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Exploring the Intentionally Diverse Charter Model: A Potential for Progress in Meaningful School Integration

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Contents

Introduction

Charter schools have garnered a significant amount of attention, as well as support, among policymakers in recent years. The charter school model has been supported by the presidential administrations of both Republicans and Democrats alike, including Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump (Peterson & Chang, 2018). In 2016, then-President Obama stated "We celebrate the role of high-quality public charter schools in helping to ensure students are prepared and able to seize their piece of the American dream... these innovative and autonomous public schools often offer lessons that can be applied in other institutions of learning across our country" (quoted in Russell, 2016). The Trump administration, as incomparable as it is to many Obama era policies, has also included charter school expansion among the school choice policies they are looking to pursue, which points to a surprising similarity between two very different administrations (Valant, 2017).

Despite, their political popularity, charter schools have not been without their critics, and this educational innovation has been met with disapproval from some educational actors who view the model as inherently flawed, a step towards the privatization of education, and draining resources away from traditional public schools. As chapter one will explore in greater depth, one of the most prominent critiques of the charter sector is that the schools put students at a heightened level of racial and socioeconomic isolation and do not have a proven track record of success (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley & Wang, 2011). Some of these outcomes are due to the intersection of racial and socioeconomic inequality -- high achieving charters who make it their mission to serve students who are systematically underprivileged which results in these schools serving a racially and economically segregated student body. Nevertheless, there are also many examples of charters that are deeply segregated without demonstrating strong academic results.

This outcome of hyper segregation in the charter sector has led some prominent education researchers to question the merits of this model, and demand changes.

Despite the importance of acknowledging this overall issue in the way the charter model is developing, critiques that treat the sector as all the same ignore the important variation that can tell observers more about what is working within the model and what has the potential to inform national educational policy in all schools. I will instead consider a specific type of charter school which aims to undermine issues of racial and socioeconomic segregation in both the charter model and in conventional public schools. These are intentionally diverse charter schools. This model of school has been growing in popularity in recent years, but there is not yet an extensive body of research about this specific brand of charters (see Kahlenberg and Potter, 2012; 2014, Kern, 2016). In this thesis, I will connect existing research about charters schools and the merits of integration as well as the historic and contemporary barriers that have prohibited effective integration in the United States. Then I will offer analysis of intentionally diverse charter schools based on my interviews with schools leaders at several of these schools. This thesis will contribute to the limited existing research on intentionally diverse charter schools in order to better understand the model and explore promising practices that can be replicated in future charter schools as well as traditional public schools.

I find that the emerging model of intentionally diverse charter school has great potential to inspire new practices in schools and education policy to increase school integration, impacting the lives of many students who are currently educated in low achieving, segregated schools, and subjected to discriminatory classroom and school practices. In the next chapter, I will explore further explore the concept of charter schools in relation to this project. At the conclusion of chapter one, I will describe the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Chapter One: Charter Schools

Defining a Charter School

So what is this education policy that every presidential administration has supported since its conception in the 1990's? And what makes the model so compelling to both policymakers and researchers? Charter schools are publically-funded, but independently-run schools that operate under a contract made with a school authorizer in states which have charter laws in place. It is the role of the authorizer to ensure that the school is upholding high standards, and meeting the goals laid out in their "charter" with the authorizer (NAPCS, 2018). Depending on the state, the number and type of authorizing bodies can differ, however the role of charter authorizer is typically filled by state education agencies, colleges, special boards, or school districts (Cohodes, 2018). In exchange for agreeing to uphold the terms set forth in the charter, these schools are granted autonomy from some of the restraints imposed on traditional public schools. Charter schools are a dimension of a larger system of choice options, that give families autonomy over where to send their students outside of their traditional neighborhood public school. The way in which charter schools fit into this broader concept of choice will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis, but for now it is important to note that charters are the fastest growing choice option in America (NAPCS, 2015).

In 1994, the Charter Schools Program was authorized through the implementation of the of the Improving America's Schools Act in Title X Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Skinner, 2014). The ESEA defines a charter school as a public school exempt from significant state and local rules in order to obtain greater autonomy that is created by a charter developer, or is converted from a traditional public school but remains under public direction (Skinner, 2014). Prior to 2009, the ESEA was the only federal support for charter

schools and it offered about $200 million in grants to states and charter organizations, which for the 2008-2009 school year worked out to just approximately $1.40 per student and highlights the overall limited impact of the federal government on the charter movement (Dynarski et al., 2010).

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided $650 million in grants to encourage educational innovations aimed at addressing and remedying the achievement gap, and the largest of these grants went to KIPP, a high achieving charter network dedicated to improving results for socioeconomically disadvantaged students in urban environments (Dynarski et al., 2010). Additionally, the Race to the Top program provided an additional $4 billion in order to carry out competition between the states for greater reform and innovation. In order to be eligible for the grants, states had to adopt an array of charter friendly policies including more equitable per pupil funding for charter school students and the lifting of any caps on the number of charter schools (Dynarski et al., 2010). These developments led researchers at the Brown Center on Education Policy to conclude that in 2010, "We are clearly at the beginning of a new era in federal policy towards charter schools" (Dynarski et al., 2010, 6). While federal policy on charter schools and other choice remains limited from an absolute perspective, the federal government's financial support has increased overtime.

In their book *A Smarter Charter: Finding What Works for Charter Schools and Public Education* authors Richard D. Kahlenberg and Halley Potter argue that since the conception of charter schools, the model has moved in a very different direction from what was originally imagined by teacher union leader Albert Shanker in 1988 (2014). As these researchers note, understanding the historical context and development of the movement is important for understanding the variety of charter schools and models that exist today particularly as this

variety has complicated the national conversation about charter schools to the point that it is very

challenging in many cases to compare schools to one another. The forthcoming section will

explore the history of the charter movement, within the greater scope of the school choice

movement which was present long before the introduction of the charter model. Next, this

section will consider the current landscape of charter schools and the impact these schools make

on the educational system in the United States.

Historical context of charters

Finn, Manno, and Wright (2016) describe the historical roots of today's school choice

movement, stating that it goes back as far as the United States colonial beginnings. The initial

"thousand flowers" mentality of public schooling, in which families choose which schools to

send their children to, gave way into the "common schools" which became more and more

standardized throughout the twentieth century through attendance and graduation requirements,

teacher qualifications, and increased state and federal control and oversight (Finn, Manno,

Wright, 2016, 8-9). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this movement towards increased centralization in

education policy did not exist without its critics. Numerous critiques of the existing public school

system came to a head in 1983 when the National Commission on Excellence in Education

published a report entitled *A Nation at Risk,* which pointed towards "mediocre educational

performance" emanating from the Nation's public schools (Finn, Manno, Wright, 2016).

With support for a centralized and standardized public education system wavering, Nobel

Peace Prize winning economist Milton Friedman's solution hit a chord with many education

policy dissenters. Friedman famously applied the market theory of competition to education

policy and schooling. Friedman argued that the government held a monopoly of the schools,

calling public schools a "socialist enterprise" in which parents and students, as the consumers,

are limited in the impact they can have upon the schools of which they are a part (Friedman,

1983). Friedman built his argument around a solution of school vouchers, which could be used at public or private schools as a means of increasing market competition since the consumers would have more agency over where to send their children to school. Friedman also included an equity component to his market theory argument, stating that in the current education model, upper-class families do have the ability for school choice since they were able to pay both tuition to public schools through their tax dollars as well as tuition to private schools (Friedman, 1983).

While Friedman's solution focused on vouchers to the private schools overwhich he believed consumers had more control, this concept of market competition translated into a burgeoning set of education policies for increased choice in education programs (Kahlenberg, 2017). Kahlenberg has argued adamantly against some choice policies, including private school voucher and tax credit programs, stating that they have the effect of decreasing public school funds, reducing accountability by test score measure, diminishing civil rights protections, segregating students by socioeconomic status and race, and supporting schools that are academically weaker and less civic minded (Kahlenberg, 2017). However, Kahlenberg supports some public school choice programs as the solution that advocates for of public education should champion, "Progressives should take the valid premise of vouchers supporters-poor kids trapped in failing schools deserve something better-and suggest public school choice that provides those children an opportunity to attend high quality socioeconomically and racially integrated public schools" (Kahlenberg, 2017).

One such form of public school choice, promoted by the "progressive" defenders of public schools, was charter schools, an educational innovation conceived in Minnesota in 1992 and the focus of this project (Berends, 2015, 161). Finn, Manno, and Wright (2016) cite teacher and principal Ray Budde as the most significant early contributor to conceptualizing the earliest

charters through expanding opportunities for innovation solely in existing schools. Next it was

Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, who, inspired by Budde's

idea, adapted the concept into a way for teachers to set up new and more autonomous public

schools. It was Shanker's hope that this in turn would create the marketplace of competition that

Friedman boasted as the answer to better educational opportunities, and more options for parents

between schools with different pedagogical approaches (Finn, Manno, Wright, 2016).

Charter schools today

Since the late twentieth century, the charter movement has experienced rapid growth, and

is in fact the fastest growing sector of school choice with almost 7,000 schools serving 3.2

million students (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2018; NAPCS, 2015). Forty-four

states and the District of Columbia have charter school policies and the federal government

supplies $400 million in funding for these schools (NAPCS, 2018). As is the case with many

education policies, charter policies vary from state to state despite the federal charter school

programs that also exist (Skinner, 2014). In part, these differences can be attributed to the way

that federal charter grants under Title V-B-1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

(ESEA), which allocates grants to not only state educational agencies but also to charter school

developers, or other successful charter schools (Skinner, 2014).

Differences in Charter Policies Across States and Districts

A review of the federal legislation on charter schools illustrates the breadth of policies

that different states and even individual schools can enact. A series of articles produced by the

National Conference of State Legislators pointed to the importance of understanding state and

local policies due to this national variance, "because state laws enable and govern charter

schools, state legislatures are important to ensuring their quality" (Cunningham, 2012, 1).

Broadly speaking, state differences in charter policies can be observed in the accountability

requirements states hold charter schools to in terms of achievement, the requirements they hold

teachers to, the way charter school facilities are funded, the imposition of caps on the number of

charter schools, and the process of authorizing charter schools.

Finn, Manno, and Wright (2016) argue that chartering is "no single, coherent experiment,

but rather a multihued strategy" aimed at rethinking the ills present in the United States' school

system as well as giving needy children and families more agency and choice (7). The Center

for Research on Educational Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford university drew similar

conclusions: "The charter sector is regularly treated as a monolithic set of schools, but recent

research has made clear that across the U.S. there are in fact distinct charter markets with

dramatically different student profiles, governance and oversight structures, and academic

quality" (2015, 1).

Literature Review of Charter Schools, Choice, and Integration

Taking into account the evolution of charter schools as a form of school choice, it

becomes evident how the original motivation behind the charter model has resulted in many

different types of schools and charter networks with different applications. However, as

Kahlenberg and Potter (2014) have noted, within this variety of schools there are examples of

charters that serve as strong examples in so far as accomplishing important education policy

goals. Of particular interest to this thesis, is the model that Kahlenberg and Potter have

identified as emerging due to this variation in charter possibilities. Specifically, the ability for

charters to serve as a tool for integration, despite current trends that as a whole do not address

this policy concern, will be explored in this thesis. The literature review that follows will

consider competing ideas about the role of school choice, as well as the role of charter schools in

extending greater civil rights and increasing equity to all students regardless of race,

socioeconomic status, or ability.

There is no doubt that charter policy remains a controversial and important education policy innovation to consider, particularly as the movement continues to grow and serve more students. However, this thesis seeks to move beyond the debate of charters or no charters, and instead consider what kinds of charters have the greatest potential for the future of the model. As Berends (2009) suggests, "Future research must focus on questions that go beyond the horse races between charter and non-charter students. Understanding the conditions under which choice options are effective will help scholars push policy debates forward" (176). While the conflicts surrounding charter schools will likely continue for some time, this thesis attempts to understand best practices for the charter model as a tool for increasing integration.

Former Secretary of State Arne Duncan addressed this point when weighing in on the charter school debate and speaking against "the myth of the miracle school" (Duncan, 2016). Duncan condemns the rhetoric that surrounds charter schools and argues that it detracts from the salient points that should be at the heart of all educational policy debates,

> "Despite the bloodless, abstract quality of much of today's debates on charters, the ideologically driven controversies won't end anytime soon. Advocates and activists will continue to care about whether a high-performing school is identified as a charter school or a traditional neighborhood school. But it is worth remembering that children do not care about this distinction. Neither do I. Our common enemy is academic failure. Our common goal is academic success." (2016).

Secretary Duncan highlights a point that tends to get lost in the debate; the purpose of any school should be to provide a strong education to every student. The reality of charter schools in the United States has been overwhelmingly mixed as far as academic outcomes. Some charter schools are doing exceptional work, reaching students, elevating levels of academic achievement, and providing students and families with a quality educational option. Yet, some charter schools are the complete opposite – failing students and leaving them far worse off.

Understanding why and how some charter schools are successful, and what state, district, and individual school policies are contributing to this success is an important project.

What this thesis seeks to do is move beyond the debate and discussion of research into the academic achievement of the charter model, suggesting that current research on the comparative success charters to traditional public schools is inconclusive. This is not to suggest that accountability and educational achievement do not remain critical goals for the charter movement, and an avenue for future research. Rather, this paper seeks to accept that, like any type of school, the charter model boasts both exceptional examples of success, as well as clear failures and non-fulfillment of goals and expectations for the students entrusted into their care. Instead, a feature more unique to charter schools is explored in this paper, and that is the potential for the movement to be used as a tool for racial integration. One of the benefits that charter advocates advance is that the movement provides parents with more choice and agency over their child's school placement, one that is not restricted by traditional school district boundaries (Potter, 2015; Frankenberg & Lee, 2003). I will discuss the existing research that indicates charter schools are largely failing to embrace this potential to serve as an integrative tool in residentially segregated areas, as well as evidence that some charters are experiencing success in encouraging a broad array of educational options for increasing racial diversity and integration. These success stories suggest that the charter movement has the potential to be a tool for diversity and integration education policy goals.

Neoliberalism and school choice

During the 1970-1980's the United States experienced a shift away from the "state-interventionist policies" and the government-centric model of Keynesianism towards the free market driven model of neoliberalism (Lipman, 2011, 7). The concept of choice and personal accountability were used to "reshape social relations and social identities" towards valuing the

individual over the accountability of the government and collectivism as a society (Lipman, 2011, 10-11). Lipman (2011) argues that the way in which neoliberalism impacted education was to turn the view towards education as a "private good" the goal of which was to make students actors in a labor market, rather than use education to contribute to the development of individuals and society as a whole. "U.S. education policy has always juggled tensions between labor market preparation and democratic citizenship, but the neoliberal turn marks a sharp shift to 'human capital development' as the primary goal" (Lipman, 2011, 14). Lipman argues that the effect of neoliberal policies on education is an assault on public education and teacher unions in favor of private options, including the publically funded privately operated model of charter schools (Lipman, 2011, 15).

While there exists the argument that the goal of education should be preparing students for the labor market, this goal can come at the expense of other missions for education such as the benefit of individual character development and desegregating students and schools (Scott and Quinn, 2014). Scott and Quinn argue these political developments have created a barrier to diversity in the post *Brown* era because the focus on student excellence has been at the expense of desegregation, as has an increased emphasis on free market applications of choice in education (2014, 752). "School choice," argue Scott and Quinn, "…has provided many parents with critical alternatives to traditional public schools suffering from state neglect. However, school choice has not helped alter the profound racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic segregation within and between school districts" (2014, 757). Scott and Quinn, along with Lipton present an important argument about the way that the values and practices of a neoliberal educational system can exacerbate rather than remedy issues of segregation in schools. What these analysis do not recognize however, is the potential for schools of choice, particularly charter schools, to

act as a more accessible way to integrate schools, particularly given the public resistance to desegregation efforts through policies like redistricting and busing (see Chapter 2). Additionally, while Scott and Quinn (2014, 751) do point out the lack of incentives for intentional diversity within the charter movement, they do not acknowledge the potential for these schools to be used in order to attract diverse student bodies and perfect practices which can provide the best education for a diverse student body. This potential will be explored in greater depth in this thesis; however, it does point to a flaw in conflating the ideas of neoliberalism with the entire charter sector.

Increased isolation of charter school students

As argued by neoliberal critics, one of the fears of choice in education is the potential for it to result in greater segregation (Lipman, 2011; Scott and Quinn, 2014). Evidence that charter school students are more segregated by race, socioeconomic status, as well as by English language proficiency and special education qualification as compared to their traditional public school peers is an important critique of the charter movement (Frankenberg & Lee, 2003; Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley & Wang, 2011; Mickelson, Bottia & Southworth, 2008). Since the early days of the charter movement, research has suggested that some charter schools served a higher population of minority students than traditional public schools (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley & Wang, 2011; Berman, Nelson, Perry, Silverman, Solomon, & Kamprath, 1999). A 1999 federal study found that of the twenty-four states with charter laws at the time, six served higher numbers of students of color than the state's traditional public schools (Berman, et al., 1999). Research at the turn of the millennium found that minority enrollment in charter schools continued to grow, reaching almost two-thirds of the charter student population by the 2001-2002 school year, a number that is suggested to be ever higher today (Finnigan, et al., 2004; Moreno, 2017).

Frankenberg is among the most prolific charter critics, particularly on the topic of the charter movement and segregation. Frankenberg and Lee (2003) research the extent to which charter school students are racially isolated. Frankenberg and Lee (2003) used a comparison of charter schools to non-charter public schools in sixteen states, which at the time of the study, enrolled more than 5,000 charter students. The researchers used an "exposure index" to compare the diversity that students in charter schools are experiencing to what even racial distribution would look like in the state if all students were evenly split between all of the charter schools within the state. One unique aspect of the researchers' methodology is their focus on a state-level analysis. The researchers argue that state-level comparisons may in fact be more telling of the impact that charter schools have on education since not all states require that charters be confined to a specific school district or attendance zone (Frankenberg and Lee, 2003). Despite this methodological choice, Frankenberg and Lee contend that this limits their ability to consider how local and school charter policies impact the conditions they study, so they cite evidence of other studies that considered charter schools as compared to the surrounding public school district or the closest public schools and share that this evidence has also found charter schools to be racially less diverse than their traditional public school and district counterparts (cited in Frankenberg and Lee, 2003).

Frankenberg and Lee explain that at the state-level, when viewed in comparison to traditional public schools, charter schools enroll a disproportionately high percentage of black students and a disproportionately lower percentage of white students (Frankenberg and Lee, 2003)., The researchers also report that in 10 states white students are more exposed to black students in charter schools than they are in traditional public schools (cited in Frankenberg and Lee, 2003). Frankenberg and Lee attribute this to the fact that charter schools in these states

enroll a disproportionately lower percentage of white students which in turn leads to white students going to less racially isolated charter schools compared to their traditional public school. "This provides support to the contention that it is not that charter schools are inherently doing a better job of integrating students, but rather that low white enrollments are responsible for the lower levels of white racial isolation in charter schools in most states" (Frankenberg and Lee, 2003, 24).

Researchers have demonstrated that the average minority student who attends a charter school will be enrolled in an even more hyper-segregated schools than if they had remained in their traditional public school setting (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley & Wang, 2011). This is an incredibly critical finding. As the forthcoming review of the literature on racial isolation and segregation will explore in greater depth, schools that promote segregation could prove highly problematic for the long term outcomes of students. A review of charter schools during the 2014-2015 school year found that of the 6,747 charter schools that existed in the United States at the time, more than 1,000 of the charter schools had minority populations equal to or exceeding 99% (Moreno, 2017). Highly segregated schools, both traditional and charter, have fewer students reaching academic proficiency in reading and math on their state's assessments (Moreno, 2017).

What is missing from this body of research is a clear definition of what the goal of diverse schooling is, and what schools are doing to make the benefits of diverse schools impactful for all students. By studying only the racial composition of these schools, researchers are ignoring the critical component of whether or not classrooms in traditional public schools are diverse, or if "tracking" practices of segregating students into different ability groups is creating even less diversity in the classrooms where students are spending their time. If traditional public

schools are employing ability grouping practices that create segregation within schools, it could well be argued that the students in traditional public schools are as segregated at their charter counterparts, and also being subjected to harmful discriminatory practices which have been shown to negatively impact students perceptions of their ability and potential (Discussed in Mickelson, 2001).

Additionally, what a state-level analysis fails to address is the policies of individual charter schools or networks, that seek to encourage integration and honor diversity through their own practices, separate of what is required at the state or federal level. Kahlenberg and Potter provide an early introduction to the diverse charter movement in a 2012 report that highlights seven charter schools who have successfully accomplished integration through their individual school and charter network models (Kahlenberg and Potter, 2012; Kahlenberg & Potter, 2014, Potter, May 2013). This report, as well as other research concerning the growth of diverse charter schools will be considered in greater depth shortly. However, it should be noted now that intentionally diverse charter schools do point to a growing number of individual schools that are working to achieve integration in ways that would not be captured in statewide analyses (Frankenberg & Lee, 2003) and maybe too recent of an innovation to have impacted local and district-wide studies (cited in Frankenberg & Lee, 2003).

A final critique offered by charter school proponents is that most public schools in the United States are highly segregated due to residential segregation, regardless of whether it is a traditional public school or a charter school. Chait argues that the fact that charter schools serve a disproportionate number of low-income, minority students means the alternative of segregated neighborhood schools is no alternative at all. "Charters disproportionately serve children in heavily minority neighborhoods because those are the children who can't get a decent education

from their neighborhood schools. The schools that those children would otherwise be attending are also segregated" (Chait, 2017). Chait argues that making segregation the main argument of charter critics is a statement against a movement, not evidence that these schools are necessarily bad for their students.

Charter schools and choice as an extension of Civil Rights

Given both the critique of the neoliberal education market and the evidence that charter schools contribute to increased segregation, what then should be the role of choice and charter schools in today's education landscape in the United States? The argument put forth by Chait, along with other advocates for the charter movement is that charter schools do not have to serve an integrating goal for them to be a worthwhile education innovation, as they offer the ability to provide parents with agency over their children's education (Chait, 2017; Stulberg 2014).

One particularly confrontational assertion of the link between civil rights and school choice was voiced by Hoover Institution fellow Deroy Murdock who compared New York City mayor and charter school critic Bill de Blasio to infamous segregationist George Wallace. "Just as Alabama's segregationist Democratic governor notoriously stood in the school door to deny quality of education to disadvantaged black children in 1963, New York's far-left Democrat mayor stands in the charter-school door to deny quality education to disadvantaged black children in 2014" (quoted in Stulberg, 2014, 35). The argument that school choice provides students with civil rights is based on an understanding that many white Americans have historically enjoyed school choice through the virtue of being able to choose where to live, and, therefore, what public school district to send their children to or had the option to pay private school tuition. Charter schools, as a method of public school choice, in a way to extend that option to all parents, at least to a certain extent.

Given concerns over segregation, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) announced in 2016 that they were calling for a moratorium on new charter schools. In October of 2016, the NAACP released a resolution calling for a stay in charter expansion until reforms were made to the charter system. Following the resolution, a NAACP task force conducted hearings in seven major cities across the United States, featuring both support and opposition to charter schools in order for the NAACP to inform their recommendations, which they presented in the 2017 task force (NAACP, 2017). What is obvious from the task force's report, is much of what is already known about the charter debate. Just like in traditional public schools, charter schools experience a range of successes and failures but that alone is not enough to characterize all charters as either good or bad. Chris Ungar, Past President of the California School Boards Association and Former Special Education Director in the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education described the place that charters should fill. "Charters have a place as a supplement to local school districts to fill a void when a local district is underperforming or has failed to provide offerings that are absent in traditional schools. What is not viable, however, is the vision of charter schools as a replacement to local school districts or as a parallel shadow school system. It doesn't scale" (Quoted in NAACP 2017, 30).

Charter schools as a solution to traditional school districting

Proponents of diversity and charter schools argue these policies have the potential to address district segregation by attracting and enrolling students beyond traditional district lines. Thus these schools could fulfill the void in many places in the United States that do not have traditional public schools with diverse student bodies. Just as Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley and Wang (2011) argued that charter schools have potentially negative impacts on integration goals, charters also have potentially positive impacts for integration. Charter schools have the ability to

pull students from beyond traditional school district lines, which like magnet schools, gives them the potential to attract a more diverse student body, that is not as subjected to the impacts of residential and school district segregation. However earlier research has pointed to evidence that "attendance zone flexibility does not necessarily produce reduced levels of racial isolation" (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley & Wang, 2011, 7; Gulosino & d'Entremont, 2011)

In a 2013 report on the state of charter schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, researchers found evidence of heightened charter school segregation in suburban districts as well as urban districts. The report cited evidence that charter school enrollment was becoming more evenly balanced between white and non-white students as well as students who qualify for free and reduced price lunch and those who do not, a common measure of socio-economic status for public school children (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013). However, the researchers did not find evidence that this aggregated diversity was being translated into more diverse individual schools (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013). Instead, the researchers concluded that the growth of majority white suburban charter schools was leading to an exodus of white students from their growingly diverse traditional public schools to majority white charters. "Clearly, whether by intent or not, more and more suburban charters are facilitating white flight from increasingly diverse traditional schools in the suburbs" (Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, 2013, 6). In Indianapolis researchers found evidence that racial sorting appears to occur in charter schools (Stein, 2015). Similar to the evidence gathered by the Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, Stein concluded that although charter schools are attracting a demographic that is racially proportionate to the Indianapolis Public School system, students are choosing individual charter schools that are more homogeneous than the traditional public schools they are exiting (2015).

In a study of Arizona Garcia (2007), also found evidence that students are often sorted into segregated charter schools despite the potential for these schools to pull a diverse population from numerous districts. The study in Arizona examined "charter school specialization theory" or the theory that charter school segregation occurs because in a system of school choice parents from similar social, economic or cultural backgrounds seek out similar school environments for their children. This helps to explain why charter schools can be geared toward specific groups are responding to these individual group needs (discussed in Garcia, 2007). Garcia (2007) found that school transfers in Arizona did not provide evidence in support of specialization theory and instead suggested that parents are opting for more segregated charter schools despite no difference in the type of academic offerings at the school. "According to the Arizona results, the weak and, at times, inconsistent relationship between academic and racial segregation and charter school type is not compelling evidence to support the charter school specialization theory uncritically" (Garcia, 2007, 609).

Potential in the diverse-by-design charter model

Despite evidence of continued segregation, there is still a case to be made that charters can be a tool for increased school diversity. Frankenberg et al. contend that despite the trend of increased racial and socioeconomic isolation of students in charter schools there are charters that seek to employ methods to make their schools places of integration (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, Wang, 2011). "These schools serve as a reminder that current patterns of segregation in charter school can- and should- be avoided with the help of carefully designed policies. Such policies would promote charter school enrollments that roughly reflect the demographics of the surrounding area, in addition to ensuring levels of within-school diversity" (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, Wang, 2011, 8). In his study of Arizona charter school selection, Garcia, (2007) found evidence that parental choice does result in diversity in certain instances which supports the use

of these charter models as a way to encourage integration through choice. "The outcome of parental choice does not result in universal racial segregation among all charter schools in Arizona. For example, students who chose charter schools with broad themes such as traditional and Montessori schools joined a student body that was more diverse than the district schools they exited" (Garcia, 2007, 609). The findings of these researchers, despite being critical of the charter model, suggest that there are ways that schools of choice can be utilized to encourage diversity in enrollment.

Two researchers who have been at the forefront of researching this potential for diversity, particularly in the charter school movement, are Richard D. Kahlenberg and Halley Potter. In their 2014 book "A Smarter Charter" these Century Foundation researchers highlight "intentionally diverse charter schools" that are doing just what Frankenberg, Garcia, and other charter critics say is missing from the movement. The chapter provides a discussion of eight charter schools or networks that have excelled academically as well as pursued diversity in their student bodies. Kahlenberg and Potter explore how eight charter schools tailor their recruitment strategies towards achieving diversity, and avoiding the perpetuation of increased racial and socioeconomic isolation uncovered by the research discussed earlier. Additionally, Kahlenberg and Potter (2014) explore the way that these diverse charters implement diversity into their curriculums and instructional practices before considering evidence of how these practices combine into high levels of academic achievement.

In a report, published in 2012, Kahlenberg and Potter utilize seven case studies of diverse charter schools in order to devise recommended approaches for integrating schools both racially and socioeconomically (2012). Among their findings were the importance of intentional location on the part of the school in order to attract a diverse student population, targeted student

recruitment, weighted admissions lotteries to encourage a diverse yield, responsive pedagogies, and school culture that supports diversity (Kahlenberg and Potter, 2012). The researchers recommend policy interventions at both the federal and state level that could help expand the number of integrated charter schools and support the types of practices that they highlighted in their case studies.

Many of the recommendations made by Kahlenberg and Potter at the federal level are geared towards funding incentives for schools that make diversity a part of their mission or priorities, as well as including diversity missions as a criteria which determines a charter school's status as "high quality" (2012, 19). At the state level, Kahlenberg and Potter argue for a policy that would strike a balance between weighting the importance and potential of high performing charters serving at-risk populations. "Charter school authorizers could work to close failing high-poverty charter schools and apply heightened scrutiny to applications for new charter schools from operators of high-poverty schools that struggle academically" (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2012, 20). Despite the validity of these recommendations, there do seem to be gaps in the proposed policies. Since Kahlenberg and Potter are at the forefront of documenting the diverse charter movement, additional primary research into successful diverse charter schools is an important step towards the development of additional policies as well as a greater understanding of the experiences of schools in order to more critically assess proposed policies. This thesis hopes to contribute to this conversation.

The intentionally diverse charter school policy innovation is not without its critics. In fact, this policy often faces critiques from both sides of the charter school divide. Potter describes feeling like a "pariah" when she speaks about socioeconomically and racially diverse charter schools.

> Folks in the charter school community often get nervous at the mention of integration. They favor market-driven enrollment and school autonomy, ideas that could be threatened by lotteries weighted to promote integration or requirements that charter schools meet diversity targets...On the flip side, supporters of school integration frequently oppose the presence of charter schools. (Potter, June 2013).

Writing in response to Kahlenberg and Potter's 2012 report, New York school integration advocates and members of the National Coalition on School Diversity Khin Mai Aung and David Tipson questioned how big of a role diverse charter schools can have in the fight to integrate schools (2013). Central to their critique is the argument that the charter model, of individual schools or networks with high levels of independence, is not well designed to tackle integration, which is a systematic problem and thus requires a "systematic strategy… across a school district" (Aung & Tipson, 2013). Though these advocates call the diverse charter model "laudable," they give voice to concerns that it could detract from interventions through the traditional public schools, particularly magnet programs (Aung & Tipson, 2013).

Aung and Tipson (2013) argue that "mounting evidence" supports the idea that there is a desire among middle-class parents to pursue diverse schools. Missing from this consideration, however, is evidence that parents also want integration to be by choice, thus demonstrating a strong potential for school choice options (Potter, June 2013; Moskowitz, 2015; Whitehurst, 2012). 27 percent of parents cite moving to their neighborhood because of the schools it gives them access to. An additional 16% of parents enroll their children in public schools of choice, and another 11% of parents enroll their children in private schools (Whitehurst, 2012). These numbers strongly support the contention that choice in education is something that parents value. Chapter two will explore public opinion for integration and establish it as another value that is important to Americans, thus providing evidence that an option of public school choice which brings together these two values could be both a beneficial and popular educational innovation.

Additionally, as Potter explains in her response to Aung, Tipson, and other diverse charter critics, the expansion of diverse charter schools does not need to run contrary to attempts to bring about systemic change. "While a small group of diverse charter schools cannot solve all of the problems of segregated school systems, they can still help advance school integration beyond their walls," writes Potter, "Charter schools can develop innovative practices for serving a diverse group of students that could be shared with other schools" (June, 2013).

Setting the stage for future research

What Potter's response so aptly points to is the ability for diverse charter schools to return to the original charter ideal of serving as a laboratory for educational innovation and learning. In other words, while education advocates, researchers, and policymakers should continue to pursue systematic changes to increase school diversity, intentionally diverse charter schools can be powerful learning tools for developing what that integration looks like in practice. By developing practices and policies for more impactful and meaningful integration through the system of public school choice, intentionally diverse charter schools can capitalize off of the popularity of choice as well as contribute to the greater educational goal of integration. This will likely prove to be an important part of avoiding segregation within schools, or accomplishing diversity without meaningful integration. This thesis hopes to contribute to a greater understanding of the intentionally diverse charter model in the hopes of learning from the experiences of successful schools. Additionally, with the use of data collected from interviews with diverse charter schools, this thesis will further the development of policy recommendations by assessing proposed ones, as well as suggesting additional avenues for exploration.

Charter Schools and Choice in the Trump Administration

Although the charter conversation has been significant in education and policy circles since the model debuted, there is good reason to believe that the Trump administration, in part

because of Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos's firm commitment to expanding both private and public school choice options, may work to expand such choice programs. This makes establishing best practices for the model even more pressing. Interestingly, since Trump took office and Devos was appointed to her position, charter support by the public has been more tumultuous than other points in recent history (Prothero, 2017; Peterson & Cheng, 2018). In a 2017 Education Next survey conducted by the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, researchers saw a 12% drop in public support for charter schools (Prothero, 2017). Interestingly, the researchers did not attribute this drop to the election of President Trump, or his administration's views on charters because the decline in support was not solely among Democrats or uniform across education policies supported by Trump. West explained,

> "If the decline in support were related to Trump's support of the concept, I would have expected it to occur primarily among Democrats, and that's not what we see. I would also expect there to be similar changes in opinion about other policies that the president has embraced especially other school choice policies, which is not what we see" (quoted in Plothero, 2017).

Instead this decrease in support is attributed largely to "eroding" support for the charter movement due to negative attention drawn to the model by civil rights groups like the NAACP (as discussed in literature review). Prothero (2017) pointed out that the decrease in support from black and latinx respondents was particularly problematic for charter advocates, since a large number of charters are dedicated to serving these students. Complicating these findings was a 2018 follow up poll, in which Education Next posed the same question that they did in 2017 and found that public support for charters had increased by 10%, returning support to around 62%, almost equal to 2016 levels of support (Peterson & Cheng, 2018). While, we should be cautious about the interpretation of any single public opinion poll, the currently tumultuous nature of

public support might be indicative of an underlying, growing uncertainty of such charter schools policies among the public.

Despite this seemingly good news for charter supporters based on the 2018 poll, Peterson and Cheng point out that there are still concerning shifts in opinion, which point to growing polarization over charter schools and their place in American education (2018). This can be illustrated by the growing support by individuals identifying as Republican while support for charters among Democrats has become stagnant. The growing party divide can be seen clearly by comparing support of charters in 2010 when there was not significant differences in the support of charters by party affiliation, where by 2015 there was a 20% difference, which has grown to 30% since then resulting in 75% of Republicans and 45% of Democrats supporting the continued creation of charter schools (Peterson and Cheng, 2018).

As highlighted in this chapter's review of the literature, charter schools and school choice as a whole have a complex relationship with issues of equality and civil rights. This does create a perhaps surprising convergence of conservative and progressive interests in certain circumstances (Valant, 2017). However, Valant argues that Trump and DeVos's agenda and policy rhetoric may pose a heightened threat to divide support for charters by distancing liberals and making charter schools too risky of a move for Democratic politicians to pursue (2017). Shavar Jeffries, President of Democrats for Education Reform stated, "I can't think of anything more potentially harmful to the charter school movement, or anything more antithetical to its progressive roots, than having Donald Trump as its national champion," (quoted in Whitmire, 2016). Though support for charters has been increasingly polarized since before Trump's election, and despite evidence that 2017's dip in support cannot be attributed to his election, it remains a concern that the national partisan rhetoric surrounding choice and charters can

influence the future of the movement and the possibility of using it to inspire future change. One example of lost potential if this were to occur could be growing the intentionally diverse charter subgroup described earlier.

Overview of the Thesis

The future growth of charter schools and choice policies remains a bit uncertain in these increasingly politically polarized times. While charter schools have long benefitted from bipartisan support at the national level, it remains to be seen how this will continue to play out. Likewise, many charter schools remain contentious at the local level among many competing interest groups. Yet, charter schools could potentially offer new opportunities to challenge existing inequality. One such issue is segregation. While most American schools are based on neighborhood to determine attendance, choice policies, including charter schools, could provide a challenge to this system that reinforces the widespread existing housing segregation in the United States. I will explore the question of how charter schools may be employed to address segregation and increase school-level diversity. While there is existing research on the benefits of intentionally diverse charter schools, this project aims to expand this research in order to better understand the potential benefits and drawbacks of such policies. In the conclusion, I propose policy recommendations based on my findings.

I will explore the issue of school integration policies in the United States in the second chapter. This will include a consideration of the historical context for why controlled school choice provides an important channel through which to encourage diversity in schools despite continued residential segregation. The chapter will begin with a review of the literature regarding research into the benefits of school integration in order to establish why policymakers should continue to pursue meaningful school diversity, decades after the *Brown v. Board* decision. Next, I will explore both the historical context of student segregation as well as the

current trends in segregation before considering how school choice, particularly the charter model, provide an opportunity to address student isolation in the places where it impacts students the most.

Chapter three will more thoroughly explore the diverse charter model. I interviewed 8 school leaders from intentionally diverse charter schools across the United States to analyze and explore the experiences and outcomes of these types of charter schools. These themes will be analyzed to consider the benefits and challenges facing schools in the diverse charter sector in order to better understand the role that federal, state, district, and local school policies play in creating meaningful student integration. Next, chapter four will focus in on the state of New York, where four of the schools interviewed in this research were located. This location-specific case study will look more specifically at the charter laws in existence in New York, and weigh how supportive these policies are of the continuation and spread of the diverse charter sector within the state.

The final chapter of this thesis seeks to reconcile my findings, based on my primary research, with the findings of prominent educational researchers in order to assess the value and applicability of these diverse by design by charter schools. I will conclude with my own recommendations for future policies aimed at supporting the diverse charter sector's potential. This chapter will conclude with suggestions of best practices for future charters based upon the evidence collected from charter schools that are making student diversity and integration a part of their mission.

Chapter Two: Americans Schools and Segregation

Within the overall charter school approach, there is a growing niche brand of charter schools focused specifically on increasing diversity (Potter, 2015; Osborne & Langhorn, 2017). These schools are often called "diverse by design". In order to more fully understand the potential of the emerging model, this chapter aims to highlight two important considerations. First, this chapter seeks to understand why integration should remain an important policy goal, before arguing that it indeed should continue to be pursued by education policies. Second, this chapter will provide a historical as well as contemporary context of the barriers to integration which have persisted since *Brown v. Board of Education* was decided in 1954. Through this second consideration, this chapter will provide evidence for why charter schools, as a form of public school choice, serve as a possible avenue of growth in integration efforts for America's schools to pursue.

Why Should Policymakers Care About Segregation in Schools?
What support is there for integration as a policy goal?

60 years after the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* scholars, policymakers, and the parents of America's school children continue to grapple with what educational equality means today. However, for many, the answer lies in accomplishing what the decision in Brown failed to fully do so on its own. According to education writer Nikole Hannah-Jones "it's the one thing that we are not really talking about, and that very few places are doing anymore…integration!" (Glass interview, 2015). The idea that integration can serve as a remedy to fixing the achievement gap is not a recent realization. In 1966, James Coleman and colleagues researched this issue and produced a report called the *Equality of Educational Opportunity,* better known as the *Coleman Report.* This report found evidence of factors beyond

unequal school funding for explaining the achievement gap between black and white students (Coleman, 2011; Wells, 2001). The report argued that segregation is harmful beyond creating unequal conditions in segregated schools, and Coleman's study concluded that "variations in the facilities and curriculums of the schools account for relatively little variation in pupil achievement" (2011, 132). Instead Coleman's report found that student achievement "is strongly related to the educational backgrounds and aspirations of the other students in the school" (2011, 132). The *Coleman Report* highlights that the negative impact of school inequality is much more complex than mere equitable school facilities or school curriculum.

Integration impacts black students in ways beyond giving them access to facilities and lessons comparable to their white counterparts because there are less tangible, but equally influential factors associated with an education in an integrated classroom. As will be discussed in this section and as argued by advocates, integration is the best policy solution in order to make schools and classrooms as equitable as they can be for all students. Additionally, integration is important and successful in granting students more equal access to important social capital and networks that can benefit their future educational and occupational attainments (Wells, 2001; Brown-Jeffy, 2006). Researchers have found that the concentration of minority students in schools has a negative effect on achievement even holding family, individual and school level factors constant (Bankston & Caldas, 1996; Brown-Jeffy, 2006). This means that the positive impact of integrated schools goes beyond the individual-level attributes. One of the demonstrated benefits of integration is higher academic attainment in reading, and a reduction in the achievement gap between black and white students (Brown-Jeffy, 2006). School segregation also has a small, but statistically significant negative impact on performance in mathematics for students, which grows as a student moves from elementary to secondary school (Mickelson,

Bottia, Lambert, 2013). Michaelson points to a number of ways in which racial isolation and segregation can have tangible impacts on student achievement, including having few teacher resources available than students in more integrated schools and classrooms (2001). Material resources, including well curated libraries, technology, advanced courses, and well-maintained facilities, are most commonly associated with schools that have a lower percentage of black students (Mickelson, 2001).

It is important to recognize that despite making the case for integrated schools, this argument does not hinge on the idea that simply having a diverse group of students in a school creates higher student achievement. For example, Clarence Thomas describes the harm that can result from thinking of desegregation as a way to save the black race. He explains, "It never ceases to amaze me that the courts are so willing to assume that anything that is predominately black must be inferior. Under this theory, segregation injures blacks because blacks, when left on their own, cannot achieve" (Quoted in Moskowitz 2015, 19). Many proponents agree that there is no evidence that the achievement gap will be diminished by simply sitting white, black, and Latinx students next to each other (Wells & Crain, 1994; Wells 2001, 793; Hannah-Jones in Glass, 2015). Yet these proponents argue that the benefits and resources of high quality schools are often hoarded in white schools and the only way to ensure equality – because of structural racism and inequality – is to create truly integrated schools.

For students to truly benefit from integration, one must take into account integration at the classroom-level. As Mickelson and Bottia described, "An integrated educational system is not a phenomenon, like the weather, that is largely beyond the reach of conscious human efforts to create. School leaders make policy choices-highly conscious policy choices-when they draw district boundaries and school attendance zones" (2010, 1048). The likelihood of this type of

redistricting aside, the full potential for integration to work as a powerful policy tool will not be realized without efforts to integrate students within school communities. Segregation can persist in both the academic and social spheres, even in otherwise diverse schools, which undermines the full potential of integration. Researchers have identified two different levels of school segregation – first and second generation segregation, both of which negatively impact the outcomes of students (discussed in Mickelson, 2001). First generation refers to the integration of schools within a district and is generally seen as the focus of national action since the *Brown* decision, and second generation segregation refers to the practice of assigning academic opportunity differently to students based on race, and has been held by courts as being unconstitutional (Mickelson, 2001).

Academic tracking remains a problem in many schools and researchers have found that even among students with similar academic abilities, black students are more likely to be placed on a lower track than their white peers (cited in Mickelson, 2001). Where integration policy is most successful in narrowing the achievement gap is in places that desegregate students while also eliminating tracking and ability grouping in order to expose students to the same educational opportunities a classroom has to offer (Mickelson, 2001, Wells and Crain, 1994). In these situations where both first and second generation segregation are eliminated, academic benefits are visible for black students, at no academic impairment to white students (Mickelson, 2001).

Exclusion from traditional classrooms has been identified as such a detriment to the civil rights of students with academic disabilities that the Individuals with Disabilities Act, reauthorized in 2004, requires that students be put in the the "Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)" in order to spend the maximum amount of time in classrooms with peers who do not have disabilities (U.S. Department of Education; Morin). Though this is different from the issue

of racial or socioeconomic segregation of students, it offers an interesting point of comparison to those types of isolation. Additionally, despite the fact that IDEA requires that students receiving special education services be as integrated into traditional classrooms as possible, ensuring that this is happening remains an on-going challenge in the field.

Disporportionate discipline rates of students of color is another pressing problem in American education today. Scholars have connected the academic achievement with what is referred to as the "discipline gap" and suggested that until discipline practices are resolved, the academic achievement gap will continue (Losen, Hodson, Keith, Michael, Morrison, Belway, 2015; Gregory, Skiba, Noguera, 2010). In 2014 the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education released a Dear Colleague letter responding to evidence that black and hispanic students are subjected to more and harsher discipline than their white peers. The letter warned of long term impacts such as the entrenchement of the "school to prison pipeline" and as well as concerns for the achievement gap because of exclusion from classrooms due to disciplinary practices (U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Educaiton, 2014).   The Civil Rights Project at UCLA highlighted evidence that the discipline gap not only harms students of color, but also studens with disabilities, and emerging English speakers (Losen et al., 2015). The discipline gap points to another serious issue in American education policy, and signals an alarming potential for segregation and discrimination to be continued even in diverse schools if better practices are not developed.

Integration as the solution to changing "Hearts and Minds"

Why then has integration been shown to be beneficial for narrowing the equality gap among students if it is not simply due to lower levels of tangible resources as Coleman's infamous report suggests? While we have started to explore this issue in the previous section, we

must further clarify the relationship. Mickelson responds directly to Justice Thomas' concern that the potential message of championing a policy of integration can have negative impacts for race relations by arguing that it is not about "proximity to a diversity of derma" (Mickelson, 2001, 241). Rather, in her research of the Charlotte Mecklenburg School District, Mickelson found that the political power of white parents and families is what leads integrated schools to be better for all students. "Because of resource scarcity and the political power of middle-class White parents, the schools their children attend have the human and material resources optimal for learning. Therefore, Black children learning in this environment are more likely to achieve" (Mickelson, 2001, 241). Mickelson's argument is also helpful in explaining why "double segregation," or the segregation of students by both race and socioeconomic class, is particularly harmful since this intersectionality puts students at an even greater disadvantage for accessing the kinds of resources that are shown to help them succeed.

In their research Orfield, Schely, Glass, Reardon (1994) found that highly segregated African American and Latino schools are 14 times more likely to be highly segregated by socioeconomic status as well. This illustrates the intersectional nature of segregation, race, and socioeconomic status. Another question that is important to our understanding of how integration benefits students is how these benefits are measured. We must consider how to quantify the achievement gap and student performance. What is the impact of these less tangible factors that are not as easy to quantify as test scores? Wells argues that attempting to justify segregation by pointing to gains in student achievement as measured by test scores does not allow for the real meaning behind the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling to be realized.

> "Clearly, short-term gains in standardized test scores were far less than what the Supreme Court or the civil rights attorneys expected in terms of 'consequences.' Unfortunately, too much of the debate about the value of school desegregation as a public policy has been framed around this inconclusive and incomplete information." (Wells, 2001, 795).

Wells argues that the focus on standardized tests scores misses the "'hearts and minds' message of the *Brown* ruling" (2001, 780). There are benefits to integration that are much further reaching than achievement as measured by test scores, and understanding these factors helps illustrate the larger impact that integration can have on student outcomes. As Mickelson, Brown-Jeffy, and other researchers have contended, integrated classrooms give minority students access to higher levels of academic opportunity than they have available to them in segregated environments. Additionally, integrated classrooms open doors to networks that have benefits for future mobility opportunities such as higher education and jobs. For instance, black graduates of white suburban high schools are hired in greater numbers than comparable applicants of segregated urban schools (discussed in Wells, 2001). Furthermore, black students who have access to prestigious educational institutions in high school through achievement programs are able to then achieve entrance into well respected universities and, ultimately, careers (discussed in Wells, 2001).

In short, students educated in a classroom that is both racially and socioeconomically integrated gain access to more resources in the classroom, but are also to more opportunity to move closer towards an "all else being equal" scenario in which students have the same access to important types of social and cultural capital that can lead to future opportunities (Crain and Mahard, 1978; Wells, 2001, 782). As Crain and Mahard argue, "all else being equal" may be an impossible goal, as no school desegregation policy can erase a long history of discrimination and exclusion, or provide all students with equal opportunities outside of the classroom (Crain and Mahard, 1978, 49). Despite these limitations, integration policies can bring us closer to equality.

Of equal importance, particularly as America's classrooms and workforce become more diverse, is cultivating a citizenry that is understanding of different backgrounds, cultures, and

viewpoints. This applies not only to ensuring that white students are taught to understand and

question the institutional systems that have maintained segregated schools, neighborhoods and

workplaces well into the twenty-first century, but to also teaching minority students and

encouraging them to see a brighter future for themselves, and instill greater confidence in them.

In the United States today, white students make up only 60% of the school age demographic,

which is down from 80% during the Civil Rights era, and is expected to drop to below 50% by

the middle of the twenty-first century (Frankenberg, 2007, 8). Considering that white students

remain the most racially isolated of any other racial group, it can be reasonably argued that they

may in fact be the most impacted by remaining segregated as the nation rapidly diversifies

(Frankenberg, 2007). While existing structural class and race privilege will likely mean many

white students will remain in positions of power, and continue to have access to more

educational opportunity, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's majority opinion in the affirmative

action case *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) presented a strong argument that segregation hurts white

students as well as minority students.

> "Numerous studies show that student body diversity promotes learning outcomes,
> and 'better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society,
> and better prepares them as professionals'... These benefits are not theoretical but
> real, as major American businesses have made clear than the skills needed in
> today's increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure
> to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints…" (Quoted in Orfield
> and Lee, 2004, 8).

Though the case of *Grutter* did not focused on compulsory public school education, Justice

O'Connor's reasoning and the decision of the majority highlight the national importance of

preparing students for an increasingly diverse society and workplace (Orfield and Lee, 2004).

Integrating students can also play an important role in combating discrimination that can

affect the educational attitudes and trajectories of minority students. Speaking at the peak of the

Civil Rights movement, Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. made the argument that "segregation is evil" citing reasons including the effect it has on perpetuating inequality beyond a lack of classroom resources (1956). "...In the sense that they would not have had the opportunity of communicating with all children. You see, equality is not only a matter of mathematics and geometry, but it's a matter of psychology...The doctrine of separate but equal can never be…" (cited in Orfield and Lee, 2004, 5). This psychological impact is not simply moving rhetoric but has instead has real impacts on students, as a series of interviews with African American students who transferred into a white suburban school district demonstrated. The experience of attending an integrated school improved student attitudes and self-confidence about themselves and their future potential among African American students (discussed in Wells, 2001).

Arguments against integration policy

Despite evidence that integration can have benefits for all students, as well as the increasing need to prepare citizens for an increasingly diverse nation, there are strong counter arguments against prioritizing integration policies. For one, some critics fear that pushing minority students to accept white culture or, as Justice Thomas feared, assuming that majority minority schools are inherently less successful are both problematic ways of thinking about integration. A policy of encouraging integration as a way to instill a common culture among all students in the same way could be criticized because it allows schools to determine what is acceptable or desirable in terms of culture. This would also be counter to the goal of promoting knowledge and understanding of different people and different backgrounds. The experience of minority students who have transferred into white suburban schools has not been entirely positive, and many students have experienced hurtful treatment by their new peers, teachers, and administrators, to say nothing of the continued threat of second-generation segregation with

academic tracking (Wells and Crain, 2001). These concerns, along with others, have been

voiced by some who believe too much emphasis has been placed on integration at the expense of

supporting neighborhood schools which cater to a majority minority demographic but perhaps in

a supportive and empowering way.

As Moskowitz (2015) notes, desegregation efforts have also experienced pushback from

from both white families adverse to seeing their students in integrated classrooms, and among

black activists and families who saw the integration of schools as a loss of political and

economic power, and community control. The conflict over best practices for addressing the

achievement gap, and ensuring quality schools for black students can be observed through the

National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and their complex

relationship with integration policy throughout the later part of the twentieth century. Despite

being one of the petitioners in *Brown v. Board of Education*, there has been discontent, at least

among local chapter members and executives, surrounding the effectiveness and desirability of

integration policies, exasperated by the unequal pressures that busing policies placed on black

communities (Moskowitz, 2015). Instead some researchers, including political scientists

Carmichael and Hamilton, pushed for a policy of community control. "The point is obvious:

black people must lead and run their own organizations. Only black people can convey the

revolutionary idea-and it is a revolutionary idea-that black people are able to do things

themselves" (quoted in Moskowitz, 2015, 19). These arguments support the stregthening of

neighborhood schools and the maintenance of community control instead of challenging

segregated schools. Due to America's long history of housing segregation, community control

and integration are often mutually exclusive policies.

> "What should be clear then is that in most cases, often due to residential
> neighborhood segregation, integrated schools and neighborhoods schools are often

impossible to create simultaneously. To attend both a true neighborhood school and an integrated school one must live in a rare American neighborhood – one that is integrated. Given these circumstances, schools districts and citizens are often forced to choose between the two." (Moskowitz, 2015, 21).

Reaching consensus

Despite the valid arguments that integration policy can be harmful for minority communities or strip away local control of schools, both the evidence of the benefits of integrated schools for students, as well as the long term policy goals of a more equitable and culturally aware citizenry suggest that integration must remain at the forefront of education policy in the twenty-first century. However, despite the contention that integration is an important policy goal that does not mean that it should not be approached in a way that maintains agency for all students and families. Rather than expecting minority students to conform to majority white school customs and expectations, a bi-directional, diversity driven option is possible and should be seen as a potential opportunity for supporting integration while remaining respectful of different students cultures and backgrounds. This chapter will provide important historical context in order to better understand the barriers which exist, both past and present, to the integration of schools in the United States. In chapter one, a model of intentionally diverse charter schools was introduced, and this chapter will explore the potential of that educational innovation by highlighting the ways in which public choice options, like charters, can address integration in ways that traditional public schools cannot. This chapter seeks to lay the foundation for how schools of choice could serve as an opportunity to attract students beyond designated district lines, and when done with an integration goal in mind, can serve to educate all students, preparing them for an increasingly diverse workforce and country.

Segregation in U.S. Schools: Barriers to Equality

The seminal case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) reversed the precedent of *Plessey v. Ferguson* (1896) and ruled that "separate was inherently unequal" in America's public schools. This decision has been considered one of the most significant constitutional rulings on education in the country's history, and resulted in the striking down of 17 state policies which segregated students on account of their race (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014). The decision of the Warren Court was met with great celebration by civil rights activists and those who opposed segregation. It is worth noting that Thurgood Marshall stated it would be only five years before all schools in the United States were desegregated fully (Patterson, 2001). Despite the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education,* it should be understood that, while the ruling had great symbolic meaning, the actual implementation of the law through the desegregation of schools has failed in significant ways.

This section will explore the barriers to desegregation which persisted past the Supreme Court's decision that state-mandated separation of the races was unconstitutional. Next, a consideration of what segregation means for students, and the way it negatively impacts the educational opportunities for all children will then be reviewed to illustrate the ongoing pressing need to integrate over sixty years after the *Brown* decision was decided. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a review of more recent affirmative action cases in primary and secondary education, as well as barriers to desegregation present in U.S. education policy today. This chapter will lay the foundation for why integration remains a pressing need for education policy today, despite the many failures at its implementation in the past. Despite America's failure to achieve meaningful integration, as this thesis will argue, intentionally diverse charter schools provide a strong potential avenue for furthering integration as a goal today.

The 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* began a period of focus on integration for some and opposition to integration by others. Yet, the Supreme Court's decision was not a self-fulfilling prophecy and would instead need to be implemented with the help of many powerful white leaders, and maintained through systematic structural changes to the current state of schools. Though the passage of *Brown* began the process of school integration, very little was accomplished in the direct aftermath of the landmark decision (Reardon & Owens, 2014).

The 1955 case of *Briggs v. Elliot* determined that the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown* did not find that segregation was unconstitutional, but rather the state was forbidden by the Constitution to "enforce segregation." This interpretation of the decision became known as the "Briggs Dictum," and served as form of encouragement for states and school districts that opposed integration, prompting them to find other implicit ways to keep the races separate in educational spaces (Patterson, 2001). Among the most widely used of these seemingly color-blind methods of maintaining segregation was to implement "pupil placement strategies" in which students would be placed into schools through a variety of considerations including preparedness, aptitude, morals, conduct, health and personal standards (Patterson, 2001, 100). Though these policies never explicitly mentioned race, they did have the effect of maintaining segregation in schools, as was illustrated in Virginia, where not a single black student was found qualified to be placed in a school with white students (Patterson, 2001). This strategy of pupil placement remains in schools and districts today through tracking measures, which in some cases are used to impose segregated classrooms even in schools that appear to have integration (Brown, 2009). Tracking, or the issue of separating students into different academic trajectories,

continues to serve as a way that even schools with a more diverse student demographic perpetuate segregation and the achievement gap in schools. Though the issue of tracking is not the focus of this paper, it does provide another important consideration when assessing what integration really looks like in U.S. classrooms.

Segregation between black and white students in U.S. schools, especially in southern schools, declined dramatically during the first period of integration which the Brown decision began, though most of this change occurred after 1968 (Reardon & Owens, 2014). The Civil Rights Act brought about a new level of power and responsibility for the federal government to enforce the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, as well as require a greater amount of reporting on the implementation of desegregation efforts to the U.S. Department of Education on behalf of schools and districts (Brown, 2004). The effect of this increased vigilance on the part of the federal government was to make suing segregated school districts the responsibility of the Attorney General without plaintiffs having to hire their own attorney and risk the repercussions of going up against the school districts largely on their own (Brown, 2004). In 1968, the progress of the Civil Rights Act was furthered by the Supreme Court's ruling in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* which determined that school districts needed to more effectively adopt plans to achieve integration goals, which in turn led to hundreds of school districts being placed under court ordered desegregation plans (Reardon & Owens, 2014). Regardless of what metric is employed to measure segregation between white and black students, the evidence is clear that between 1968 and the mid-1970s segregation declined drastically, and continued to decline into the 1980s (Reardon & Owens, 2014).

Despite the positive rhetoric put forth in the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act, these perceived advances did not address the issue of other minority students, or segregation in states where there were no explicit laws requiring separate schools. This applied largely to schools in the northern states that experienced segregation even though there were no laws requiring the separation of students based on race (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014). The limitations of both the Supreme Court's decision and the Civil Rights Act illustrate the difference between *de jure* and *de facto* segregation. De jure segregation refers to segregation that is being perpetuated by the courts or legislature of the federal or state government, such as the segregation laws that the Supreme Court struck down in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. De facto segregation is far more vague, and includes any "voluntary" segregation that occurs through people's personal choices, or "other factors" as Chief Justice John Roberts defined it in the 2007 Supreme Court case *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No.1* (Erickson, 2011, 42).

Similarly, the language of the Civil Rights Act specifically targeted the types of segregation orders that had been present in the South, without naming or addressing the way the issue manifested in the North. Using the more accepted term in the North of "racial imbalance" rather than segregation, the Act allowed federal enforcement to be focused on the South and the North was given the leniency to continue opposing busing and redistricting measures (Delmont, 2015-2016). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 adopted this language stating, "'Desegregation' means the assignment of students to public schools and within such schools without regard to their race, color, religion, or national origin, but 'desegregation' shall not mean the assignment of students to public schools in order to overcome racial imbalance" (quoted in Delmont, 2015-

2016). It was this dismissal of de facto segregation that allowed education segregation to

continue to manifest in the North due to housing segregation and blocked federally-mandated

integration efforts.

Judicial obstructions and waning court support for integration

The differential treatment of so-called "de facto" segregation has been demonstrated

through various court cases since the decision in *Brown* and has contributed to a weakened

ability to accomplish or enforce desegregation through both court mandated and voluntary

methods (Stroub & Richards, 2013, 500). Vergon argues that the decision in *Brown* marked the

beginning of an almost two decade long period when the Court "spoke with a singular voice in

every major school desegregation decision" during the time (1994, 486). However, according to

Vergon, this consensus ended by the mid 1970's when the Court became more split on the issue

(1994). This section will explore the most significant cases on the ability of schools to

desegregate.

Milliken v. Bradley was decided in 1974, and served as the first judicial turn against

desegregation goals (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014, 723). In *Milliken,* the Court ruled against the

redrawing of district lines around the city of Detroit for the purpose of desegregating schools.

The legal question of the case was whether or not the federal court could require a multi-district

solution to desegreate, if the other school districts included in the plan were not found to have

intentionally segregated their schools (*Milliken v. Bradley*, n.d.). In other words, the Court was

called to rule on whether or not surrounding school districts could be used for the purpose of

mitigating the effects of de jure segregation in a single district. The majority found that without

evidence that the school districts surrounding the Detroit district did not enforce explicit

segregation of school assignment, they could not be compelled to become a part of the Detroit district's desegregation plan (*Milliken v. Bradely*, n.d.).

Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Burger rejected the dissenters argument that statewide agencies "participated in maintaining the dual system found to exist in Detroit" and thus warranted the incorporation of surrounding districts in order to mediate the negative impacts that statewide segregation had on Detroit (*Milliken v. Bradley*, 1974, 418). This decision served as a "roadblock" for metropolitan integration that had the effect of limiting the options of interdistrict desegregation plans (Vergon, 1994. 486). The precedent set in *Milliken*, that interdistrict options either needed to be voluntary forms of school choice, or could only be implemented in the adjacent districts had been involved in creating a unitary system within a segregated district. This has had the long-term effect of minimizing the ability to create interdistrict integration plans in the north to combat the most common cause of segregation, namely, housing segregation due to policies of suburbanization and redlining.

Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools illustrates the concerns that Orfield and Frankenberg (2014), along with other researchers, express that the 1990's brought a rejection of the integration that had been introduced to formerly de jure segregated districts. In *Oklahoma City Public Schools* the Court ruled that the city no longer had to maintain its desegregation plan after complying for a reasonable amount of time, and achieving integration (Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools v. Dowell, n.d.). The majority ruled, "The legal justification for displacement of local authority by an injunctive decree in a school desegregation case is a violation of the Constitution by the local authorities" (*Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools v. Dowell*,1991, 498). The majority called upon the precedent set in *Milliken* which determined that "necessary concern for the important values of local control of public

school systems dictates that a federal court's regulatory control of such systems not extended beyond the time required to remedy the effects of past intentional discrimination" (1974, 498).

The Court reached this decision despite the claims of respondents who argued the city's new plan was a step backwards to segregated schools and would lead to 11 out of 64 elementary schools having over 90% black students (*Oklahoma City Public Schools v. Dowell*, 1991). The effect of *Oklahoma City Public Schools* was to establish a two part test for determining whether desegregation obligations had been met. First, districts must prove that they had observed the desegregation plan for a reasonable time and showed good faith and, second, districts had to prove that they had removed the markings of former segregation to the extent possible (Vergon, 1994). This case, along with the willingness of courts across the country to end court ordered desegregation plans in many areas, demonstrate a need for integrative measures that are by parental choice, rather than left up to changing courts and ideologies of judges and policy makers.

The most recent Supreme Court case to related to desegregation of public schools was *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No.1* (2007). In *Parents Involved*, the Court struck down the use of an integration plan that used race as a determinant for student school assignments. The majority argued that though alleviating the impacts of past intentional discrimination was a compelling interest, no such interest existed in this case because the Seattle schools had not had de jure segregation, or been compelled by the courts to present a desegregation plan (*Parents Involved*, n.d.). The majority called upon the precedent of *Brown* to argue that the very goal of the case was to "prevent states from according differential treatment to American children on the basis of their color or race" (quoted in *Parents Involved*, 2007, 40). The decision in *Parents Involved* has been strongly criticized by many for the way it limits

school districts and cities that want to voluntarily take steps towards integrating schools and diversifying classrooms. The changed way that the courts have responded to desegregation overtime demonstrates the legal barriers which integration efforts will continue to run into, as illustrated by Brown's (2004) assessment, "One lesson from Brown is that most efforts to secure equality in this country sooner or later run into a form of de facto segregation that no American court is likely to strike down: segregation by social class or wealth" (186). Rather, the differentiation between segregation that results from independent decision making and segregation that results from federal, state or judicial action does not account for a national history that allowed for the creation of an unequal array of options for white citizens, from housing policy to transportation policy (Erickson, 2011, 42).   The failure of busing, and the issues of white flight, exclusionary districting and housing remain issues that contribute to the continuation of "de facto" segregation today all over the country, and will be considered in greater depth later in this chapter. The next section will explore the scope of segregation today in our nations neighborhood and schools.

Segregation Today

As discussed above, it is clear that segregation did not end with the Supreme Court's decision in 1954. Though de jure segregation laws in schools were struck down, states, districts and schools still found ways to maintain segregation protected under the guise of de facto excuses, as did individuals through the ability to exercise choice of where to live and where to send their children to school. The limitation of *Brown* to fully eradicate racial segregation, largely between black and white people, raises the question of what segregation looks like today. In fact when considering the state of segregation in schools in the United States today, two things become evident. First, segregation was never actually eliminated, particularly in the north where

de jure school segregation was not as strong of a factor in creating the racial isolation of students and was thus not as strongly impact by the *Brown v. Board* decision as in the south. Second, there is evidence that school segregation is on the rise today, despite ample research that it is harmful to student success.

The current scope of segregation

A consideration of current segregation trends in the United States reveals that while there is a correlation between housing segregation and school segregation, increased residential integration alone is not enough to fully integrate schools. Contemporary research and scholarship on racial and socioeconomic segregation is largely concerned with whether or not the United States is more or less segregated than it has been in the years since the Civil Rights movement. Orfield, along with his peers, argue in their research that diminishing legal support for integration among other factors has resulted in the resegregation of American public schools since the progress of the civil rights era (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, Wang, 2010; Orfield & Frankenberg, 2014).

Recent research determined an increase in segregation in the South, where the largest progress toward school integration had been made following the *Brown* case and Civil Rights movement. This demonstrates a painful loss of ground toward more equitable schools in a region of the country where the historical significance of school integration was perhaps most important (Stroub & Richards, 2013). In addition to the segregation felt in the South, Stroub and Richards (2013) also found evidence of increasing segregation among non-white students between districts Reardon and Yun (2002) found that in 1990 public schools in metropolitan counties were typically 40% less segregated than the residential communities in the area. Ten years later in 2000, this number had dropped 13% making schools only 13% less segregated than

the corresponding housing markets and thus showing a steep decrease in the effectiveness of desegregation efforts. In fact, Stroub and Richards (2013) found that 60% of school segregation is between districts, which when applied to the metropolitan areas studied by the researchers means that even if students were evenly integrated within their districts, segregation could only be reduced by 40%. Stroub and Richards conclude that this finding illustrates the need for "integration solutions transcending district boundaries" (2013, 528). The conclusion of this chapter will apply this policy suggestion to the contemporary debate on school choice, and will prepare for later analysis into the way integrative charter schools can become that solution.

Measuring segregation is a bit challenging, in part because there are competing measures to do so. There are two metrics typically used for identifying levels of segregation; first is unevenness or dissimilarity and second is levels of isolation or exposure (Reardon & Owens, 2014; Iceland & Sharp, 2013). The first method of unevenness measures for how evenly distributed a population of students is among schools and can be translated into a dissimilarity index which illustrates how a school population would have to change in order to reach an equal proportions of different demographics of students in each of the schools in a district (Reardon & Owens, 2014). The second method of measuring segregation through isolation or exposure measures the extent to which students are in schools with very high or very low proportions of a single race or socioeconomic status and are therefore impacted by the overall racial composition of a district in a way that unevenness or dissimilarity measurements are not (Stroub &Richards, 2013; Reardon & Owens, 2014; Iceland & Sharp, 2013).

Some critics argue that desegregation is a myth based on the premise that measures of exposure are not appropriate for assessing current levels of integration (VerBruggen 2018). VerBruggen argues that it is the changing demographic of the nation, not the reversal of

desegregation court orders argued by Orfield and Frankenberg (2014), that can give people the sense that American schools are resegregating (2018).

> "But contrary to a popular liberal narrative of nationwide resegregation, this has merely balanced out a fortunate (and mostly unengineered) trend of residential integration, leaving American schoolchildren writ large no more segregated than they were a couple of decades back — and roughly as segregated in schools as they are in their neighborhoods. This bodes well for the future. Assuming neighborhoods continue to integrate, schools will become increasingly integrated as well once desegregation orders are fully left in the past and their steady elimination no longer cancels out gains within neighborhoods." (VerBruggen, 2018)

VerBruggen's largely agrees with Owens and Reardon's analysis that the differences in what is being gauged by these measurements highlights different considerations of segregation, and can result in different conclusions about the proliferation of segregation today (Reardon & Owens, 2014).

Stancil responded directly to VerBruggen's argument by countering that the focus on "exposure" measurements was "too simple" of an explanation, and that "There is plenty of evidence that resegregation is urgently real" (2018). As Stancil explains, different perceptions of the status of segregation can be gathered because the United States and its schools are changing in multiple ways at once including population and demographic change, school openings and closings, and district lines changing (2018). Stancil and Chang each conclude that even as districts become more racially diverse, districts are becoming more dissimilar from one another (Stancil, 2018; Chang, 2018). What's more, Stancil provides additional evidence for the trend of resegregation in schools by highlighting the easier metric of socioeconomic status, and the intersectionality of these two issues. "The existence of economic segregation does not contradict evidence of racial segregation—it helps confirm it. It shows that, underneath the confounding effects of growing diversity, American schoolchildren are still being divided on the basis of

social caste" (Stancil, 2018).   Students are in increasingly segregated schools that are

experiences the double effects of racial and socioeconomic isolation. Despite the different

conclusions which can be reached depending upon the measurement methods employed or the

factors considered in an analysis, most researchers largely agree that racial and socioeconomic

isolation remains present in neighborhoods, and thus remains a point of consideration for

policymakers.

Additional Barriers to Integration

As considered earlier in the chapter, efforts at integration since the *Brown* ruling have

been uneven. There have been multiple attempts at integration which have been met with public

backlash and ultimately failure. This section will consider some of the historic and current

methods through which integration has been attempted in order to make the case for role of

intentionally diverse charter schools that will be reviewed more deeply in this thesis.

Busing: Historical and contemporary context

One important integrative tool to consider when looking back at the history of

implementing the *Brown* decision is inter-district busing and the failure it met in cities like New

York and Boston. Busing was utilized to desegregate districts that were placed under court

ordered desegregation plans, in order to achieve a greater evenness of students within the schools

of the districts. Busing plans were controversial because of the effect that they had on keeping

students from attending their neighborhood schools in order to achieve greater racial equity

(Yellin & Firestone, 1999). Despite the progress made by the Johnson administration through

the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, the "Southern Strategy" of the Nixon administration

slowed much of this success, and slowed the enforcement of desegregation efforts (Orfield &

Frankenberg, 2014, 723; Brown, 2004). Nixon's efforts to capture southern votes by opposing

integration was continued by Ronald Reagan, as illustrated by his 1984 campaign speech in Charlotte, North Carolina where he vehemently spoke out against busing as a means of integrating schools. He argued that "busing takes innocent children out of the neighborhood school and makes them pawns in a social experiment that nobody wants" (quoted in Brown, 2004, 188). These calls were a critique of the 1971 decision in *Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education*, which determined that school boards could use race as a determinant of school assignments in order to serve an integrating purpose (Brown, 2009). The precedent set in *Swann* was effectively overthrown in 2001 by *Belk v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education,* in which the Fourth Circuit Court determined that the policy's goal of integration had been achieved and thus was no longer required to achieve a "unitary" school system (Brown, 2009, 520; Yellin & Firestone, 1999).

Delmont explains that busing has never been a "politically neutral word" and that treating it as such ignores the fact that "this term developed as a selective way to label and oppose school desegregation" (2015-2016). Delmont provides evidence for his argument by highlighting what he calls "busing before 'busing'" which refers to the use of busing to attend schools further away from their neighborhood school in order to maintain segregation (2015-2016). It was not until busing was used for integration rather than segregation that people became so opposed to it, leading to public unrest and commitment to neighborhood schools. Delmont states that the failure of busing initiatives in places like New York, Boston, Los Angeles, and Chicago can be boiled down to two things; first, white flight from the school districts diminished the ability to build diverse schools in cities even with the use of busing, and second, is the increased burden that busing put on black families and students over white ones (Cornish interview, 2016). As

described earlier in the chapter, the price that desegregation efforts asked for black communities, educators, and students was not small and the impacts on them were significant.

Busing remains an unpopular tool for integration among the public. There has been very little polling data on the issue since 2000 – an indicator of its status as politically unpopular and largely ignored. A 1998 survey conducted by Time to Move On: An Agenda For Public Schools Survey, found evidence of the failure of busing highlighted by Delmont above. The question posed to respondents said, "(I'm going to read you some ways to achieve integrated schools, and ask if you favor or oppose each one.) How about... busing children to achieve a better racial balance in the schools? Do you favor or oppose this? (If Favor/Oppose, ask:) Is that strongly or somewhat favor/oppose?" The question was asked to an equal number of black and white parents with children in grades K-12, and interestingly the question used the less politicized language of "racial balance" that was included in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The survey found that among black respondents, 55% strongly or somewhat favored busing as a way of achieving a better racial balance, and 43% strongly or somewhat opposed it. This outcome is not surprising given Delmont and others analyses of the negative impact that busing was perceived as having for many communities. Among white respondents, only 22% said they strongly or somewhat favored busing as a way to achieve a better racial balance in schools, while 76% strongly or somewhat opposed it (Public Agenda Foundation, March 1998). This data reveals the unpopularity of busing more than four decades after the *Brown* decision and more than three decades after the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Still the data demonstrates an appreciation, at least in theory, for integration though busing was not the desired method through which to accomplish it. A nationally representative random survey of 1,031 adults in the summer of 1999 revealed an interesting cross section of

beliefs. While 68% of respondents said that, they believed integration had improved the quality

of education received by black students, and 59% said that more should be done to integrate

schools; only 15% supported transferring students for the purpose of integration (Gillespie,

1999). The question asked to respondents was

> In your view, which of the following is better -- 1) Letting students go to the local school in their community, even if it means that most of the students would be the same race (or), 2) Transferring students to other schools to create more integration, even if it means that some students would have to travel out of their communities to go to school? (Gillespie, 1999).

Despite the fact that the word 'busing' did not even appear in the question, 82% of respondents

supported letting students attend local schools and only 15% supported transferring students for

integration purposes (Gillespie, 1999). What this data illustrates is that Americans largely have a

positive opinion of integration but not of the traditionally employed methods through which to

obtain it.

Barriers to redistricting

Residential segregation is a practice that has been reinforced in the United States for

decades through personal choices, but also through government policies. Through the use of

exclusionary zoning, the federal government backed the home loans of white people while

refusing them to black people (Chang, 2017). Additionally, the government was involved in the

growth of suburban housing initiatives by backing the loans for the building of new suburban

communities, but required an explicit ban on selling these homes to black families (Chang, 2017;

Rothstein, 2017). In particular, Rothstein (2017) provides deep insight into the divisionary

practices of the federal government to create the residential and school segregation that exist in

the United States today. He argues convincingly that the U.S. government is responsible for first

creating much of segregation in the United States, regardless of whether it is classified as de facto and de jure segregation (Rothstein 2017).

Even with the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968, residential segregation continues to persist; as do school district boundaries and the way they separate these neighborhoods into segregated schools. EdBuild provides maps that demonstrate the bizarre ways in which school district lines have been drawn to reify segregation. A recent report identifies Camden City School District in Camden, New Jersey, the city with the highest poverty rate in the United States (EdBuild, 2015). Of the 16,000 students served by the Camden City School District, 45% live in poverty and 90% students are eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch (EdBuild, 2015). However, surrounding the larger district of Camden are much smaller peripheral districts, most serving fewer than 3,000 students with far lower poverty indexes. For example, located within five miles of Camden are five districts serving between 1,198-2,411 students all with lower than 10% poverty as well as portions of two geographically larger districts serving between 3,406-12,070 students with less than 10% poverty (EdBuild, 2015). The stark differences in district size and poverty level indicate that there are specific goals behind the way school district boundaries are created, which the EdBuild report explains is due to the relationship between property values and the incentive this creates for higher-income communities to protect themselves through these practices (EdBuild, 2015).

This evidence demonstrates the way in which district lines are used to maintain the segregation that federal policies of the past created. The connection between property values and school district lines presents a clear challenge to the ability to redistrict these areas in a way that promotes more economic and racial integration, particularly since the decision in *Milliken* held that federal courts could only impose inter-district desegregation plans to remedy de jure

segregation. The analysis provided by Rothstein, Erikson and others establishes the ways in which de jure segregation applies to much more than our conventional understanding of the term would allow. Thus, the decision proves very limiting for fixing the segregation that is evident in Camden and other places where de jure segregation was not believed to exist.

White flight and parental choice

One clear example of how de facto segregation continues to impact educational segregation can be viewed through parental choice. School choice, or "freedom of choice," played a part in the maintenance of school segregation post *Brown v. Board* (Erickson, 2011; Patterson, 2001; Reardon & Owens, 2014). By extending the freedom of school choice to all families, it is assumed that what results is a color blind selection of schools based on parental preferences, however, as the aftermath of *Brown* illustrated this was not the case. White parents almost never chose to send their children to "black" schools, and black families would have to be the ones to initiate transfers into "white" schools, all the while recognizing that their children could be subject to unfair treatment and discrimination by those who opposed the integration of schools (Patterson, 2001). This example of how choice was used to maintain segregation illustrates a harm of de facto segregation that still exists in the United States today.

This self-segregating from of school choice has often come to be referred to as "white flight" or the exodus of white families to other school districts, neighborhoods, or private schools when integration efforts begin to be successful in their local school. Reardon and Yun (2002) observed that in the South, private school enrollment by white parents is likely used as a method of maintaining segregation, into the 21st century. The researchers found that in 1980, 1990, and 1998 white private school enrollment was closely related to the proportion of school-age black students in the district, which suggests that the private schools were used as a method of leaving

these integrated districts (Reardon & Yun, 2002). Similar observations have been made of public school choice. Researchers Roda and Wells (2013) looked at the effects of public school choice in New York City. The researchers conducted interviews with parents enrolled in a New York school choice program that allowed families to enter a lottery for either general education programs or gifted and talented programs (Roda and Wells, 2013). The study found that white parents said that they valued diversity in the schools that their students attended and even voiced frustration that there were not enough integrated options (Roda and Wells, 2013). Despite this rhetoric, when given the opportunity to choose where their children attended school, many of them favored the less integrated options (Roda and Wells, 2013). The researchers point out that regardless of the market based goals behind implementing these choice options in schools, these programs in New York City were not created with the specific goal of creating racial integration (Roda and Wells, 2013). Despite the research evidence that "color blind" programs likes these tend to increase segregation (Roda and Wells, 2013). This research provides evidence of how difficult the implementation of choice programs can be, because the rhetoric of support is not always what occurs in practice. The researchers conclude by arguing that policies should be focused around racial and social class integration. The researchers state that since parents have voiced support for sending their children to integrated schools, focusing on this goal rather than programs that are in competition with each other could be more effective in accomplishing integration goals (Roda and Wells, 2013).

A recent study of the charter option of school choice in Pennsylvania illustrates that it is not just white parents whose preferences lead to de facto segregation in schools of choice (Frankenberg, Kotok, Schafft, Mann, 2017). The researchers concluded with four main takeaways to be applied to the charter conversation and policy consideration. Frankenberg,

Kotok, Schafft, Mann (2017) found that Black and Latino students tend to move to charter schools with majorities of same race of students, and this move to a charter school in fact put them in more racially isolated schools than the TPS they transferred from..   The authors found that distance to charter schools is an aspect of the decision making process, but is not the only one. Rather families consider other aspects of the schools besides which one is the most conveniently located (Frankenberg, Kotok, Schafft, Mann, 2017). Perhaps most importantly, the researchers conclude that balancing choice with integration efforts will be a difficult task given the enrollment patterns displayed by the black, Latino, and white families they researched, "Such diverging behaviors, holding other factors constant, complicate efforts to create diverse schools when allowing for extensive family choice—and may help to explain the relatively few racially diverse charter options that exist" (Frankenberg, Kotok, Schafft, Mann, 2017, 21).

Charter Schools and How They Fit into the Conversation

After reviewing what is known about segregation in American cities and towns as well as in schools, researchers and policymakers are left to consider what comes next. In the face of increasingly segregated schools, and the knowledge researchers have about the detrimental impacts this has on student success, it is evident that integration in schools remains an important and necessary education policy goal. However, precedent set by the courts has made it increasingly difficult to use race as a determinant in student placement, which has created another barrier for creating more racial and socioeconomic evenness in classrooms and schools. School choice, in theory gives families the opportunity to integrate beyond what the school districts are able to accomplish through research has shown that parental choice especially in the form of "white flight" have played a role in the continuation of segregated schools. Despite this troubling trend that has been observed throughout the country's attempts to integrate, the

research of Roda and Wells (2013) into parental choice in New York City revealed evidence that diversity is important to parents in the metropolitan area, despite it not being achieved in reality. This finding suggests that while current methods of school choice are not leading to integration, there is still a possibility for them to do so and for it to be desirable to families.

Charter schools arguably have the ability to be designed to achieve such a result because of their ability to pull students from multiple districts, and, thus, target the type of segregation that is most contributing to the continued segregation of students. The following chapter will analyze charter schools that are making integration a part of their mission, and examine the ways that they seek to encourage diversity despite the barriers to integration discussed in this chapter.

Chapter III: Data Analysis of Diverse Charter Schools

Thus far, I have discussed the existing evidence and literature in order to highlight some key components of school choice, historic causes of segregation, as well as the contemporary issue that segregation still poses for our nation's schools and students. This research has made the following points clear. Firstly, charter schools are a popular but controversial innovation in education policy with many different models, some of which have potential to assist in the development of solutions for education issues, including segregation (Kahlenberg & Potter, 2014). Second, parents support integration, but they also want educational choice options (Moskowitz, 2015; Whitehurst, 2012). Third, despite the legal precedent of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, segregation has not gone away, and has by some measures grown in recent decades (Stancil, 2018).

What this research illustrates is the potential for school choice, such as charters, to increase integration. This potential requires that more research is done on intentionally diverse charter schools in order to better understand the experiences of these schools and networks so that best practices can be developed to implement the model and the adoption of effective integration policies by traditional public schools. Kahlenberg and Potter have contributed substantially to this body of work, as have charter organizations such as the Diverse Charter School Coalition and the National Association of Public Charter Schools. This chapter will contribute to this body of work as well, and provide further evidence and analysis of the experiences of intentionally diverse charters in order to better inform future policies.

In order to contribute to the developing body of work about the potential of diverse charter schools, I conducted qualitative interviews with charter school leaders. This method of research has been employed by Kahlenberg and Potter, as much of their work has included case

studies on successful diverse charter schools, as well as various case studies completed by news outlets which included information about diverse charters as the model has grown in recent years. The purpose of these interviews was to better understand the experiences of those involved in the work that diverse charter schools take on, and to inspire best practices for future growth. Although research does exist on this topic, diverse by design charter schools are still an emerging model and research is not extensive on the merits of this practice. This chapter, and the research that inspired it, provides evidence of the potential of these types of schools and supports the existing research in the field.

Methods

Type of data collected

I collected the data in this chapter by completing qualitative interviews with school leaders whose charter school or charter network are members of the Diverse Charter School Coalition. These interviews were semi-structured and covered a variety of topics pertinent to the development of the diverse charter model. The main areas discussed included school mission, perceived benefits and challenges of a diverse charter school model, recruiting and yielding strategies, collaboration with the community or traditional public schools, and impressions of state and district charter laws. These topics are important for understanding the similarities and differences between charter schools with diversity missions, in order to better understand what aspects of these schools can be replicated and under what circumstances and contexts. Outreach and interviews were conducted with school leaders, though no strict parameters were placed on what titles constituted a "school leader" in order to allow for flexibility between the ways in which different schools structured their leadership. The interviews that were conducted took place with two executive directors, three founders, one director of community development, one president and CEO, and one school principal. All of these individuals had a depth of

understanding about how diversity was practiced and encouraged through different aspects of school operations, though not all individuals were in their positions at the time that the school was founded. The limited tenure of some individuals does serve as a potential limitation to the ability of these newer school leaders to speak to the initial diversity goals of the school at its founding, it also offers a diversity of perspectives that provide an interesting scope of the diverse school experience.

Source of the sample

As previously mentioned, the participant schools for these interviews were selected from the list of charter schools that as of early 2018 are members of the Diverse Charter School Coalition (DCSC). This Coalition was founded in 2014 and has received attention from various media outlets (Potter, 2015; Tatter, 2014; Osborne & Langhorn, 2017). Since its founding, DCSC has grown from 14 member schools, to 44 members representing over 100 individual schools and over 45,000 students (DCSC, n.d. b). The mission statement of the DCSC is:

> The vision of DCSC is that an ever-growing number of American public schools, including many charter schools, will embody the diversity of our nation's people – across race, socioeconomic status, language and abilities – while preparing the children in their care to pursue higher education, meaningful and sustainable work in a global economy, and an equal role in a more cohesive and connected participatory democracy (DCSC, n.d. b)

DCSC seeks to support diverse charter schools by connecting them with other schools and resources, as well as supporting research into the impacts of diversity in education and advocating for supportive policies. In order to join, the DCSC says they require approval and vetting, and explain that they are looking for schools that demonstrate a commitment to diversity in both mission and practice, despite not having "all of the answers" (n.d. a). The application for membership requires schools to reflect on their diversity goals, strategies and student achievement data (DCSC, n.d. a).

Table 1:

Location of DCSC Members
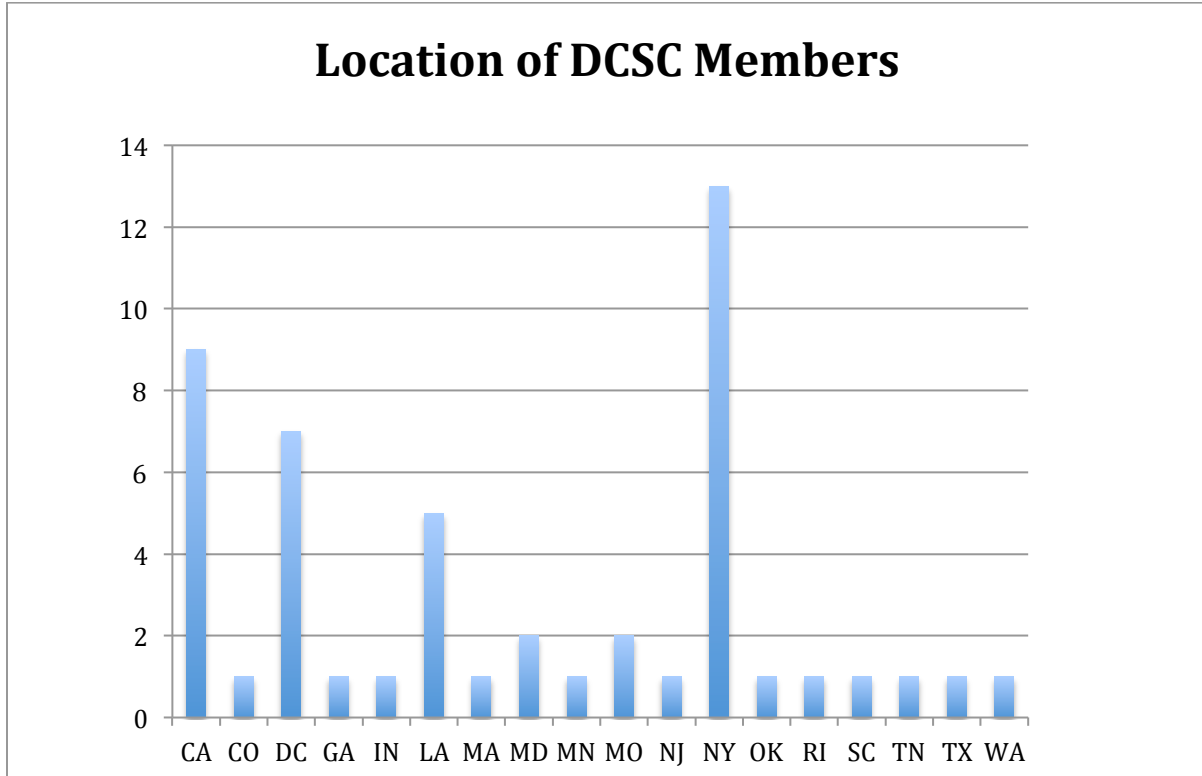
DCSC member schools and networks operate in 18 states, with California, Washington D.C. Louisiana, and New York as the most popular locations. Diverse Charter School Coalition. (n.d. a). Our Members. Retrieved from http://diversecharters.org/members/
Note: Charter networks that operate in multiple states are factored into the totals for those states.

Sample selection

  I used the online list of DCSC member schools and networks to collect contact information for members. Some members were made up of multiple schools, sometimes serving different ages of students (i.e. an elementary school and a middle school), and/or having different locations and campuses for separate schools that are related and regulated under the same charter umbrella. In the cases of these members, if available, contact information was recorded for the central office of the network. If there was no central office contact information available, each of the individual schools in the network were recorded along with contact information for school leaders at each school.

Email was the method of outreach utilized for contacting individuals for interviews, so initial contact was limited to those schools who had email addresses listed on their websites. An initial round of emails was sent out to twenty-six individuals, and six schools responded and agreed to interviews. A second, much more limited, round of emails were sent out in order to try to attract more New York schools for a potential case study into the particular experiences of schools in that state. This second round included sending a follow up emails to New York schools that had been contacted in the first round of outreach, as well as more thoroughly searching for contact information for other New York schools and contacting them. In the end, twenty-eight individuals were contacted by email for interviews and eight interviews were conducted. The interviews ranged in length from between 20 minutes and just under one hour.

The Schools highlighted in this essay

This section offers a basic description of each of the schools where a school leader was interviewed for this project. I spoke to school leaders at eight diverse charters for the purposes of my research, four of which were located in New York in order to inform the case study in the next chapter. The other schools were located in three different states including South Carolina, Louisiana, and Georgia as well as Washington D.C. In the Appendix, there is a directory of contact people for these interviews and information about when they were conducted. The interviews utilized in this section are all a result of personal communication and are not published independently from this paper.

Lead Academy Greenville, SC

Lead Academy opened its doors in the fall of 2010. Initially serving grade 5-8, the school has since expanded to serve students in kindergarten through eighth grade (Lead Academy, n.d. a). Diversity is listed as one of the school's core values (Lead Academy, n.d. b).

Bricolage Academy New Orleans, LA

Located in New Orleans, Bricolage opened in the fall of 2013 and serves students from grade

kindergarten through fifth grade (Bricolage, 2018 b). Diversity is built into the school's name as

a bricolage refers to a "mash up" of different things and the school believes it's mission is to

embody that in an educational setting. "We are a mash-up of backgrounds, instructional

approaches and people, but our overriding educational philosophy strives to develop students

into creative problem solvers who will change the world" (Bricolage Academy, 2018 a).

Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School Washington, DC

The oldest of the charter schools considered in this research, EW Stokes opened in the fall of

1998 and has grown to serve 350 preschool through fifth graders. A unique aspect of EW Stokes

is its dual language curriculum in which students take classes in either Spanish or French (Elsie

Whitlow Stokes, 2015).

Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School Atlanta, GA

ANCS opened in 2002 serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade, and expanded to

serve sixth through eighth grade in 2005 through a merger with another Atlanta charter school

(Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, 2018 c). The school includes diversity as one of its core

values (ANCS, 2018 d). The school maintains a primary attendance zone and actively recruits

within that boundary to attract a diverse population including the use of a weighted lottery that

gives preference to socioeconomically disadvantaged students (ANCS, 2018 b).

Hebrew Public Charter School New York, NY

Hebrew public is a charter network that operates 10 schools across the country, including schools

in New York City community school districts 3, 21, and 22 (Hebrew Public Charter Schools for

Global Citizens, 2017 a; Hebrew Language Academy, 2017; Hebrew Language Academy 2,

2017; Harlem Hebrew, 2017) Across the network, Hebrew Public serves over 2,660 students, through a curriculum that includes a modern Hebrew language component (Hebrew Public, 2017 a). Diversity is part of the school's mission (Hebrew Public, 2017 b).

Brooklyn Urban Garden School Brooklyn, NY

Brooklyn Urban Garden School opened in 2010 with the goal of providing New York City community school district 15 with more middle school spots (Susan Tenner, personal communication, March 20, 2018; B.U.G.S., n.d.). The school has an emphasis on sustainability projects and interdisciplinary problem solving. The admissions lottery utilizes a weighting system in favor of English Language Learners and follows the New York State requirement to offer preference to students who reside in District 15 (B.U.G.S, n.d.).

Elmwood Village Charter Schools Buffalo, NY

Elmwood Village educates 575 students in kindergarten through eighth grade in Buffalo, NY (Elmwood Village Charter Schools, 2009-c). The school has expanded to a second campus that will grow to mirror the original location (EVCS, 2009-a). Pursuant to New York State law the school pulls students from the lottery from the city of Buffalo before accepting students from out of the attendance boundary (EVCS, 2009-b).

Community Roots Charter School Brooklyn, NY

Community Roots opened in 2006 and serves students in kindergarten through eighth grade on two campuses in Brooklyn, NY. The school is committed to diversity and inclusion and utilizes a weighted admissions lottery to maintain 40% of its student body is from the nearby public (Sahba Rohani, personal communication, April 11, 2018; Community Roots Charter School, n.d.).

This study did not require IRB approval because participating individuals and schools consented to having their names used, and, thus, there was no need for confidentiality. Additionally, the nature of the questions were about the practices of the school rather than individuals' own beliefs or opinions. The recorded interviews were transcribed and then coded for common themes or particularly unique ideas to be used in this data analysis section as well as provide evidence for the concluding chapter's policy recommendations.

Themes and Analysis

School Mission

One of the broad concepts explored in these interviews was finding out more about the individual school's missions and how they pursue putting that mission into practice. One theme that came through in the interviews with intentionally diverse charter school leaders was that although diverse charter schools largely expressed a founding mission of using the school as a tool for diversity, there were some interesting exceptions to this overall theme. This suggests that though perhaps less common, charter schools that wish to adopt a diverse design do not need to be founded with such an intent. This theme can be best observed by looking at the founding mission of the schools and the goals that the charters hoped to accomplish, which reveals additional interesting insight into what prompted many of these schools to open their doors.

Responding to a changing national demographic

One concept that was voiced by multiple schools was the idea that there is a need that exists for schools that are going to prepare students for an increasingly diverse country. In describing the motivation behind the founding of Lead Academy in Greenville, Principal Chase Willingham explained that due to school segregation in the city, there was a desire among the founding members to provide students with a diverse option because of the exposure it would give them to people and ideas that were different from their own.

So as a charter school, because we have taken kids from all over the county and even outside of the county, we decided we wanted our student body to be representative of the city we live in, the county we live in, and even the country we live in. We feel like a lot of our kids, even my own kids, were not being prepared for what they are going to come across when they're going to school with the same people they go to church with and the same people they play soccer or basketball with. It is the same people every day, so we, to hit that diversity.

What Principal Willingham's explanation points to is the perceived flexibility that the charter provided to the school founders in terms of offering students an educational setting in which they would be exposed to more diversity than their traditional community schools. This analysis also points out another issue in using neighborhood-based school assignment, since those neighborhoods also end up being the places in which students do so many of their formative activities (religious observance, extracurricular activities, etc.). By harnessing the potential that the charter model offered, Lead Academy was able to give students a diverse educational setting that would prepare them better for the future.

The leaders I interviewed from Elsie Whitlow Stokes and Bricolage Academy both expressed motivation that was grounded in responding to growing evidence that diverse educational settings were needed. Elsie Whitlow Stokes founder Linda Moore explained that prior to the school opening its doors in 1998, she was inspired by research that the country's demographics were changing, and that education system was not keeping up with these needs.

The value really came from having studied something about demographic changes to this country, and when I say having studied probably as early as the late 1980's um it was really clear to demographers that the demographics of the nation were going to be changing so that there would be more brown, black, and Asian students in the education pipeline, and the concern at that time was that public school administrators and teachers were probably not prepared to consider who these students were going to be. There weren't that many teachers-there was a declining number of teachers of color there were concerns about curriculum, for example in literature up until that time most of the books were, particularly for young children, were the same books that were around when I was a child 99 years ago and there was no reflection on the emerging {inaudible} children's literature by and about children of color. So there were a whole lot of issues pertinent to

education that were emerging at that time. So part of the commitment to that value came from a study of the value of what was anticipated future reality and that we always, at the school had in mind, um preparing students for not only the world that existed but also the world that would be around when they were old enough to take {inaudible} leadership positions so we wanted them to learn in their schooling in a situation where they would learn to deal with all kinds of people.

Linda Moore's assessment, and her reflection about the school's early motivation at its founding points to not only building upon this narrative of helping prepare students for a changing country, but also responding to concerns about how the educational system will adapt and looking to be at the forefront of positive change. Interestingly, this observation in a way responds to the concern voiced by some after *Brown* was decided, namely that black educators would be greatly impacted by the desegregation orders, and that education would become whitewashed rather than integrated (Moskowitz, 2015). The mission expressed by Elsie Whitlow Stokes founder Linda Moore responds to that concern and demonstrates the way in which the school sought to use the charter model to push back against this concern.

Bricolage Academy founder Josh Densen also described responding to research was a motivating factor in the diversity mission of the school at the time of its founding.

It was absolutely part of our founding from the beginning. It was a personal value of mine and there has been research that demonstrates that diverse teams produce better results more creativity in diverse teams, and I wanted to try to create a school and school community where there were equitable outcomes in a diverse environment. If the country itself is a diverse environment we want to have more equitable outcomes in the country at least I do, this seemed to be the right conditions to create and try to develop kids that are to thrive in that environment because that is the world they are going to be inheriting.

What the founder's analysis reveals is that the school sought to respond to evidence that diversity was important for student success, but was not effectively being practiced in schools. The analyses of school leaders at Lead, Elsie Whitlow Stokes, and Bricolage demonstrates diverse charters acting out of the belief that diverse classrooms benefit all students, and contributes to

understanding the need for diverse schools as something that is a benefit to all students, not just underserved students of color (Orfield, 2007).

Importance of location

An additional theme that was articulated by some of the charter school leaders was a sense of responding directly to the needs present in their specific location, or the need for diverse options in their district or community. Interestingly, however, this experience was different for many of the New York schools interviewed. This difference will be explored in greater depth in the forthcoming case study of New York's experience with diverse charters. Among the schools that talked about the inspiration of their locations, a few interesting concepts were voiced. At Lead Academy, Principal Willingham explained that that in Greenville neighborhood schools tend to be very segregated, which is in line with some of the concerns explored in the earlier in the segregation section. "What the frustration we saw in Greenville is, you know the quality of education, the building you are in, the teachers you have, depended 100% on what area code or what zip code you lived in. And that was kind of what we were trying to avoid, so that was kind of why we chose here." This reasoning highlights the issue that despite Greenville's location in a diverse county, diverse education options largely did not exist.

School leaders acknowledged that location can reproduce institutions or structures of power and identified this as a rationale for choosing to open schools specifically where they did. The decision to pursue a diverse charter school in a location where diverse education opportunities were lacking was present in the experience of Bricolage Academy and their decision of where in New Orleans to open in 2013. Founder Josh Densen explained that when choosing a location it was important to him that the school seek to be equally accessible to all of the students it was looking to attract. "If you're not careful you can really very easily replicate the same power structures that undermine the fabric of the community that we are trying to

create," explained Densen, "...In other words if you're not specifically addressing race, and racism among a diverse community you're going to like recreate a diverse place where racism thrives." The way this played out in the founding of Bricolage Academy was that their first location was one that was in a fairly well-off neighborhood, out of necessity and real estate availability. Densen voiced concerns that this contributed to racism being "manifest in a variety of often subtle ways" including division between which students walk and which are bused.

Maintaining the idea of freeing the school from the "power structures" that location can create, Densen explained that a more appropriate location was always the goal.

> We moved to a more central location in 2015, we've been there for 3 years. It's a little more higher income, it's lower income than the place we opened but still relatively like a nicer part of town, but we are going to be moving at the end of this year, beginning of next year to just a, less than a mile away on the exact same street we are on and that is really at the crossroads of the entire city and one block in any direction will take you to a really different neighborhood and community. Really different by income, culture, race, all of those things. Our permanent location is really going to be the ideal location for a diverse-by-design school.

The experience of Bricolage Academy, and their commitment to not only pursuing diversity in a location where diverse education was lacking, but also pursuing it in a thoughtful manner that attempted to strip away additional levels of inequity is an important way of moving beyond diversity and towards truly meaningful integration of students in a more equitable setting and location.

Interestingly, some schools cited location as meaningful to their motivation to open the school, and yet sometimes in conflict with their goal of diversity. Elsie Whitlow Stokes opened in a very diverse neighborhood before relocating to a different location. In order to maintain the school's mission of diversity, Elsie Whitlow Stokes needed to adjust its recruitment strategy in a way to continue to reach and yield the diverse body of students that it had been able to easily attract at its first location. "I think you have to be intentional if you want a diverse school… we

knew for example that we were going to lose latino students once we moved, and we just really

wrenched up our efforts to recruit them, not just for purposes of diversity but also because we

consider them very important to our instructional program," explained school founder Linda

Moore. Ms. Moore's reference to the instructional program highlights the school's language

component in either French or Spanish. In addition the practice of being cognizant of how

location impacts recruitment and school composition is one that is important for the success of

any school, particularly charter, with the goal of being diverse.

An interesting, and slightly different example of a way in which location impacted

motivation to open a diverse school can be found by considering Atlanta Neighborhood Charter

School (ANCS) in Georgia. This school was founded with a commitment to serving the

community, and established a primary attendance zone for this purpose. Executive Director Matt

Underwood, who was not there at the time that the school was founded, explained that the school

wanted to reflect the community in which it was located and give students the opportunity to

attend a community school because of the benefits that has been shown to provide. However,

within this goal of a community school, the "secondary" goal of diversity was pursued.

> ...A group of parents who really wanted to form a neighborhood school and also at the
> same time wanted to have a school option with for them looked a little more hands on,
> project based than sort of the traditional public school options, so I would say the focus
> on having a diverse school was really, I mean they wanted to reflect the neighborhoods
> but it was really sort of secondary at the time to trying to have a unified school for the
> neighborhood, a unified school option for the neighborhood and one that was sort of
> progressive and the fact that it could you know likely could be diverse was a nice side
> effect, but I don't think that was their-the whole diverse by design idea certainly that
> probably wasn't even around at the time.

In this rather unique case scenario, ANCS was founded with the goal of providing a charter

school that served a specific neighborhood rather than an entire district where parents were very

involved. However, to meet this goal the school went through intentional recruitment efforts to

reflect the neighborhood demographics in their school, and adjusted the attendance zone in order to include more diversity in the school's recruitment and yield, ultimately resulting in a more diverse school community and student body. The attendance zone policy of ANCS runs counter to the argument made that charter schools offer an alternative to traditional district and neighborhood schools by not tying school opportunity to a specific attendance zone. However, the ability of ANCS to adopt a secondary goal of diversity and still act intentionally in making it a reality within their school while maintaining a neighborhood identity provides the possibility for replicable lessons for other districts and school. The idea of replicable policies of diverse charter schools will be explored in a forthcoming section.

Founding goals beyond diversity

ANCS was not the only school that had a founding goal beyond diversity. Other school leaders identified diversity as a goal in addition to other themes or innovations they hoped to offer through the development of their charter school. Other schools including Hebrew Public, Elmwood Village Charter Schools, and Brooklyn Urban Garden School were founded with additional goals, which also paired well with the a goal of diversity. The Hebrew Public Charter School network was founded with a goal of teaching students through a foreign language component. Though he was not a founding member, Hebrew Public CEO and President Jon Rosenberg explained the way that a diverse charter school married well with the additional goal of an innovative curriculum.

> There was a commitment to diversity very early on based on the idea that a school that was focused on global citizenship and on foreign language should strive to attract students from all different backgrounds. We focus on modern Hebrew with an orientation around Israeli history and culture, in the same way that a French or a Mandarin, or a Spanish language school, or Hellenic Charter Academy which focuses on Greek in Brooklyn, would on language history and culture on those contexts. And like many of those schools, we strive for diversity in enrollment.

What Rosenberg's comments suggest is that pursuing diversity as an intentional goal complimented Hebrew Public's other mission of foreign language instruction and he suggests that it might also be a complementary goal for other language and cultural schools, as it was in the case of Elsie Whitlow Stokes Academy in D.C.

The ability for a diversity goal to enhance other goals provides evidence for the future adoption of diversity practices by schools that had not formerly intentionally sought it as a part of their mission. Liz Evans, one of the founding members of Elmwood Village School in Buffalo, explained that together the founding members brought a wide array of interests and motivations to the table of when the school was proposed. Evans describes herself as "a convert to diversity" and though diversity was not one of her initial motivations for founding Elwood, she has seen the meaningful benefits it offers to students. Evans explained that her goal was to encourage intellectual or learning diversity, and create a school that would "serve all learners, just whoever came through the doors we would strive to educate them." While the mission that Evans describes is still diversity, it is a different type of diversity (not specifically racial or socio-economic) than what has been largely focused on throughout earlier chapters. Still Elmwood provides an interesting example of a way in which multiple missions and goals of a school can complement one another, and how pursuing diversity, be it economic, racial or ethnic, or learning style, can go hand in hand.

What the experiences of these other schools illustrates is that although diversity was an early goal of the school, it was also not the only goal. The importance of this theme is that it highlights why more needs to be understood about the potential for this model as well as the intentional diversity seeking practices that schools could potentially adopt to enhance their missions while also offering an effective opportunity for increasing diversity. The following

section will explore the purposeful recruitment and yielding strategies that these schools pursue, in order to better understand the processes that existing schools can adopt or future schools can replicate in terms of creating intentionally diverse student bodies.

Recruitment and Yield

As previous chapters have explored, intentionally diverse charters have the potential to positively impact schools both within the charter sector and beyond. As the previous section suggests, there is some evidence that within the charter sector, schools with additional themes, goals, or educational missions, may find that pursuing diversity is another mission that complements their initial vision. As schools of choice, charters have the ability to recruit students and families to become a part of their schools and enter their lotteries which is largely quite a different process than enrolling in traditional district schools. This following section will focus on recruitment and yielding strategies employed by the schools interviewed in order to explore potential policies that could be pursued by other charters or schools of choice looking to adopt a mission of diversity.

Targeted recruitment

Making sure that diverse communities knew about the charter school and how to apply to it was a theme across many of the interviews of leaders. Many of these school leaders discussed how lotteries (and weighting practices based on diversity goals) were an important part of maintaining a diverse student body, but that it also required them to pursue diverse recruitment strategies since it was not guaranteed that diversity would result even with the weighting. "...there is always a danger in a school of choice that the sheer lottery based chance of how it is going to work would lead you to have an entering kindergarten class that is less diverse than what you had hoped for. It's not social engineering in that sense," explained Jon Rosenberg of Hebrew Public, "In some settings is this can lead a school to flip towards affluence or towards

poverty or towards a particular racial or ethnic group or away from a particular racial or ethnic group. And when those kinds of things happen, it could be the work of years to bring a school back towards diversity." The inability of charter schools to employ techniques of "social engineering" in part come from the 2007 Supreme Court decision of *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1,* a case which determined that efforts to consider race in "tiebreaker" admissions to primary and secondary schools did not pass "strict scrutiny" (*Parents Involved,* n.d.).

The driving need to make the outcomes of lottery admissions diverse, even with the opportunity to employ weighting, contributes to the need for schools to employ intentional and targeted recruitment strategies. Nearly every school interviewed discussed recruitment strategies that were geared towards attracting a diverse applicant pool in order to maintain a diverse student body. Josh Densen, the founder of Bricolage Academy explained the way they developed their recruitment strategy, "We were just going straight open enrollment for a while and realized that we were just overwhelmed by demand from the middle and higher income populations so we amended our admissions process and criteria to give us preference for kids from low income homes."

Similarly, Linda Moore of Elsie Whitlow Stokes explained that although their school now receives many more applicants than available spots and thus did not need to recruit for the school as they did twenty years ago when the school was founded, they did maintain an ongoing recruitment process to make sure that they were reaching out to diverse communities. She states, "If we see that we're not, we may not maintain representation from diverse communities we will go out of our way to recruit." Moore also explained the role that families play in encouraging diverse applications, which was another common theme among the other intentionally diverse

charter schools interviewed. What this theme demonstrates is that parents were viewed as partners of the school, and that by counting on them to aid in the recruitment process, the school needed to be responsive to them and consider their concerns. This is important because this offers parents agency and access to power in their children's school communities and educational experiences.

Transportation

Many schools also identified transportation as an important innovation to yield diverse student bodies after the recruitment process is completed. While this was something that differed in importance depending on the location of the school and the demographics of the surrounding neighborhood, for some being able to offer transportation was critical to ensuring that their yield would be diverse. At Lead Academy in Greenville, SC Principal Willingham explained that the school's decision to go out of pocket to cover the cost of transportation differentiated them from other charters in their district.

> We're one of the very few charter schools in SC that offer transportation. A lot of the charter schools near the district schools, in terms of not being very diverse and a lot of the roadblock for being diverse is not offering transportation. We do not get funded for transportation in the state; we have to pay for it out of our per-pupil funding and out of our own pocket whereas the traditional public schools are getting transportation funded and buses from the state. So without transportation and busing we could not be diverse because there are certain groups of families that cannot provide a ride to and from school every day.

In fact, Willingham explained that lack of transportation is a barrier for ensuring a diverse student body for other charter schools because these schools often end up only serving the communities that their schools were most accessible too. "[Other charter schools] just kind of promote 'hey we have a rigorous high class curriculum' and they don't really say much more than that but they are in a super high class area and don't provide any transportation," explained Willingham, "so even if people were interested they wouldn't be able to get there. You know I

don't know that it's they don't want diversity it's just not a priority at all." It is a financial cost for Lead Academy, but one they choose to make in support of their diversity goals.

At Elmwood Village Charter Schools, founding member Liz Evans explained that ability to offer transportation was something that changed between the opening of the first and second school in their charter network. Evans shared that already in the second school the network opened, the offering of transportation is having positive benefits for the school's diversity. Once the law changed the law to allow for charter schools to access free school district busing, "…[it] helped to open up our program to everyone in every corner of the city." The experiences of Lead and Elmwood illustrate how significantly residential segregation impacts educational segregation in the United States (discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis). When schools are able to offer transportation to students from "every corner" of the attendance area, it makes a diverse school a realistic goal. But this also exemplifies the role of costs and financial decisions by schools, districts, and states in any effort to create intentionally diverse schools.

Moving Beyond the Charter School Walls

While there are important and interesting themes among diverse charter schools that can be replicated in existing charters as well as future charters, there is also a potential to replicate some of these practices among traditional public schools, and inform best practices for future curriculum, professional development, and parent outreach and communication. While it is true that charters operate under different conditions than many traditional schools, the unique policies, experiences and informed practices warrant that they have a seat at the table when considering future education policies. The potential for this type of policy and curriculum experimentation includes, but is not limited to, tracking, family engagement, discipline, and teachers preparation.

The most important thing to consider before recommending how these practices of

diverse charters can be replicated by other schools, both charter and traditional, is to assess the

degree to which they are succeeding in their efforts. Though much of this evidence is anecdotal,

every school identified the benefits of pursuing diversity, and it provides an important look into

what a diverse charter education looks like for students. Josh Densen of Bricolage Academy

explained,

> They're creating friendships that they wouldn't have without the school. I believe that
> they are experiencing a greater level of empathy than they would if they were in a school
> that was either racially of socioeconomically homogenous. So I don't know how much
> that can impact annual academic achievement or anything like that, I do think there is
> influences there but we can't really identify "oh these types of scores are attributable to
> this kind of diversity" but I think from a world view, and from a perspective of what life
> is, I do think that they are in a, and all kids in the school are in a much more enriched
> place than they would be had they been attending a school that is more homogenous.

Similar to the experience at Bricolage, Matt Underwood of ANCS explained that their students

feel more confident when they moved into more diverse schools and colleges later on, and

attributes this to the connection between diversity and the teaching and learning approach that

the school undertakes in serving it's students. "...We get, kind of anecdotally, from the high

schools too and through the surveys, really deep critical thinkers generally speaking," explained

Underwood, "and part of that is through again kind of the way that we approach teaching and

learning but also through being in a setting where you know it's not homogenous…working

with, collaborating with people who have had different life experiences than you."

At Hebrew Public, Jon Rosenberg spoke to the idea that the school went beyond the

"superficial" integration, which he defined as diversity in the student body without meaningful

integration of the students in their lives both in the school and outside of the school.

> I don't mean in the sense of not meaningful, but the most superficial level of integration,
> level one is that you have a school that has a diverse student body and that doesn't speak

to who's in what classrooms, or taking what kinds of course work, or who's friends with whom. So another level, I won't say level two, but another deeper level is what I would call social integration where children of different backgrounds who would not otherwise have relationships with each other, again despite living in the same school districts have playdates, are in the same peer groups, their families have relationship with each other, and on that front I think we have been very successful.

An interesting point that Rosenberg highlights, is that while this social integration is observed among the lower grades, and younger students, it seems to decrease at the middle school level where "sorting mechanisms" begin to lead to greater self-segregation among students by gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class. This is a trend that Hebrew Public is not alone in, and bucking this trend has become a focus at ANCS as well. Despite the potential backtracking of this success in some cases at the middle school level, as scholarship has suggested, the benefits of a diverse education can still be impactful for students since they are receiving access to social networks in the future that can help them obtain entry into higher education and employment later in their lives (Wells, 2001).

Despite this largely anecdotal evidence, there are also tangible benefits that illustrate an important impact that diverse charter schools are having on students, which will be explored in the next section on responsive pedagogy. There is the potential for these school policies and practices to be replicated to elevate student experiences throughout the country, even in schools that do not have a diverse student body. The final chapter of this thesis will explore how these benefits can be replicated and encouraged outside of these existing diverse charters, through policy recommendations and informed best practices.

Responsive pedagogy

As mentioned in the prior section, there are tangible benefits beyond the still important, but anecdotal experiences that students learn more in diverse classrooms. Specifically, there is evidence that students are not being subjected to practices of tracking, or suspension and

expulsion at the rates that they are in other schools.   Looking first at tracking, this is an important policy goal in order to prevent students from experiencing the harmful effects of "second generation segregation" where within even a diverse school, students are segregated into different classes and courses by ability, but often also by race (Mickelson, 2001). Josh Densen explained at Bricolage, "You don't want to have a school that's diverse but classrooms that are homogenous that's just a terrible idea...we don't want to have any tracking or you know classes where kids are going to be segregated in anyway." Matt Underwood at ANCS echoed a similar commitment to diverse classrooms, and included a commitment to diversity as well as ability, "We don't have ability grouped classes, even as kids move up into middle school so really try to have in order to reap the benefits of a diverse school the classrooms themselves have to be diverse...we really try to have as much of a mix as possible"

Hebrew Public voiced a commitment to doing the same thing, though their experience highlighted the challenge that differing levels of achievement in a classroom can pose.

> We're really focused on heterogeneous grouping. You know although we come under pressure sometimes from you know a board member or parents or others particularly if the school starts to go through struggles around behavior or academic performance, there is often a pressure, although people won't tend to use the word, to move towards a more tracking based model, even at the elementary school level... What I'd say, the distinction comes up is there is fair amount of grouping of kids based on current and stretch goals around academic performance. So kids will be engaging for example in the same kinds of content but they might be engaging with in in different levels… always with the goal to close that gap but by virtue of that you are going to have kids grouped.

Despite the challenge that classrooms with differing levels of ability poses to students, Hebrew Pubic provides an interesting potential solution, using their language curriculum component as an example:

> For example within Hebrew we tend to have 2-3 Hebrew teachers teaching a single class of kids at the same time of Hebrew instructional block. In that block you have kids who are novice speakers of Hebrew and kids who are more advanced. You have kids whose

parents speak Hebrew, kids who have been learning it in school for four years and a kid who just arrived this year. And so you know in some ways the simplest example to explain of why kids would be grouped but even there the way we've done it thus far is they are still in the same class it's just two or three small instructional groups.

B.U.G.S founder and director Susan Tenner also voiced the problem ability grouping could pose, particularly in the context of middle school because of the knowledge that students would likely be tracked once they left for high school. "Where you get sticky is around whether you are going to do, again it's what I said is happening at the systems level with those schools that were selective schools, that cut off [at] certain test scores," explained Tenner. She cautioned, "If I'm going to do like classrooms with for example Algebra I Regents, that is disproportionately more white students, it isn't the reflective microcosm of your school. And we are constantly trying to figure out how do we combat that."

The experience of B.U.G.S highlights the need to address the existing racial achievement gap, while still challenging all students to perform at their highest ability. While the example of B.U.G.S points to a degree of tracking that does take place, it is evident that the school is actively pursuing responsive ways to address these inequities and engage all students. Through a project based curriculum that is centered around the charter's sustainability focus, student engage in unique opportunities to engage with their community and do work which Tenner cites as being integral to building diversity and integration of different ideas and perspectives, thus demonstrating to students the value of integration and validating the role they play in the school community. She says, "I think the kids being of diverse backgrounds helps them do those projects you know...it's academic and social, it's like worldview, you know everyone talks about 21st century skills and being able to coordinate with really different groups of people on projects." The experience of schools like B.U.G.S and others demonstrate that although the

schools encounter a similar challenge with ability grouping that traditional schools also often face, they are actively pursuing ways to maintain heterogeneous classrooms in order to avoid second generation segregation as well as expose all students in the school to the benefits of a diverse school and classroom.

A second tangible benefit that these diverse charters offer in informing future policy, is evidence that, despite fears that top charter schools differ in their discipline and expulsion practices (Welner, 2013), these intentionally diverse charters have taken steps to lower their suspension and expulsion rates through employing social-emotional learning practices and other unique measures to better serve students. Elmwood Village Charter School and B.U.G.S. are two clear examples of the benefits that these programs offer students. Elmwood, located in Buffalo, NY has the lowest suspension rate of any school in the city which co-founder Liz Evans attributes to the school's emphasis on practicing social-emotional learning and giving students agency in the classroom.

Susan Tenner of B.U.G.S also noted that they pay attention to the rates of discipline and suspension and, in particular, how these punishments relate to race and ethnicity. Susan Tenner explained that the reason the school takes this focus is in order to serve the "whole child" and make sure they are understanding and responding to the needs and circumstance of each individual child. "...A lot of behavior issues can be connected to learning frustration around accessing the content. Like for example, there's a lot of ...best practices that are designed to make sure that educators can't discipline students in a way that doesn't consider their disability…" explained Tenner. And, she says, "It's the school to prison pipeline, you know discipline and its connection to the whole child as well as to their academics." Both Elmwood and B.U.G.S. have engaged in practices that are aimed at addressing larger systemic problems

that are present in society and play an important role in developing these tools in order for them to be understood and replicated in other school districts and education settings.

Parental involvement

The leaders from intentionally diverse charter schools identified a high level of parental involvement and engagement which demonstrates a positive practice of encouraging a deeper level of integration by incorporating parents into the school community. As earlier mentioned, parents at some of the diverse charters interviewed played a big role in the targeted recruitment efforts by the schools in order to pursue diversity, but as demonstrated by Lead Academy, efforts were also made to make sure that parents felt included in the school community. Lead Academy hired a bilingual parent liaison to work with current as well as prospective students to make sure their experience, and the experiences of their children, were positive.

At ANCS, efforts were made to ensure that relationships were made with the public housing developments within the attendance boundary where the school pulled much of its diversity from, so that residents were familiar with the school and the community, beyond just the recruitment process. Matt Underwood explained that building a relationship with these communities was important and intentional.

> I would say in the past we're used some strategies that were both not particularly effective...also kind of now in retrospect kind of patronizing. Like we would show up once a year to do recruitment without really building a relationship with the community, so what we have tried to do in the past couple of years is with those two housing developments is you get a pretty regular presence there, not necessarily to try and sell the school but just to try and know the residents and let them know us and if they happen to find out about the school, or when it becomes time for enrollment season we start talking about enrollment they- we're familiar faces...So we work with the resident coordinators at each of these places to go to their resident meetings, we planned a family game night once every couple of months at these places and we bring dinner, and it's just trying to get to know the communities and it's helped us to yield more applicants because people know us and people trust us

Bricolage Academy and Lead Academy both talked about needing to introduce methods of communication in order to involve a diverse group of parents and best serve their students. Josh Densen explained that the experience of Bricolage mirrored that of ANCS in that best and most effective practices had to be developed. Densen described a commitment from the school to always being "a learning organization," citing specifically in terms of developing better and more effective parent communication. Densen explained that "... parent communication is way easier in a homogenous school because for the most part parents... like to communicate in the same ways because there is a way more homogenous culture at home." For instance, both Lead and Bricolage identified the use of mobile texting as a mode of communication that was more popular among certain demographics of parents and utilizing this technology then as well as more common means to ensure that parents of all backgrounds were included in communication outreach.

Community involvement

Another important way the practices of intentionally diverse charters can have an impact outside of the charter sector is related to the extent to which these charters are working with the community and the district on a number of important issues and projects. The two clearest examples of positive district or community collaboration are evident in B.U.G.S. and ANCS. At B.U.G.S. the school is working with their public school district on a task force aimed at addressing issues of diversity and at ANCS the school has been advocating alongside other community groups to ensure that economic development projects do not contribute to the over-gentrification of the area. These projects provide important examples of the contribution that diverse charter schools can make to their larger community as part of their mission to represent and serve diverse populations.

Looking first at B.U.G.S, which is located in New York Public School's District 15, the school has established a positive relationship with the district. Susan Tenner describes that recently the district has sought to explore more of the issue of diversity and understand how it is playing out in district schools. Tenner was complimentary of the work that the district was taking on and explained the goal of the public workshops hosted by the district in this way: "they're seeing this segregation in different schools, especially in the two high performing schools, in middle school… again they have this disproportionality...they are looking at, they're kind of in a listening and exploring mode with the community." B.U.G.S. as a diversity minded charter school has been called upon by the district to be a part of that conversation. "[The research is] not focused on charters but it's an interesting dialogue because they want to know how we are doing it so that they can maybe consider it more in the DOE process." The relationship between B.U.G.S and their district provides a great example of the positive collaborative role that charters can play within their district particularly on issues of diversity and integration due to their experience and informed practices.

The collaboration that ANCS has undertaken within their community in Atlanta, Georgia demonstrates a different kind of role that charters can play in responsible community development. As described earlier, ANCS has worked to build strong relationships with two public housing developments in the neighborhood since this is where they are able to recruit the bulk of their diverse applicants and students. As the area around the school has pursued economic growth projects, there has been a fear of how this would affect the diversity that exists, and thus the ability of the school to continue its commitment to diversity. Matt Underwood explained that ANCS has tried to address this concern by being a voice for community interests

amid the threat of real estate development and rising housing costs. In describing the project

Underwood explained,

> It's kind of similar to the High Line in NY, where there's old rail line and they've converted into what's essentially an oversized sidewalk, but there's a lot of restaurants and bars and apartments popping up and it's all wonderful but it's all, and we're right on that, it's all driven up real estate values so there's some efforts to legislate maintaining some affordable housing stock in these neighborhoods...So we have really been trying to work as much as we can to advocate for that because you know outside of these housing developments we also want people who are homeowners to not be priced out of the neighborhood, who might have kids who they want to send here so that is another way, another part of our strategy is really working as much as we can to be some advocate for some level of affordable housing to be maintained in these neighborhoods as well.

The role that ANCS has taken in sustaining the community and the neighborhood diversity

amidst the economic growth and threat of gentrification of the area, demonstrates the role that

diverse charter schools, as a community that brings together different voices and identities, can

serve in responsible growth.

Professional Development

Interviews with intentionally diverse charter schools highlighted the important role that

these schools can play in preparing teachers to work in diverse schools. This potential is

particularly important as states and districts work to establish desegregation policies and as

teachers will need to be prepared and armed with best practices in order to make diverse

classrooms truly integrated. Two clear examples of the roll that intentionally diverse charters

can play in professional development and new teacher preparation programs beyond their own

classrooms and schools were highlighted by Community Roots Charter School in Brooklyn, NY,

and Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School in Atlanta, GA. Roots ConnectED is an initiative out

of Community Roots Charter School that aims to disseminate information about best practices

for inclusion and integration to schools in New York City and across the country. The program

offers workshops, institutes, and consulting services (Roots ConnectED, n.d. b). Recent

workshops have covered a number of themes including "Talking about Race and Gender in Early Childhood Education," and "It Starts with Us: Building Strong Staff Development for Diversity Work in Schools," and they give educators an opportunity to share information, reflect on ideas, and work on future plans for action (Roots ConnectEd, n.d. c). Institutes offer a longer more in-depth look into many of these issues though programs lasting from one day to multiple days and are completed in small groups capped at 10 individuals. The five-day Diversity and Social Justice Institute offers participants the opportunity to learn about fostering diversity through school culture and practices as well as curriculum and instruction (Roots ConnectED, n.d. a). Opportunities like the one offered through the Roots ConnectED program are important for communicating with education professionals and provide a terrific opportunity for them to observe students in a diverse classroom and see how other schools implement an integrating curriculum and school culture. The potential in this program demonstrates the role that intentionally diverse charter schools can offer to enhance efforts to integrate all public schools and develop best practices for diverse classrooms. The school provides both a laboratory through which to innovate these practices and aid other schools and educators in adopting best practices.

Similarly, Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School has instituted the Center for Collaborative Learning, the goal of which is to bring together individuals, schools, and organizations in order to create more student-centered educational environments (Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, 2018). One way to achieve this type of collaboration has been through a partnership with Georgia State University to administer the CREATE Teacher Residency Program. This program provides new teachers with three years of support in order to fulfill the program's mission. "The mission of the CREATE Teacher Residency Program is to

raise student achievement by increasing teacher effectiveness and retention and improving school climate within high-needs local public charter and traditional neighborhood schools" (Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School, 2018). Though not definitively for the purpose of educating and exposing new teachers to the benefits of diversity, the collaboration between intentionally diverse charters and residency programs like the one out of Georgia State demonstrate the potential for the diverse charter model to impact professional development and inform best practices for schools and educators in both the charter and traditional public school realms going forward.

Conclusion

As demonstrated by this analysis of interviews of school leaders from intentionally diverse charter schools, there is evidence of both the merits of the diverse model of charters, as well as the potential for the model to impact education policy and communities beyond the walls of the school. Within the charter sector, this chapter provided additional evidence about practices that diverse charters are employing to both attract a diverse applicant pool as well as yield a diverse student body. Additionally, this chapter explored the benefits experienced by students when educated in a diverse charter classroom. Secondly, these interviews with diverse charter schools explored the lessons that can be learned from responsive curriculums that target issues of academic tracking, which threaten to segregate even diverse student bodies by putting certain students on different academic trajectories, as well as work to drive down rates of suspension and expulsion which can contribute to the racialized school to prison pipeline. Finally, this chapter explored the ways in which school districts and communities can benefit from forging close and collaborative partnerships with diverse charter schools.

The next chapter will provide a case study of New York State, and focus more closely on the charter schools in this study that are located there. This section will consider the charter policies that exist at the state and district level, and explore the how these policies support and conflict with the schools' goal of diversity and integration. Chapter four will build on many of the themes considered in this chapter, as well as use the experiences of diverse charters in other states in order to assess the charter laws of one specific state.

Chapter Four: Case Study of Diverse Charter School and New York Policy

Segregation in NY Schools

Building on the history of segregation offered in chapter two, this section provides a more specific analysis of the segregation in New York. Delmont (2015-2016) explains the reasons why segregation is particularly severe in the case in New York. By the time the *Brown* case had been decided, civil rights activists in New York City had already been working to call attention to the de facto segregation experienced in the city, and despite the use of less politically charged terms like "separation" or "racial imbalance" rather than "segregation" the school board did begin the process of rezoning to create more diverse schools (Delmont, 2015-2016). In January of 1959 the Wall Street Journal published an article by Peter Bart which described "the mass migration of school children," which set off more news coverage and in turn protests from parents against the use of busing in the city (Delmont, 2015-2016).

It was in part due to these fears about busing that a commitment to "neighborhood schools" developed throughout the city (Delmont, 2015-2016). "Pupils should not be transported by bus from one school to another solely for the purpose of integration… The homogenous character of some school neighborhoods is an effect of segregated residential patterns, a condition which the schools cannot deal with directly" stated Superintendent of New York Schools, William Jensen in his report on zoning in June of 1959 (Delmont, 2015-2016). Delmont explained the significance of New York's reaction to busing in a 2016 interview.

> "New York, more than any other place, undercut school desegregation nationally...You can say you're opposing busing, and that resonated more powerfully, and sounded better and less racist than saying, 'We don't want to send our kids to desegregated schools or we don't want black kids sent to our schools' ... It was a language that got kicked up really well in media." (Klein, 2016).

A widely instituted desegregation plan was never adopted in the metropolitan New York City area, however, other voluntary initiatives such as education option programs, magnet schools, dual language programs, and district-wide integration plans, yielded more success (Kucsera & Orfield, 2014). However, as Kucsera and Orfield explain in their 2014 report on the segregation in New York, voluntary efforts declined, leaving New York with the most segregated schools in the United States. Largely due to being home to the New York City school system, which is the largest as well as most segregated system in the country, black and Latinx students in the state go to schools that are intensely-segregated and receive the lowest exposure to white students (Kucsera & Orfield, 2014).

As is the case with many school districts across the country (see EdBuild report, 2015) New York City school districts display tremendous variance in regards to the rates of poverty and racial and ethnic diversity. Considering the relationship between socioeconomic status and race, it is not surprising that the districts with the lowest rates of poverty also have more balanced demographics of white, black, and Latinx students, whereas the districts with the highest rates of poverty have far fewer white students, and are almost entirely students of color (NYC Department of Education, 2018). This relationship between poverty and racial diversity, as well as the variation between New York City's 32 school districts can be observed in the table below which is sorted in ascending order of poverty rate (Table 1). The trend in the table illustrates that as the percentage of students in poverty in each of the New York City school districts grows, the percentage of white students decreases, thus demonstrating the relationship between economic and racial segregation.

Table 1:

NYC District Demographics, 2016-2017							
Administrative District	% Asian	% Black	% Hispanic	% White	% Multiple Race Categories Not Represented	% English Language Learners	% Students with Disabilities	% Poverty
03	8.0%	22.7%	32.9%	31.4%	5.0%	5.1%	16.9%	47.9%
26	52.5%	11.3%	16.9%	17.0%	2.3%	7.4%	13.6%	54.4%
02	22.8%	15.4%	32.5%	25.0%	4.3%	8.5%	16.3%	57.8%
31	9.1%	13.0%	28.1%	47.6%	2.1%	5.7%	22.9%	58.3%
15	16.3%	14.2%	37.0%	29.3%	3.2%	16.1%	18.3%	63.7%
13	19.8%	45.5%	16.5%	14.8%	3.4%	4.3%	13.7%	66.6%
25	48.9%	7.7%	28.5%	13.2%	1.7%	18.3%	13.6%	68.6%
28	29.0%	22.3%	27.2%	16.2%	5.2%	9.9%	14.5%	68.6%
01	22.0%	16.1%	41.2%	17.5%	3.1%	9.1%	21.1%	69.4%
22	19.5%	31.9%	15.2%	31.6%	1.9%	11.2%	15.9%	72.7%
21	24.7%	15.2%	25.0%	33.3%	1.7%	16.7%	17.7%	77.0%
29	15.7%	63.1%	15.3%	1.9%	4.1%	8.1%	15.4%	78.2%
30	21.9%	6.6%	53.2%	16.1%	2.1%	17.0%	14.0%	78.5%
24	20.1%	2.7%	62.2%	13.9%	1.1%	22.3%	15.7%	79.1%
20	43.3%	3.0%	26.0%	26.7%	1.1%	24.0%	14.5%	79.7%
18	1.4%	86.5%	7.1%	3.0%	1.9%	5.8%	17.6%	80.1%
14	4.6%	21.9%	57.3%	14.2%	1.9%	11.0%	20.0%	80.2%
05	3.8%	49.7%	39.7%	4.4%	2.4%	8.9%	21.4%	80.6%
17	2.9%	76.1%	15.1%	3.7%	2.2%	10.2%	17.3%	81.7%
27	22.8%	23.3%	38.4%	10.4%	5.1%	10.7%	16.9%	81.8%
11	7.8%	40.0%	41.6%	8.6%	2.0%	10.8%	19.0%	83.3%
10	7.3%	15.9%	69.1%	5.9%	1.8%	20.3%	19.1%	84.6%
16	1.9%	74.8%	19.0%	2.4%	1.9%	4.7%	24.4%	85.9%
06	1.4%	7.4%	85.4%	4.9%	1.0%	27.7%	18.5%	86.9%
19	7.6%	45.8%	42.8%	1.9%	1.9%	12.6%	19.8%	88.9%
04	7.6%	24.5%	60.9%	4.6%	2.4%	10.4%	23.1%	89.0%
08	5.7%	22.5%	64.1%	6.1%	1.5%	13.0%	22.7%	89.7%
32	2.0%	16.8%	78.6%	2.0%	0.6%	18.9%	19.5%	90.6%
23	1.1%	74.8%	21.1%	1.3%	1.7%	4.6%	23.5%	91.4%
07	1.1%	26.3%	70.3%	1.4%	0.9%	16.6%	23.2%	91.6%
09	1.4%	28.6%	68.0%	1.2%	0.8%	23.1%	20.9%	91.9%
12	2.5%	24.9%	69.8%	1.3%	1.4%	19.5%	21.5%	92.9%

New York City community school districts ranked by poverty rate to show the variation between socioeconomic status and racial and ethnic diversity in the City's districts. NYC Department of Education. (2018). Demographic Snapshots. Retrieved from http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/default.htm

As is the case with many school districts, New York City schools are tied largely to neighborhood and place of residence. New York City Schools are divided into 32 community school districts (CSD's). As of 2010, 19 of the 32 CSD's have populations of 10% or less white students, which illustrates the residential segregation of the school districts in New York City (Kucsera & Orfield, 2014, 13). In 29 of these CSD's students are zoned to a particular school for elementary school though there is an option to choose a school outside of your attendance zone.

At the middle school level, some CSD's offer a choice component that can turn selective, with zoned schools as a default if the student is not admitted into their choice school and does not seek out an alternative option like a charter or private school (Kucesra & Orfield, 2014). A universal choice plan for high schools was adopted in 2004 by the Bloomberg administration which allows schools to utilize admissions policies that can lead to selective and often inaccessible admission processes for marginalized populations (Kucsera & Orfield, 2014; Perez, 2009).

In recent years, the city has been voicing a new "bigger vision" of school integration, and Mayor De Blasio has been praised by some integration supporters while critiqued by others that the proposed initiatives are too vague or do not adequately address the root of the problem (Shapiro, 2016). In November of 2017, the administration announced plans to extend the Socioeconomic Integration Pilot Program (SIPP) for another round of grants aimed at improving schools through integration (Veiga & Disare, 2017). The grants would provide districts with between $30,000 and $50,000 in funds to inform and educate district leaders about integration research and best practices, and then additional funds can be secured for carrying out integration plans (Veiga & Disare, 2017). While these are moves in a positive direction, what is evident in the history of New York segregation issues, as well as Kuscera and Orfield's recent scholarship on the magnitude of the problem, is that desegregation New York is a significant and entrenched challenge, but one that must be solved in order to better the educations of over a million students.

The city's recent plans also demonstrate the need for as much information and support for districts as possible as they undertake the task of not only diversifying schools but also educating a diverse population and integrating students in a meaningful way so that the full benefits of integration can be experienced. Potter (2017) provides commentary on the absence of

intentionally diverse charter schools from the City's diversity plan is charter schools. The

following section will consider the experience of charter schools in New York, before returning

to evidence from four diverse New York charter schools interviewed for this thesis in order to

understand how their experiences can impact the efforts to desegregate New York Schools.

New York Charter Schools

In 1998 New York passed its own charter school legislation with the New York State

Charter Schools Act, and today there are three authorizing groups, New York City Department of

Education (DOE), New York State Department of Education (NYSED), and The State

University of New York Charter Schools Institute (SUNY) (NYC Department of Education,

2018). The three authorizers are responsible for the oversight of 227 charter schools that serve

114,000 charter school students (NYC Charter School Center, 2017). The NYC Department of

Education describes the purpose of charters in a positive way, highlighting the dimension these

schools add to the education offered in New York schools. "Charter schools are part of the New

York City Department of Education's strategy for providing families with an increased number

of high-quality school options in NYC. Charter schools have a range of academic and staffing

models, missions, goals, and policies" (NYC Department of Education, 2018).

In their influential report, Kucsera and Orfield found that in 2010, 73% of New York City

charter schools as being "apartheid schools" meaning that they were less than 1% white in their

enrollment. When looking at charter schools that "intensely segregated" or have less than 10%

white enrollment, the number jumps to 90% (Kucsera & Orfield, 2014, 13-14). However, as this

thesis has highlighted, and Kucsera and Orfield found in their study of the city, there is a small

but observable portion of charter schools that are accomplishing diversity in their enrollments

(2014, 13-14). Understanding how New York Schools can best support the spread of the

intentionally diverse charter model is important, as it is a location that could greatly benefit from the insights and informed practices of internationally diverse schools.

New York Charter Law, Section 2854, [2][a]

One particularly interesting aspect of New York Charter law to consider when looking at the possibility of expanding the diverse charter model is Section 2854, [2][a] which lays out the admissions, enrollment, and student requirements of charter schools. In addition to requiring that charters be tuition free, and not discriminate in admissions, Section 2854, [2][a] also stipulates what one charter network operating in New York referred to as "the good faith provision" (Jon Rosenberg, 2018). This provision is underlined in the section of the state charter law below for clarity, and requires that the charter must mirror the demographics of the district that they are located in. This requirement, thus, limits charters that wish to be intentionally diverse to opening and operating in districts which already have a diverse population, rather than being able to recruit from multiple districts and be more diverse than any one district would be on its own. Given long-standing housing segregation in the United States, this requirement undermines the ability of intentionally diverse charter schools to operate their model in most neighborhoods and districts.

> Admission of students shall not be limited on the basis of intellectual ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, athletic ability, disability, race, creed, gender, national origin, religion, or ancestry; provided, however, that nothing in this article shall be construed to prevent the establishment of a single-sex charter school or a charter school designed to provide expanded learning opportunities for students at-risk of academic failure or students with disabilities and English language learners; and provided, further, <u>that the charter school shall demonstrate good faith efforts to attract and retain a comparable or greater enrollment of students with disabilities, English language learners, and students who are eligible applicants for the free and reduced price lunch program when compared to the enrollment figures for such students in the school district in which the charter school is located</u> (New York Charter Law, 1998, 17). [Emphasis added]

This provision limits the ability of charters be as impactful as they could be in New York because of the segregation that persists between districts, a finding that Potter (2017) also notes in her assessment of New York City's diversity plan. When charters can't attract a population that more effectively reflects the diversity of the city as a whole, they are limited to opening in districts that already exhibit diverse populations. While this is still a useful tool in offering an intentionally diverse alternative to potentially segregated neighborhood schools, or provide relief for some degree of self-selection, it is limited in this promising way for diverse charters to serve as another way for voluntary, interdistrict integration. The restriction on possible locations that Section 2854, [2][a] poses for charter schools that wish to be diverse can be observed through the New York City Diverse Coalition of Charter School members as it requires that they choose a location that already has a diverse demographic, rather than allowing them to open in New York's most residentially segregated districts in order to offer an integrated school option and recruit a diverse student body from nearby neighborhoods and districts.

The twelve intentionally diverse schools in New York considered by this thesis are located in just six of the City's districts due to the higher levels of diversity that the charter's student body is required to mirror. Thus, as Table 1 indicates, these schools are concentrated in districts with lower levels of poverty because of the socioeconomic but also racial and ethnic diversity that they offer. It is important to note that this analysis does not include the Success Academy charter network, which operates 47 schools in New York and across the network serves over 90% students of color (Success Academy, n.d.). Despite being a member of the Diverse Coalition of Charter Schools, likely due to the large number of schools that it operates in every borough of the City some of which are more diverse than others, this analysis did not view intentional diversity to be a big enough goal of the network to be considered in this analysis. As

Table 2 illustrates, the remaining diverse charter schools are located within six districts and

concentrated in three (District 3, 13, and 15).

Table 2:
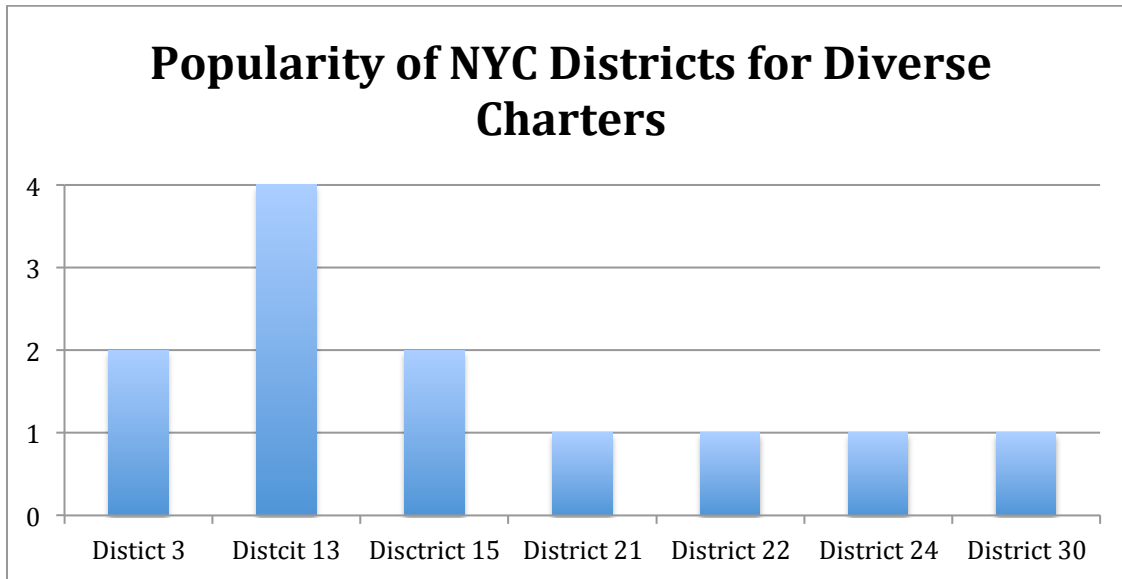
Despite stressing the highly segregated nature of most New York charter schools, in the

state-level recommendations of Kuscera and Orfield's 2014 report they advocate for legislative

changes that would enable diverse charters to grow more effectively.

> Moreover, state officials should work to promote diversity in charter school enrollments,
> in part by encouraging extensive outreach to diverse communities, interdistrict
> enrollment, and the provision of free transportation. Officials should also consider
> pursuing litigation against charter schools that are receiving public funds but are
> intentionally segregated, serving only one racial or ethnic group, or refusing service to
> English language learners. In addition, state laws that can restrict charter school diversity
> should be reviewed (127).

In the policy recommendations section of their 2012 report on Diverse Charter Schools,

Kahlenberg and Potter made a similar recommendation. The following section will consider the

real ways in which diverse New York charters, interviewed for this thesis, experienced this

provision, as well as other weaknesses in the charter law, as a way of providing evidence for

ways in which state, district, and school policies can be strengthened to fulfill charter's

integrating potential.

Analyzing the Diverse Charter Experience in NY

As explored in previous sections and chapters of this thesis, the diverse charter model

holds potential as a way to integrate schools and districts through using the popular school

choice model of the charter movement. Additionally, the experiences and practices of diverse

charter schools have the potential to positively influence the curriculums and policies of schools

that are introducing integration plans, such as New York. In this way diverse charters are an

overlooked, but important tool to consider when mapping the trajectory of integration efforts in

education policy. This section will consider changes that could prove beneficial to the success of

diverse charter schools in New York as a way to address the country's most segregated school

system, as well as suggest ways that other states can implement or protect policies beneficial to

diverse charter growth. As Executive Director of The Education Trust-New York, Ian

Rosenblum articulated, "The federal climate and the lack of federal leadership on key education

issues reinforces the importance of New York leading on issues like [integration]...There's a lot

that New York can and should be doing" (quoted in Viega & Disare, 2017).

How the "good faith" provision impacts diverse charter schools

A common theme that came up among the leaders of intentionally diverse charter schools

in New York was a frustration with the state's law requiring charters to mirror the district which

they were located in. Jon Rosenberg of Hebrew Public explained the impact that this provision

has had on schools, like those in Hebrew Public's Network, to reach their full potential.

> Under NY State charter law, there is a provision that schools need to engage in good faith
> efforts and effective efforts to have their enrollment comprise similar subgroups of
> students as the district in which the school is located… That constraint, actually flies in
> the face, from a policy standpoint of what you would want if you were trying to deal with

issues of segregation through a charter school choice model and if you were to deal with that segregation in ways that acknowledges that history of red lining, of district boundary drawing, of white flight etc… New York state law to essentially only create schools in districts that already have a diverse population…

Rosenberg's assessment points to the conflict between the state law and the mission and potential of diverse charter schools. Additionally, his reflection points to some of the historical and contextual factors considered in chapter two of this thesis, as well as the first part of this chapter by highlighting the longstanding issues which created and maintain residential segregation. Rosenberg's analysis points to the limitation that this policy places on intentionally diverse charters by prohibiting them from opening in districts that have lower levels of diversity. In other words, state policy in New York essentially mandates charter schools reinforce patterns of housing segregation in schools, thus, greatly limiting the impact of intentionally diverse charter schools to only districts with an existing overall diverse population. As already discussed, it is only those districts with a higher socio-economic status that tend to have an overall racially diverse district in the city. Jon Rosenberg of Hebrew Public described the way New York charter law serves as a limiting force.

> It would be wonderful for state policy to liberate charters from the school district boundaries because hewing to those boundaries has re-enforced segregation. For example, wouldn't it be great to create a school at the border of East Harlem and the Upper East Side with the specific policy of drawing students from both school districts (districts 2 and 4) to integrate those communities. Right now, despite their proximity, those communities are very segregated from each other and the children in their public schools have very different experiences. But state law requires us to fill open seats first from the district in which we're located, and to approximate the poverty demographics of that district.

B.U.G.S co-founder Susan Tenner also commented on the way that the New York law limits schools like hers to reach their full potential, despite being able to open in a district that has high levels of diversity.

I think we're lucky enough, we're lucky that our District is diverse enough that when they go to compare us it's ok. But it's a crapshoot, if I were in Harlem and I wanted to have a diverse school but the location was there, I mean there is something very valuable about with being reflective about the immediate community, I totally get that. But if the mission of the charter school, you know there mission is expressly to be diverse and have a distribution of whatever categories of kids you have, and which has been shown to have these positive effects on learning and development than you're stuck, because the law says you have to look like your district.

Despite this observed limitation, B.U.G.S provides an interesting example of how diverse charter schools can play an important role in even diverse districts, particularly given New York's challenging choice system. Tenner explained that the motivation of opening the charter school was to add additional quality middle school seats to District 15 that were accessible to all students. "We commissioned a study with Brooklyn College and started to notice this problem of not having enough middle school seats...and looking deeper at this disproportionality of the schools that are the most high performing being disproportionately white and well off." B.U.G.S. sought to offer a solution to this problem by supplying the district with an option that provided additional, quality middle school spots, but sought out a diverse population in order to fill the gap created by the other choice policies of the city and district. What the experience of B.U.G.S demonstrates is that diverse charters can be very beneficial for the districts that they serve, however these benefits need not be constrained to mirroring one district, and can be multiplied by allowing diverse charters to be more representative of the city's diversity as a whole.

The experience of the Buffalo based charter network Elmwood Village Charter School also demonstrates the flaws in the state law. However, the school's authorizer has expressed a willingness to work with them, understanding the importance of their intentionally diverse model. "We're authorized by SUNY now... and they are tuned into diversity being a positive

influence in a school, it's good for all students academically" explained founding member Liz Evans, "They're trying to reconcile the mandate that was put down by the New York State Legislature and best practices for diversity." The experience of Elwood Village Charter Schools signifies the possibility that the state law could undergo changes which could lead to strengthening of the diverse charter model in New York schools and highlights the need to publicize the work that these schools do and the role they can play in efforts to integrate and inform integration practices across the country.

Interestingly, the need for charters to mirror their district can be experienced as limiting the school's ability to serve certain groups of students in meaningful ways. For example, at B.U.G.S, Ms. Tenner explained that the school was getting chided for not having enough English Language Learners to mirror the surrounding district, while they were not being acknowledged for serving an above average number of students with special needs which created a point of frustration for Tenner.

> One thing I will say that has been frustrating at certain times is the state keeps dinging us around not having enough {English language learners} which because we're such a small school if we just had literally like three more {English language learners} our percentage point would be right at the district level, that's why we were trying to do this weighting. So it's kind of silly, it's like they're finding something to kind of harp on but, we were disproportionately serving special education students and knocking it out of the park, we do so well with our academic achievement for special education, so we become sort of specialized in that. And so you don't get quote on quote credit for doing really well or having an extra amount of a population in the rules. You still get dinged for {English language learners}, so it doesn't allow for charters being that lab and that specialization in a portfolio that's trying to do certain things.

By holding diverse charters to strict expectations for demographics, they are not empowered to be the tools of innovation that they can be for developing best practices which can be replicated in schools across districts and states. This provides another, perhaps less obvious, benefit of

diverse charters which is limited by the policy of mirroring the surrounding district demographics.

Conclusion

This case study of New York considered the experience of diverse charters in the state contextualized by the historical causes of segregation as well as the limitations of existing charter policy. New York provides an interesting location through which to study diverse charters because of the potential role they can play in remedying the state and city's serious segregation problem. New York City could be a site for implementing more intentionally diverse charter schools – the city, though highly segregated, is also densely populated and neighborhoods are not necessarily far apart geographically. Despite the need for methods of integration, as well as diverse schools can lead the charge in engineering best practices and school level policies as the city continues to pursue more equitable city wide approaches. Unfortunately, the New York State charter law limits this potential for intentionally diverse charters to be available to more students by requiring that they mirror the demographics of the district they are located in. As this analysis demonstrated, this confines diverse charters to very few, already diverse, districts. The experiences of New York charter schools both in New York City, and in Buffalo demonstrate the way in which this policy limits the potential of diverse charters to impact more communities, districts, and students. New York is not the only state to have this policy, and it is joined by Alabama, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Oregon, and South Carolina in requiring an in-district preference (Potter, 2015, 12). The final chapter of this thesis will consider the research and findings presented thus far, in order to assess existing policy recommendations and propose additional ideas for the future success of the diverse charter model.

Chapter V: Policy Recommendations and Concluding Remarks

In this thesis, I have explored questions related to school choice and racial segregation. In the first chapter, I studied the existing literature on charter schools and racial and socioeconomic isolation to understand the reality of education segregation. I attempted to reconcile the fact that, while the charter sector is as a whole maintaining segregation, there is a potential for the charter model to be used to build both diverse and truly integrated schools. In chapter two, I highlighted the reasons that integration remains an important yet elusive education policy goal for almost all American schools. This included an exploration into previous attempts at desegregation which failed to bring about meaningful integration for a variety of reasons, including due to public and court opposition to busing, and the politically motivated continuation of district segregation. Additionally, engaging with the existing literature about segretation established the need to create integration that extends beyond diversity in the student body. Chapter two highlighted evidence that "second generation" segregation can continue to disadvantage students even once schools themselves have become more diverse. Chapters three and four included analysis of eight charter schools through qualitative interviews with school leaders from intentionally diverse charter schools. I explored themes between the experiences and practices of intentionally diverse charter schools, before exploring New York charters in a more specific case study which highlighted the benefits of this school model while exposing policies that run counter to these schools' goal of diversity and integration.

In this chapter I will review and analyze policy recommendations at the school level, as well as the state and district levels, and then propose additional recommendations based upon the evidence explored in chapters three and four. I will consider resources like the National Charter School Resource Center's "Intentionally Diverse Charter Schools: A Toolkit for Charter School

Leaders" (Kern, 2016) as well as the recommendations from advocates like Kahlenberg, and

Potter for policies at the school, state, and federal level can be adapted to better support the

mission and potential of diverse charter schools. This chapter will seek to engage with these

existing recommendations based upon my own research and interviews as well as provide

additional policy recommendations at different levels of governments that could be implemented

to further the goal of diverse charter schools. Most importantly, this chapter will contribute to

the development of promising practices that can be adopted by traditional public schools. The

development of these practices through the evidence provided in this thesis is important for

establishing the potential of intentionally diverse charter schools to influence classroom and

school policies as traditional districts seek to diversify, as is the case in New York City. This

chapter will provide evidence for the important partner that states and school districts can find in

intentionally diverse charters as they seek to integrate students in meaningful ways.

School Level Policies

As explored in chapter three, intentionally diverse charter schools are employing practices

that encourage and support meaningful integration through their missions, recruitment strategies,

responsive classroom models and pedagogies, as well as community and parental outreach. The

National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) developed a Toolkit in 2016 to help charters

successfully attract and integrate a diverse student body of students. This toolkit suggests the

adoption of many of the practices identified in the charter school leaders who were interviewed

in this research, which provides positive evidence of the development and acknowledgement of

effective best practices. Intended for charter school leadership and stakeholders, the toolkit is

intended to provide resources for on the ground practitioners. As a result, it does not provide

state or local policy recommendations or go into great detail about the role that intentionally

diverse charters can play in influencing best practices for traditional public schools. Nonetheless,

it does provide salient recommendations for schools given the current status of state and federal law (Kern, 2016). This section will explore and analyze some of the NCSRC's recommended practices for diverse charters, along with the recommendations of other diverse charter advocates, and seek to build upon these suggestions using the evidence gathered from the qualitative interviews employed in this study.

Defining and quantifying a mission of diversity

The NCSRC tool kit provides an outline for ways in which current or future charter schools can define diversity and make it a part of the school's mission. The toolkit highlights the importance of developing a clearly stated diversity goal as well as establishing the metrics for how this goal can be measured, and suggests important questions for schools to consider when planning out their diversity missions. Many of the school leaders that I interviewed for this research reiterated similar ideas about the importance of a diversity mission. Most of these schools were founded prior to the publication of this 2016 report, and the experiences of the charters profiled in this thesis support many of the recommendations suggested by the NCSRC (Kern, 2016).

Despite the focus in this section on a diversity-focused mission and quantifying of diversity to measure success, the toolkit does not go further and provide suggestions of informed best practices for future schools to adopt. Instead the toolkit seems to suggest that different schools should adopt different policies to accomplish diversity in a way that makes the most sense for their school and the demographic they are serving. While there is merit in suggesting an adaptive approach that can be modeled to meet the needs of different schools, there is also the potential for schools to be more or less effective or intentional in the practices that they employ while still being labeled as an intentionally diverse charter school. Additionally, establishing a

way in which intentionally diverse charters can be compared across the model through common metrics should be a goal in order to maintain accountability as the sector of charters continues to grow.

What the toolkit does suggest is that using socioeconomic status as a gauge for diversity can be the most reliable and legally permissible way of enrolling a diverse student body (Kern, 2016). This assertion is supported both by the legal precedents explored in chapter two, as well as evidence collected during interviews with charter leaders. Kahlenberg has also long advocated for attention to socioeconomic diversity as the most beneficial avenue to pursue because of the positive effects that economic integration can hold for students, as well as the political and legal viability of programs that consider economic status instead of race (2016). While the intersectionality of socioeconomic status with other indicators of truly diverse schools do exist (i.e. overlap between socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity and English language ability), there still remains a need to ensure that diversity missions and recruitment are intentional enough to include critical proportions of these groups as well as students with learning disabilities who might not be captured by proxy metrics like socioeconomic status. This concept was explored in a 2016 Washington D.C. forum focused on the role of charter schools in encouraging diversity and integration where participants agreed that while racial and socioeconomic are the most commonly understood forms of segregation, pursuing these should not happen at the expense of other students or demographics (Reddick, 2017).

Additional recruitment strategies and classroom models that encourage this type of multi-faceted approach and view of integration will be explored in greater depth later in this chapter, however, in terms of defining a charter's mission of diversity, it is important to consider whether definitions or goals for diversity and integration can be different depending on the strengths of

the school (Reddick, 2017). For example, intentionally diverse B.U.G.S in New York recognized its strength in educating students with disabilities, but the demographic requirements of charter schools imposed by the state did not recognize this kind of specialization. The school's executive director, Susan Tenner, explained that expecting too broad of a definition of diversity could limit the potential of charters to serve as centers of innovation, "it doesn't allow for charters being that lab and that specialization…So you know, so if you're discovering over time that you're really good at something it starts to become the word on the street, and you start to get really better at it. And you kind of, you can get stuck." Ms. Tenner's analysis points to the potential for charters to serve specific populations while offering different, but still important, types of integration and diversity, for instance diversity of learners as was the case at B.U.G.S.

As the intentionally diverse charter model grows, the capacity for different types of diverse schools can expand as well, but, at this point in time developing meaningful and replicable ways of integrating students should be the goal of this expanding model. Charter proponents should be wary of the potential for too many "pillars" to be introduced to the charter model (Finn, Manno, Wright, 2016, June). An increase in the specialization of charter schools could come at the cost of increased segregation between these schools with different themes and missions targeted at certain populations of students. Additonally, specialization can limit the ability of charter practices and methods to be replicated by traditional public schools, which remains one of the greatest potential benefits of the intentionally diverse charter model. A line between the potential for intentionally diverse charter schools to specialize in different types of diversity with the goal of increasing the ability to integrate student bodies, and the specialization of charters without attention to diversity thus leading to more segregation, should be drawn and

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closely monitored in order to ensure that it does not exasperate segregation in charters, or limit their ability to contibute to developing techniques for integration.

The NCSRC toolkit also suggests that intentionally diverse charters, particularly those with established attendance zones or those that are restricted by state law to serving specific districts, must consider how their diversity goals will be impacted by demographic shifts in their neighborhood (Kern, 2016), which very much mirrors the experience of Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School (ANCS), one of the schools highlighted in chapter three.   Since ANCS's founding in 2002, the school has witnessed a gentrification of the neighborhood, which has threatened the school's ability to serve both a neighborhood goal along with a commitment to diversity within the school. ANCS has not only widened the attendance boundary but, as discussed in chapter three, has also become involved in community action to ensure that economic development projects near the school also include affordable housing and ways of maintaining diversity within the city. This attention to changing demographics acknowledges the importance highlighted by the NCSRC toolkit of planning diversity missions and strategies methodically in order to determine the best course of action through which to pursue them.

As highlighted by the experiences of some of the schools featured in chapter three, there is evidence that intentional diversity can be a strong partner to other types of educational goals that charters may have. This theme provides evidence that in some ways runs counter to conventional thinking of the intentionally diverse charter model (Kern, 2016) in that it allows for the potential for schools that have not yet pursued diversity to adopt it as part of their larger mission. This is not to say that retroactively adopting this goal in an effective way does not pose challenges, but rather suggests that there is the possibility that intentional diversity can be adopted as a complement to other goals of existing or future charter schools.

Attracting and yielding a diverse student body

The NCSRC tool kit highlights the ability that charters, both as schools of choice and as schools with the ability to adopt special programs and academic features, have in creating a school that attracts a diverse group of families. Kern says, "As charter school leaders know, parents seeking the right school for their child will consider a wide range of factors. Many of these factors might be school-based elements, such as the school's quality, mission, location, transportation offerings, instructional program, discipline system, culture, and approach to pedagogy" (2016, 12). Evidence of this can be seen through the schools profiled in chapter three, as some of them highlighted additional academic goals that reinforced a commitment to diversity and aided in attracting a diverse student body through themes like language immersion, social emotional learning, and project based sustainability curriculums. As the experience of Lead Academy in Greenville, South Carolina attested to, diversity alone can also be a theme that attracts diverse family interest.

An additional policy recommendation that has been proposed by both the NCSRC toolkit (Kern, 2016) as well as Kahlenberg and Potter (2012) is attention to accessibility of location and opportunities for transportation in order to attract and yield a diverse student body. As expressed in the themes explored in chapter three, the intentionally diverse charters highlighted in this thesis utilized both intentional location and opportunities for transportation to make their schools more welcoming and a more viable option for more families and students. As highlighted by the NCSRC report (Kern, 2016) and supported by evidence from Bricolage Academy in the interviews conducted for this thesis, location is an important part to maximize the benefits of an intentionally diverse schools that can attract a student body from multiple districts. However, as the New York case study illustrated, state policies can limit the ability of charter schools to be

located in places that serve to bridge the divide between segregated districts. This problem will

be explored in greater depth in the next section of this chapter concerning state level policy

recommendations.

A policy recommendation suggested in the NCSRC toolkit and supported by evidence

collected in this thesis which could prove to be largely beneficial to the development and success

of the intentionally diverse charter model, is the addition of a parent or community liaison to act

as an intermediary and advocate for families in the school, as well as assist in outreach for

attracting a diverse applicant pool. Lead Academy and Community Roots Charter School

provided strong examples of the impact that this type of position can have on the community and

experience of families. Although this role of a parent liaison or community director could be

very beneficial to the recruitment process as well as the community engagement of the school, it

might not be the most accessible option for all intentionally diverse charters due to cost or

capacity deficits. As the NCSRC report suggests, parents of the school can also serve this

purpose more informally by aiding in recruitment and community outreach.

> Parents of students enrolled at the charter school can be a powerful "word of mouth" recruitment network. Providing parents with promotional materials and enrollment applications, in other languages as applicable, enables them to share information about the school with their networks— such as religious groups, cultural organizations, book clubs, or their children's sports teams.[74] Parents sharing their experiences of the school spreads information across communities and SES levels. Parents who speak another language might also volunteer to help the school translate materials or act as translators for other families to give back to the school community. School leaders can communicate through parent listservs and attend local school fairs to reach parents in the broader community (Kern, 2016, 21).

In chapter three I highlighted evidence that schools are employing this method of a parental

involvement in recruiting, and experiencing success with it. This finding supports the

importance of outreach to the community and the role that an empowered parental community

can play in maintaining an intentionally diverse school of choice, particularly if a community director or liaison is beyond the financial means of a school.

Pursuing responsive classroom and communication models

Interviews with the school leaders from intentionally diverse charters featured in chapter three highlight the development of practices including the detracking of classroom, social emotional learning, and attention to disproportionate rates of discipline and suspension that could prove to be hugely beneficial to the educational system as a whole. Evidence of best practices that have been explored and developed through the intentionally diverse charter model could prove to be incredibly important in avoiding the issues of second generation segregation, and ensuring that meaningful integration accompanies desegregation of schools. This is of particular importance in traditional public schools in cities and districts that are adopting integration plans, as is the case in the New York Case study featured in chapter four.

While evidence from the schools interviewed in this thesis demonstrates that intentionally diverse charters are considering these issues as a part of their diversity mission, it remains an important point of consideration for schools looking to open using this model. In addition to practices for recruitment and yield, schools must also consider practices for classroom inclusion and integration. Authorizers, states, and federal charter law should build on what some intentionally diverse charter schools are already doing on their own and incentivize intentionally diverse charter schools to support the innovation of solutions to educational problems regarding inclusion, tracking, and discipline, and require them to write these plans and policies into their charter applications.

Evidence in chapter three highlighted that intentionally diverse charter schools face some of the same barriers to detracking classrooms that other schools and teachers face, however they are working on ways to combat these problems. Supporting the development of more of these

intentionally diverse charter schools could serve as an important step towards developing more effective practices. The same argument goes for discipline. B.U.G.S. and Elmwood Village Charter Schools were both making concious efforts in their classroom models to decrease rates of disciplin, which can disporportionately impact minority students.

State Level Policies

Cooperation between intentionally diverse charters and state or local initiatives

As was highlighted in chapter three, diverse charter schools can serve as important partners for traditional school districts and local or state initiatives. As highlighted by the experience of B.U.G.S in District 15 of Brooklyn, NY, intentionally diverse charter schools can help inform district practices regarding diversity initiatives. As cities and districts work to implement diversity plans, intentionally diverse charters can be an important part of understanding the benefits and challenges of integrated classrooms and planning these initiatives in a way that encourages the most meaningful integration attainable by these plans. Additionally, as previously highlighted by the experience of ANCS, by being closely tied to the community and the interests of a diverse cohort of families, diverse charters can provide insight for other community plans such as economic growth projects, or outreach initiatives, and use their status as a diverse school as a way to ensure that all of the community's voices are being heard and represented.

Partner with Intentionally Diverse Charters for Teacher Preparation and Development

The NCSRC tool kit suggests that charter schools can play a role in teacher preparation, particularly in regards to partnering with institutions of higher education and teacher accreditation programs in order to attract and recruit diverse teachers (Kern, 2016). This provides an important avenue through which diverse charters can help address educational issues related to diversity and inclusion beyond their own schools. This thesis provided evidence that

some schools are already actively pursuing this kind of professional development, and that the benefits of it can be extended to preparing all teachers for diverse classrooms and aiding them with the tools and skills they need to ensure that practices like disproportionate discipline and tracking do not get replicated in their classrooms. By following the model of ANCS and Community Roots Charter School, diverse charter schools can contribute to teacher preparation and residency programs. However, this potential can be limited in districts or charters themselves that are not open to collaboration with these diverse charters. Lines of communication can be enhanced in order for teachers to benefit from the potential to learn from and be exposed to diverse classrooms during their preparation and education periods in intentionally diverse classrooms, and states and districts can play an important role in spearheading these partnerships.

Dismantle district preference requirements

As demonstrated clearly by the New York case study in chapter four, imposing a district preference or a requirement that charters mirror their district of residence severely limits both the ability of this model to grow and meet its full potential, as well as serve the students who could most benefit from diverse classrooms by restricting the ability of intentionally diverse charters to serve students from multiple school districts. Potter (2015; 2017) highlighted the importance of breaking down these barriers in states that have district requirements, and the evidence provided this thesis supports her recommendation. As long as intentionally diverse charters have a clear definition of the diversity that they hope to attract, as well as a plan to effectively and responsibly educate their diverse student body, these schools should be free to enroll across districts in order to fully recognize the potential for the charter model as a method of interdistrict integration. Additionally, as Potter explains, ensuring that schools can utilize weighted lotteries can be an important part of maintaining diversity in enrollment and ensuring that the randomness

of the lottery does not upset the intended diversity of the school which, as Jon Rosenberg of Hebrew Public explained, can take years to revert (Potter, 2015).

National Level Policies

Provide better incentives at the federal level for these schools

Though the primary evidence of this thesis does not contribute to supporting or suggesting future policies for diverse charters at the federal level there are important considerations and recommendations put forth by the leading researchers, Kahlenberg and Potter, on these intentionally diverse charter schools. In a 2012 report, they point to the lack of federal charter law that promotes diversity in the charter sector, highlighting a similar issue that was also expressed by neoliberal critics Scott and Quinn (2015). Among the recommendations that Kahlenberg and Potter suggest are increasing the weight given to charter schools with intentional diversity plans to mirror those of charters whose mission it is to serve students of low-income backgrounds (2012). Additionally, the researchers recommend that the federal government do more to promote the use of the blind, race neutral lotteries that remain legally permissible despite the unconstitutionality of other voluntary diversity initiatives that are race conscious (Kahlenberg and Potter, 2012). To accomplish this, the federal government can play a larger role in promoting and advising schools on their ability to pursue diversity as outlined in the 2011 "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" released by the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education (Kahlenberg and Potter, 2012). By promoting the potential of intentionally diverse charters at the federal level, states and individual charter actors can be more empowered to seek out diversity and propel the model forward, along with its many potential benefits for students and the educational system as a whole.

Conclusion

This thesis has contributed to the small body of work on intentionally diverse charter schools in order to establish the model's merits as well as provide additional support for its growth and potential. The research, evidence, and analysis present a compelling case for the use of intentionally diverse charter schools to serve both students in the charter sector as well as larger long term integration goals. By illustrating the perceived benefits of integrated schools on the students in the charter schools featured in this thesis, as well as exploring the ways in which classroom models and lessons developed in intentionally diverse classrooms can be translated into other diversity initiatives at the district and state level, this model of schools has the potential for both short term and long term benefits as educators and policymakers continue to seek out solutions for greater educational integration.

It is important to acknowledge that there is a limit to the scope of this model as a policy solution. Though it was beyond the scope of this thesis to explore the academic merits of the charter system as a whole, large inconsistencies exist in the effectiveness and quality of education that charters provide their students. For this reason it is important that while we encourage the growth of the model for purposes of integration, attention to educational equity and excellence remain utmost goals. Potter (2015) summarized the contradictions between supporting the expansion of intentionally diverse charters within an educational sector that is heavily critiqued. She aruges "...Advocates of using charter schools for integration should also be aware of the political liability of being associated with a controversial movement and a host of tangential other lightning rods in education policy…that some charter schools have come to symbolize." However, as Potter explains, this variation in charter schools does not have to detract from the potential that exists and is supported by evidence in this thesis, or warrant the

exclusion of this model from important conversations and solutions for integrating schools (Potter, 2015). Despite these limitations, the potential for intentionally diverse charters to move integration policy and practices forward remains. With impactful policy changes at the school, district, state and national level, intentionally diverse charters can be encouraged and their merits adopted by other schools.

Appendix

Appendix A

School Name	Location	Title of School Contact	Name of School Contact	Interview Date
Lead Academy	Greenville, SC	Principal	Chase Willingham	February 27, 2018
Bricolage Academy	New Orleans, LA	Executive Director	Josh Densen	February 28, 2018
Elsie Whitlow Stokes Community Freedom Public Charter School	Washington, DC	Founder	Linda Moore	March 6, 2018
Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School	Atlanta, GA	Executive Director	Matt Underwood	March 7, 2018
Hebrew Public Charter Schools	New York	President/CEO	Jon Rosenberg	March 7, 2018
Brooklyn Urban Garden School	Brooklyn, NY	Co-founder	Susan Tenner	March 20, 2018
Elmwood Village Charter Schools	Buffalo, NY	Co-founder	Liz Evans	March 23, 2018
Community Roots Charter School	Brooklyn, NY	Director of Community Development	Sahba Rohani	April 11, 2018

The interviews were semi-structured, and each conversation was different. This was the general guide I prepared and used for the data collection.

Pre-interview:
When I first call: *Thank the person for making the time to speak with me. Ask if they are comfortable with me recording our interview so that I can speak more conversationally without having to rush to keep up with notes.*

Turn on Recorder

If they consent to being recorded: *Thank them on the recording for consenting to be recorded. Explain that my goal is to have a chapter about best practices/ policy recommendations for diverse-by-design schools so I would like to use their names/names of their school- ask if that is ok with them. Explain that we can skip any questions they do not wish to answer.*

If they don't consent to being recorded: *I am hoping that I will not run into this but if I do, I ask them verbally if they are comfortable being named and confirm via email after the interview. In this instance I will have to weigh how useful/accurate my notes are and decide whether or not to use it.*

Interview Questions:

1. Can you tell me about your school's commitment to diversity?
   a. Was it founded for the purpose of integrating the geographic area surrounding your school? OR was it a developed goal?
   b. Was the location or any other decisions of your school made to further an integration goal?
2. What, if any, have been the benefits for students in your school of having diverse classrooms?
   a. Have there been any trade-offs or limitations due to pursuing your diversity goal?
3. How, if at all, does your school define diversity in terms of recruiting and yielding students?
   a. Do quantify your diversity goals?
       i. If yes, how so?
       ii. If not, how do you assess how well your school is embodying diversity?
   b. Do you differentiate between types of integration goals (i.e. goal of integrating by race, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, special education)?
   c. Tracking?
4. How did you develop and execute your recruitment plan?
   a. Is it an ongoing project?
   b. Is there anything about it that you believe is unique?
   c. How successful has it been in maintaining a diverse class?
5. Describe the policies that your district or state has around charter schools.
   a. In your school's experience are they supportive or in conflict with your goal of integration?
6. Do you collaborate with other public schools in your district?
   a. If so, please explain how
   b. If not, please explain why
7. Are you familiar with the 2007 *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No.1* Supreme Court Decision?
   a. {IF YES and IF School has been in existence since 2007} How, if at all, did this decision affect your recruitment and admissions policies?
       i. Please explain how it did/did not effect
   b. {IF YES but school is younger than 2007} How, if at all, would your recruitment and admissions policies be different if it weren't for the *Parents Involved* Decision

End with asking if there is anything else I should know to understand the school/diversity mission?

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