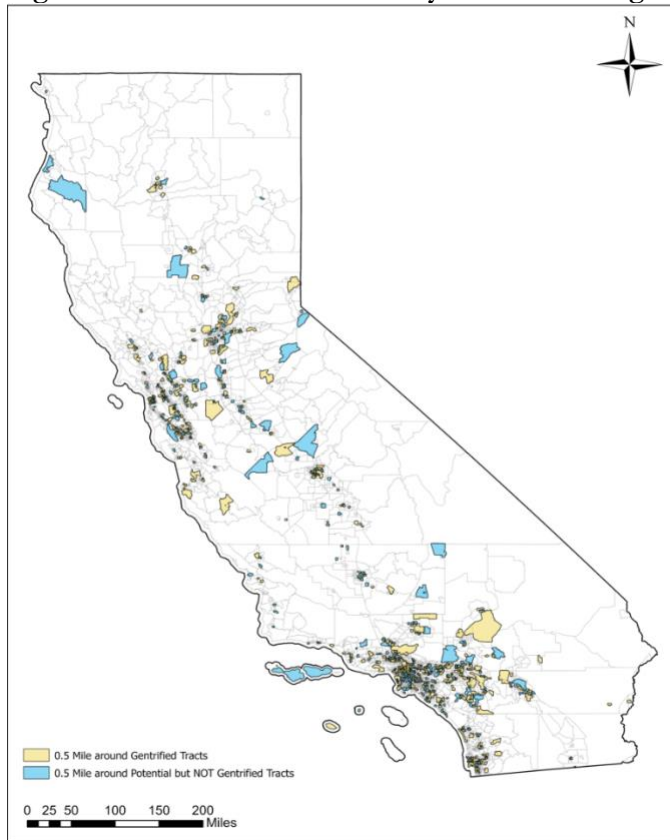
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<sup>4</sup> Sometimes called the two-group normalized exposure index, the relative diversity index, the squared coefficient of variation, and eta-squared (James & Taeuber, 1985; Reardon & Firebaugh, 2002).

## Findings

This section begins by describing neighborhood and school demographics in 2000 and 2019 across California by neighborhood types (see neighborhood typology description), where we find rapidly accelerating gentrification across many parts of the state (Figure 1). We then zoom into several distinct cities (Oakland, Los Angeles, and San Diego) to explore the relationship between neighborhood gentrification and its impact on local elementary schools. We do this primarily by comparing neighborhoods that are gentrified with similar non gentrifying ones, as illustrated in figure 1 below. The comparison of these two neighborhoods is not meant to be interpreted as a perfect counterfactual or a “might-have-been” reconstruction. It is simply an attempt to improve on past approaches that frequently compare gentrifying neighborhoods with all other neighborhoods.

**Figure 1. Gentrified and Potentially Gentrified Neighborhoods, California**

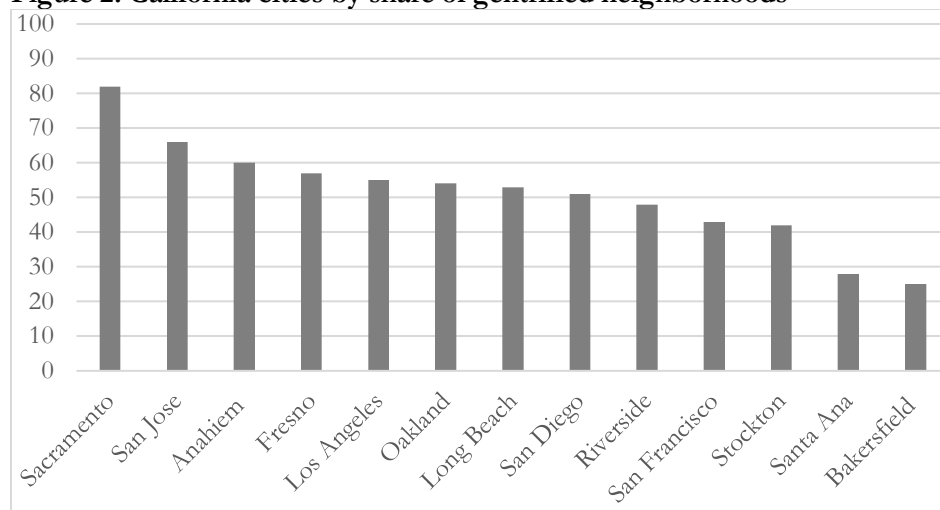


Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey, 5-year estimate.

## Soaring Housing Cost, Demographic Shift, and Gentrification in California

Historically, gentrification has been a modest force, concentrated in a small number of coastal central cities, such as New York and San Francisco. However, in the first two decades of the twenty-first century, gentrification has become much more widespread. As is illustrated in figure 2, the share of low socio-economic status neighborhoods that have gentrified since 2000 has increased markedly across many cities in California. In Sacramento, the state’s capital, over 80% of divested neighborhoods have gentrified since 2000, the largest share in the state. In Los Angeles, San Diego and Oakland, over 50% have gentrified over the same period. Figure 2 illustrates the geographic scope of gentrification and how widespread the phenomenon has become across the Golden State. No longer just confined to the large cities, but clearly growing in suburbs and outside the large metropolitan areas.

**Figure 2. California cities by share of gentrified neighborhoods**



Note: Share of gentrified neighborhoods is based on share of low SES neighborhoods that gentrified between 2000 and 2019. Excludes cities with less than 10% of tracts that are gentrified and cities with less than 200,000 residents. Source: Author’s calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

Table 1 provides a descriptive portrait of California’s residential demographics in 2000 and 2019 by gentrification level. In 2000, areas that were eligible for gentrification and did not gentrify were relatively similar to areas that had. Both of these areas had lower median household incomes, housing values, percentage of college graduates and percentage of white residents and higher

percentages of Black and Hispanic residents. By 2019 however, areas that had gentrified in California had seen median real home values increase by over 110%, whereas areas that were eligible for gentrification, but did not, saw median home values increase by approximately 29%. In the state's most intensely gentrifying areas, home values soared by over 380% (see Figure A-2). These findings illustrate not just the incredible housing market pressures that often accompany gentrification, but also the surging demand in gentrifying neighborhoods, which are initially more affordable neighborhoods and frequently on the boundary of the richer communities. As others have observed, poor neighborhoods on the border of richer neighborhoods are not only most prone to becoming gentrified, but also tend to see the largest increase in house price appreciation (Guerrieri, Hartley, & Hurst, 2013). The shifting demographics of the state's most intensely gentrifying areas is perhaps highlighted most starkly by an increase in the share of college graduates. As illustrated in table 1, the most intensely gentrified areas saw a 15.7 percentage point increase in the share of college graduates. This demographic shift is a key feature of neighborhoods that gentrify.

**Table 1. Neighborhood Demographics by Gentrification Status, California**

	Overall	Not eligible for gentrification	Did not gentrify	Weak gent	Moderate gent	Intense gent
	N=8,035	n=6,768	n=577	n=93	n=343	n=254
<b>% Change in College graduates</b>	7.6%***	7.4%***	2.4%***	11.3%***	13.7%***	15.7%***
<b>% Change White</b>	-11.0%***	-11.2%***	-11.1%***	-12.1%***	-8.1%***	-7.7%***
<b>% Change Black</b>	-0.5%***	-0.4%***	-1.5%***	-0.2%	-1.2%*	0.7%
<b>% Change Hispanic</b>	6.5%***	6.6%***	9.6%***	6.9%***	2.7%***	2.0%
<b>% Change Asian</b>	3.3%***	3.3%***	1.7%***	3.7%***	4.8%***	5.0%***
<b>% Change Poverty</b>	1.2%***	0.7%***	5.4%***	2.4%***	2.8%***	4.1%***
<b>% of Homes Built in Past 20 Years</b>	24.9%	23.4%	9.9%	13.0%***	9.7%	7.2%

Note: To calculate percent change we subtract 2019 from 2000 for each variable, respectively. \*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; and \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . The units of analysis here are census tracts. The percentages in the table reflect the means of the percentages across census tracts by type (e.g., Overall, did not gentrify).

Source: Author’s calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

## Understanding Segregation

In 1947, a federal court case, *Mendez v. Westminster*, held that segregating Mexican American students into “Mexican schools” in Orange County, California was unconstitutional. Seven years later, in the landmark 1954 Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Court ruled that segregated schools are inherently unequal. Although the South is often cited for its resistance to school desegregation in the decades following *Brown*, districts in California were slow to desegregate as well. By 1966, 85% of Black students and 57% of Latino students in California attended majority minority schools, and only 3 and 15 percent, respectively, attended white schools (Orfield & Ee, 2014). Unfortunately, efforts to desegregate across the state have been mixed, as illustrated by the cases of three of California’s largest school districts, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego.

## Los Angeles

### *History of School Desegregation*

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) resisted desegregation in the face of the court, first with *Brown* and then in the 1963 *Jackson v. Pasadena City School District* decision, mandating that school boards take steps to eradicate racial segregation, both of which LAUSD effectively ignored. By 1966, the majority of Black students in LAUSD were attending less than 100 highly segregated schools, while a handful were able to attend the 400 white schools (Orfield & Ee, 2014). The court-mandated plan outlined in the *Cranford v. Board of Education* (1970) decision was criticized and quickly repealed. By the time the decision was reinstated in 1976, and the schools ordered to desegregate, hundreds of thousands of minority students were attending intensely segregated schools (Orfield & Ee, 2014). Los Angeles is thus recognized as the first major city to abandon its court-mandated desegregation plan. The struggle to desegregate LAUSD that stretched from 1963 to 1979, including a very limited court-mandated plan affecting a few grades and an anti-busing proposition, effectively ended with the passage of Proposition I in 1979, amending the state constitution, which was spurred by a backlash to busing after court-appointed experts concluded that a workable plan would need to include suburban school districts. This proposition amended the state constitution such that desegregation through busing could only be achieved if the federal government required it. LAUSD also tried a voluntary transfer plan, which whites were usually able to take advantage of to opt out of integrated schools, while students of color were usually denied, resulting in white flight rather than desegregation.

The district still allows inter- and intra-district transfer, pending approval from both the giving and receiving schools, though the policy seems less about integration and more about “improving educational options” and catering to parent choice. Students can enroll in their neighborhood school or apply to a choice program, including magnets, charters, and other options

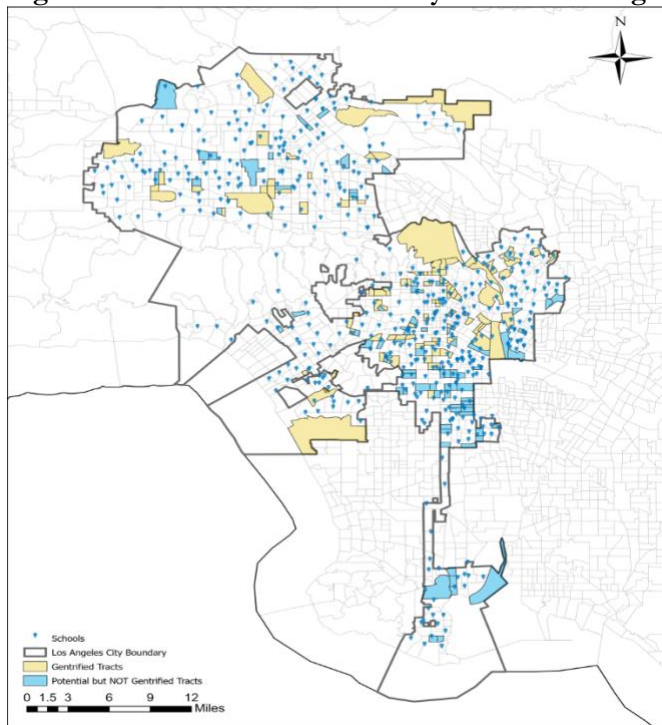


like dual language and International Baccalaureate. These enrollment and transfer policies, along with white flight into private schools and segregated suburbs, seem to have confirmed the LAUSD status as a segregated school district. The district experienced an increase in Hispanic immigration between 1993 and 2012 during which time white students were, in essence, replaced by Hispanic students: In 1993 the school population was 42 % white and 37 % Hispanic; by 2012 whites were only 25.5 %, whereas the share of Hispanics had risen to 52.7 % (Orfield & Ee, 2014). Today, 39 % of Black and 51 % of Hispanic students attend intensely segregated schools, though the district is 73.4% Hispanic, 10.5% white, 7.5% Black and 3.9% Asian (LAUSD, 2021).

### *Los Angeles Neighborhoods and Schools*

The city of Los Angeles is incredibly diverse with nearly half of its residents identifying as Hispanic. Non-Hispanic whites account for 28% of the population, 1 % are Asian, and 9% are Black (U.S. Census Bureau 2019). While gentrification has accelerated in the city, it may be distinct from gentrification in east coast and midwestern cities because of the large proportion of single-family homes and its geographically sprawling nature. Coupled with being in the throes of a multi-decade housing crisis, the city has seen widespread gentrification over the past 20 years (Figure 3). Indeed, the city's housing market pressures are illustrated in figure A-3, particularly in the gentrifying communities which are typically most vulnerable to rapid housing market appreciation. Citywide, median real home values have more than doubled, up from over \$334,000 in 2000 to just over \$700,000 in 2019. During the same period, however, LA's moderately and intensely gentrifying communities have seen real housing values soar more than 4-fold and 6-fold, respectively.

**Figure 3. Gentrified and Potentially Gentrified Neighborhoods, Los Angeles**



Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey, 5-year estimate.

Table 2 illustrates the demographic transformation across the city's various neighborhood types. The stark increase in college-educated residents in the weak, moderate, and intensely gentrifying neighborhoods can be seen below. In the most intensely gentrified areas, the share of college educated residents increased almost 20 percentage points, whereas neighborhoods that were eligible for gentrification but did not, increased by 3 percentage points. Racially, Asian and White residents were the only groups to see an increase in their total share across each of the gentrifying neighborhoods. In fact, while the share of Whites declined citywide (-2.2 percentage points), the share increased in each of the gentrifying neighborhoods, by far the most in moderately gentrifying neighborhoods (+7.5 percentage points). Conversely, while the Hispanic share increased city-wide by 1.2 percentage points, the group's share declined in each of the gentrifying neighborhoods, most in moderately gentrifying areas (-7.4 percentage points). These neighborhood trends suggest that

gentrification is unfolding racially across Los Angeles neighborhoods, and is largely spearheaded by an influx of White households and to a lesser extent Asians.

**Table 2. Neighborhood Changes by Gentrification Status between 2000 and 2019, Los Angeles**

	Overall	Not eligible for gentrification	Did not gentrify	Weak gent	Moderate gent	Intense gent
	N=1,002	n=826	n=79	n=5	n=46	n=246
<b>% Change in College graduates</b>	9.7%***	5.6%***	3.1%***	12.1%**	18.2%***	19.5%***
<b>% Change White</b>	-2.2%***	-2.7%***	-1.9%	1.5%*	7.5%***	0.1%
<b>% Change Black</b>	-2.3%***	-1.7%***	-7.4%***	-2.0%	-4.4%**	-0.2%
<b>% Change Hispanic</b>	1.2%**	1.3%**	7.7%***	-4.1%	-7.4%**	-3.0%
<b>% Change Asian</b>	1.8%***	1.7%***	1.1%**	2.7%	4.2%***	4.3%**
<b>% Change Poverty</b>	-0.8**	-1.5%***	3.2%*	7.5%*	1.3%	1.6%
<b>% of Homes Built in Past 20 Years</b>	13.5%	15.2%	5.7%	6.2%	5.9%	5.0%

Note: To calculate percent change we subtract 2019 from 2000 for each variable, respectively. \*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; and \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . The units of analysis here are census tracts. The percentages in the table reflect the means of the percentages across census tracts by type (e.g., Overall, did not gentrify).

Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

The effects of neighborhood gentrification across Los Angeles have spilled over into the local schools. In fact, as seen in table 3, the racial group whose share grew most in gentrifying areas since 2000, are White elementary school students. Since 2000, the group's share has increased from just over 7% of the total to approximately 12%. Conversely, the share of Blacks declined more than any other group in both gentrifying and non-gentrifying communities (Table 3). Meanwhile, the Asian share remained stable in both gentrifying and non-gentrifying areas at 6% and 4%, respectively. Hispanic elementary students by far make up the largest share in each of the areas, but in gentrifying areas, the share has *declined* modestly (from 74.7 to 73.2). Finally, the share of economically disadvantaged students declined starkly in gentrifying areas (from 85% to 75%), while the share declined only modestly in areas that were eligible but did not gentrify.

**Table 3. Elementary School Demographics, Los Angeles**

Gentrified	2000	2019	Change
White	7.4%	12.1%	+4.7%***
Black	11.6%	7.8%	-3.8%***
Hispanic	74.7%	73.2%	-1.5%
Asian	6.0%	5.9%	-0.1%*
Low-Income	85.0%	75.0%	-10.0%*
Did not Gentrify	2000	2019	Change
White	5.0%	6.7%	+1.7%
Black	13.3%	8.9%	-4.4%
Hispanic	77.4%	79.5%	+2.1%
Asian	4.2%	4.0%	-0.2%
Low-Income	87.4%	85.5%	-2.1%

Note: Sample is restricted to neighborhoods classified as disinvested at baseline and *did not* gentrify (i.e., those neighborhoods that had, at baseline, median household incomes and shares of recently constructed housing that were below the 50th percentile of its respective city). Neighborhoods were classified as gentrified if they experienced during the observation period a percentage increase in college-educated residents that exceeded the growth of college-educated persons in the city overall, and an increase in real housing prices. Includes all schools within a .5-mile buffer.

Source: Author’s calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

Los Angeles elementary schools remain highly segregated by both race and class. Hispanics are by far the most segregated group, and their segregation has increased in each of the areas, even once we account for demographic changes (i.e. Hispanic natural growth). Citywide, the average Hispanic elementary student attended a school that was over 80% Hispanic in 2019 (Table 4). Similar to Oakland, Black elementary school students have seen a decline in their isolation, which is at least in part a consequence of a dramatic decline in Black enrollment and increasing exposure to the city’s growing Hispanic population (Table 5). White students have seen the largest increase in isolation, but when adjusting for demographic changes, the group’s isolation has remained stable in each of the neighborhoods. In addition, Asian student segregation remained stable in each of the

areas as well. Finally, while the segregation of economically disadvantaged students declined modestly in each of the areas, this group remains highly segregated.

**Table 4. Elementary School Racial and Economic Segregation, Los Angeles**

	Los Angeles City		Gentrified		Did Not Gentrify	
	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019
<b>Black</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.25	0.07	0.27	0.06	0.27	0.07
Isolation	0.34	0.15	0.36	0.14	0.37	0.15
<b>Hispanic</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.32	0.36	0.27	0.33	0.27	0.28
Isolation	0.80	0.81	0.81	0.82	0.84	0.85
<b>Asian</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.79	0.80	0.80	0.81	0.83	0.85
Isolation	0.19	0.20	0.21	0.20	0.18	0.20
<b>White</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.78	0.78	0.80	0.79	0.83	0.84
Isolation	0.40	0.45	0.30	0.41	0.32	0.33
<b>Low-Income</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.39	0.36	0.30	0.28	0.31	0.27
Isolation	0.88	0.85	0.89	0.86	0.91	0.89

Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Table 5. Black/Hispanic Exposure Index, Los Angeles**

	Citywide	Did not gentrify	Gentrified
<b>2000</b>	0.55	0.58	0.54
<b>2019</b>	0.57	0.64	0.58

Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

As can be seen in Table 6, both White and Asian elementary school students in gentrifying areas have seen large declines in their exposure to low-income students, down 12 and 10 percentage points, respectively. In 2019, the average White student in gentrifying areas attends a school that is 50% economically disadvantaged, compared to 57% in areas that did not gentrify. Both Black and Hispanics students have seen modest declines in exposure to economically disadvantaged students in each of the neighborhood types. However, both groups remain by far the most exposed to economically disadvantaged students, with alarmingly high levels of exposure in each of the neighborhood types. However, in gentrified areas, an average Black student attends a school that is made up of 77% economically disadvantaged students compared to 87% in areas that did not gentrify. The average Hispanic elementary student in gentrifying areas attends a school that is composed of 86% economically disadvantaged students, compared to 90% in areas that did not gentrify.

**Table 6. Exposure to Low-Income Students by Race, Los Angeles**

	Los Angeles City		Gentrified		Did Not Gentrify	
	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019
<b>Black</b>	0.81	0.78	0.82	0.77	0.88	0.87
<b>Hispanic</b>	0.88	0.85	0.89	0.86	0.91	0.90
<b>Asian</b>	0.64	0.53	0.74	0.64	0.69	0.62
<b>White</b>	0.46	0.43	0.62	0.50	0.55	0.57

Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

In 2019, approximately 84% of all Los Angeles elementary schools were majority Black and Hispanic, a share that went largely unchanged from 2000 (Table 7). However, in the city's gentrifying areas, that share of majority Black and Hispanic schools declined, down from 92% of the total in 2000 to approximately 86% in 2019. This is compared to an increase in areas that did not gentrify (+2 percentage points). The share of intensely segregated (90-100% Black and Hispanic) elementary

schools however, increased citywide and in both gentrifying and non-gentrifying areas, but least in the city’s gentrifying areas (+3 percentage points). Lastly, the share of hyper-segregated schools (99%–100% Black and Hispanic) declined across Los Angeles and the various neighborhood types. Combined, these trends suggest that citywide, there continues to be persistently high numbers of spatial concentration of majority-minority and intensely segregated schools. However, the share of schools that are majority-minority in gentrifying communities have been declining, although schools in gentrifying communities remain highly segregated.

**Table 7. Concentration Index by Neighborhood Type, Los Angeles**

	Overall	Did not gentrify	Gentrified
<b>2000</b>	<b>N=384</b>	<b>N=227</b>	<b>N=233</b>
Majority Minority (50%–100% Black and Hispanic)	84.6%	93.0%	91.9%
Intensely Segregated (90%–100% Black and Hispanic)	47.1%	65.6%	49.9%
Hypersegregated (99%–100% Black and Hispanic)	21.4%	34.8%	19.3%
<b>2019</b>	<b>N=494</b>	<b>N=313</b>	<b>N=307</b>
Majority Minority (50%–100% Black and Hispanic)	83.8%	94.6%	86.4%
Intensely Segregated (90%–100% Black and Hispanic)	52.0%	70.0%	52.8%
Hypersegregated (99%–100% Black and Hispanic)	6.1%	9.0%	6.5%

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

School segregation has remained persistently high across Los Angeles, in spite of the widespread gentrification across vast parts of the city. Across the city, and in gentrifying communities, the influx of white elementary students has been unevenly distributed by school type (charter/non-charters status). While the share of majority White elementary schools has increased citywide, approximately 1 in 5 charters are majority White, compared to approximately 1 in 20 non-charter schools (Table 8). In the gentrifying communities, 10.8% of charter schools are majority-White, in contrast to 4.6% of non-charters. In communities that did not gentrify, 8.6% of charter

schools are majority white, whereas zero non-charter schools are majority white. This trend holds (directionally) when comparing the share of charter and non-charter schools with 25% or more White enrollment (Table 8). In gentrifying communities 33.9% of schools have enrollments with at least 25% Whites compared to 14.6 % of non-charter schools. In areas that did not gentrify, a much lower percentage of elementary schools enroll 25% or more Whites overall (approximately 20% of charters compared to 5.7 of non-charters enrollment) This finding suggests that as White families move into gentrifying communities, a large and growing subset are enrolling their children in majority-White schools. In the case of Los Angeles, these schools are disproportionately charter. Such trends are not uncommon and have been found in other cities with gentrification pressures.

**Table 8. White Concentration Index by Charter Status in 2019, Los Angeles**

	White (>25%)		White (>50%)	
	Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
<b>Citywide</b>	41.3	14.9	21.1	4.8
<b>Gentrified</b>	33.9	14.6	10.8	4.6
<b>Did Not Gentrify</b>	19.9	5.7	8.6	0

*Note.* Numbers are percent of total schools

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

In addition to enrolling a larger concentration of White students, charter schools in Los Angeles and in both gentrifying and non-gentrifying communities, also have lower concentrations of greater than 50% and 75% low-income students (Table 9). 76% of Charter schools in gentrifying communities have majority low-income elementary students, compared to approximately 88% of charter schools in communities that did not gentrify. Lastly, 63.4% of charter schools in gentrifying areas enroll 75% or more low-income students compared to 76% of non-charter schools.



**Table 9. Low-Income Concentration Index by Charter Status in 2019, Los Angeles**

	Low-Income (>50%)		Low-Income (>75%)	
	Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
<b>Citywide</b>	66.4	90.5	54.9	76.2
<b>Gentrified</b>	76.1	91.3	63.4	77.3
<b>Did Not Gentrify</b>	88.7	96.0	76.1	88.7

*Note.* Numbers are percent of total schools

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

In sum, the demographic transformation caused by neighborhood gentrification has undoubtedly impacted local elementary schools. As many of Los Angeles’s neighborhoods became diverse via gentrification, some elementary schools have diversified and become less segregated as well, but with the school level changes far more muted. The share of majority Black and Hispanic schools has *declined* in gentrifying areas while it has *increased* in areas that have not gentrified. However, even in gentrifying communities, racial isolation for students of color remains alarmingly high. While we find evidence that Black and Hispanic students in gentrifying areas have seen modest declines in exposure to economically disadvantaged students (relative to areas that did not gentrify), your average White and Asian students have seen a large and noticeable decline in their exposure to economically disadvantaged students. We also find evidence that White families in particular, are enrolling their children in schools with large shares of White students (greater than 25% and 50% White). These schools with high concentrations of White students are disproportionately charter schools across each of the neighborhood types- much more so in gentrifying than non-gentrifying areas. Prior studies have also found that gentrifying families may cluster their children into a few “vetted” schools (Jordan & Gallagher, 2015; Mordechay & Ayscue, 2022). This, in effect, does little to alleviate school segregation in gentrifying neighborhoods as gentrifier families cluster their children with other Whites. Lastly, we find that White elementary students appear to be significantly overrepresented in their concentration across the charter school sector in Los Angeles.

## **Oakland**

### *History of School Desegregation*

Like L.A., Oakland was slow and hesitant to desegregate following the *Brown* decision, though their struggles were confined to local politics rather than deferred to higher courts. Although it seemed a likely locale for desegregation to take root, and had the support of civil rights leaders of the time, “substantial desegregation never came to Oakland,” and desegregation “reached no more than 3% of the student population” (Kirp, 1979). Desegregation may have had some support from the community, but it did not have the support of the long-standing conservative school board and superintendent. When the makeup of the board changed and the superintendent retired in 1962, the prospect of desegregation became more likely; however, the conservative majority won out. Instead of taking up the issue itself, the school board diverted the question of integration to an advisory committee made up of community members (Kirp, 1979). There was no desegregation lawsuit or state or federal enforcement in Oakland. Apart from Seattle and several university communities, including neighboring Berkeley, no large city has undertaken a major desegregation plan without a court order or enforcement pressure. California’s desegregation agency, the Intergroup Relations Bureau of the Department of Education, which had been active in the 1960’s and 1970s, was closed during the conservative George Deukmejian “law and order” administration of 1983-1991. During the same time, the more progressive members of the state’s Supreme Court were recalled and removed in a partisan campaign in 1986. The state never resumed significant work requiring or fostering desegregation.

Unlike LAUSD, OUSD has several neighbors who may act as desegregation models. However, even when nearby Berkeley and San Francisco desegregated, OUSD did not follow suit. Berkeley and a few other university communities were unique in taking serious voluntary action to support desegregation. San Francisco was repeatedly sued and forced to desegregate until the court

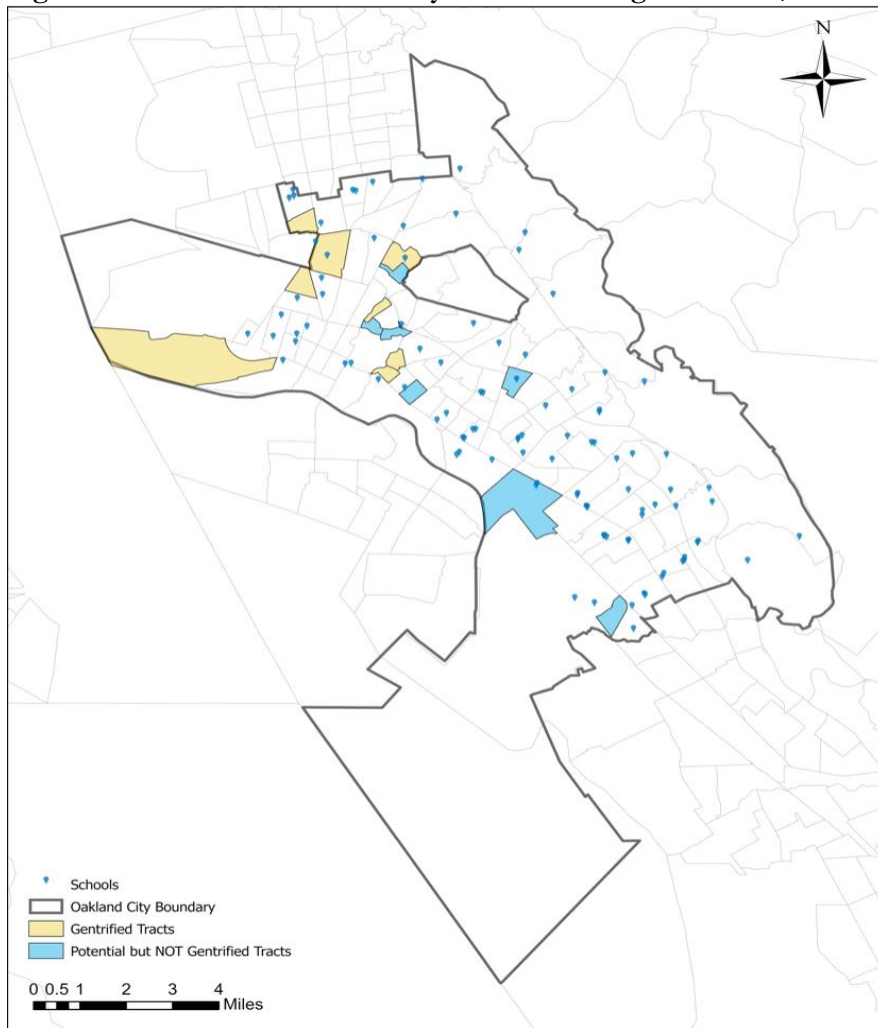
order was lifted. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, OUSD’s school board did take up a few desegregation-related issues: busing and redistricting plans, which were rejected, and an open enrollment plan, which was approved. Unfortunately, this open enrollment policy was targeted “not to students seeking a desegregated education but to students attending overcrowded schools; the plan was supposed to increase parental choice, not necessarily lessen racial isolation” (Kirp, 1979). Today, OUSD still follows an open enrollment policy which allows students to apply through a lottery to all schools in the district, including charter schools (OUSD, 2021). The district does include several enrollment priorities, including neighborhood and equitable enrollment priority, which is offered to students in a Prioritized Census Block Group. Attempts were made in the 1980s to eliminate this open enrollment policy and eradicate segregation, but were ultimately unsuccessful, such that OUSD schools are still segregated by race and class (Integrate Oakland Schools, 2020).

Oakland also experienced a demographic shift in the 1960s, with the students of color population growing from little more than half in the early decade, to over 80% by the end of the 1970s (Kirp, 1979). Today, white students make up just 10% of the public-school population; of these students, 76% attend low-poverty schools, exacerbating the segregation of students of color in high-poverty schools (Integrate Oakland Schools, 2020).

#### *Oakland Neighborhoods and Schools*

The San Francisco Bay Area has seen vast racial and economic changes since the mid 1990s, when the tech economy emerged as the major driver of the local economy. Despite the dot-com bust of 2000 and the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, the tech industry has continued to grow, creating enormous pressure on a housing market with already limited supply. As a result, Oakland has been transformed, particularly the westside of the city, large parts of which have become gentrified (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Gentrified and Potentially Gentrified Neighborhoods, Oakland**



Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey, 5-year estimate.

Perhaps even more stark than the demographic changes seen in Los Angeles's gentrifying communities, many Oakland neighborhoods have become transformed. This is best illustrated by the city's home value appreciation since 2000 (Figure A-4). While the rapid acceleration of real housing values can be observed citywide, the city's most intensely gentrifying communities have seen median values increase from \$150,000 in 2000 to over \$800,000 in 2019. Demographically, the city's moderate and intensely gentrifying areas have seen large increases in the share of college educated residents, up over 24 and 36 percentage points, respectively. Racially, the changes across the city and its gentrifying communities have been no less significant (Table 10). The decline in the Black share

has been substantial in each of the neighborhoods, with the steepest decline in moderately gentrifying areas (-22 percentage points). Moderately gentrifying communities have also seen the sharpest decline in poverty (-3 percentage points) and a substantial increase in the share of White residents, up approximately 17 percentage points. The increase in the share of White households has been even more extraordinary in intensely gentrifying communities, increasing by 28 percentage points. Lastly, the share of Hispanic households increased citywide (+3.9 percentage points), with the sharpest increase in areas that were eligible but did not gentrify (+8.7 percentage points). Conversely, the Hispanic group's share declined starkly in the most intensely gentrified areas, down 20 percentage points.

**Table 10. Neighborhood Changes by Gentrification Status between 2000 and 2019, Oakland**

	Overall	Not eligible for gentrification	Did not gentrify	Weak gent	Moderate gent	Intense gent
	<b>N=113</b>	<b>n=96</b>	<b>n=7</b>	<b>n=0</b>	<b>n=6</b>	<b>n=2</b>
<b>% Change in College graduates</b>	15.6%***	15.3%***	6.7%**	N/A	24.1%***	36.7%
<b>% Change White</b>	2.0%***	4.7%**	3.8%	N/A	16.9%**	28.0%
<b>% Change Black</b>	-12.8%***	-12.1%***	-12.3%	N/A	-22.0%**	-10.0%
<b>% Change Hispanic</b>	3.9%***	4.1%***	8.7%	N/A	4.3%	-20.3%
<b>% Change Asian</b>	0.2%	0.3%	1.8%	N/A	-1.1%	-2.1%
<b>% Change Poverty</b>	-1.8%*	-2.2%*	4.0%	N/A	-3.0%	-0.1%
<b>% of Homes Built in Past 20 Years</b>	9.7%	10.7%	2.9%	N/A	3.1%	2.3%

Note: To calculate percent change we subtract 2019 from 2000 for each variable, respectively. \*  $p \leq 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; and \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ . The units of analysis here are census tracts. The percentages in the table reflect the means of the percentages across census tracts by type (e.g., Overall, did not gentrify).

Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

The city's demographic transformation has also altered the demographic composition of its local elementary schools. While the school demographics have shifted even in neighborhoods that were eligible to gentrify, but have not, schools nearby gentrifying neighborhoods have experienced starker changes (Table 11). In gentrifying neighborhoods, the White share of students has

approximately doubled from 7.6% to close to 15%. While not as large of an increase, the share of Asians went up approximately 3 percentage points. However, by far the largest change was in the Black elementary school population, which declined significantly in both areas (slightly more in the gentrifying areas). Meanwhile, the Hispanic share has grown in both areas, but *much less* so in gentrifying areas. Lastly, the share of students on free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL), a proxy for economic disadvantage, or low-income, declined in each of the areas, and is lower in gentrifying areas.

**Table 11. Elementary School Demographics, Oakland**

Gentrified	2000	2019	Change
White	7.6%	14.9%	+7.3%
Black	54.3%	29.2%	-21.1%
Hispanic	14.3%	20.0%	+5.7%
Asian	23.5%	26.4%	+2.9%
Low-income	64.1%	61.1%	-3.0%
Did not Gentrify	2000	2019	Change
White	5.0%	9.0%	+4.0%
Black	37.6%	17.5%	-20.1%
Hispanic	36.7%	54.7%	+18.0%
Asian	20.5%	11.7%	-8.8%
Low-income	75.0%	67.8%	-7.2%

Note: Sample is restricted to neighborhoods classified as disinvested at baseline and *did not* gentrify (i.e., those neighborhoods that had, at baseline, median household incomes and shares of recently constructed housing that were below the 50th percentile of its respective city). Neighborhoods were classified as gentrified if they experienced during the observation period a percentage increase in college-educated residents that exceeded the growth of college-educated persons in the city overall, and an increase in real housing prices. Includes all schools within a .5-mile buffer. Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

Racial and economic segregation have long been features of American cities, including Oakland and its surrounding areas. In both gentrifying and similar but non-gentrifying areas, Oakland’s Black elementary school population has seen a dramatic decline in isolation (Table 12). As in Los Angeles, this is in large part driven by a steep decline in Black enrollment and increasing

exposure to the city's burgeoning Hispanic population (Table 13). The average Black elementary student in Oakland now attends a school with 35% Hispanics, up from 24% in 2000. It should also be noted that Black students have seen stark increases in their exposure to low-income students citywide and in each of the neighborhood types (Table 14). The group however, is *least* exposed to economically disadvantaged students in gentrifying areas, with the average Black student attending a school with 73% low-income students. Hispanic students meanwhile have become more isolated citywide, and in both gentrified and non-gentrified areas. However, as seen in Table 12 when accounting for demographic changes (per variance ratio), isolation for the Hispanic elementary school population has declined modestly in gentrifying areas (-3 percentage points). Meanwhile, White elementary school students are less isolated citywide compared to 2000, but when accounting for changing demographics, namely the growth in White enrollment, the group's isolation has increased. In gentrifying areas however, White student isolation has declined by 7 percentage points, a directional trend that holds when adjusting for demographic changes.

**Table 12: Elementary School Racial and Economic Segregation, Oakland**

	Oakland City		Gentrified		Did Not Gentrify	
	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019
<b>Black</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.27	0.06	0.37	0.08	0.16	0.06
Isolation	0.60	0.18	0.71	0.23	0.47	0.13
<b>Hispanic</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.28	0.36	0.15	0.12	0.22	0.32
Isolation	0.51	0.65	0.27	0.29	0.51	0.69
<b>Asian</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.42	0.60	0.14	0.13	0.38	0.65
Isolation	0.37	0.36	0.55	0.49	0.35	0.29
<b>White</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.48	0.60	0.20	0.16	0.48	0.66
Isolation	0.40	0.35	0.41	0.34	0.30	0.33
<b>Low-Income</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.25	0.40	0.26	0.35	0.19	0.38
Isolation	0.73	0.82	0.74	0.76	0.74	0.85

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Table 13. Black/Hispanic Exposure Index, Oakland**

	Citywide	Did not gentrify	Gentrified
<b>2000</b>	0.24	0.30	0.12
<b>2019</b>	0.35	0.45	0.21

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

Whites also remain least exposed to economically disadvantaged students, although their exposure to low-income students has increased in each of the areas (Table 14). Asian students in gentrifying areas however, have seen the steepest decline in exposure to low-income students (-7 percentage points). For Black students, exposure to economic disadvantage has increased in each of



the neighborhoods, up between 10 and 12 percentage points in each. Hispanics meanwhile, have seen a modest decline in exposure to low-income students (-2 percentage points) in gentrified areas, but have seen substantial increases citywide and in areas that did not gentrify. Lastly, using both segregation measures, low-income students have seen an increase in their isolation across the city and in each of the neighborhood types. However, they are least isolated in gentrifying areas, where your average low-income student attends a school with 76% low-income students (Table 12).

**Table 14. Exposure to Low-Income Students by Race**

	Oakland City		Gentrified		Did Not Gentrify	
	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019
<b>Black</b>	0.64	0.75	0.63	0.73	0.65	0.77
<b>Hispanic</b>	0.71	0.81	0.73	0.71	0.74	0.83
<b>Asian</b>	0.36	0.36	0.75	0.68	0.71	0.75
<b>White</b>	0.25	0.34	0.26	0.37	0.35	0.37

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

The share of majority Black and Hispanic schools have declined non-trivially citywide and across each of the neighborhood types (Table 15). The decline in gentrifying communities has been most substantial (by far), down from 78% in 2000 to 58% in 2019. In addition, while the share of intensely-segregated schools (90%-100% Black and Hispanic) has increased in communities that did not gentrify (+7 percentage points), the share in gentrifying areas declined from 39% in 2000 to 0% 2019.

**Table 15. Concentration Index by Neighborhood Type, Oakland**

	Overall	Did not gentrify	Gentrified
<b>2000</b>	<b>N=64</b>	<b>N=28</b>	<b>N=23</b>
Majority Minority (50%–100% Black and Hispanic)	82.8%	85.7%	78.3%
Intensely Segregated (90%–100% Black and Hispanic)	42.2%	28.6%	39.1%
Hypersegregated (99%–100% Black and Hispanic)	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>2019</b>	<b>N=77</b>	<b>n=41</b>	<b>n=24</b>
Majority Minority (50%–100% Black and Hispanic)	75.3%	80.5%	58.3%
Intensely Segregated (90%–100% Black and Hispanic)	27.3%	34.2%	0.0%
Hypersegregated (99%–100% Black and Hispanic)	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

Across Oakland, close to 1 in 5 schools in gentrifying areas are charter, compared to approximately 1 in 20 schools which are charter in areas that did not gentrify (Figure A-15). In addition, citywide, and in both gentrifying and non-gentrifying communities, charter schools make up a much lower share of schools that are greater than 25% and greater than 50% White (Table 16). In fact, across each of these areas, zero charter schools are majority White. The disparity is especially stark in gentrifying communities where 17.4% of non-charter schools are majority White, compared to zero charter schools. In fact, in both gentrifying and non-gentrifying communities, there are zero charter schools that enroll more than 25% White students. However, in gentrifying areas 23.5% of non-charter schools enroll greater than 25% White students, compared to 16.6% of non-charters in areas that did not gentrify. Lastly, charter schools and non-charter schools enrolled similar concentrations of low-income students across each of the neighborhood types (Table 17).

**Table 16. White Concentration Index by Charter Status in 2019, Oakland**

	White (>25%)		White (>50%)	
	Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
<b>Citywide</b>	11.1	20.4	0	7.4
<b>Gentrified</b>	0	23.5	0	17.4
<b>Did Not Gentrify</b>	0	16.6	0	6.3

*Note.* Numbers are percent of total schools

Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Table 17. Low-Income Concentration Index by Charter Status in 2019, Oakland**

	Low-Income (>50%)		Low-Income (>75%)	
	Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
<b>Citywide</b>	76.2	76.8	61.2	66.1
<b>Gentrified</b>	71.4	70.6	43.9	46.9
<b>Did Not Gentrify</b>	75.0	78.8	75.0	73.2

*Note.* Numbers are percent of total schools

Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

In sum, similar to Los Angeles, gentrification has transformed many of Oakland's communities. This transformation appears largely driven by a stark increase in White and college-educated households and a burgeoning Hispanic population. In addition, as others have observed, there has been a rapid exodus and decline in the city's Black population. Taken together, this demographic shift has diversified public school enrollment citywide, more so in gentrifying communities. While each racial group has seen a decline in their isolation in gentrifying communities, Black and Hispanic students remain highly segregated as measured by their racial isolation and high levels of exposure to low-income students. Lastly, unlike Los Angeles, charter schools in Oakland have lower concentrations of White students compared to non-charters, with the largest gap observed in Oakland's gentrifying areas. This suggests that White students are significantly underrepresented in the charter school sector in Oakland.

## **San Diego**

### *History of School Desegregation*

The first successful school desegregation case in the United States occurred in San Diego. In 1931, the Superior Court of San Diego ruled that in the rural San Diego community of Lemon Grove, the school board's attempt to build separate schools for Mexican American students violated the state's laws. Three and a half decades later, in 1967 a case was filed by a former teacher, Larry D. Carlin, against San Diego (Monteagudo, 2019). A decade later, in 1977, in *Carlin v. Board of Education*, a Superior Court judge ruled that 23 of San Diego's public schools were racially segregated. San Diego implemented voluntary busing through the Voluntary Ethnic Enrollment Program (VEEP) and magnet schools. VEEP's two-way voluntary busing transported students from schools in predominantly non-White areas to predominantly White areas and vice versa; through 1996, race was used as an explicit criterion but with the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996, race was no longer considered for participation in VEEP (Koedel, Betts, Rice, & Zau, 2009). Most of the district's magnet schools were intended to attract students from predominantly White areas to predominantly non-White areas and over time shifted to using socioeconomic status of geographic areas to determine admission ((Koedel et al., 2009). San Diego remained under court supervision until 1998, and in 2011, San Diego Unified cut its budget for transportation (Koran, 2015). San Diego never received the kind of mandatory order that affected many big cities in the 1970s and early 1980s. Purely voluntary choice-based plans rarely achieved significant desegregation. In that period, San Diego had a much larger white enrollment than many big cities.

### *San Diego Neighborhoods and Schools*

The city of San Diego, on the southern edge of California and adjacent to the Mexican border is incredibly diverse with nearly a third of its residents identifying as Hispanic. Non-Hispanic Whites account for 45% of the population, 15% are Asian, and 6% are Black (U.S. Census Bureau

2019). Across San Diego since 2000, neighborhoods experienced a 9-percentage point decrease in the share of White residents and an 0.8 percentage point decrease in Black residents alongside a 4.9 percentage point increase of Hispanic residents and a 3.0 percentage point increase of Asian residents (Table 18). In moderately and intensely gentrifying neighborhoods, the same overall patterns held, although there was a smaller decrease in the share of White residents, a larger decrease in the share of Black residents, and a smaller increase in the share of Hispanic residents. One of the biggest changes across San Diego occurred with regard to the share of college graduates. The share of college graduates increased by 10.3 percentage points overall and to a larger degree in gentrifying areas. In moderately gentrifying neighborhoods, the share of college graduates increased by 19.5 percentage points and in intensely gentrifying neighborhoods, the share of college graduates increased by 16.8 percentage points. The median housing value increased by more than 50% across San Diego and similar to Los Angeles and Oakland, the increase was even more extreme in gentrifying areas (Figure A-5). In neighborhoods that experienced weak and moderate gentrification, the median housing value more than doubled, and in neighborhoods that experienced intense gentrification, the median housing value more than tripled. Gentrification in San Diego has occurred predominantly in the southern part of the city (Figure 5).

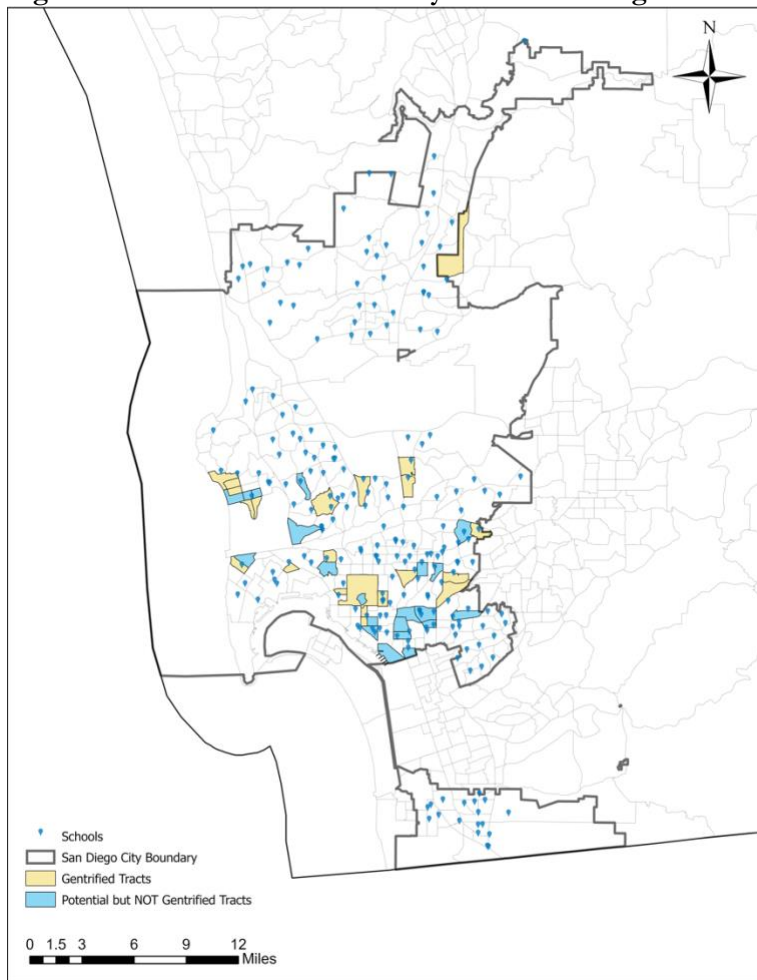
**Table 18. Neighborhood Changes by Gentrification Status between 2000 and 2019, San Diego**

	Overall	Not eligible for gentrification	Did not gentrify	Weak gent	Moderate gent	Intense gent
	<b>N=275</b>	<b>n=233</b>	<b>n=21</b>	<b>n=2</b>	<b>n=7</b>	<b>n=12</b>
<b>% Change in College graduates</b>	10.3%***	10.4%***	2.9%	12.0%*	19.5%***	16.8%***
<b>% Change White</b>	-9.0%***	-9.8%**	-5.4%*	-6.5%	-8.3%	-2.0%
<b>% Change Black</b>	-0.8%**	-0.6%*	-3.1%	-0.3%	-1%	-1.2%
<b>% Change Hispanic</b>	4.9%***	5.0%***	6.7%***	3.1%	2.3%	.08%
<b>% Change Asian</b>	3.0%***	3.2%***	0.7%	3.8%	3.7%	0.5%
<b>% Change Poverty</b>	-1.3%*	-1.5%*	0.5%	3.6%	-7.1%	2.6%
<b>% of Homes Built in Past 20 Years</b>	30.1%	34.0%	10.2%	14.4%	9.9%	5.8%

Note: To calculate percent change we subtract 2019 from 2000 for each variable, respectively.

Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

**Figure 5. Gentrified and Potentially Gentrified Neighborhoods, San Diego**



Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey, 5-year estimate.

In San Diego's elementary schools that are located in gentrified areas as well as in areas that were eligible but did not gentrify, the largest racial group of students in 2000 and 2019 were Hispanic and the second largest group was White students (Table 19). In gentrifying areas, the elementary schools experienced a decrease in Black (-7 percentage points), Asian (-2.5 percentage points), and White (-1.1 percentage points) students while the share of Hispanic students increased by 1.8 percentage points. In elementary schools in areas that were eligible for gentrification but did not gentrify, the share of Black (-8 percentage points) and Asian (-0.6 percentage points) students decreased while the share of Hispanic (1.2 percentage points) and White (0.5 percentage points) students increased. In elementary schools in both types of areas, Black enrollment had the largest

decline, Asian enrollment decreased to a smaller degree, and Hispanic enrollment increased. The White share of enrollment decreased in gentrifying areas but remained higher (23.8%) than the share of White enrollment in areas that did not gentrify (18.6%). The share of low-income students increased in both areas that gentrified and those that did not, but remains higher in areas that did not gentrify (66% in 2019) than in areas that gentrified (61.5% in 2019).

**Table 19: Elementary School Demographics, San Diego**

<b>Gentrified</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>White</b>	24.9%	23.8%	-1.1%
<b>Black</b>	16.3%	9.3%	-7.0%
<b>Hispanic</b>	47.8%	49.6%	+1.8%
<b>Asian</b>	10.4%	7.9%	-2.5%
<b>Low-income</b>	48.2%	61.5%	+13.3%
<b>Did not Gentrify</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>White</b>	18.1%	18.6%	+0.5%
<b>Black</b>	17.6%	9.6%	-8.0%
<b>Hispanic</b>	54.4%	55.6%	+1.2%
<b>Asian</b>	9.3%	8.7%	-0.6%
<b>Low-income</b>	52.5%	66%	+13.5%

Note: Sample is restricted to neighborhoods classified as disinvested at baseline and *did not* gentrify (i.e., those neighborhoods that had, at baseline, median household incomes and shares of recently constructed housing that were below the 50th percentile of its respective city). Neighborhoods were classified as gentrified if they experienced during the observation period a percentage increase in college-educated residents that exceeded the growth of college-educated persons in the city overall, and an increase in real housing prices. Includes all schools within a .5-mile buffer. Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

Across all types of neighborhoods in San Diego, Hispanic students are the most isolated with same-race peers, and Asian students are the least isolated (Table 20). Across San Diego, Black elementary school students became less isolated with same-race peers. In gentrifying areas, the



typical Black student attended a school that was 25% Black in 2000 and only 11% Black in 2019. At the same time, the typical Black student was exposed to an increasingly large share of Hispanic students across all types of neighborhoods such that in 2019 the typical Black student attended a school that was nearly half Hispanic. The increase in exposure to Hispanic students for the typical Black student was smallest in gentrifying areas (Table 21). In gentrifying areas, the typical Black student attended a school that was 44% Hispanic in 2000 and 46% Hispanic in 2019, making the typical Black student's exposure to Hispanic students lower in gentrifying areas than the rest of the city in 2019.

The average Hispanic student experienced a slight increase in isolation across the city, including in gentrified areas as well as those that did not gentrify (Table 20). In 2019, in gentrified areas, the typical Hispanic student attended a school with 62% Hispanic students. In areas that did not gentrify, the share was slightly higher—the typical Hispanic student attended a school with 67% Hispanic students. While isolation remained at a stable level (16%) for the typical Asian student in a gentrifying area, it increased from 15% to 23% for the typical Asian student in an area that did not gentrify. Isolation was fairly stable for White students, although there was a slight decrease in isolation in gentrifying areas (45% to 43%) and a slight increase in areas that did not gentrify (42% to 44%). Economically disadvantaged students became increasingly isolated across the city and in both gentrifying areas and those that did not gentrify.

**Table 20. Elementary School Racial and Economic Segregation, San Diego**

	San Diego City		Gentrified		Did Not Gentrify	
	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019
<b>Black</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.15	0.02	0.10	0.02	0.19	0.02
Isolation	0.27	0.09	0.25	0.11	0.33	0.11
<b>Hispanic</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.33	0.34	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.27
Isolation	0.61	0.63	0.60	0.62	0.65	0.67
<b>Asian</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.54	0.56	0.56	0.58	0.62	0.64
Isolation	0.28	0.31	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.23
<b>White</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.46	0.52	0.47	0.50	0.57	0.60
Isolation	0.51	0.42	0.45	0.43	0.42	0.44
<b>Low-income</b>						
Variance Ratio	0.34	0.40	0.34	0.48	0.37	0.40
Isolation	0.65	0.72	0.66	0.75	0.70	0.80

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Table 21. Black/Hispanic Exposure Index, San Diego**

	Citywide	Did not gentrify	Gentrified
<b>2000</b>	0.39	0.44	0.44
<b>2019</b>	0.47	0.51	0.46

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

Exposure to low-income students has increased for all racial groups in all areas, but to a greater extent for Black and Hispanic students (Table 22). Black and Hispanic students are also exposed to the largest share of economically disadvantaged students. In 2019, in gentrified areas, the average Black and Hispanic students attended schools in which 72% and 73% of students,

respectively, were low-income. In areas that did not gentrify, the typical Black and Hispanic students attended schools with an even larger share of economically disadvantaged students: 77%. The typical White student had the lowest level of exposure to low-income students: 40% in gentrified areas and 36% in areas that did not gentrify. The typical Asian student is exposed to a larger share of low-income students than the typical White student but smaller than the typical Black and Hispanic students.

**Table 22. Exposure to Low-Income Students by Race, San Diego**

	San Diego City		Gentrified		Did Not Gentrify	
	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019	2000-2001	2018-2019
<b>Black</b>	0.56	0.70	0.55	0.72	0.59	0.77
<b>Hispanic</b>	0.57	0.71	0.52	0.73	0.56	0.77
<b>Asian</b>	0.28	0.31	0.47	0.57	0.52	0.57
<b>White</b>	0.29	0.30	0.38	0.40	0.37	0.36

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

In 2000, about half of all of San Diego’s elementary schools (50.3%) were majority Black and Hispanic. By 2019, the share of majority minority schools increased to 56% across the city (Table 23). Areas that gentrified saw an increase as well (+3.8 percentage points), while areas that did not gentrify saw a modest decline in the share of majority Black and Hispanic schools (-1.8 percentage points). However, areas that did not gentrify had the highest share of majority Black and Hispanic schools. The share of intensely segregated schools – those that enrolled 90-100% Black and Hispanic students – remained largely stable across the city as well as in areas that gentrified. However, the share declined by 4 percentage points in those that did gentrify, although these areas have the highest shares of intensely segregated schools. Across the city, a very small share of San

Diego’s elementary schools is hypersegregated (.60% in 2000 and .50% in 2019), none of which are in areas that did not gentrify or those that gentrified.

**Table 23. Concentration Index by Neighborhood Type, San Diego**

	Overall	Did not gentrify	Gentrified
<b>2000</b>	<b>N=161</b>	<b>N=69</b>	<b>N=79</b>
Majority Minority (50%–100% Black and Hispanic)	50.3%	75.4%	60.8%
Intensely Segregated (90%–100% Black and Hispanic)	14.9%	23.2%	13.9%
Hypersegregated (99%–100% Black and Hispanic)	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>2019</b>	<b>N=191</b>	<b>N=84</b>	<b>N=100</b>
Majority Minority (50%–100% Black and Hispanic)	56.0%	73.6%	65.0%
Intensely Segregated (90%–100% Black and Hispanic)	14.1%	19.1%	14.0%
Hypersegregated (99%–100% Black and Hispanic)	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

In San Diego, 8.2% of elementary schools are charter (14 out of 170 total). In gentrifying areas, 13% of schools are charter and in areas that did not gentrify, 10% of schools are charter (Figure A-15). Unlike Los Angeles and Oakland where the share of White students is unevenly distributed by school type, in San Diego, White students are relatively evenly distributed across charter and non-charter schools (Table 24). In 2019, citywide, 46.2% of charter schools and 42.8% of non-charter schools enrolled a share of white students that was greater than 25%; 15.4% of charter schools and 13.2% of non-charter schools had a white enrollment greater than 50%. In gentrified areas, the distribution of white students is slightly more uneven across school type with 47.6% of charter schools and 39.2% of non-charter schools enrolling greater than 25% white students. A similar pattern exists in areas that did not gentrify, although the overall shares of schools are lower than in gentrified areas – 33.3% of charter schools and 26.8% of non-charter schools

enrolled greater than 25% white students. In both gentrified areas and areas that did not gentrify, the share of schools that enrolled more than 50% white students was around 14-17%.

When examining the concentration of low-income students, perhaps not surprisingly, the share of schools that enrolled more than 50% and more than 75% low-income students was largest in charter schools and non-charter schools in areas that did not gentrify (Table 25). Citywide, a larger share of charter schools (65.4%) than non-charters (57.5%) enrolled more than 50% low-income students; however at the more extreme level of concentration, a larger share of non-charter schools (38.3%) than charter schools (30.8%) enrolled more than 75% low-income students. In gentrified areas, larger shares of non-charter schools (67.1% and 45.6%) than charter schools (61.2% and 38.1%) enroll more than 50% and more than 75% low-income students.

**Table 24. White Concentration Index by Neighborhood Type in 2019, San Diego**

	White (>25%)		White (>50%)	
	Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
<b>Citywide</b>	46.2	42.8	15.4	13.2
<b>Gentrified</b>	47.6	39.2	14.3	15.2
<b>Did Not Gentrify</b>	33.3	26.8	16.7	14.9

*Note.* Numbers are percent of total schools

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Table 25. Low-Income Concentration Index by Neighborhood Type in 2019, San Diego**

	Low-Income (>50%)		Low-Income (>75%)	
	Charter	Non-Charter	Charter	Non-Charter
<b>Citywide</b>	65.4	57.5	30.8	38.3
<b>Gentrified</b>	61.2	67.1	38.1	45.6
<b>Did Not Gentrify</b>	66.7	71.6	44.4	58.2

*Note.* Numbers are percent of total schools

Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

In sum, San Diego experienced a decline in white residents and an increase in Hispanic residents. The same pattern was found, although to a lesser degree, in gentrifying neighborhoods, the majority of which are located in the southern part of San Diego. In elementary schools located in gentrifying areas, the share of Black, Asian, and white enrollment decreased while Hispanic enrollment increased. Across elementary schools in all types of San Diego's neighborhoods, Hispanic students experienced increased isolation and had the highest level of isolation with same-race peers, but the overall level of isolation for Hispanic students was slightly lower in schools in gentrifying neighborhoods. Across all types of neighborhoods, Black students became less isolated with same race peers. However, Black students experienced increased segregation with Hispanic students across all types of schools; this increase was smallest in gentrifying areas. Finally, across all neighborhood types, exposure to low-income students increased for all racial groups, but it was more extreme for Black and Hispanic students who are exposed to disproportionately high shares of low-income students. The overall level of exposure to low-income students is slightly lower, but still remains high, in gentrifying areas compared to areas that did not gentrify.

## **Policy Recommendations and Conclusion**

Managing the process of rapid demographic transformation such that it supports sustainable neighborhood and school desegregation requires coordinated and targeted policies that underscore the fundamental relationships among housing, communities, and schools. One of the promises of neighborhood revitalization is an upgrade in the quality of public resources- with schools being among the most significant. However, as our findings and those of others bring to light, it is unclear whether the influx of economic resources and more advantaged community residents reach the local schools. California's massive use of choice and charters and abandonment of desegregation policy affect these outcomes.

One concern is that without a broader set of policies linking housing and education policy, rent and home price pressures build up and schools never effectively integrate- resulting in the promise of increased diversity giving way to displacement and resegregation (Mordechay & Orfield, 2017). This may happen through a process of “pass-through” diversity, in which communities at the forefront of neighborhood change become *temporarily* diverse, followed by resegregation. Another concern is that local schools may not be attractive to newcomer parents who want to send their child to high-quality schools – which may accelerate enrollment declines. To avoid this process, schools must become attractive options and anchors that reflect their neighborhoods across race and socioeconomic differences.

### **Breaking Housing Barriers**

The interaction of local zoning laws, restrictions on development, and rising demand in urban centers have driven up housing prices, placing vulnerable households at risk of displacement. Facing a massive affordable-housing crisis, California has passed numerous housing bills in recent years to facilitate housing production. Despite these efforts, the already limited housing supply in the state, compounded by a surge in homebuying during the pandemic, has further exacerbated the crisis. Local governments and nonprofits can play an important role in helping manage and mitigate the potential housing-related pitfalls that plague so many cities and gentrifying neighborhoods. One strategy is to utilize community preference policies, giving residents priority access to subsidized housing built in their neighborhoods. Such programs can target low and moderate-income residents who are at the highest risk of displacement, or those that have long ties to the community. For example, the city of Portland recently adopted a program that gives affordable housing to residents who were displaced as a result of past redevelopment efforts. Similarly, other cities including San Francisco, Seattle, and Austin have adopted such policies (Goetz, 2018). For these policies to be effective, they must not be a one-size-fits-all set of policies but must be carefully crafted to the

particular community and regularly reviewed for compliance with the Fair Housing Act. Properly tailored community preference policies can be an effective strategy for minimizing displacement and ensuring that long-term residents benefit from neighborhood upgrades occurring around them. In the San Francisco desegregation plan, there were requirements that the school board work with housing agencies but it never did so on any scale. One of the ideas was the development of housing for teachers who rarely could afford to live in the city.

In addition, local governments should adopt a range of other policy tools designed to increase access to affordable housing in gentrifying areas. Lubell (2016) argues for six broad approaches as part of an overarching strategy, stressing that communities early in the gentrification process preserve and expand the availability of affordable housing. Specifically, he argues that effective and comprehensive strategies should involve the preservation of existing affordable rental units, protection of long-time residents, and inclusion to ensure that a share of new development is affordable (Lubell, 2016). One proven market-based tool for increasing affordable housing and sustaining diverse communities in gentrifying areas is inclusionary zoning (IZ). IZ policies incentivize real estate developers to set aside a percentage of housing units in new or rehabilitated projects for low or moderate-income residents. Many of these programs offer developers powerful incentives- such as density bonuses, expedited permit processing, tax-relief, and fee waivers. Communities must carefully craft these policies so that they are effective at ensuring that housing is affordable at a range of incomes while still remaining attractive to developers.

In neighborhoods with especially strong market pressures, local governments should enact policies that protect existing tenants from harassment and evictions. Ultimately, local communities will need to work together with multiple municipal agencies. This will entail building partnerships with local nonprofits and for-profit developers, community development corporations, local businesses, and others.



## **Integrating Schools**

With racial integration facing legal challenges, some school districts across the US are finding new and innovative ways to create more diverse schools that reflect the growing diversity of their communities. Several districts in New York City recently adopted a controlled-choice admissions mechanism to target economic segregation in middle school, with some of the more ambitious districts seeing substantial decreases in segregation in the first year of their integration plan (Margolis, Dench, & Hashim, 2022). In both Berkeley and Cambridge, where gentrification is occurring on a large scale, districts have “controlled choice” integration plans where parents must submit an application with their ranked choices of schools. In Berkeley, the district uses an algorithm taking into account both parental preferences and demographic targets to assign students to schools, resulting in 72% of families getting their first choice of school (Diem et al., 2019). A new movement of “50/50” schools in Dallas offers another useful model of “diversity by design” in the face of gentrification. Over a dozen schools there have employed a weighted lottery to achieve a 50/50 socioeconomic diversity model to ensure that 50% of student enrollment is made up of economically disadvantaged students, and the other 50% non-economically disadvantaged students. These plans also included regular equity audits to ensure that the schools are meeting their goals. Some of the schools have proven so popular that the district plans to open 11 more over the next three years (Rix, 2022). The models from these districts across the country, both larger and small, can provide insight to school systems in California.

For schools in gentrifying communities, it is critical to develop comprehensive plans that include strategies for attracting diverse student bodies as well as strategies for facilitating equal status interactions among students and families from different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds within the school (Mordechay & Ayscue, 2018).

Gentrifier parents are often able to select schools through choice of residence. Therefore, without an attractive school option, they are unlikely to enroll their children without a strong incentive. Such incentives could include schools offering full-day care that involves high-end extracurricular programs, theme-based or magnet programs (e.g., dual language immersion), free public preschool programs, strong leaders and teachers (particularly those who have received awards or recognitions for their accomplishments), and partnerships with community organizations.

Considering the role of the charter sector is especially critical as charters appear to make up a growing share of schools in many cities and gentrifying communities. In our analysis of Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Diego, we find that individual charter schools have become increasingly racially imbalanced, in the sense that some are serving high concentrations of minority students and others are serving high concentrations of White students. Indeed, the proliferation of charter schools may be breaking the housing-school link, potentially causing school and neighborhood segregation patterns to move in opposite directions, effectively leading to families living in more integrated neighborhoods while using charters to enroll their children in segregated schools (Rich, Candipan, & Owens, 2021). Therefore, revising charter school policy so that it supports more diversity is critical.

At the district level, recognizing the importance of the K-12 feeder pattern is also necessary. If gentrifier families enroll their young children in the neighborhood elementary school, it is critical that district leaders ensure the middle and high schools in the feeder pattern also be attractive to gentrifying families. Without a strong feeder pattern, gentrifier families may be reluctant to enroll their children in elementary school or may remove their children from elementary school as they enter the upper grades in order to secure a spot in what they perceive to be a more desirable feeder pattern. Conducting targeted outreach and sharing accessible information about the positive aspects of all schools in the feeder pattern would be important.

While the above recommendations address ways in which schools in gentrifying neighborhoods can attract and retain gentrifier families, it is critical that they not do so at the expense of long-standing residents who are families of color. Providing programs and services that are attractive to existing residents and that meet the needs of children of color is absolutely essential. To facilitate meaningful integration, schools would need to ensure students of color are not disproportionately impacted by any of their practices, such as discipline, tracking/ability level grouping, and identification processes for gifted and talented programs and special education. Culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) could be used to recognize and build upon the knowledge and assets that students bring to a racially diverse environment.

To promote inclusivity and equity in schools, it is important for school leaders and teachers to be aware of power dynamics between families of color and white families. Specifically, they should prevent gentrifying families from engaging in exclusive practices that may marginalize or exclude families of color, an issue that has been identified by scholars (Mordechay, 2021; Roda, 2020; Butler & Boggs, 2023). Developing the skills to do so would likely involve professional development for leaders and teachers about how to facilitate racial integration. Bringing parents together to engage in meaningful conversation about the changes occurring in the neighborhood and the school as well as providing opportunities for parents of all racial groups to engage in equal-status interactions are essential. Proactively creating these structures as demographic change is underway would be more beneficial than reactively addressing problems as they arise.

### **Cross-Sector Collaboration**

While it is essential for the education and housing communities to address their specific areas of need, cross-sector collaboration could also enhance these efforts. Federal or state policy that provides grant funding to incentivize cross-sector collaboration would be beneficial. With dedicated

funding to support their efforts, education and housing stakeholders could plan collaboratively to address demographic changes in communities and schools based on the local context and needs.

Building truly integrated and inclusive communities will likely require more than just housing and school investments. The social environments of newly gentrifying communities are often characterized by limited social interaction across races and class, and often with dynamics of cultural exclusion. For the communities to be truly integrated, intentional efforts to break through the challenging social barriers are critical, including developing more inclusive forms of political participation and welcoming public spaces for shared use (Chaskin & Joseph, 2015). In addition, new commercial businesses might consider how they could better serve the communities and steps they could take to appear welcoming and inclusive to a wide range of potential customers, minimizing cultural displacement. Long-standing community organizations are likely best equipped to help break down the social barriers that are common within demographically shifting neighborhoods. This can help ensure that all residents feel part of the community and can take full advantage of any emerging opportunities. This is not an easy policy or political task, but is essential.

## **Conclusion**

The latter half of the twentieth century saw American cities in a state of decline, depopulation, and racial and class segregation. Over the last two decades, however, many US cities have undergone a transformation. They have seen large declines in crime (in spite of recent upticks), become more diverse, and have experienced reinvestment while increasingly attracting middle- and upper-class residents. While these changes have been a boon to many US cities, the vast majority of urban schools remain racially and economically segregated. Despite the emergence of more diverse schools in some gentrifying communities, schools remain demographically imbalanced compared to their gentrifying neighborhoods. While some progress has been made, there is still a long way to go.

Under California state law, school boards have a constitutional duty to take appropriate measures to address segregation in public schools, regardless of whether it is due to de facto or de jure factors, as established in the *Crawford vs. Board of Education* case. As a result, the state government plays a critical role in monitoring and enforcing desegregation efforts throughout the state. In 2019, the California Department of Justice, Office of Attorney General issued the state's first desegregation order in over 50 years against the Sausalito Marin City School District. The order found that the district had violated both the equal protection clause of the U.S. Constitution and the equal protection guarantee of the California Constitution. Subsequently, the school district and the Attorney General's office reached an agreement that entailed prompt corrective action and a long-term desegregation strategy. This case highlights the ability and responsibility of the Attorney General, specifically through the Bureau of Children's Justice, to actively enforce school board obligations in promoting desegregation efforts.

Gentrification is a growing social and economic force in many cities, offering an opportunity to integrate what were once segregated neighborhoods and schools. While unchecked gentrification is unlikely to produce any lasting integration, we believe that with a range of policy levers and explicit diversity efforts, gentrification could lead to shared opportunities for all stakeholders.

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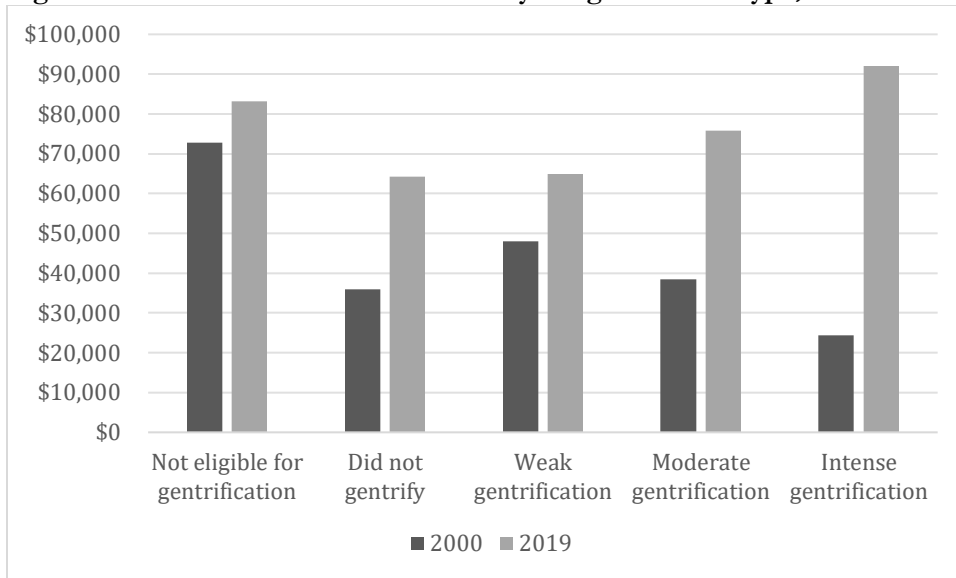
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## Appendix: Additional Figures and Tables

**Figure A-1. Median Household Income by Neighborhood Type, California**



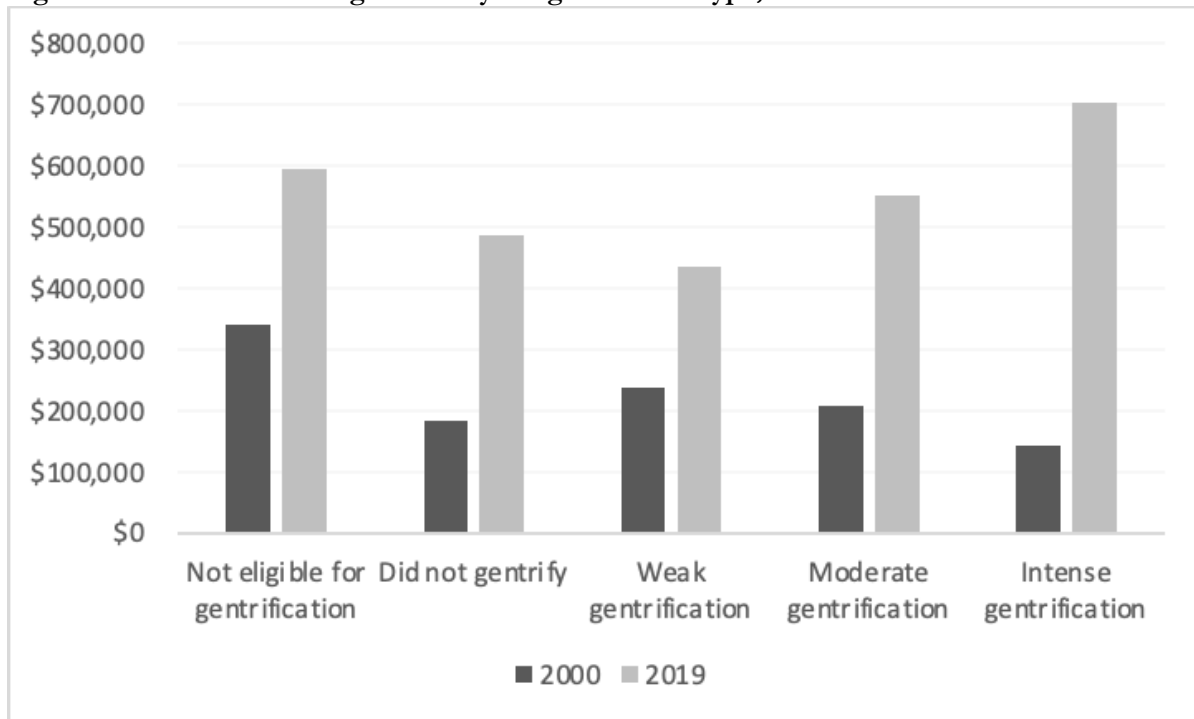
Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

**Table A-1. Elementary School Demographics, California**

<b>Gentrified</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>White</b>	32.5%	22.4%	-10.1%
<b>Black</b>	8.5%	5.7%	-2.9%
<b>Hispanic</b>	47.9%	54.4%	6.5%
<b>Asian</b>	10.4%	11.7%	1.3%
<b>FRL</b>	55.4%	60.4%	5.0%
<b>Did not Gentrify</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>White</b>	27.0%	18.4%	-8.5%
<b>Black</b>	9.4%	5.8%	-3.7%
<b>Hispanic</b>	53.8%	61.2%	7.3%
<b>Asian</b>	9.0%	9.4%	0.4%
<b>FRL</b>	61.5%	66.9%	5.5%

Note: Sample is restricted to neighborhoods classified as disinvested at baseline and *did not* gentrify (i.e., those neighborhoods that had, at baseline, median household incomes and shares of recently constructed housing that were below the 50th percentile of its respective city). Neighborhoods were classified as gentrified if they experienced during the observation period a percentage increase in college-educated residents that exceeded the growth of college-educated persons in the city overall, and an increase in real housing prices. Includes all schools within a .5-mile buffer.  
 Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-2. Median Housing Values by Neighborhood Type, California**



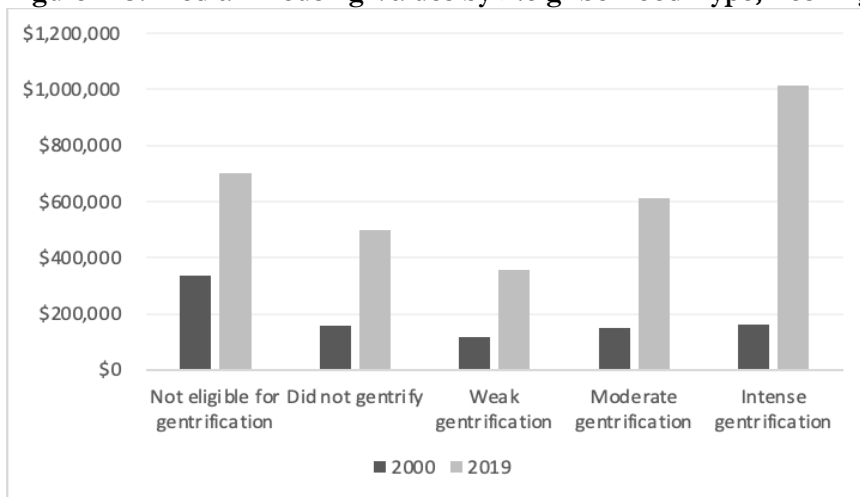
Source: Author’s calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

**Table A-2. Concentration Index by Neighborhood Type, California**

	Overall	Did not gentrify	Gentrification
<b>2000</b>	<b>N=5,619</b>	<b>n=2,617</b>	<b>n=2,756</b>
Majority Minority (50%–100% Black and Hispanic)	47.1%	57.6%	50.8%
Intensely Segregated (90%–100% Black and Hispanic)	13.4%	20.0%	14.0%
Hypersegregated (99%–100% Black and Hispanic)	1.8%	3.2%	3.0%
<b>2019</b>	<b>N=5,933</b>	<b>n=2,874</b>	<b>n=3,083</b>
Majority Minority (50%–100% Black and Hispanic)	59.3%	69.1%	60.4%
Intensely Segregated (90%–100% Black and Hispanic)	19.8%	28.8%	20.0%
Black and Hispanic Enrollment Greater than 99%	1.2%	2.1%	1.3%

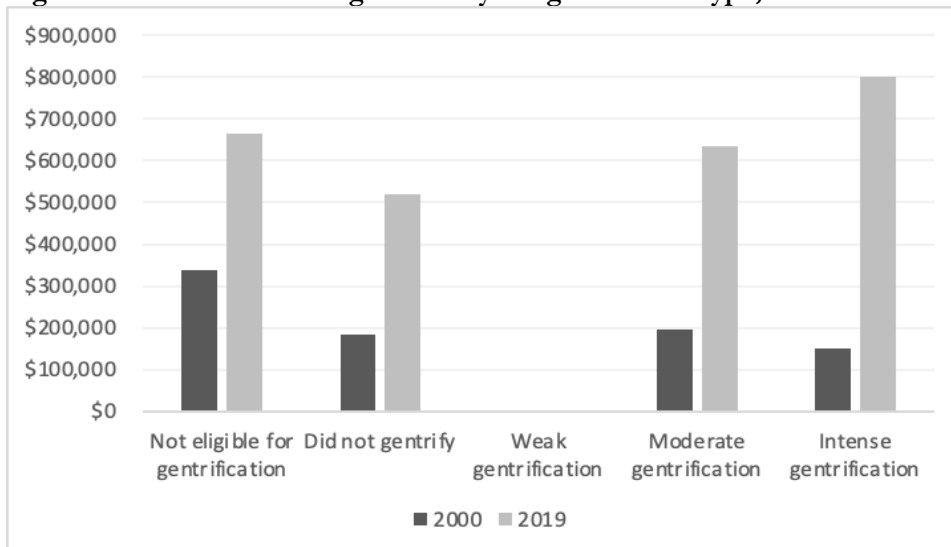
Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-3. Median Housing Values by Neighborhood Type, Los Angeles**



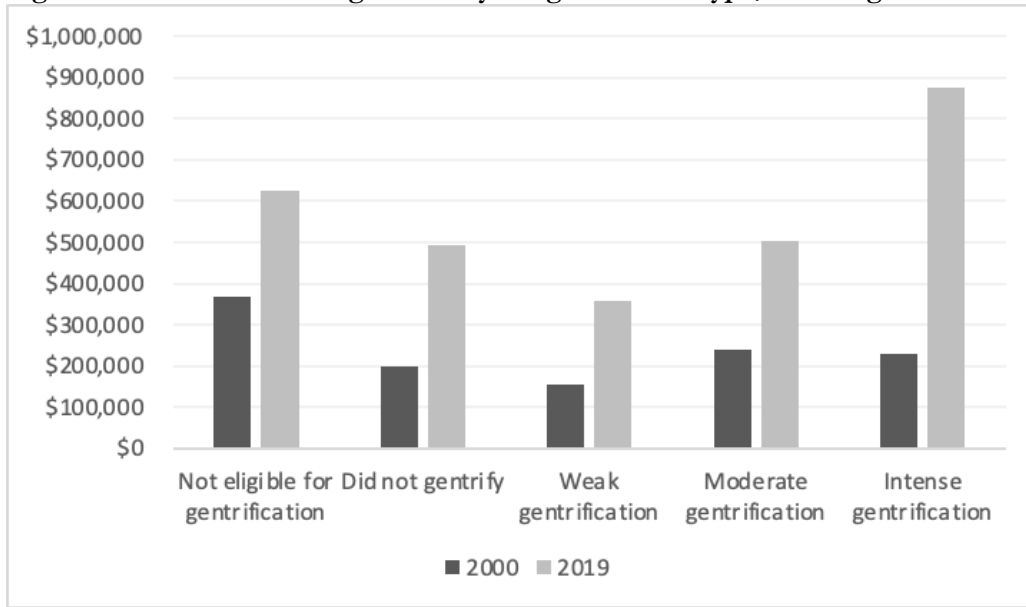
Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

**Figure A-4. Median Housing Values by Neighborhood Type, Oakland**



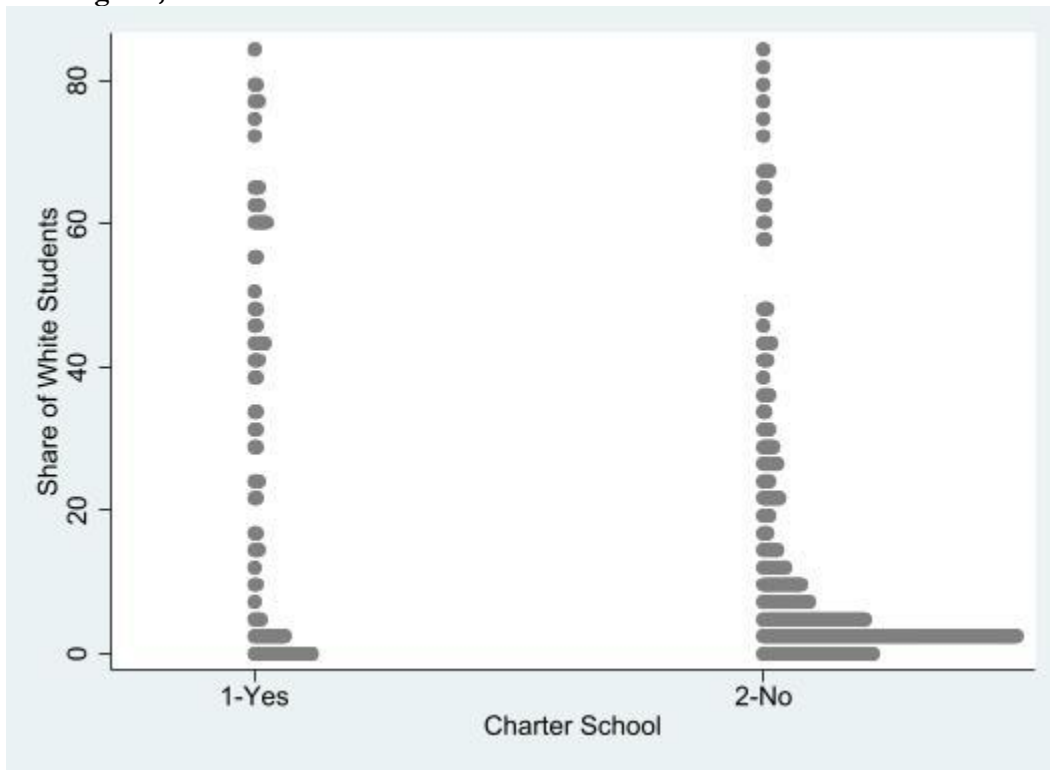
Source: Author's calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

**Figure A-5. Median Housing Values by Neighborhood Type, San Diego**



Source: Author’s calculations using 2000 decennial census and 2019 American Community Survey.

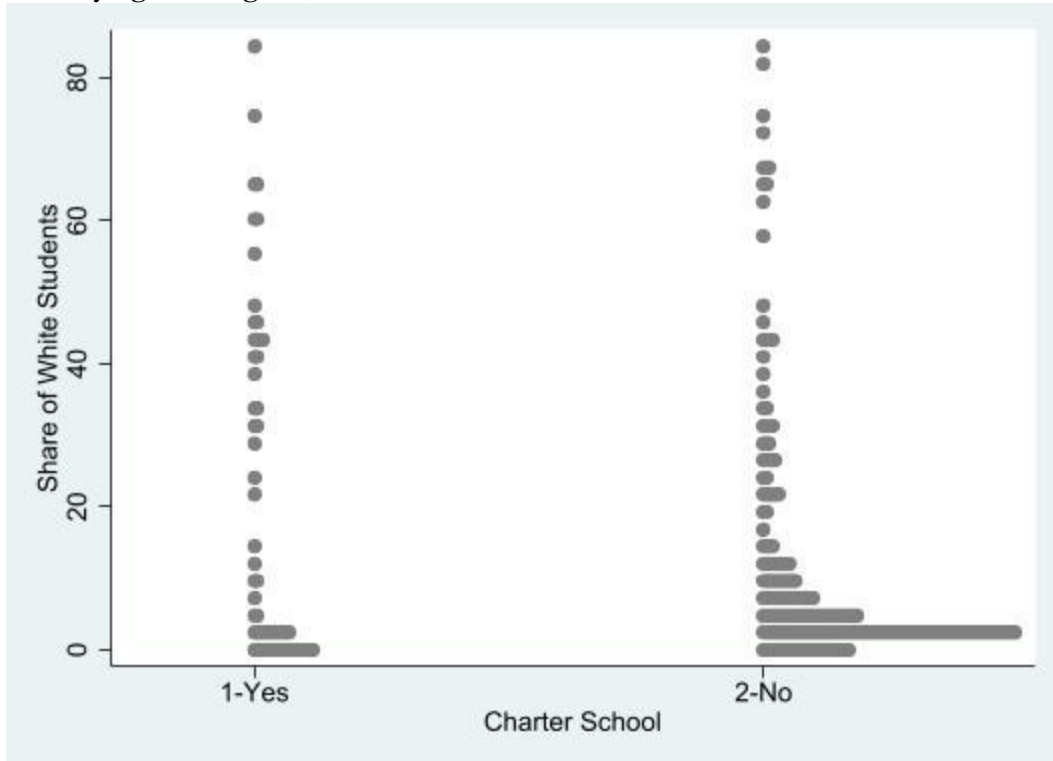
**Figure A-6. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in Los Angeles, 2019**



Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

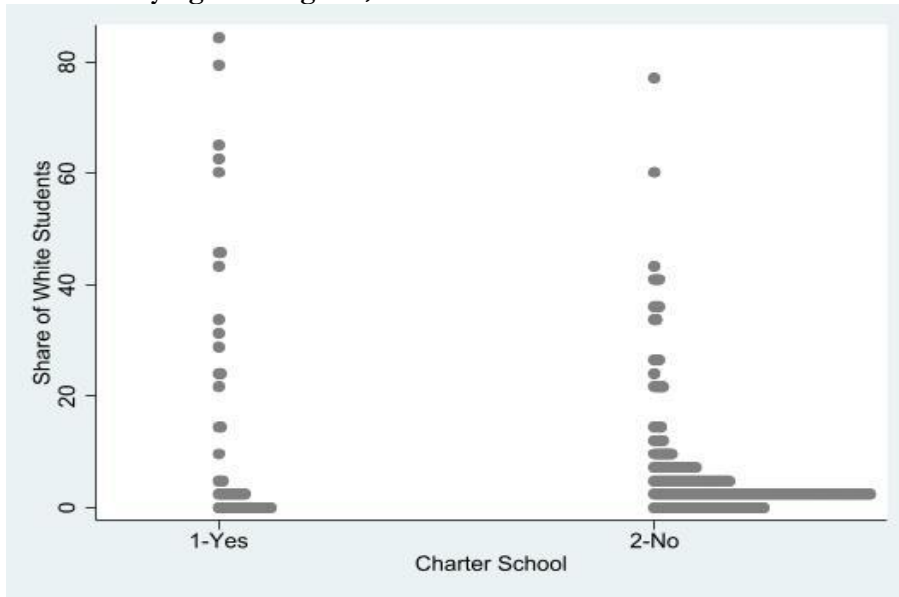


**Figure A-7. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in Gentrifying Los Angeles, 2019**



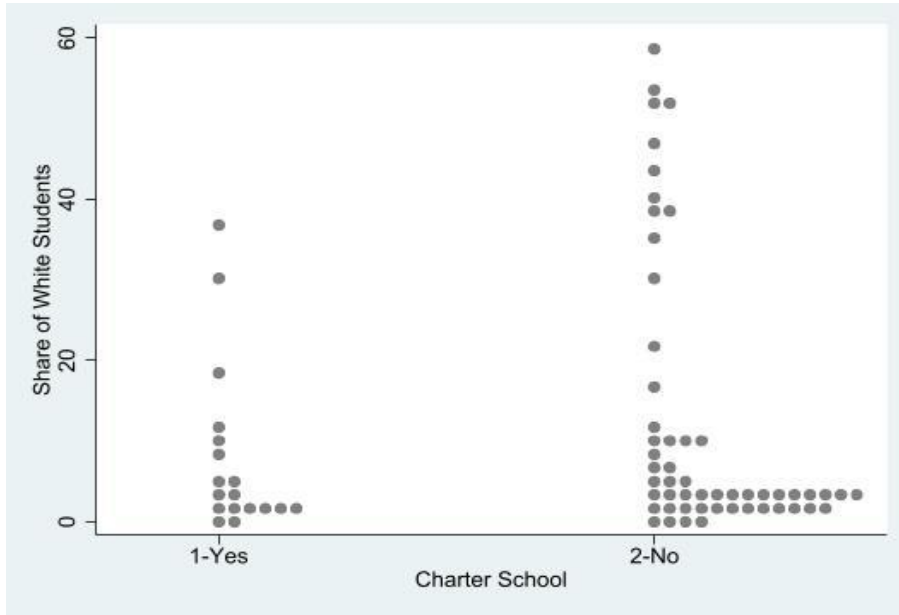
Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-8. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in non-Gentrifying Los Angeles, 2019**



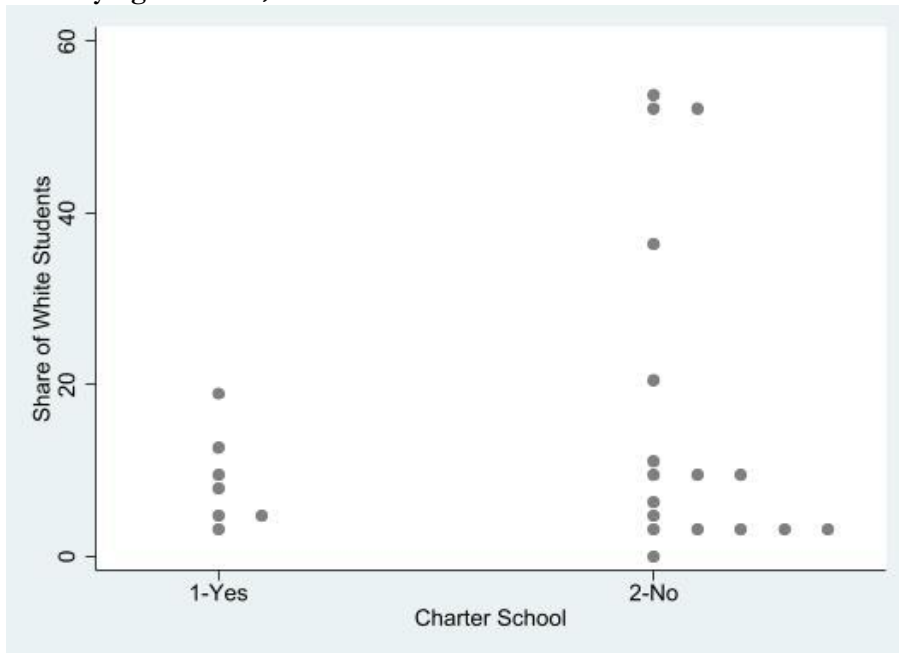
Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-9. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in Oakland, 2019**



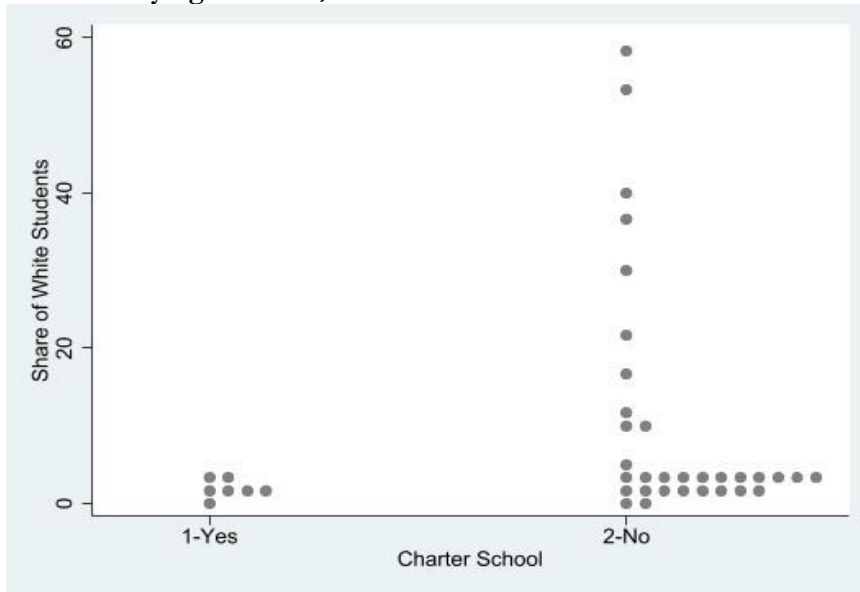
Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-10. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in Gentrifying Oakland, 2019**



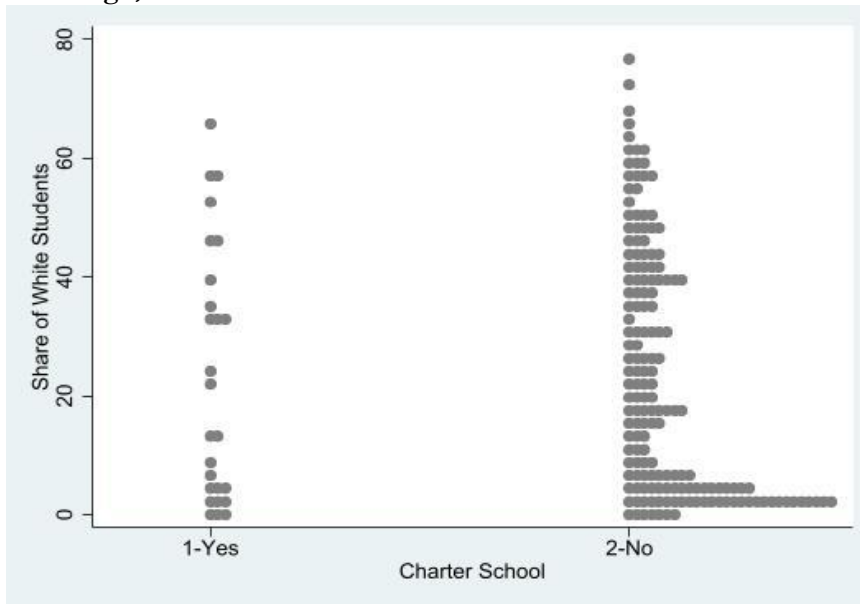
Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-11. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in non-Gentrifying Oakland, 2019**



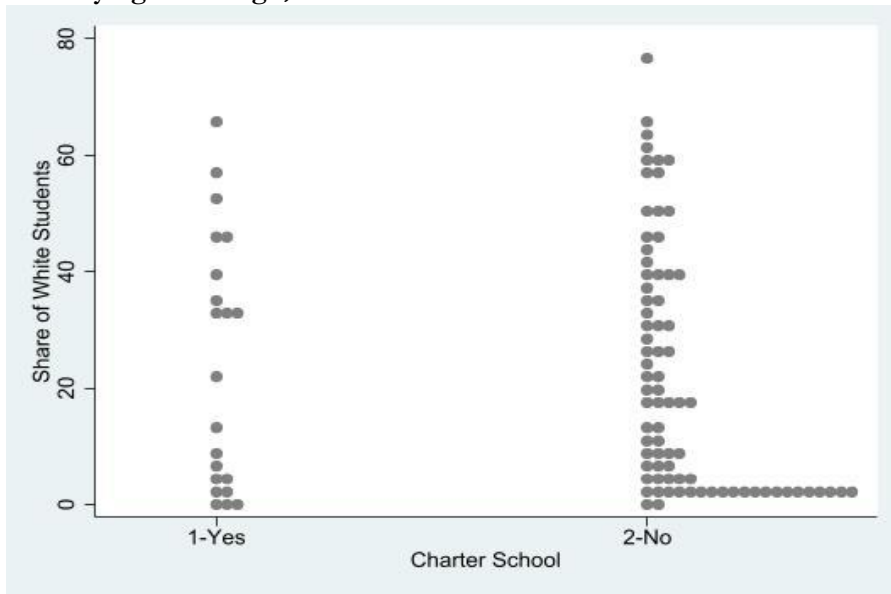
Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-12. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in San Diego, 2019**



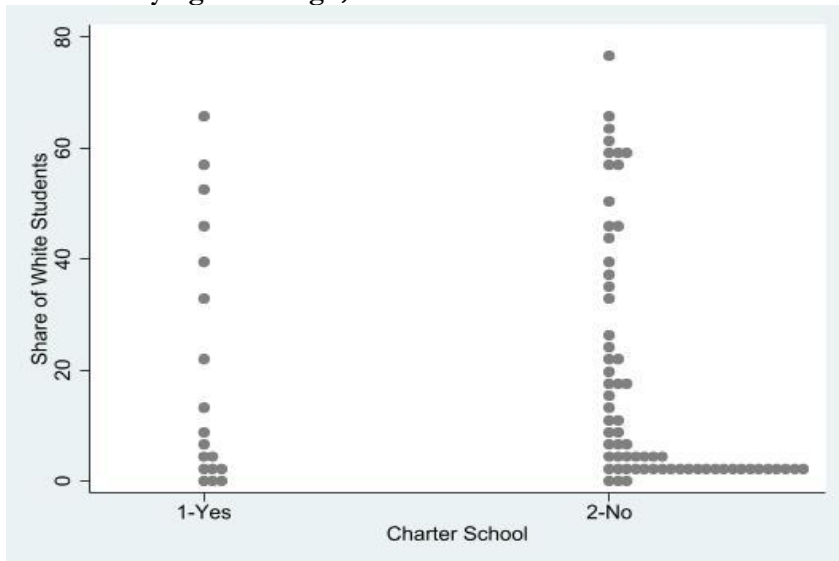
Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-13. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in Gentrifying San Diego, 2019**



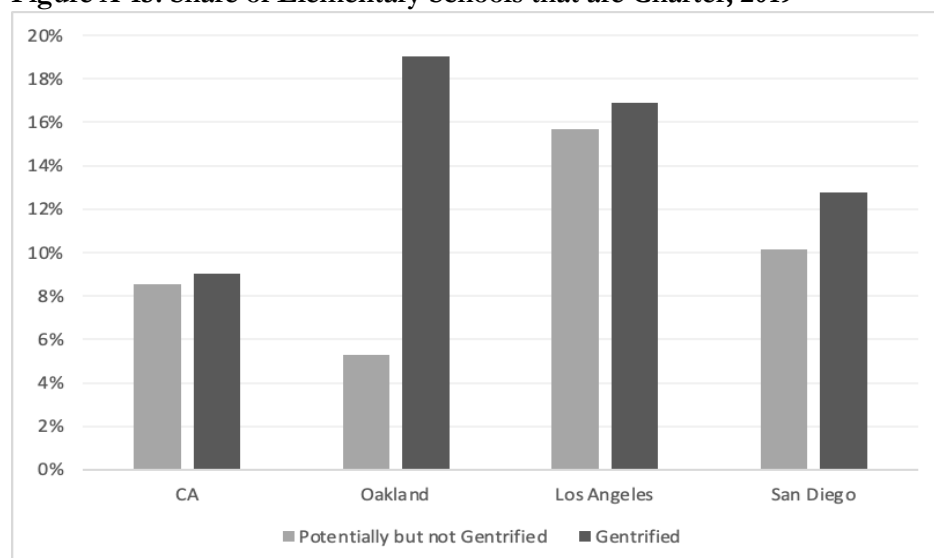
Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-14. Distributions of White Students by Charter school status in non-Gentrifying San Diego, 2019**



Source: Author’s calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Figure A-15. Share of Elementary Schools that are Charter, 2019**



Note: Includes all schools within a .5-mile buffer.

Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data

**Table A-3. Share of Elementary Schools that are Charter, 2019**

	California		Significant difference	Los Angeles		Significant difference	Oakland		Significant difference	San Diego		Significant difference
	2001	2019		2001	2019		2001	2019		2001	2019	
<b>White</b>	50%	39%	***	31%	29%	***	26%	31%	***	53%	44%	***
<b>Black</b>	6%	6%	***	11%	8%	***	35%	23%	***	7%	6%	**
<b>Hispanic</b>	31%	38%	***	47%	48%	**	20%	24%	***	25%	30%	***
<b>Asian</b>	10%	14%	***	10%	12%	***	16%	16%		12%	15%	***
<b>N=</b>	7,980			998			111			274		

Note: The units of analysis in this study are Census tracts. The values in the table above represent the means of the percentage of each racial group across census tracts for that geographic boundary. \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$

Source: Author's calculations based on National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data