



RESEARCH REPORT

# Integrating Housing and Education Solutions to Reduce Segregation and Drive School Equity

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# Integrating Housing and Education Solutions

Racist housing policies and practices have systematically limited access to housing and educational opportunity for generations of people of color and profoundly affected their wealth. Low wealth, in turn, limits access to mortgages with low interest rates and down payments and leaves households with fewer resources to pay rent. As a result, students in families with low incomes and students of color are more likely to suffer from adverse housing outcomes such as low housing quality, instability, and unaffordability (Gallagher et al. 2020). Low wealth also limits families of color from accessing neighborhoods with schools and other amenities that have benefited from more public and private investment.<sup>1</sup> This inequitable access to high-quality housing and education perpetuates racial disparities in opportunity, health, and well-being for children.

Civil rights policies in the 1960s ended state-sanctioned, or *de jure*, school segregation, but racial segregation in schools and neighborhoods has been maintained by exclusionary but legal practices in housing and education that make it difficult or impossible for Black families to send their children to integrated schools. Today, many people interpret contemporary school enrollment patterns of students of different races as a reflection of personal preference or chance (i.e., *de facto* segregation), when in fact they reflect the legacy of state-sanctioned segregation and decades of exclusionary practices that followed. Enrollment patterns also reflect white families' choices, which often involve living in predominantly white neighborhoods and sending their children to predominantly white schools. School desegregation is one pathway for improving the educational prospects of children of color because it drives resources into schools that serve children of color, but it is not necessary for equitable resource allocation. Other ways to achieve equity involve more resources for schools and neighborhoods that serve students of color.

This report lays out a through-line between housing policies and practices, inequitable school resources, and inequitable educational outcomes. It first discusses policies and practices at multiple levels that have limited residential opportunities for people of color, particularly Black people, and how those limitations manifest for students through school segregation and education inequity. Next, it discusses education policies used to address school segregation but argues that education policies alone are insufficient to tackle segregation and offers alternative strategies for municipalities and school districts to pursue together. For practitioners interested in addressing segregation locally, the report also recommends several steps to initiate the process.

# Racist Policies and Practices Drive Residential Racial Segregation

Several policies and practices have promoted residential segregation. Federal policies limited and continue to limit housing opportunities and wealth accumulation for people of color, resulting in the disparate outcomes we see today between white students and students of color. Starting in the 1930s, financial institutions, including the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), limited home loans in Black communities, classifying these communities as high risk for mortgage lending, limiting the ability of people of color to obtain mortgages, buy homes, and accumulate wealth (Aaronson, Hartley, and Mazumder 2020; Shapiro, Meschede, and Osoro 2013; Sood, Speagle, Ehrman-Solberg 2019).<sup>2</sup> This practice, known as “redlining,” reduced homeownership rates and home values while increasing racial segregation and starving Black communities of investment.<sup>3</sup>

Developers and real estate agents established racial covenants that prevented white homeowners from selling or renting their properties to people of color, limiting their ability to build wealth in the early 1900s to the 1940s (Gordon 2021).<sup>4</sup> The practice of preventing homebuyers from purchasing property based on race was blocked in the 1917 *Buchanan v. Warley* property rights case (Ely 1998), but municipalities continued implementing discriminatory zoning policies (Rothstein 2017), and it was another 50 years before the law guaranteed equal protections for people of different races.<sup>5</sup> As suburban communities were established in the 1950s and 1960s, prospective homebuyers of color were prevented from purchasing homes in new, predominantly white communities. As white families fled city centers, mercenary individuals bought their homes below value and sold them to Black families at higher prices. Many of these deals were considered contract home purchases, where a single missed payment could result in losing the home.<sup>6</sup> Further, federal transportation infrastructure designed to facilitate travel to and from white suburbs destroyed or bisected Black communities, separating them geographically from each other and from economic centers (Archer 2020). These policies and practices resulted in neighborhood disinvestment and concentrated poverty in inner cities that affected multiple generations of Black families (Massey 1990; Sharkey 2013; Wilson 2012).

Violence was used to enforce residential segregation. Black families crossing racial lines often experienced violence or threats of violence by white people. Black workers arriving in industrial northern cities during the Great Migration experienced violence when they lived outside of Black neighborhoods, and the violence continued for the next 60 years (Massey 2008). For example, community members of the all-white Chicago suburb of Cicero incited a riot in 1951 when a Black

family moved into an apartment in the community. The 4,000-member mob set fire to the family's apartment, and the National Guard was called in to end the violence.<sup>7</sup>

Public and assisted housing development programs also limited opportunity for residents, particularly for residents of color. In some cases, municipalities demolished naturally occurring affordable housing to build segregated developments (Rothstein 2017). Public support and siting for public and assisted housing development was often limited to segregated,<sup>8</sup> disaster-prone, environmentally hazardous, or less attractive, healthy, or accessible places (Shertzer, Twinam, and Walsh 2016).<sup>9</sup> From the 1940s through the 1960s, the federal government built public housing that was segregated by race. Furthermore, developments for white residents offered better amenities. The federal government also used a “neighborhood composition” rule that offered leases for federal housing units in white neighborhoods to white tenants and for units in Black neighborhoods to Black tenants (Rothstein 2017). Similarly, private developers using federal tax credits to build affordable housing have continued to perpetuate residential segregation by building affordable housing in high-poverty, disinvested, primarily Black communities (Freeman 2004).

In the mid-2000s, predatory lending practices disproportionately affected homebuyers of color, entrapping them in mortgages with unfair terms or fees and undercutting the wealth-building benefits of owning a home. These practices also resulted in disproportionate foreclosure rates for homeowners of color. Inequitable lending practices still exist today. A 2018 study showed that banks rejected Black loan applicants at higher rates than white applicants, even among applicants with the same income, loan amount, type of lender, and neighborhood characteristics.<sup>10</sup> In 2021, research released by Freddie Mac revealed that properties owned by Black homeowners and properties in majority-Black and majority-Latino communities are systematically undervalued by property value assessors, compared with properties in predominantly white neighborhoods (Narragon et al. 2021). Lower assessments mean lower asking prices and lower home equity for Black homeowners and other homeowners of color. Black and Hispanic homeowners face higher property tax burdens than white homeowners because tax assessors are less likely to factor in neighborhood market conditions that diminish Black homeowners' sale prices (Avenancio-León and Howard 2022).

Evidence from national housing discrimination studies shows that most discriminatory practices against homebuyers and renters have declined over the past 40 years (Turner et al. 2013, exhibit V-3). But real estate agents can limit the properties that homebuyers of color see by showing white families properties in white communities and Black families properties in Black communities. The 2012 national housing discrimination study revealed that real estate agents were more likely to recommend and show white homebuyers properties in slightly whiter (by 2 percentage points) neighborhoods and to convey

more positive things about white neighborhoods and more negative things about mixed-race neighborhoods. Another investigation conducted in Long Island, New York, revealed in 2019 that real estate agents and brokers steered Asian, Latino, and Black homebuyers toward neighborhoods with high proportions of people of color and steered white homebuyers toward white neighborhoods.<sup>11</sup> In the rental market, landlords also discriminate against potential renters of color by showing them fewer units or more units with problems (Turner et al. 2013).

Outcomes from these policies and practices have been sustained and amplified by white households who have hoarded wealth and opportunity in white communities (Reeves 2017). Homeowners wield power over local land-use decisions and sometimes limit the opportunities for newcomers to obtain affordable housing or build wealth. In the 1980s, the term “not in my back yard,” or NIMBY, was coined to reflect exclusionary attitudes and behaviors.<sup>12</sup> Having influenced local policy to increase the value of their homes, homeowners extract value from their homes to buy larger or second homes, education, and other investments, amplifying their wealth.

## Residential Racial Segregation Drives School Segregation and Education Inequity

School boundaries and geographic school assignment often map residential segregation onto schools (Monarrez and Chien 2021). Current school boundaries in many cities reflect the discriminatory lending practices that deepened segregation in the 20th century. Maps from the 1930s that show white communities with lower lending risk next to Black communities with higher lending risk line up with today’s most divisive school boundaries, illustrating the enduring legacy of residential segregation in schools. These practices have played a role in creating neighboring public schools that are racially unequal. As of 2021, more than one-third of students attended schools where more than 75 percent of students were of a single race and ethnicity (GAO 2022).

Communities with limited tax bases attributable to historical (and continuing) lack of investment or the undervaluing of property have fewer local resources for schools (Weathers and Sosina 2022). State and federal school finance formulas for progressive funding patterns do not usually compensate for the needs of low-income communities or discrepancies at the local level. Because Black and Hispanic children are overrepresented in lower-resourced communities, this funding structure has led to different levels of funding for public schools serving children of color and public schools serving white children (Acevedo-Garcia, Noelke, and McArdle 2020).

The most prominent differences are observed across school districts, but differences can also be observed within school districts, especially when more affluent schools garner additional funding from parents to supplement public funding (Brown, Sargrad, and Benner 2017). In areas with divisive boundaries, schools with more Black or Hispanic students have more inexperienced (first- or second-year) teachers, higher rates of chronic teacher absenteeism, and fewer advanced classes and are less likely to have staff members dedicated to student services, such as counselors and health workers (Monarrez and Chien 2020).

## School Segregation and Education Inequity Harm Students

Research links neighborhood racial segregation directly to inequitable educational outcomes for Black children (Card and Rothstein 2007), but the relationship between residential segregation and inequitable outcomes is more commonly driven by school segregation because residential segregation has concentrated children of color in high-poverty schools (Johnson 2019; reardon et al. 2019). Research shows that national desegregation efforts that began in the 1960s and continued through the 1980s increased educational attainment and future earnings, reduced probability of incarceration, and improved health outcomes for children of color (Johnson 2011, 2019). These improvements are attributed to increased funding for smaller class sizes, higher adult-to-student ratios in schools, more instructional time for students, and better teacher compensation, resulting in improvements in student outcomes (Johnson 2019). Specifically, “for low-income children, a 10 percent increase in per-pupil spending each year for all 12 years of public schooling was associated with 0.46 additional years of completed education, 9.6 percent higher earnings, and a reduction of 6.1 percentage points in the annual incidence of adult poverty” (Jackson, Johnson, and Persico 2015, 3). Desegregation does not harm white children academically or economically (Johnson 2019), and it can improve white students’ ability to work, empathize, and live with people of color (Chin 2022; Turner, Chingos, and Spievack 2021). Despite the evidence, desegregation efforts have stalled since the 1980s, and numerous court-ordered desegregation plans have ended, resulting in significant racial and economic resegregation (Frankenberg et al. 2019; reardon and Owens 2014).

Additional evidence for the benefits of economic desegregation comes from a study of low-income students in Montgomery County, Maryland, whose families were randomly assigned to housing units throughout the county (Schwartz 2010). The housing units were zoned to local neighborhood schools categorized as low poverty or higher poverty. The county gave higher-poverty schools extra resources

for full-day kindergarten, smaller class sizes, teachers' professional development, and special instruction for students with special needs. Still, students randomly assigned to housing units zoned to low-poverty schools scored higher on math and reading exams than those assigned to higher-poverty schools, even though the higher-poverty schools received extra resources.

## Investments in Segregated Schools

This report focuses on desegregation, but desegregation is not the only method to get equitable resources to segregated schools. Directing investments into schools serving predominantly students of color is also important, particularly when funding is used for functions that improve outcomes for students of color. For example, segregated schools can be funded so that students have access to state-of-the-art facilities, rigorous classes, well-compensated teachers, and student services to address academic needs. Segregated school districts can allocate funding to Black students by increasing funding for schools that serve more Black students (Blagg et al. 2022). Indeed, analysis of school-level spending data finds that in most states, on average, Black students receive higher school-level spending than white students.

State and local funding make up about 90 percent of K–12 funding per student, with about half of funding coming from each source (Chingos and Blagg 2017). Thirty-five states have funding formulas that distribute funding from wealthy districts to less-wealthy districts, but local governments often raise additional funding to support their schools. These local efforts perpetuate an uneven playing field for students in low-income communities. Federal funding, which makes up about 10 percent of K–12 funding per student, is used to enhance state and local funding for schools serving students from low-income communities but does not eliminate funding disparities. School finance reform is an opportunity to increase funding for students in schools with high poverty rates, and efforts are being undertaken by school funding advocates, equity organizations such as the NAACP, and state and local policies designed to equitably distribute funding.

The 1981 *Abbot v. Burke* legal cases in New Jersey, for example, required the state legislature to fund urban districts at a level that is adequate so that children meet academic standards and to support early education, supplemental programs, and capital investments for school facility improvements. This was the first time a state was required to ensure equal funding for children in high- and low-wealth communities.<sup>13</sup> Although these efforts have faced challenges, they continue to make New Jersey a state with one of the most progressive school funding regimes. According to a 2017 Urban Institute

analysis, poor students in New Jersey receive \$1,914 more than nonpoor students in New Jersey (Chingos and Blagg 2017).

Other policies and programs ensure that schools have services and supports to address nonacademic needs, such as those available through the community schools model. The federal government has recently expanded the Full-Service Community Schools Program, and philanthropic investors are supporting the field to codify and expand the community school model of wraparound supports for students.

## Education Policies That Address School Segregation

State, district, and school-level administrators have tools to address segregation and its resulting inequities. Ayscue and Frankenberg (2023) describe policies that state education agencies and districts can pursue to increase integration. These policies include the following:

### School Zoning

Within districts, school attendance boundaries play a large role in dictating where children attend school and with whom. School boundaries align with historic efforts to undermine integration and translate into differences in real estate values and school resources across school boundaries (Bayer, Ferreira, and McMillan 2007; Black 1999). School boundary adjustments can reduce school segregation or hold levels steady (Carlson et al. 2019). Adjustments can introduce the need for transportation for students attending schools farther from home, but they do not have to increase students' commutes to reduce segregation (Monarrez et al. 2021). It can also be difficult to gain local support for boundary changes, given the influence privileged families in opposition have on elected officials. Some jurisdictions have established school boundary review processes that take effect on a regular basis and set into motion school boundary adjustments. Community members who choose to live in that community are subject to school reassignment as part of this process. School openings and closings also create opportunities to draw new boundaries and assemble school communities with lower levels of segregation, depending on where the new school facilities are located and whether the district is committed to reducing segregation. Finally, open enrollment, which was established in the 2010s, allows families to choose public schools outside their geographically assigned school (Mikulecky 2013). These policies disrupt the link between neighborhood of residence and school assignment that can

perpetuate segregation and unequal opportunity, but they do not increase integration without offering transportation and enrollment preference to students of color (Koedel et al. 2009).

Washington, DC, for example, has open enrollment and neighborhood preference. Over the past couple of decades, DC Public Schools and the public charter school sector have established a wide array of school options, offering traditional schools as well as Montessori, bilingual, technical, and arts schools. In theory, open enrollment allows students to attend any neighborhood school or charter school, regardless of how far away it is from their home. Students who would like to attend a school other than their assigned neighborhood school communicate their preferences through an online system annually. In practice, because neighborhood schools in predominantly white communities are popular choices, there are typically no seats available for students from outside the neighborhood. Students of color and white students living outside predominantly white neighborhoods attend their own neighborhood schools, magnet programs, or charter schools.

## School Choice

Some school choice strategies were designed to achieve racial integration. Magnet schools were established in the 1970s to integrate Black and white students by attracting white or affluent students to attend school in Black or poor neighborhoods (Smrekar and Goldring 2009). Magnet schools are public schools that typically offer a special focus (e.g., STEM, language immersion, performing arts) or a special instructional approach (e.g., Montessori or International Baccalaureate). Admission is usually determined through an application and lottery process, which can be used to preference neighborhood residents or students from specific demographic groups. In the mid-2000s, a legal ruling substantially limited the ability of magnet schools to assign students based on race, resulting in reduced levels of integration (Straubhaar, Wang, and Sylvester 2021). Ayscue and Frankenberg (2023) discuss the potential for interdistrict choice programs, in particular, to offer students of color and low-income students the opportunity to attend predominantly white suburban schools that may be located in different districts. Intradistrict choice, on the other hand, is designed to promote choice within districts.

Charter schools were established in the 1990s. Like magnet schools, charter schools are supported with public funds. Unlike magnet schools, charter schools are independently governed and seek to improve academic results through innovation and flexibility (Murphy and Shiffman 2002). In exchange for more freedom to innovate, charter school leaders are held accountable for student performance. Research finds that charter schools can increase high school graduation and college attendance (Bodilly 2009), but their growth has also led to slightly higher levels of racial segregation (Monarrez, Kisida, and

Chingos 2019) and socioeconomic segregation (Marcotte and Dalane 2019). States can establish charter school policies that influence how segregated they are, such as use of selective admissions or provision of transportation, or that influence the diversity of noncharter schools in the same district, such as requiring recruitment strategies and diversity analyses in charter school applications (Potter and Nunberg 2019).

One example is New Haven, Connecticut's interdistrict choice program, which was designed to attract white suburban students to attend schools in the city. It is modeled after the Sheff schools in Hartford.<sup>14</sup> The program offers grants for districts receiving nonresident students, as well as opportunities for capital improvements. Since the program was established in the mid-1990s, New Haven Public Schools has established 15 interdistrict magnet programs and built around 20 new schools. In the 2022–23 school year, 7,600 students enrolled in the interdistrict magnets, 2,600 of which are students who are not residents of New Haven. Although the program is designed to increase racial integration, many of the nonresident students are students of color from the close-in suburbs around New Haven. Only 2 of the 15 schools have managed to achieve the goal of enrolling 25 percent of students from racially isolated groups. In New Haven's schools, this would include students who are not Black or Hispanic of any race.

## **District Consolidation**

The 1974 *Milliken v. Bradley* case established that neighboring school districts are not responsible for addressing segregation (Green and Gooden 2016). Since then, school districts have become increasingly fragmented as a way to protect their autonomy and exclude students they do not want to serve. Also known as district secession, this fragmentation is a process of creating a new district from part of an existing district, resulting in increased school and residential segregation (Taylor, Frankenberg, and Siegel-Hawley 2019). Ayscue and Frankenberg (2023) discuss regional policies for school district consolidation as a strategy for improving racial integration. District consolidation can also streamline overhead costs and allow districts to more efficiently allocate academic resources for schools. For example, predominantly white suburban districts can combine with districts that predominantly serve students of color to create new, consolidated districts with more opportunity for integration. State policies can play an important role in forcing or providing incentives for district consolidations, by offering financial support during the consolidation process.

One case of district consolidation and suburban secession comes from Tennessee in 2013, where the urban and predominantly Black Memphis City Schools (MCS) merged with the predominantly white

and more affluent suburban Shelby County Schools (SCS). At that time, 35 percent of SCS students and 83 percent of MCS students were labeled economically disadvantaged, and MCS was facing financial vulnerabilities along with a decreasing tax base. The two districts consolidated for one year until the Tennessee Senate passed legislation allowing new municipal districts, at which time the six incorporated municipalities broke away from the majority-Black city district and formed six predominantly white districts (Ayscue and Frankenberg 2023, 138). The suburban districts cited school quality concerns and demonstrated a hostility toward sharing resources with Memphis students (Kiel 2020).

## **Federated Regionalism**

Federated regionalism establishes regional education areas that govern multiple districts together to support desegregation and to reduce the opportunity for highly resourced communities to hoard resources (Ayscue and Frankenberg 2023). Like district consolidation, this approach can also improve efficient resource allocation. Besides the example below, there are not a lot of examples of federated regionalism. But metropolitan areas such as Minneapolis and Boston have interdistrict choice programs with governing bodies and similar but more limited scopes and less capacity to address funding inequity across districts (Wilson 2014).

Jennifer Jellison Holme and Sarah Diem (2015) highlight the case of Omaha, Nebraska, which established the first regional governing body responsible for overseeing interdistrict education functions, including a levy for tax revenue sharing, interdistrict student transfers, and programmatic enhancements to historically disinvested elementary schools. The governing entity, the Learning Community Coordinating Council, was established in 2009. Membership is determined through public elections. Although the group has not achieved all its equity goals, it has established a model for interdistrict governance that other communities can learn from.

## **Housing Policies Should Support School Integration Efforts**

School policies cannot always disassemble the systems of segregation that decades of housing, education, and transportation policies have created. In fact, housing conditions and policies make it difficult to address school segregation through school policy alone. Levels of residential and school segregation are high, and some measures suggest they are increasing (reardon and Owens 2014). The

housing sector needs to address residential segregation to create more equitable neighborhoods and schools.

## **Support Housing Mobility for Students in Segregated Communities and Schools**

Housing mobility programs can make living in less segregated neighborhoods possible. Children who move to neighborhoods with lower levels of poverty, crime, and environmental hazards benefit in terms of health, well-being, and academic performance (Browning et al. 2008; Chetty and Hendren 2018; Harding 2003). In fact, children who moved to these neighborhoods earlier in their lives experienced the greatest benefits. Housing mobility programs do not always result in school improvements, but programs in Baltimore and Dallas offer expanded options for participants to select housing that is served by high-performing schools, even if it is outside the municipality the housing authority serves (Tegeler and Herskind 2018). This approach prioritizes opportunities for families to move to communities where their children can attend high-performing, integrated schools if that is their preference. But there can be barriers to families interested in this option, including resource and information constraints, preferences and lived experiences, and structural challenges to housing mobility programs (Gallagher, Zhang, and Comey 2013). In addition, discrimination against voucher holders by landlords who refuse to accept vouchers is more prevalent in areas with lower-poverty and higher-performing schools.<sup>15</sup> Education and social service providers, community-based organizations, and housing providers can help students and their families explore school options in more integrated communities and ensure that receiving schools welcome and support students of color and students from low-income households.

In the mid-1990s, for example, the Baltimore Housing Authority and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development were found guilty in the *Thompson et al. v. HUD* case of segregating Black public housing residents in poor and racially segregated communities. The Baltimore Housing Mobility Program was formed in 2003 to provide a remedy. The program offered mobility counseling and a housing subsidy that was designed to help them move to lower-poverty and more racially integrated communities in the Baltimore metropolitan area. Families in the program lived in more integrated neighborhoods and attended more integrated schools. In the first phase of the program, the average neighborhood poverty rate declined from 32 percent to 8 percent, and the proportion of Black residents declined from 78 percent to 22 percent. The proportion of Black students in their original schools was 89 percent, compared with 51 percent in the new schools (DeLuca, Rhodes, and Garboden 2016).

## Help School Districts Plan for Population Change

Housing agencies and planning officials can help school districts understand and plan for changes in the student population that result from housing changes—whether the community is demolishing old developments or building new ones. Sometimes, this involves improving the tools for tracking housing permits or partnering with the school district to improve estimates of student yield from new and existing housing. It can also include better tools for tracking demolition and redevelopment efforts that can increase residential and school mobility.

One example is HUD's Choice Neighborhoods program, which is designed to demolish and rebuild, or renovate, public and assisted housing, can motivate a collaboration between housing and education partners because of the impacts it will have on local schools (Galvez, Gallagher, and Brennan 2017). In fact, the US Department of Education has identified public housing redevelopment as a priority for Magnet Schools Assistance Program applications, encouraging applications that demonstrate coordination between the housing agency and the school district (Mumphery and Tegeler 2023). Examples from San Francisco, California, and Tampa, Florida, show the potential for magnet schools to attract a diverse student body to a segregated neighborhood (Tegeler and Gevarter 2021). State and local redevelopment and revitalization projects present opportunities for the same kind of coordination and communication across agencies.

## Foster Integrated Schools through Integrated Housing Plans

Urban planners, developers, municipal leaders, and others should work together to identify, prioritize, and provide incentives for where to build, renovate, and subsidize housing so that students of color can benefit from well-resourced, integrated schools. This means examining the housing stock in the community and identifying ways to offer more affordable options where they have not previously existed. Mixed-income developments and communities offer housing for people with different levels of income and wealth, but they have to be fostered and protected. Alternatively, when neighborhoods are revitalizing and higher-income residents move in, it is important to employ housing strategies such as rent control and eviction prevention that preserve affordable housing so that low-income families are not displaced.<sup>16</sup> When mixed-income communities are not preserved and protected, mixed-income schools can be unsustainable.

Municipalities across the country regulate the types of housing units that can be built in their jurisdictions. Some of the regulations are exclusionary, meaning they limit affordable housing development.<sup>17</sup> Some of the most exclusionary residential zoning rules prevent developers from

developing multifamily developments or developments that are subsidized by the government so that they can be rented at an affordable price. Recent research shows how exclusionary zoning was more common in communities with school desegregation policies and may have been used to undermine access to integrated schools by limiting access to housing (Cui 2023). Matthew Desmond (2023) recently identified exclusionary residential zoning as one of the top three factors contributing to poverty. Eliminating exclusionary zoning helps increase access to opportunity, but establishing inclusionary zoning helps even more. Inclusionary zoning includes incentives for developers such as affordable housing units in their developments, increasing choices for families with lower incomes to live in less segregated, lower-poverty neighborhoods with higher-performing schools (Ramakrishnan, Treskon, and Greene 2019).

HUD's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing ruling, which has not been adopted as of this writing, offers a process, as a condition for receiving federal funding, for assessing and addressing the barriers that exclude and isolate people of color (and other protected groups, such as families with children and people with disabilities) and undermine the well-being of the neighborhoods in which they live, and creates plans to overcome these barriers.<sup>18</sup> The rule also requires that local governments engage community members through robust public participation and provides guidance on how to ground plans in their perspectives and priorities. HUD provides data, resources, and questions that states and localities use to identify the primary factors undermining fair housing outcomes in their communities and to set goals for addressing those factors, to produce an equity plan for the community.

Washington, DC's Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing equity plan analyzes education and community data to identify factors that drive segregation and unequal educational opportunity. Factors the analysis identified include the location of public and assisted housing (near lower-performing schools), gentrification, school assignment policies, transportation, and school ratings. The equity plan includes strategies that the housing sector can take to address some of these issues (PRRAC 2018).

## **Support Students Living in Unstable or Gentrifying Neighborhoods**

Families living in gentrifying communities with increasingly integrated schools might be forced to spend more on rent, experience discrimination from landlords, or experience changes in property management that result in housing instability. Homeowners, too, can experience instability, especially when property taxes, insurance, or utilities increase, leaving them vulnerable to displacement. In some cases, housing instability can lead to involuntary mobility or homelessness and affect neighborhood and school composition. Schools and their partners should ensure that students and their families are aware

of resources available to support housing stability and prevent homelessness among renters, including the following:

- **Tenant protections** are rules or regulations at the municipal or building level that support renters' rights, including limits on rent increases.
- **Eviction prevention** is support for renters who are threatened with eviction, such as legal advice or legal representation.
- **Emergency grants.** Some communities offer financial support for renters who may be forced to leave their home because of a lack of financial resources. The funding can support one or more months of rent to support a household and prevent eviction.
- **McKinney-Vento support.** Schools are obligated by federal law to support students experiencing homelessness to reduce barriers to school attendance through McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance, including transportation from a shelter to a school, or reduced proof of residency for homeless students registering for school in a new community.

Schools and their partners can also support instability among homeowners by accessing the following resources:

- state programs that provide financing for rehabilitation of properties owned by low-income individuals
- federal loans and grant programs for homeowners
- emergency grants, similar to emergency grants for renters, that can support homeowners who face unexpected expenses
- foreclosure prevention services to support homeowners who have difficulty paying their mortgage

Starting in 2019, the Seattle Office of Housing instituted community preference guidelines to address displacement and advance racial equity.<sup>19</sup> Developers can use the guidelines to prioritize the neighborhood's current or former residents when they develop affordable housing. Residents who can show they have some tie to the community can get priority for securing housing there. School records can be used to tie a family to a particular community. This community preference policy is complemented by a recent school district policy to stabilize students. Starting in the 2022–23 school year, Seattle Public Schools students who have to move can remain in their school of origin until they complete the highest grade offered.<sup>20</sup> This means that if students are relocated because of housing

instability, their school can remain stable. If the students choose to change schools, they need to communicate that to the school district.

## Tackling School Segregation in Your Community

New opportunities are emerging nationally to address segregation.

1. The US Department of Education has supported the creation and improvement of magnet schools through the Magnet Schools Assistance Program to explicitly address segregation.<sup>21</sup>
2. The newly established Fostering Diverse Schools Program offers funding for school districts for increasing socioeconomic diversity.<sup>22</sup> The US Department of Education was authorized to use the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title IV-A's capacity building and technical assistance reservation to support the program.

Below, we outline some initial steps your community can take to explore the causes and consequences of school segregation. These align with the stages laid out in “Advancing Mobility from Poverty: A Toolkit for Housing and Education Partnerships.”<sup>23</sup>

### Stage 1. Assess Existing Conditions

There are new data tools to understand the relationship between residential and school segregation and to explore policy levers to address it. Each of these tools was built using nationally available data, including data from the Census Bureau and the Common Core of Data (table 1).

TABLE 1

Data Tools to Help Understand Segregation

Tool	Description
<p>Tomas Monarrez, Brian Kisida, Matthew Chingos, Carina Chien, and Emily Peiffer, “How Much Does Your School Contribute to Segregation?” Urban Institute, July 8, 2020, <a href="https://apps.urban.org/features/school-segregation-index/">https://apps.urban.org/features/school-segregation-index/</a>.</p>	<p>Launched in 2020, this feature shows how much individual schools contribute to segregation in their districts and allows users to explore whether changing their school’s segregation to match their districts would have an overall effect on the district.</p>
<p>Tomas Monarrez, Carina Chien, and Wesley Jenkins, “Dividing Lines: How School Districts Draw Attendance Boundaries to Perpetuate School Segregation,” Urban Institute, September 14, 2021, <a href="https://apps.urban.org/features/dividing-lines-school-segregation/">https://apps.urban.org/features/dividing-lines-school-segregation/</a>.</p>	<p>Launched in 2021, this feature’s goal is to illustrate a relatively discrete set of egregious school boundaries that are driving segregation. It shows pairs of schools whose boundaries can be modified to increase integration by presenting 2010 Census data and 2019–20 school district boundaries.</p>
<p>“The Segregation Index,” University of Southern California Sol Price School of Public Policy, accessed August 4, 2023, <a href="https://segindex.org/">https://segindex.org/</a>.</p>	<p>Launched in May 2022, the index aims to be a comprehensive resource on residential and school segregation. The index is longitudinal and presents options for different ways of measuring segregation.</p>
<p>Halley Potter, “School Segregation in Cities across America Mapped,” The Century Foundation, May 17, 2022, <a href="https://tcf.org/content/data/school-segregation-in-cities-across-america-mapped/">https://tcf.org/content/data/school-segregation-in-cities-across-america-mapped/</a>.</p>	<p>Launched in 2022, in collaboration with the University of Southern California’s Segregation Index team, this dashboard presents school segregation data for the 2017–18 school year at the metropolitan statistical area level. It offers users opportunities to explore segregation between districts and how private school, traditional public school, and magnet school enrollment drive segregation.</p>
<p>“Increasing School Diversity,” Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Georgia Institute of Technology, accessed August 4, 2023, <a href="https://www.schooldiversity.org/">https://www.schooldiversity.org/</a>.</p>	<p>Launched in 2022, this tool allows users to change school boundaries to maximize racial and ethnic diversity and to explore options related to average increases in travel time and school size associated with the option. The tool includes 4,000 school districts (almost every district that has more than one elementary school) and uses a dissimilarity index.</p>

Local municipalities and school districts can also provide data helpful for understanding the pathway of influence, from residential segregation to school segregation and education inequity.

- Tax data show property characteristics, including location, size, and value of homes in the community.
- Residential zoning codes show residential and commercial zoning, including which lots can be used for inclusionary zoning, such as multifamily developments that include homes affordable to a range of incomes.
- Housing and construction permit data show housing renovation and construction before it becomes available to renters and homeowners.
- Subsidized housing and housing voucher data show the locations of subsidized housing developments and where housing vouchers are being used.

- School facilities and school utilization show the locations of schools and whether there is space for additional students.
- Magnet programs and other school choice policies provide detailed information about which students are eligible to attend which schools.
- School or district boundary maps show the boundary or catchment area of the school and describe characteristics about the community and the students eligible to attend.

Data from schools and from other sectors can be examined together to better understand home and school conditions.

## **Stage 2. Identify and Engage Partners**

Having data is not enough; data must be used to drive change. It is essential that school districts improve their use of data to better understand students' socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Use existing data tools, and if they do not serve your community's needs, develop local tools with local data holdings to measure and understand segregation. Although practitioners and researchers in the education arena have valuable expertise to share, members of communities affected by school segregation should be included in the conversation. Housing providers seeking school district partners should identify and engage school board members and departments in the school system that are committed to education equity. Districts seeking to tackle segregation should assemble a working group that includes community members with lived experiences and people with data analysis skills who can use the data tools listed in stage 1 to develop and implement solutions.

## **Stage 3. Prioritize and Develop Shared Outcomes**

School districts are under increasing pressure to address segregation through school choice and school assignment policies. Many of them struggle to meet their goal through school policy alone but may share that goal with members of the housing sector that are addressing current and historic housing discrimination. Once they have identified a shared goal and sought input from other stakeholders, they can plan a solution.

For example, Higher Achievement in Racine, Wisconsin, identified housing stability as a challenge for students with low attendance rates. Higher Achievement established a community advisory committee to understand tenant rights and the relationship between housing stability and attendance and ultimately helped establish a strategy for families to proactively request housing inspections and to

address unhealthy housing conditions that caused instability (StriveTogether, n.d.). Higher Achievement has also begun to explore data on the legacy of redlining in Racine, which continues to drive segregation and inequitable outcomes, suggesting that they could be positioning themselves for addressing segregation.

#### **Stage 4. Partner and Implement Cross-Sector Solutions**

This report describes the role that housing policy and practice has played in driving segregation and ways that housing and education can be leveraged for implementing solutions. Some of the solutions discussed in this report represent approaches your community might consider as partners explore options.

Examples include the following:

- housing mobility programs that support moves to high-opportunity communities with high-performing schools
- alignment of US Department of Housing and Urban Development and US Department of Education programs, such as Choice Neighborhoods and Magnet School Assistance Program
- fair housing planning that expands affordable housing near high-performing schools
- housing and school policies that reduce or prevent displacement

#### **Stage 5. Sustain Partnerships for Systems Change**

Segregation is not a problem that can be addressed with a single policy or practice change. Instead, it will need to be tackled at the system level through a series of strategies and solutions. Because this work takes time, partnerships need to be resilient to leadership changes, funding changes, and market pressures that continue to benefit those with wealth and privilege.

## **Conclusion**

Residential and school desegregation can give students of color access to better-resourced schools, but desegregation is not the only method for equitable resource allocation. This report shows the relationship between housing policies and practices, inequitable school resources, and inequitable educational outcomes. Desegregation and equitable access to educational opportunity takes alignment

in the housing and education sector. This report presents strategies that the education sector can undertake on its own and ways the housing sector can help. Practitioners in communities across the country are implementing solutions to address segregation and improve equity, and this report presents steps that some are taking and resources that others can use to work toward this in their own communities.

# Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Kriston McIntosh, Emily Moss, Ryan Nunn, and Jay Shambaugh, “Examining the Black-White Wealth Gap,” Brookings Institution, February 27, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>.
- <sup>2</sup> Margery Austin Turner and Solomon Greene, “Causes and Consequences of Separate and Unequal Neighborhoods,” Urban Institute, accessed July 21, 2023, <https://www.urban.org/racial-equity-analytics-lab/structural-racism-explainer-collection/causes-and-consequences-separate-and-unequal-neighborhoods>.
- <sup>3</sup> Relative to median home values in redlined communities, rents were proportionately higher, leaving renters in those communities with higher rents than renters in nonredlined communities. See Diego Mendez-Carbajo, “Rental Costs in Redlined Neighborhoods,” Federal Reserve Economic Data blog, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, February 24, 2022, <https://fredblog.stlouisfed.org/2022/02/rental-costs-in-redlined-neighborhoods/>.
- <sup>4</sup> “Racial Covenants,” University of Minnesota, accessed July 21, 2023, <https://mappingprejudice.umn.edu/racial-covenants/what-is-a-covenant>.
- <sup>5</sup> *Buchanan v. Warley*, 245 U.S. 60 (1917); and Kriston Capps, “Breaking ‘the Backbone of Segregation,’” Bloomberg, November 5, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-05/-buchanan-v-warley-a-housing-milestone-at-100>.
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- <sup>7</sup> Mason Seggebruch, “Illinois Supreme Court History: The Cicero Race Riot and George Leighton,” Illinois Courts, accessed July 21, 2023, <https://www.illinoiscourts.gov/News/1054/Illinois-Supreme-Court-history-The-Cicero-Race-Riot-and-George-Leighton/news-detail/>.
- <sup>8</sup> Susan J. Popkin, “Public Housing and the Legacy of Segregation,” *Urban Wire* (blog), Urban Institute, August 19, 2013, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/public-housing-and-legacy-segregation>.
- <sup>9</sup> Angela Caputo and Sharon Lerner, “House Poor, Pollution Rich,” American Public Media, January 13, 2021, <https://www.apmreports.org/story/2021/01/13/public-housing-near-polluted-superfund-sites>.
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- <sup>12</sup> Jerusalem Demsas, “The Next Generation of NIMBYs,” *The Atlantic*, July 20, 2022, <https://www.theatlantic.com/newsletters/archive/2022/07/the-next-generation-of-nimbys/670590/>.
- <sup>13</sup> “The History of *Abbot v. Burke*,” Education Law Center, accessed August 18, 2023, <https://edlawcenter.org/litigation/abbott-v-burke/abbott-history.html>.
- <sup>14</sup> “*Sheff v. O’Neill*,” NAACP Legal Defense Fund, accessed July 25, 2023, <https://www.naacpldf.org/case-issue/sheff-v-oneill/>.
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- <sup>16</sup> “Gentrification and Neighborhood Revitalization: What’s the Difference?” National Low Income Housing Coalition, April 5, 2019, <https://nlihc.org/resource/gentrification-and-neighborhood-revitalization-whats-difference>.
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- <sup>19</sup> “Housing Programs and Initiatives: Community Preference,” City of Seattle, accessed July 25, 2023, <https://www.seattle.gov/housing/programs-and-initiatives/community-preference>.
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- <sup>22</sup> “Fostering Diverse Schools Demonstration Grants Program (FDS),” US Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, last updated July 20, 2023, <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-discretionary-grants-support-services/school-choice-improvement-programs/fostering-diverse-schools-program-fdsp/>.
- <sup>23</sup> See the website for Enterprise Mobility Toolkit at <https://mobilitytoolkit.enterprisecommunity.org/>.

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