

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF MAGNET SCHOOLS IN THE  
DESEGREGATION OF RIVERVIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT

BY

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DISSERTATION

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## **Abstract**

This historical study provides a concise history of desegregation in public schools in the United States and the subsequent establishment of magnet schools. An historical timeline from the establishment of the first magnet schools to current magnet school models of excellence was presented. Equity theory framed this study as educational practitioners continue to strive for equal access to educational programs for all students.

This study examined historical, racial, and socio-economic data from a school district in central Illinois that established magnet programs in 1979 to stop White flight. The results of the study included information regarding the historical and political events that led to the establishment of the magnet programs. Additional data examined if the establishment of these programs led to improved integration in the school district and if there were differences between students enrolled in both the magnet classes and non-magnet classes in terms of race and socio-economic status.

The study found that there were many factors which led to the establishment of the magnet programs in Riverview. Additionally, the study found that the magnet programs did not accomplish their initial task, and that there are some significant racial and socio-economic differences between students enrolled in magnet and non-magnet classes. Recommendations for further study were provided.

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## CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In an era of great hope for this country's racial transformation from the mid-1960's to the early 1970's, we committed ourselves to creating integrated schools. There was a brief period in our history in which there was serious policy and research attention on how to devise racially diverse schools to achieve integration and equal opportunity. Civil rights leaders and participants in the hundreds of demonstrations demanding integrated education knew the sorry history of "separate but equal" and fought for access to the opportunities concentrated in White schools (Orfield, 2007, p. 1).

Public education began in the early 1600's in the United States. The first public school to open in the United States in 1645 was the Boston Latin School, located in Boston, Massachusetts. The rigorous curriculum at the Boston Latin School centered around the humanities and was modeled after the free grammar school in Lincolnshire, England. The Boston Latin School was the first school, which integrated the students both racially and sexually over the centuries and continues to do so to this day (Fraser, Allen, & Barnes, 1979). As the years passed, the Boston Latin School was the exception, rather than the rule, when it came to integrating schools and providing students with equal educational opportunities over the past four centuries.

Fifty-eight years after the historic *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of 1896 that legitimized the doctrine of "separate but equal," the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* United States Supreme Court Decision of 1954 outlawed segregation practices which were occurring in public schools across the United States. But as the years passed, many school systems did not voluntarily follow the court mandate to end the dual system which separated Black students from White students and open all schools to everyone without regard, in order to equalize the racial balance in schools through desegregation practices. After *Brown* (1954), a trend across the United States began where many White students left public schools with high populations of Black students for suburban school districts with larger White student populations. This

phenomena was termed "White Flight." During the 1960s and 1970s reform efforts were attempted across the United States to racially integrate public schools. During the late 1960's and early 1970's, numerous school districts established magnet schools to encourage voluntary racial integration and to keep white students in their district.

Although some magnet schools were established as a voluntary method to reduce racial isolation, other magnet schools began under court orders to desegregate schools. This implementation of desegregation mandates and the establishment of magnet schools was one of the reasons for the bussing of students away from their neighborhood schools.

Historically magnet schools were created to "attract" students to attend rather than to force them to attend to promote the desegregation of schools. These "new" magnet schools were designed to provide a vehicle for integration and to combat the inequities present in public schools. Although magnet schools in many school districts were originally established to encourage voluntary integration, more recently magnet schools have become a form of choice in the school choice movement. Magnet schools offer a way for racial integration to be combined with the concept of school choice. A choice of schools enables parents to choose specific schools for their children based on the academic programs provided.

### **Need for Study**

Magnet schools were originally intended to promote desegregation, stop "white flight", and "attract" students to the programs offered in the school (Smrekar & Goldring, 1999). Magnet schools have continued to be a form of choice utilized by school districts across the country since the late 1960s. One reason for their continued popularity is their dedication to cater to students' interests and needs.

Magnet schools at the high school level in large urban areas have been studied in depth, specifically those under court orders to desegregate. Less research exists regarding magnet schools in smaller school districts at the elementary and middle school level that have implemented magnet schools for desegregation purposes. This study will benefit smaller school districts with magnet programs and magnet schools.

### **Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

Confucius said, "Study the past if you would define the future." We do not know where we are going unless we know where we have been. Historical analysis is commonly used in social research as an introductory strategy for establishing a context or background against which a substantive contemporary study may be set (Jupp, 2006). This historical study focused on the role of magnet school programs in the desegregation process throughout history, and more specifically, in Riverview School District (pseudonym).

Riverview School District is an urban district located in central Illinois with an average enrollment of 5,292 Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students housed in eleven schools. Riverview has a 23% mobility rate, and a low income rate of 86%. Additionally, Riverview has a population of English Language Learners at 11%, students with disabilities at 12%, and a homeless population at 2%. The racial demographics of students in Riverview include 49% Black, 26% Hispanic, 23% White, and 1% of the students are of two or more races. The purpose of this study was to understand the history of legislation and reform efforts aimed at the racial integration of public schools and the role magnet schools have played in these desegregation efforts. Additionally, this historical study examined the history of one school district's (Riverview) effort to achieve a racially diverse enrollment through the establishment of magnet programs.



This study addressed the history related to the establishment of magnet programs and schools, and more specifically, the Riverview School District's magnet programs. A primary focus was to determine if the magnet programs integration process had changed over the years in Riverview. The following questions guided this research study:

- What historical and political events in Riverview led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview School District?
- Has the establishment and continuation of magnet programs in Riverview School District improved integration in Riverview School District?
- What differences, if any, exist in Riverview School District from the 1970's to today between students enrolled in magnet and non-magnet programs in grades four through six in terms of race and socio-economic status?

### **Situated Self**

My interest in desegregation and magnet schools goes beyond data. As a teacher, I was unaware of the reasons behind the establishment of magnet schools. I spent 18 years in a neighboring school district before becoming an administrator in the Riverview School District. Spending the past 32 years in public education, and the last 13 of these years as both assistant principal and principal in two different elementary and middle schools in the Riverview School District which house magnet programs has caused me to question some of the reasons behind the establishment of magnet schools both across the country and in Riverview School District. One aspect I have pondered is why Riverview School District busses many students across the city to other schools within the district when there are neighborhood schools in close proximity. I have also pondered the historical and political reasons behind the establishment of magnet programs

in my district. Additionally, I had not put much thought into parents being able to have a choice in the public school for their children.

This study manifested itself from my desire to explore the history of magnet programs and magnet schools both nationally and locally and their role in the desegregation and reform of public schools. Although my position as principal of a school that houses magnet programs and my personal interest in magnet schools is the reason behind this study, I must “bracket” myself from my own experiences, prejudices, history, and assumptions (Merriam, 2009). There are also concurrent advantages my positioning provides for being an insider in this study, such as: some prior knowledge of the history of the school district, knowledge of the magnet programs and their processes, and access to information, to name a few.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

Equity theory framed this study as we continue to strive for equal access to educational programs for all students. In relation to many policy debates, equity is synonymous with social justice as the needs of individuals and groups differ. In school desegregation policy, equity claims are made by attorneys and civil rights leaders for equal treatment of Whites and Blacks. This translates into demands for equal access to and participation in educational programs (Rossell, 1990).

Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) propose that race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States. This has been well documented over recent years (Bell, 2004, Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007, Kozol, 1991, Omni & Winant 1994, Rothstein, 2004). Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) also propose that our society is based on property rights and the intersection of property and race creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social and school inequity.

## **Review of Literature**

There is considerable literature that focuses on desegregation in public schools and the role of magnet schools in desegregation efforts (Bell, 1980; Frankenberg & Lee, 2002; Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Guthrie & Springer, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Orfield & Eaton, 2007; Orfield, Frankenberg, & Garcés, 2008; Rossell, 1975, 1990, 2003) and the need for equitable outcomes in education (Bell, 2009; Blank & Archbald, 1992; Blank, Levine, & Steele, 1996; Coleman, 1990; Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009; Fuller, Elmore, & Orfield, 1996; Smith & Kozleski, 2005; Wong & Nicotera, 2004). A study by McNally (2002) of four inter-district elementary magnet schools in Connecticut found that White families sent their children to magnet schools, partly for their racial diversity, and 100% of minority and White families chose to send their children to a magnet school outside their neighborhood. A study by Saportio (2003) found that White families typically use magnet school choice programs to avoid neighborhood schools composed of non-White children, while non-White families typically show no such sensitivity to race.

It is vital to focus on the scholarly literature of the history of desegregation in the United States and studies associated with magnet schools. The historical time period, significant legal decisions, and relevant historical events related to school desegregation and race relations are presented. This study contributes to the known literature on magnet schools and the role of magnet schools in desegregation and reform efforts. Current and future educational leaders will need to have the necessary knowledge to further refine and develop the magnet programs in Riverview and other school districts.

## **Methodology for Research**

The research methodology used for this study was a historical case study. Historical researchers utilize dates, facts, figures, and descriptions of past events, people, or developments (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). This study examined the history of magnet schools nationwide and specifically one school district's (Riverview) effort to voluntarily desegregate and to stop White flight through the establishment of magnet school programs. Additionally, the race and socio-economic status of the fourth through sixth grade student population of said school district from the inception of the magnet programs to current day was examined to determine if the integration process changed over the years. Archival data including primary and more specifically secondary sources were used as research tools for this study.

### **Nature and Organization of the Magnet Programs in Riverview**

Riverview School District originally established magnet programs to halt “White flight” from the school district. Today Riverview School District houses 5,292 students in 11 schools. Riverview has one high school which houses grades 9-12, one junior high houses grades 7-8, two middle schools each house grades 4-6, one Montessori Magnet houses grades K-8, and six primary/elementary schools house grades Kindergarten through grade 3.

Currently Riverview School District houses magnet programs within schools (schools within schools), with only one school, the Montessori Magnet School, designated exclusively as a full or “true” magnet school. Magnet programs in Riverview include the Montessori Magnet, science magnet, fine arts magnet, math magnet, and computer magnet. One school in Riverview School District houses the Montessori Magnet, grades K-8, where all 319 students are enrolled in the Montessori Magnet. Other than the Montessori Magnet school, the schools in Riverview that house the magnet programs also house the regular educational program and enroll neighborhood

children, while also bussing students from various parts of the city to the parent and student choice of magnet programs.

Neither the junior high nor the high school house any magnet programs. Additionally, three of the six elementary/primary schools do not house any magnet programs and these three schools are considered neighborhood schools. One primary school located outside of the city in a small town adjacent to Riverview (but part of Riverview School District) houses the math magnet for grades K-3, one primary school on the east side of the city houses the computer magnet program for grades K-3, and one primary school on the west side of the city houses both the science and fine arts magnet programs for grades K-3. The middle school on the east side of the city houses the computer and math magnet programs for grades 4-6, while the middle school on the west side of the city houses the science and fine arts magnet programs for grades 4-6.

Today, enrollment in magnet programs in Riverview is by parent choice. Parents fill out a magnet application if they would like their child to participate in any of the five available magnet programs the district offers. The Magnet Program Director makes a concerted attempt to reach all parents of children entering the Riverview School District so parents are aware of the choice programs available in Riverview School District. Additionally, the Magnet Program Director makes an admirable attempt to maintain a racial balance within magnet classes (Magnet Program Report, 2006). According to information in a Riverview Magnet Program Report (2006), parents see the program as a way of ensuring their child's attendance either at a west-side school or in the Montessori Magnet program. The report also indicates that "the community perception of the magnet programs in Riverview seems by default to be "elitist and segregated" and "a natural effect of maintaining the magnet program is to create a dual system, exacerbated by failure to

sufficiently educate poor and minority families about application procedures” (Magnet Program Report, 2006, p. 1).

Today, students enrolled in magnet programs who live more than 1.5 miles away from the school that houses the magnet program in which they are enrolled are bussed to the school. This involves some bussing of students from one side of the city to the other side to attend a magnet program of their choice.

### **Definition of Terms**

This study requires the clarification of terms related to desegregation and magnet schools. The vocabulary used most frequently in this study will be defined.

*De facto segregation* - segregation practices that are not the result of legal mandates.

*De-identified student data* - data that does not include student names for their protection and anonymity.

*De jure segregation* - segregation based on the actions or laws of the state.

*Desegregation* - the process of ending the segregation or separation of groups of students, or not allowing schools to separate students, and more specifically by race.

*Equity* - freedom from favoritism or bias, justice according to right or natural law.

Educational Consultants from EDEquity, Inc. (2015) define equity as: Applying additional or different resources to ensure all students receive what they need to meet and exceed grade level standards. Educational Consultants from EDEquity, Inc. (2015) define educational equity as: Educational equity is the belief that access to quality instruction for all students will be achieved when the result of deliberate actions to close the racial achievement gap becomes the driving force of the organization. Equity is about understanding the assets students bring to learning.

Kranich (2001) defines equity as:

When some are excluded or lack the knowledge, equipment, or training necessary to participate in public discourse, they must overcome obstacles to access in order to ensure fairness. In other words, fairness also demands remedies to redress historic injustices that have prevented or diminished access in the first place: for, just as there can be no fairness without equality, there can be none without justice. That is, in order to maximize opportunities for access experienced by certain groups, a good society commits resources in order to level the playing field (p.1).

*Equality* - fairness or justice in the provision of education and it takes individual

circumstances into consideration. Kranich (2001) defines equality as:

The ideal of equal access is fundamental to American democracy. The 18th-century notion that all (men) are created equal, before God and before the law, set up the powerful expectation that every citizen deserves the same opportunity to influence the course of democracy, and to benefit from the fruits of a good society. Consequently, the notion succeeds or founders depending on the experiences of citizens in gaining equal access to the means of participating in the discourses that guide governance. But when a society is stratified into poles of advantage and disadvantage, with the inevitable consequences of privilege and exclusion, the promise of equal access to the discourses necessary for democratic participation rings hollow. Fair access, then, may take on a different meaning in each citizen, but its essence remains the interpretation of "fairness" as equal access and opportunity. Correspondingly, access to channels of communication and sources of information that is made available on even terms to all--a level playing field--is derived from the concept of fairness as uniform distribution, where everyone is entitled to the same level of access and can avail themselves if they so choose. (p.1)

*Free/Reduced Lunch Status* - a classification for students who receive school lunches at a reduced price or for free. Free and reduced lunches are based on federal guidelines and are aligned with family size and income. Typically students who qualify for free or reduced lunch are from a lower socio-economic status.

*Jim Crow Laws* - laws that consist of ethnic discrimination by legal enforcement or traditional sanctions.

*Magnet programs and magnet schools* - programs of curricular choice utilized to desegregate schools. Typically magnet schools have something special to offer that is not typical in regular schools. The intent is for the school to "attract" students as a magnet attracts an object

and attract parents from across different school zones. This attraction would be so great that students would rather attend the magnet school than be forced to attend neighborhood schools to promote desegregation of students. Types of special programs provided by magnet schools could include fine arts, performing arts, visual arts, foreign languages, engineering, science, math, technology, and language arts, etc.

*Non-Magnet School Programs* - traditional curriculums based on grade level as well as they typically enroll students from the entire school district.

*Open Enrollment* - students are allowed to enroll in the school of their choice, regardless of where they live in the school district. Inter-district transfers are open-enrollment policies that allow a student to transfer to the public school of his or her choice. The two types of open-enrollment consist of intra-district and inter-district. Intra-district open-enrollment policies allow a student to transfer to another school within his or her school district while inter-district open-enrollment policies allow a student to transfer to a school outside his or her home district (Education Commission of the States, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

*Public Schools* - schools that are available to all students within the school district.

*Schools within schools* - typically magnet programs which are housed in regular schools and only a portion of the student body is enrolled in the magnet program.

*Segregation* - the separation of students, usually by race or sex.

*Socioeconomic Status* - one's social standing or class. It is typically measured by combining income, education, and occupation. Many school districts use the free/reduced lunch status for the socioeconomic student data.

*Unitary status* - the inclusion of all students in a school regardless of race or color.



*White Flight* - the tendency for White families and students to leave public schools as the proportion of Black families and students increases or for better school outcomes.

*Whole School Magnet Programs* - all students in the school are enrolled in the thematic magnet programs in the school.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The literature review in chapter two examined the reasons behind the establishment of magnet schools across the country. The research collected for chapter four and five in this study was conducted in one school district in central Illinois known as Riverview School District (pseudonym). This limited the scope of the study to Riverview School District and the city of Riverview. This study emphasized the effect of the Riverview School District's Board of Education's decision to voluntarily desegregate in 1969 following a period of racial unrest in the community and the schools and the subsequent establishment of magnet programs within the district. Additionally, the study focused on available minority/non-minority demographic data from the years 1979-1980 - the first year of the program, and from race and socio-economic status data of fourth through sixth grade students from the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years. This study was limited to one school in Riverview that is designated a K-8 Montessori Magnet School and four K-6 magnet programs housed within six of the eleven schools in Riverview School District.

### **Significance**

It is important to understand the historical reasons behind desegregation cases and the establishment of magnet programs and schools and their role in desegregation efforts. Through an examination of the desegregation issues that were significant from the 1950's to today, the

concerns of the twenty-first century can be more effectively addressed. This study sought to fill a gap in the literature pertaining to magnet school enrollment in smaller school districts and specifically adds to the documented history of Riverview School District. This research benefits Riverview School District and other school districts which house magnet programs as they evaluate their current programs.

### **Dissertation Overview**

Chapter two provides an historical narrative of events that led to desegregation mandates across the country and the establishment of magnet programs and schools. The chapter began with Jim Crow laws in 1877. The researcher then examined such court cases as: the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of 1896, *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, *Brown II* in 1955, The Civil Rights Act of 1964, *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* in 1965, and *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No.1* in 2007. This chapter also examined the establishment of magnet programs and schools nationwide.

Chapter three provided the purpose of the study which was to address the history related to the establishment of magnet schools and of the Riverview School District in particular. Chapter three also consisted of the methodology for the study including: overview of methodology, personal standpoint, ethical considerations, participant selection, site selection, data collection, data analysis, limitations, and significance of research.

Chapter four examined voluntary desegregation in Riverview and the process which led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview School District. Additionally, the application process for Magnet Assistance Grants, and the establishment of magnet programs in schools in Riverview was reviewed. Chapter four examined the available data regarding the magnet schools' first and second years and up to the 2012-2013 school year. Chapter four also

included an examination of de-identified student data from the inception of the program including minority/non-minority data from the first year of the magnet programs implementation in 1979. More information was available regarding race and socio-economic status of students in Riverview from the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years than from the program's year of inception and subsequent years. Chapter five provided the conclusions from this study. Additionally, this chapter looks at the implications of this study for educational leaders.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Various public schools throughout the past four centuries across the United States have possessed many characteristics of our current day magnet schools. The concept of our modern magnet schools was born during a time of racial unrest across the United States in the late 1960's. The racial unrest and segregation of students in public schools over the years eventually led to peaceful solutions to desegregate schools and the establishment of magnet schools in some school districts. Since the late sixties, magnet schools have played an important role in the reform process in American education by decreasing segregation processes and increasing the opportunities and choices for all students, and more specifically, minority students.

Magnet schools typically have distinctive programs of study that will "attract" students (as a magnet is attracted to metal) from across all racial groups. Magnet schools were originally conceived to accomplish both integration and innovation. According to McMillan (1980), four common criteria of magnet schools include:

1. Magnet schools must offer an educational program that is distinguishable from the regular curriculum in non-magnet schools.
2. The special curriculum in magnet schools must be attractive to students of all races.
3. Magnet schools must be racially mixed and must have the effect of eliminating segregation of the student races.
4. Magnet schools should be open to students of all races on a voluntary basis and any admission criteria must not discriminate on the basis of race. (p. 9)

Today, magnet schools make up one of the largest systems of school choice in the United States. As time has passed since their inception, the integrative mission of magnet programs has somewhat receded, particularly during the second President Bush Administration and the *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* decided together with *Meredith*

*v. Jefferson County Board of Education* Supreme Court Decision in 2007 (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012).

To understand the impact magnet schools have had on the desegregation of public schools and their role in the reform of public education it is important to focus on the history of desegregation in the United States and the scholarly literature associated with magnet schools to frame this study. An examination of the history of early school models, early segregation in our public schools, the development of desegregation policies, school choice efforts, the increased focus on student achievement due to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and the Common Core has made it imperative for educators to understand the reasons behind desegregation and the implementation and role of magnet schools in promoting educational equity and equality for all students. This chapter provides scholarly research and an equity framework supporting the need for elementary and middle grade magnet schools to be examined in a larger context. This study begins by examining early school models in the United States and leads to the establishment of magnet schools nationwide. The chapter concludes with the current role of magnet schools.

## **The 1600's**

### **Early Schools with Magnet Characteristics**

Before magnet schools began to open across the United States, there were predecessors to these educational institutions. Many schools which were formed during previous decades in the United States possessed characteristics of our modern day magnet schools. This study examines a few schools that began with what are still considered to this day as having magnet characteristics.

## **Boston Latin School**

Magnet schools have roots in the earlier educational institutions dating back to the 1600's. The first school to have the makings of a magnet school and enroll students of all races was the Boston Latin School. The Boston Latin School is the oldest public school in continuous existence in the United States and is a year older than Harvard University. It was founded in Boston, Massachusetts on April 23, 1635. The curriculum adopted at the Boston Latin School during the 17th century was modeled after the Free Grammar School in Lincolnshire, England, and centered around the humanities, with Greek and Latin as the core subjects and a rigorous academic program in the classical tradition (Boston Latin School, 2014).

John Cotton was one of the founders of the Boston Latin School and he shared the beliefs of the ancient Greeks that the only good things are the goods of the soul. Since the inception of the school, it has taught its scholars to dissent and has persistently encouraged dissent with responsibility (Nolan, R., 2011). The Boston Latin School has over the years educated Yankee Puritans, Jews from Eastern Europe, Irish, African-Americans, Indochinese, and Hispanics. According to White (cited in Rexine, 1985, p. 237), “The Latin School was a cruel school...It accepted students without discrimination and flunked them – Irish, Italians, Protestants, Black – with equal lack of discrimination.”

Joseph Kennedy, father of the late President John F. Kennedy, stated that the Boston Latin School “somehow seemed to make us all feel that if we could stick it out at the Latin School, we were made of just a little better stuff than the rest of the fellows of our age” (Rexine, 1987, p. 241). “In spite of all revolutions and all the pressures of business, and all the powerful influences inclining America to live in contemptuous ignorance of the rest of the world, and

especially of the past, the Latin School...has kept the embers of traditional learning alive”  
(Santayana, 1985, p. 241, cited in Rexine, 1987).

Over the years, the Boston Latin School has been sexually and racially integrated and simultaneously insisted on the maintenance of standards of excellence for young people (Rexine, 1987). In response to a 1974 court order which affected all of Boston’s public schools, a quota system was established that included setting aside places for minority students. More recently the Boston Latin School changed its focus to be a part of the reform movement.

Since its inception the Boston Latin School has continued to commit to the classics as the foundation of its curriculum over the past 375 years. Approximately 400 students continue to be admitted each year on the basis of a competitive entrance examination. Typically 14-15 areas of advanced placement are offered along with music, art, and electives in Classical Greek, Mandarin, and architectural design (Rexine, 1985). Academically, the best standards have prevailed over the centuries at the Boston Latin School (Coles, 1998).

### **General School Act in Massachusetts**

In 1647 the Massachusetts colonial legislature decreed in the General School Act that towns of over 50 families should provide a grammar school, although no specifications on cost or attendance were given and the law was weakly enforced. Citizen boards were developed and implemented the rules for their schools. In these early years of public education, parents had to pay for part or all of the cost to send their child to school. Most students who attended school were young and not working in the farm fields. Formal schooling was more common for the privileged while the poorer children learned more from the home, church, and workplace.

## **The 1700's**

As the years passed and agriculture became more efficient, more distant markets were available and led to a reinforcement of the value of literacy while poverty became more visible. Some cities such as Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Albany, and Charleston established free schools for the moral education of poor children following the model of English "charity" schools, (United States Embassy, 2012). Thomas Jefferson was an instrumental force in the promotion of education for all. He realized the importance of education as being vital and essential to maintaining an effective democratic citizenry. Additionally, he advocated for a well-educated citizenry who would serve as a check for those who are in power.

In 1779 John Adams drafted the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and it was put into effect in 1780. The Preamble of the Massachusetts Constitution describes the "body politic" as a "social compact" whereby all agree to be governed by laws designed for the "common good" (Massachusetts Government, 2014). The Massachusetts Constitution served as a model for the United States Constitution.

In 1787, Some Black parents in Boston said that their children were not given equal opportunity or were excluded from the public schools in Boston (Bell, 2004). Black parents had been paying taxes but did not receive any benefits from the Boston schools. This was not the first and would not be the last time that Blacks would be denied equal rights to an education for their children, not only in Boston, but throughout the newly independent country.

In 1787, Boston community member Prince Hall and some Black parents in Boston had petitioned the newly formed Boston School Committee and requested a separate "African" school for their children (Bell, 2004). Prince Hall urged the school board to "provide separate



schools so that black children would not be raised in ignorance in this land of gospel light" (Bell, 2004, p. 88). The Boston legislature denied their petition.

In Massachusetts, John Adams, like Thomas Jefferson, was an advocate for equalizing education. The American Revolution had disrupted schools throughout Massachusetts and the nation. After the war, many schools were slow to re-open. John Adams believed in equal opportunity for all and as he continued to campaign for an expanded public school system and work to build a just and equal commonwealth, he demanded the equalizing of opportunity that good schools would give (Fraser, 1979). In 1789 John Adams and his cousin Sam Adams were in disagreement regarding who should run the school systems. John Adams believed that schools should be open to all but controlled by the wise and the good and Sam Adams believed that schools should be controlled by the whole community. Sam Adams defeated John Adams and Sam Adams' proposals were adopted in 1789. Included in the proposals submitted by Sam Adams and his committee were:

1. The Boston Latin School would continue to prepare students for college.
2. Three other schools in Boston would teach English grammar, writing, and arithmetic.
3. The English schools would be open to girls as well as boys during half of the school year when the boys were busy in the fields during the summer.
4. The entrance age was raised to ten to encourage a broader mix of students in the English schools.
5. A twelve member Boston School Committee was formed to control the schools system and separate control of the schools from the rest of the city government.
6. The school committee would set the budget and control curriculum and operations.
7. A child had to be able to read English before he or she could be admitted to the English school (Fraser, 1979, p. 11).

As time passed, in Boston, Massachusetts, public schools were integrated, but Blacks were neither barred nor segregated in the late eighteenth century (Bell, 2004). Blacks continued to fight for equal opportunity for their children and then in 1789 with funding from some Blacks and Whites, the African School was established. This private Black school was housed in the residence of Primus Hall. Primus was the son of Prince Hall. Many Black students were driven out of Boston Public Schools by 1790 due to mistreatment and racial insults (Bell, 2004). James Fraser (1979, p. 12) summed up the inequities evident during the early years of our nation:

"It is indeed ironic that in the same decade as the initial establishment of the Boston School Committee, the issue of segregated schools and the lack of opportunity in the Boston schools for the small free black population of the city was being raised."

### **The 1800's**

In 1808 the African School moved to the first floor of the African Meeting Hall in Boston (National Park Service, 2014). Finally, after more than two decades, in 1812, the Boston School Committee recognized the African school and provided funding after repeated requests and petitions (National Park Service, 2014). In 1815, Abiel Smith, a White businessman passed away and bequeathed \$4,000 for the education of African-American children in Boston. This money was used to fund the African School and for the construction of the Abiel Smith School. The Abiel Smith School was built for Black students and opened on March 3, 1835 (National Park Service, 2014). Although the Abiel Smith School was provided with some funds, the poor conditions in the Black schools and the poor quality of instruction was in contrast to that provided the White schools (Bell, 2004; National Park Service, 2014). The Black community in Boston continued to fight for equal rights in public education for their children.

## **Early Schools with Magnet Characteristics**

As inequities persisted across Boston, schools continued to open across the country with what we consider today as magnet school characteristics. Another early school was Central High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania which opened in 1838 and was the second public high school in the nation. Central High School displayed itself to the middle-class as two-thirds of the student population came from the middle class, most of whom were a part of the more prosperous self-employed middle class. The common-school founders attempted to attract middle-class students to the lower schools (Labaree, 1988). Due to the high academic standards put forth by the high school, Central was granted the authority to confer academic degrees to its graduates by an Act of Assembly in 1849 (Central High School, 2011):

The Controllers of the Public Schools of the First District of Pennsylvania shall have and possess the power to confer academic degrees in the arts upon graduates of the Central High School, in the City of Philadelphia, and the same and like power to confer degrees, honorary and otherwise, which is now possessed by the University of Pennsylvania (Central High School, 2011).

To this day, Central High School is the only high school in the United States that is authorized to grant its graduates Bachelor of Arts degrees instead of high school diplomas, if they have met the necessary requirements.

## **The Common School Model**

The common school movement was initiated in the 1840's and was formed after a majority of voters in the northern regions of the United States decided to create state mandated and locally controlled free schools (United States Embassy, 2012). These early public schools in the United States began during a time of Evangelical Protestantism and dramatic social change. As America grew, cities seemed to undermine the agrarian and rural values upon which the country was founded. The schools were expected to reinvigorate the work ethic, strengthen the

moral character of children, spread republican and civic values, and teach a common curriculum to ensure a unified and literate public (Reese, 2011).

The common schools were advocated by Horace Mann in Massachusetts, Henry Barnard in Connecticut, and John Pierce in Michigan. Early proponents of common schools hoped to create citizens capable of democratic self-governance (Reich, 2008 in Feinberg & Lubienski). Common schools were determined to foster cultural unity and mold morals by teaching the responsibilities of citizenship and ending poverty and spreading prosperity. According to Horace Mann, the common schools were to be the "great equalizer," although laypeople financed, built, and supervised the schools, while untrained teachers instructed the students (Kirst & Wirt, 2009). The purpose of the common school was to produce "literate, numerate, moral citizens" (Tyack, Kirst, & Hanson, 1980, p. 256). These public schools would educate all classes, ethnic groups, and sects while providing a basic elementary education to prepare them for entering the work force and participating in political life (Wincek, 1995). Typically, the amount of schooling a child received was ultimately determined by wealth.

Horace Mann advocated common schools for both girls and boys as well as immigrants and long-standing American residents in order to promote political stability, equip more people to earn a living, equalize conditions, and enable people to respect private property and follow the law (Messerli, 1972). Initially the common school excluded children with disabilities, Black students, and American Indians (Minow, 2010). Typically, children would attend a one-room school house for their instruction. The common schools spread quickly across a sparsely settled country.

As the common school movement progressed, the United States continued to break away from models of schools brought from Europe. Horace Mann and other reformers encouraged

educators and policymakers to restructure educational practices and initiate graded schools. Quincy School was the first graded school to open in Boston in 1848 (Fraser, 1979). Quincy School housed eight grades and by 1890 modern graded schools were the norm in cities across the United States and remain the foremost structure of schooling today.

### **Separate but Equal is Born**

#### **Roberts v. City of Boston (1848-1849)**

While graded schools were in their infancy, inequities between Black schools and White schools were still prevalent across the country, and especially in Boston. Complaints from Black parents continued as their children were not receiving the same quality of education, instruction, and services of their White peers who attended the White schools throughout Boston (Fraser, Allen, & Barnes, 1979). Black parents fought against prejudice and for integration and continued to petition drives to close down the segregated schools in 1845, 1846, and finally brought suit in state court in 1848 with the *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849) case (Fraser, et al., 1979).

Sarah Roberts was a Black student who attended the Abiel Smith Grammar School and every day she walked past five elementary schools for White students on her way to school (Alexander & Alexander, 2005). Sarah's father fought to place his daughter in the better White schools, and was never successful. Mr. Roberts eventually sought the services of civil rights enthusiast and attorney Charles Sumner to represent his daughter and challenge the unequal treatment between Whites and Blacks in the public schools (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; Bell, 2004). Eventually Robert Morris, one of the nation's first Black lawyers joined Sumner and they maintained that:

1. Neither state nor federal law supported segregated schools.

2. The Black schools were inconvenient for the Black children living closer to White schools.
3. The Black schools were inferior in equipment and staffing (Bell, 2004).

These arguments used by Morris and Sumner were similar to what would be used over a century later in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954. The court rejected all of the arguments in the case and found that the School Committee's segregation policy was reasonable.

Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw responded with:

It is argued that this maintenance of separate schools tends to deepen and perpetuate the odious distinction of caste, founded in a deep-rooted prejudice in public opinion. This prejudice, if it exists, is not created by law, and probably cannot be changed by law. Whether this distinction and prejudice, existing in the opinion and feelings of the community, would not be as effectually fostered by compelling colored and white children to associate together in the same schools, may well be doubted; at all events, it is a fair and proper question for the committee to consider and decide upon, having a view the best interests of both classes of children placed under the superintendence, and we cannot say, that their decision upon it is not founded in just grounds of reason and experience, and in the results of a discriminating and honest judge (Roberts, p. 210).

Hogan's (1973) research on the provisions of the *Roberts v City of Boston* (1849) case included the following:

1. Education is a state matter, and in cases affecting it are to be disposed under state law.
2. The "neighborhood" school concept does not apply to Negroes (and other minorities).
3. The state may close its public schools, if it chooses, thereby leaving all education to private means.
4. There is no *right* of the individual to demand a public education.
5. The Massachusetts constitutional provision that "all persons...are equal before the law" is but a platitude - a principle - and we must therefore look elsewhere in the law to find out what rights of the individual it covers.
6. Educational classifications requiring separation of the races ("separate but equal") are reasonable and therefore permissible (p. 58).

From the ensuing legal conflict, *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849), the doctrine of "separate but equal" was born (Alexander & Alexander, 2005; National Park Service, 2014).

### **Early Schools with Magnet Characteristics**

#### **Comprehensive High School Model**

The late 1800's and early 1900's brought many changes to public education including what should be provided for secondary school curriculum. As the industrial revolution spread across the United States bringing with it new economic realities, educators called for instruction to suit youth for employment in an industrial age (Wraga, 1994). Immigrants from mostly eastern and southern Europe continued to descend on the United States. As life changed more quickly during the Industrial Revolution, the typical public school was no longer suiting the needs of the modern day. The comprehensive high school model emerged from the early twentieth century debate over whether secondary education in the United States should imitate the class-based dual systems or become a unitary democratic system (Wraga, 2000).

The purpose of the comprehensive high school model was to provide vocation instruction in the high school and welcome a wider range of students. With the influx of immigrants, the schools would soon "become the primary link between the immigrant neighborhood and the wider American culture" (Cremin, 1955, p. 299). The comprehensive high school represented the influence of the early progressive educational theory and the rise of vocational instruction in education (Wraga, 1994). The hope was to provide an education for all youth whether college-bound or vocational and a social mingling of the students.

## **The Extension of Segregation**

Although the intent of the common high school was to encourage social mingling of students, racial segregation has a long history in the United States. Racial segregation began with slavery and continued with legally enforced segregation of private and public institutions after emancipation (Smith & Kozleski, 2005).

### **The Thirteenth, Fourteenth Amendment, and Fifteenth Amendment**

Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary version of the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862 and he signed the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. A portion of this proclamation included:

And by virtue of the power, and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States, and parts of States, are, and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons (Lincoln, 1863).

The Emancipation Proclamation provided freedom to the slaves in the confederate states of Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and parts of Louisiana and Virginia. The Thirteenth Amendment was passed in 1865 and legally ended slavery. Section one of the Thirteenth Amendment in the United States Constitution states:

Neither slavery nor voluntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction (U.S. Constitution, *Amendment 14*, June 13, 1866).

Three years later, the Fourteenth Amendment was established to ensure equal protection of the law. Policy makers attempted to alter the process of segregation when the Due Process Clause of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was adopted in 1868 and prohibited state and local governments from depriving people of life, liberty, or property without due process. The Fourteenth Amendment was enacted to prevent racial discrimination and give Blacks and Whites equal rights after the



Civil War (Alexander, K., & Alexander, M.David, 2005). Section one of the Fourteenth

Amendment states:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws (U.S. Constitution, 1869).

This law applies to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. The Fifteenth

Amendment affirmed the right of all citizens to vote regardless of their race, their color, or whether or not they had been a slave. Section one of the Fifteenth Amendment states, “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude” (U.S. Constitution, 1869).

### **Jim Crow Laws**

Efforts to create equality as stated in the United States Constitution did not reach all citizens and some states attempted to create their own rules. "Jim Crow" laws began in 1877 in Florida and then many states and cities followed suit and enforced segregation or the separation of citizens through “Jim Crow” laws. The name “Jim Crow” came from a Black character in minstrel shows and was applied to the racial caste system. Jim Crow laws began to emerge out of a series of unofficial racial agreements between poorer Whites and the elite Whites who demanded laws segregating public facilities to ensure official recognition of their superior status over Blacks with whom they shared a similar economic plight (Bell, 2004). During this time, African Americans were relegated to the status of second class citizens and people could be legally punished for consorting with members of another race. The Jim Crow laws which were enforced in states throughout the south disenfranchised Blacks from Whites in public places such as public transportation, housing, and restaurants (Caldas & Bankston, 2007).

Examples of these Jim Crow laws included:

1. *Education in Mississippi*: Separate schools shall be maintained for the children of the white and colored races.
2. *Education in Missouri*: Separate free schools shall be established for the education of children of African descent; and it shall be unlawful for any colored child to attend any white school, or any white child to attend a colored school.
3. *Teaching in Oklahoma*: Any instructor who shall teach in any school, college or institution where members of the white and colored race are received and enrolled as pupils for instruction shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten dollars nor more than fifty dollars for each offense.
4. *Libraries in Texas*: Any white person of such county may use the county free library under the rules and regulations prescribed by the commissioner's court and may be entitled to all the privileges thereof. Said court shall make proper provisions for the negroes of said county to be served through a separate branch or branches of the county free library, which shall be administered by a custodian of the negro race under the supervision of the county librarian.
5. *Promotion of Equality in Mississippi*: Any person...who shall be guilty of printing, publishing or circulating printed, typewritten or written matter urging or presenting for public acceptance or general information, arguments or suggestions in favor of social equality or of intermarriage between whites and negroes, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to fine or not exceeding five hundred dollars or imprisonment not exceeding six months or both (University of Dayton, 2012).

### **Plessy vs. Ferguson**

In the south many schools and other public places were segregated and this segregation continued across the country. Laws set to provide equal protection of the law were poorly enforced. The state of Louisiana passed a statute called the Separate Car Act. Under this act, it was mandated "that all railway companies carrying passengers in their coaches shall provide equal but separate accommodations for the White and colored races, by providing two or more passenger coaches for each passenger train, or by dividing the passenger coaches by a partition so as to secure separate accommodations" (Lofgren, 1987). It was the responsibility of the railway employees to ensure that the Blacks did not mix with the Whites. If the employees failed

to enforce the rule they would be subject to jail time and a \$25 fine and passengers could be refused services and subjected to the same penalty as the employee if they did not comply with the act (Lofgren, 1987).

Homer Plessy was a resident of Louisiana and was of mixed descent, 7/8 Caucasian and 1/8 African-American. On June 7, 1892, Homer Plessy paid for a first class ticket on the East Louisiana Railway which was traveling from New Orleans to Covington, Louisiana. Homer Plessy sat in a vacant seat in the White section of the train. According to Louisiana laws, the railway was not authorized to distinguish between citizens according to their race. The conductor of the train made Homer Plessy vacate the coach and sit in another section of the train for persons who were not of the White race, just because Homer was not a member of the White race. Plessy was imprisoned in New Orleans, Louisiana and was charged with criminally violating an act of the General Assembly from July 10, 1890, entitled the Louisiana Separate Car Statute (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896). Plessy challenged the Louisiana state law, and the Supreme Court ruled that separate facilities, if equal, were not an infringement of the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. In the Plessy decision, Justice Brown interpreted the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause with the following:

The object of the amendment was undoubtedly to enforce the absolute equality of the two races before the law, but in the nature of things it could not have been intended to abolish distinctions based upon color, or to enforce social, as distinguished from political equality, or a commingling of the two races upon terms unsatisfactory to either....The distinction between laws interfering with the political equality of the Negro and those requiring the separation of the two races in schools, theaters and railway carriages have been frequently drawn by this court...In determining the question of reasonableness it is at liberty to act with reference to the established usages, customs, and traditions of the people, and with a view to the promotion of their comfort, and the preservation of the public peace and order. Gauged by this standard, we cannot say that a law which authorizes or even requires the separation of the two races...is unreasonable. (p. 258)

Over thirty years after the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was enacted, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) United States Supreme Court Decision upheld the constitutionality of state laws requiring racial segregation in private businesses under the doctrine of "separate but equal". The United States Supreme Court cited the *Roberts v. City of Boston* (1849) case as a precedent to uphold the doctrine of "separate but equal" and the constitutionality of racial segregation (Massachusetts Historical Society, 2014).

Under the "separate but equal" doctrine, Blacks could be kept apart from Whites as long as the facilities provided for Blacks were of equal quality to those for Whites. The *Plessy* decision legalized racial discrimination through its "separate but equal" holding. The *Plessy* decision allowed states to ignore de facto segregation and adopt de jure segregation policies. It was not long after the *Plessy* decision that legal segregation was extended to public schools (Massachusetts Historical Society, 2014). Segregation in the south endured for almost fifty more years after the *Plessy* decision.

## **1900 - 1940**

### **The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Founded**

On August 14, 1908 the population of Springfield, Illinois was 47,000, and 5.5% of this population was Black (Merritt, 2008; Springfield Convention & Visitor's Bureau, 2014). Two Black prisoners were confined to the prison in Springfield. One of the Black prisoners was George Richardson and he was accused of raping a White woman. Joe James, the other Black prisoner, was accused of murdering a White man (Merritt, 2008; Springfield Convention & Visitor's Bureau, 2014). The county sheriff was concerned about the safety of the two prisoners and he, along with a White owner of a local restaurant quietly transported the prisoners to a prison in Bloomington, Illinois, 60 miles away. A White crowd gathered outside the prison in

Springfield and began chanting for vigilante justice. When the White mob discovered that the prisoners were no longer in Springfield they began to riot. The mob looted a small Black business district, destroyed the restaurant owned by the White man who assisted in transporting the prisoners to Bloomington, destroyed buildings, and eventually lynched two prominent members of the Black community (Merritt, 2008; Springfield Convention & Visitor's Bureau, 2014). The riot lasted for two days and many Blacks were wounded, killed, and driven from Springfield. The riot came to an end after the Illinois National Guard was called in to restore order in Springfield (The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, 2014). The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was formed in part as a response to the 1908 race riot in Springfield, Illinois. A few of those who led the formation of the NAACP were White liberals Mary White Ovington and Oswald Garrison Villard, who were both descendants of abolitionists. Journalist William English Walling was another leader who had spent some years in the cause of the revolutionists in Russia and his wife had been imprisoned there. Mr. Walling believed that the Negro in the United States was treated with greater inhumanity than the Jews were treated in Russia. Others who were part of the 60 original members and who signed the call for racial justice were John Dewey, Jane Adams, Harriet Stanton Blatch, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Mary Church Terrell, and W.E.B. DuBois (NAACP, 2014).

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded on February 12, 1909, the centennial of President Abraham Lincoln's birthday. The NAACP's National Office was established in New York City in 1910. Those active in the association's cause expressed the following:

The celebration of the Centennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, widespread and grateful as it may be, will fail to justify itself if it takes no note of and makes no recognition of the

colored men and women for whom the great Emancipator labored to assure freedom. Besides a day of rejoicing, Lincoln's birthday in 1909 should be one of taking stock of the nation's progress since 1865. How far has it lived up to the obligations imposed upon it by the Emancipation Proclamation? How far has it gone in assuring to each and every citizen, irrespective of color, the equality of opportunity and equality before the law, which underlie American institutions and are guaranteed by the Constitution. (NAACP, 2014)

The goal of the NAACP was to secure for all people the rights guaranteed in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution. The rights guaranteed in these amendments promised an end to slavery, equal protection of the law, and universal adult male suffrage (NAACP, 2014). The principal objective of the NAACP is to ensure the social, political, and economic equality of minority groups of citizens in the United States and to eliminate racial prejudice. Additionally, the NAACP seeks to remove all barriers of racial discrimination through the use of democratic processes (NAACP, 2014). By the 1930's the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People initiated a movement that was to pursue racial abuse and seek judicial clarification of the limits of separate-but-equal as a legal basis for segregation (Alexander & Alexander, 2005, p. 892).

### **Early Schools in the 1900's with Magnet Characteristics**

#### **Lane Technical High School Opens**

As the years passed other schools were established with programs that would attract students and their parents. Another school that began with magnet characteristics, although it was not considered a magnet at the time of its inception is Lane Technical High School in Chicago. Lane Technical High School was named for Albert Grannis Lane, Chicago Superintendent of Schools. Lane Tech opened in 1908 and began as a manual training school for males until the 1930's when it became a college preparatory school. Only top tier students were admitted to the school due to a closed admissions policy. Girls were admitted to the school in

1971 due to a lack of technical schools for females. To this day students must take a test and pass a benchmark in order to be offered admission to the school, as Lane Tech is a selective-enrollment-based school. To reflect a college preparatory mandate, the school changed its name to Lane Technical College Prep High School in 2004 (Books, LLC, 2010). Lane Technical continues today with the school's technical traditions (Lane Tech College Prep High School, 2011).

### **Aviation High School and the Bronx High School of Science**

Additional schools that began with what are considered today as magnet characteristics are Aviation High School in Long Island City, New York, and The Bronx High School of Science in Bronx, New York. Aviation High School was organized in 1925 as a building trades or vocational school with a mission of providing our nation with qualified trained young professionals to influence the future of the aerospace industry. Today Aviation High School is the largest and foremost public Aviation School in the United States (Aviation High School, 2011). Additionally, the Bronx High School of Science in Bronx, New York was founded in 1938 and today continues its' rigorous college preparatory programs with emphasis on the humanities, science, and mathematics (The Bronx High School of Science, 2011).

Other schools continued to open across the country with what we consider today as magnet characteristics. In 1929 a high school in Dallas, Texas opened with "magnet" characteristics in the form of a technical trade high school. This high school was the first one in Texas to offer basic academics along with a wide range of vocational courses. The program was geared toward students graduating from high school with skill acquisition, mainly in the trades. This high school was originally named Dallas Technical High School or Dal-Tech. The school was open to Dallas students regardless of the school district boundaries (Dallas Library, 2014).

At that time, students from throughout the Dallas Independent School District could request to be transferred there. The school was integrated in 1965 and the name was changed to N.R. Crozier Technical High School or Crozier Tech. The high school was closed in 1971 due to a federal court order (Estes & Waldrip, 1977).

### **William Jones College Preparatory High School**

Another school that began with what are today considered magnet characteristics is the William Jones College Preparatory High School, and is formerly known as Jones Metropolitan High School of Business and Commerce, Jones Commercial High School, and Jones Academic Magnet. Jones College Prep opened in 1938 in Chicago and was named after the first Board of Education President. Jones was organized to provide students with the opportunities to participate in a Cooperative Work-Study program and equip them with practical experiences and unique educational opportunities in an integrated setting (Books, LLC, 2010). Additional early schools with magnet characteristics are Lowell High School in San Francisco, California, and the Performing Arts High School in Manhattan, New York.

## **1950's**

### **Developing Desegregation Policies and Equal Educational Opportunities**

#### **Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954)**

In the 1950's, one of the agendas of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was to achieve racial equity both socially and economically. The *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) Supreme Court decision had legally sanctioned segregation in public places, including public schools, and Blacks had not been treated equal to White students in many schools throughout the nation. The equitable access to educational programs began to change drastically in 1954 with the historic *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.



The *Brown* decision grew out of a long struggle for civil rights and the end of segregation and the racial discrimination that existed in education and other public places in the United States (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003). The impetus behind the *Brown* case started in Topeka, Kansas at the beginning of the school year in 1950 when Oliver Brown and twelve other parents attempted to enroll their children in the neighborhood public school. The district refused admission and offered the families to enroll their children in one of the four African American schools in the city (National Park Service, 2011). The school district would not let the Black families attend their neighborhood school due to their race. A Kansas statute permitted, but did not require, cities of more than a population of 15,000 to maintain separate school facilities for Black and White students. The Topeka Board of Education elected to establish segregated elementary schools. Other public schools in the community were operated on a non-segregated basis. The District Court found that segregation in public education has a detrimental effect upon Black children, but denied relief that the Black and White schools were substantially equal with respect to transportation, curricula, buildings, and educational qualifications of teachers (web.ebscohost.com, 2011).

The Browns wanted the best education possible for their children and elicited the assistance of the NAACP in challenging segregation in public schools. In 1951, other Black parents joined the Browns citing lack of resources, poor physical condition of schools, and other similar concerns in the segregation of Topeka's public schools. The *Brown* decision was composed of four cases from the states of Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware. By deciding to bring these cases together to the Supreme Court, the plaintiffs, with the assistance of the NAACP, requested an injunction that would forbid the segregation of Topeka's public schools.

In the South Carolina case, *Briggs v. Elliott*, the plaintiffs were Black children of both elementary and high school age who resided in Clarendon County. The case was brought in the United States District Court to enjoin enforcement of provisions in the state constitution and statutory code which required the segregation of Blacks and Whites in public schools. The court denied the requested relief and found that the Black schools were inferior to the White schools and ordered the defendants to immediately begin to equalize the facilities. The court denied the plaintiffs admission to the White schools during the equalization program (<http://www.ebscohost.com>, 2011).

In the Virginia case, *Davis v. County School Board*, the plaintiffs were Black children of high school age and resided in Prince Edward County. This action was brought in the United States District Court to enjoin enforcement of provisions in the state constitution and statutory code which required the segregation of Blacks and Whites in public schools. The court found the Black school inferior in curricula, transportation, physical plant, and ordered the defendants to provide substantially equal transportation and curricula and to "proceed with all reasonable diligence and dispatch to remove" the inequity in physical plant. As in the South Carolina case, the court denied the plaintiffs admission to the White schools during the equalization process (EBSCO host, 2011).

In the Delaware case, *Gebhart v. Belton*, the plaintiffs were Black children of elementary and high school age who resided in New Castle County. This action was brought in the Delaware Court of Chancery to enjoin enforcement of provisions in the state constitution and statutory code which require the segregation of Blacks and Whites in public schools. The Chancellor ordered the immediate admission for the Black students to schools that were previously attended only by White students, on the ground that the Black schools were inferior with respect to

physical plant, pupil-teacher ratio, extracurricular activities, teacher training, and time and distance involved in travel. The Chancellor also found that segregation itself results in an inferior education for Black children, but did not rest his decision on that ground. The defendants contended that the Delaware courts had erred in ordering the immediate admission of the Black plaintiffs to the White schools, and applied to the Court for certiorari (EBSCO host, 2011).

The suit, *Oliver L. Brown et al. v. the Board of Education of Topeka (KS)*, was filed in the U.S. District Court in February, 1951. In the 1954 *Brown* case, the United States Supreme Court asked the question: "Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other tangible factors may be equal, deprive children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities?" (*Brown I*, 1954, p. 493). In this case, the plaintiffs were able to develop a powerful argument that equal protection of the law, as set in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment, was not possible when public schools were segregated (Knappman, 2001; Smith & Kozleski, 2005). At that time, the United States Supreme Court recognized, by a unanimous decision of all 9 judges, the significance of the fiscal, psychological, and sociological role of the public school and its significance to our democratic existence (Meeks, Meeks, & Warren, 2000).

In the *Brown* (1954) case, Chief Justice Warren specifically cited research from social scientists Kenneth Clark and Gunnar Myrdal to confirm that segregated schooling was damaging to all students and that separate facilities were inherently unequal (Rothstein, 2004; Spring, 1989; Wong & Nicotera, 2004). Evidence presented to the court showed the contradictions presented to majority children when they are taught that all humans are created equal yet racial segregation exists. Additional evidence presented to the court showed that minority students' educational aspirations were depressed and their self-esteem damaged due to the process of

segregation (Spring, 1989). In this monumental court case, the *Brown* decision found that “segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children” (*Brown*, 1954, p. 494), and declared the school systems of 17 states and the District of Columbia as unconstitutional.

As a result of the *Brown* case, the court declared that the findings of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* ruling of 1896 which upheld the constitutionality of state laws requiring racial segregation in private businesses under the doctrine of separate but equal were inapplicable to public schools. The *Brown* decision set in motion the use of social science research to determine the effects of and solutions for educational inequity (Wong & Nicotera, 2004). Additionally, the *Brown* case has been called “the fountainhead of modern U.S. law of race and schooling” (Orfield & Eaton, 1996, p. 23).

### **The Brown II Decision (1955)**

In 1955 there was little support from the legislative and executive branches and the High Court reacted to the cries of "never" from many Southern states resulting in its backing away from its' earlier decision in *Brown I* (Bell, 2004). The High Court diluted the subsequent *Brown II* (1955) decision on enforcement, thus giving district courts the discretion to craft desegregation plans unique to each school system. The enforcement system of both *Brown* decisions was so weak that it could not overcome resistance from Southern political leaders who were prepared to close public education to resist desegregation with “all deliberate speed.” However, the Supreme Court did not define what “desegregation” or “all deliberate speed” meant (Orfield & Eaton, 1996). In *Brown II*, no standard or deadline was set for desegregation to occur. Thus, *Brown II* became a fallback decision of the High Court that became a prelude to its refusal to issue orders requiring any meaningful school desegregation for almost fifteen years (Bell, 2004).

The *Brown* decisions were interpreted by some southern segregationists as a choice for Black students to transfer between two racially separated systems of schooling. Some public schools were shut down and white students were provided with state-financed vouchers which allowed them to attend private schools known as segregation academies (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009). These “freedom of choice” plans were set up to where the initial assignment to schools was based on student choice at the beginning of each year, although few students chose opposite-race schools. Although a few districts attempted to desegregate by "allowing" some Blacks to attend formerly all-White schools on a voluntary basis, little effort was made to attract or assign White children to attend formerly all-Black schools (Gordon, 1994).

Freedom of choice plans allegedly gave families a choice of schools for their children, however, there were several caveats: Typically students living closest to a school had first choice to attend it; children were assigned to their second and third choices as schools reached building capacity; and school guidance personnel exercised substantial influence over the selection process (Gordon, 1994). Freedom of choice plans placed the burden of integration on Black students as they were given the opportunity to “choose” to transfer to majority white schools amidst an atmosphere frequently filled with intimidation, violence, and virulent opposition (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009; Orfield & Eaton, 1996).

These “freedom of choice” plans were versions of token integration and were a popular southern resistance strategy, while some northern cities instituted “open enrollment” which permitted a small number of student transfers but transportation was not provided (Fuller & Elmore, 1996; Steel & Levine, 1994). The majority-to-minority plans in the North allowed students who were a majority in their home school to transfer to any school in which they would become a minority (Steel & Levine, 1996). Students rarely chose to transfer to minority-

dominant schools to improve racial balance. School authorities continued to control the pupil assignments, which led to the former Black schools remaining all-Black and the former White schools gained a few selected Black students (Gordon, 1994). In both the freedom of choice plans and vouchers, educational choice was used in the aftermath of *Brown* as a way to circumvent desegregation (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009).

The *Brown* decisions ended de jure segregation but de facto segregation remained. One of the results of the *Brown* decisions were that they provided the political and legal leverage by which segregation practices and policies that permeated every region of the country could be legally dismantled (Lindsay, Robins, & Terrell, 2003). The *Brown II* cases' ambiguity left decisions about implementing *Brown* to the federal district courts in the Southern states, which were without clear *guidance* from either the High Court or the federal government for more than a decade. In *Brown II*, no standard or deadline was set for desegregation to occur, although the expectation from the court was for desegregation to occur with "all deliberate speed." Subsequently, the *Brown II* decision on enforcement diluted the power of the original decision in *Brown I* (Orfield & Eaton, 2007; Orfield, Eaton, & Harvard Project, 1996).

Although the intent of *Brown* was to provide equity for all students, two significant limitations to this historic case include: (a) *Brown* did not directly address the injustice of specific kinds of *de facto* desegregation, and (b) *Brown* did not guarantee equality of opportunity as it did not address the larger scope of justice in a democratic society. Some question the degree to which *Brown* was a victory for African-Americans, at too great of a cultural cost (Bell, 2004; Hughes, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2004). Some see the *Brown* (1954, 1955) decisions as synonymous with legalizing freedom but not abolishing slavery (Meeks, et al., 2000). In the 1960's, the achievement gap remained in the years following the *Brown* (1954, 1955) rulings as

many districts continued to resist integration. The omission of the *Brown* (1954, 1955) decisions to provide prescriptive strategies to eliminate segregation or to incorporate desegregation has left a generation to continue to grapple with achieving a goal that has far-reaching underpinnings exacerbated by unforeseen circumstances, such as a pervasiveness of racial separatism, changing national demographics, political decisiveness of this educational issue, unequal patterns of poverty, and the shift in the country's economic base from national to global (Meeks et al., 2000).

As the 1960's progressed, some advocates of education focused on social change with movements such as free speech and civil rights. Many advocates who participated in these movements were battling a "technocratic" society where citizens were merely mechanical parts in the overall social machine. The Free Schools movement during the 1960's was a movement where hundreds of small, independent schools across the United States were developed to save students from the death of public schools and was a response to the "factory-like" system that was used to educate American children (Cooperative Catalyst, 2011). The focus was on education of the heart rather than the mind and teachers were considered friends and mentors. Proponents of free schools wanted to tear down the educational system and start anew. Most free schools lasted only a few years due to financial and organizational difficulties.

## **The 1960's**

### **The Road to Equality**

#### **The Civil Rights Act**

As freedom of choice plans continued to flourish in the South along with majority-to-minority transfer programs in the North, the United States was faced with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement. This resulted in the Federal Government's enactment of the Civil Rights Act

in 1964. The Civil Rights Act was the first major civil rights law in ninety years and it barred discrimination in all schools and other public institutions receiving federal dollars, forcing dramatic and rapid changes in the South. These desegregation changes cut off federal aid to those school districts that were not desegregating, but the effects were short-lived (Orfield & Eaton, 1996).

### **The Coleman Report**

As the 1960's progressed, many school districts continued to resist integration. Equality advocates were convinced, whether integrated or segregated, Black children continued to attend poorly financed schools (Rothstein, 2004). The United States Congress ordered a study to prove that when Black students attend inferior schools, this leads to their relatively low achievement (Rothstein, 2004). An examination of the notion of equal educational opportunities, as was required by the United States Government under the Civil Rights Act was put into effect in 1964 by James Coleman, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University and Ernest Campbell of Vanderbilt University. The Coleman Report was charged with impacting educational policy and stated:

The commissioner shall conduct a survey and make a report to the President and the Congress, within two years of the enactment of this title, concerning the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, color, religion, or national origin in public educational institutions at all levels in the United States, its territories and possessions, and the District of Columbia (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Modd, Weinfeld, & York, 1966, p. iii).

Although Section 402 required the Commissioner of Education to conduct the survey of equal educational opportunities, the Civil Rights Act was developed in the United States Department of Justice without the input of the United States Office of Education (USOE). This report was an opportunity for the USOE to explore deeper into the meaning of equal educational opportunities (Wong & Nicotera, 2004). The federal government had never facilitated national student achievement tests and the survey executed by Coleman was met with resistance from



10% of local school superintendents who declined to participate in the research project. Some of the districts declining to participate due to student achievement tests included Los Angeles, Chicago, and all of the school districts in Florida (Grant, 1973). The Coleman Report included a sample from 3,100 schools, 600,000 students, and 60,000 teachers from all over the United States and was completed in one year (Coleman, 1990). The Coleman Report attempted to relate the socioeconomic status and race of the students' family background and school equity variables which included the integration of White and Black children to student's test results and their attitudes toward attending higher education (Coleman, 1990).

Coleman found that school facilities and resources, teacher quality, and curriculum, do not show statistically significant effects on student achievement (Coleman et al., 1966; Coleman, 1990). Additionally, Coleman found that the most significant effect on student achievement was linked to the background characteristics, or peer effects of other students. The Coleman Report findings suggest school resources have differential impact on Black and White students.

In terms of curriculum and facilities, the Coleman Report stated:

Differences in school facilities and curriculum, which are the major variables by which attempts are made to improve schools, are so little related to differences in achievement levels of students that, with few exceptions, their effects fail to appear even in a survey of this magnitude (Coleman et al., 1966, p. 316).

Although the Coleman report establishes the insignificance of school resources, some resources such as science laboratories do show a slight relationship to student achievement. The report claimed, "Again, it is for majority whites that the variations make the least difference; for minorities, they make somewhat more difference" (Coleman, et al., 1966, p. 22). The findings of the Coleman Report suggest that school resources have differential impacts on Black and White children (Coleman, 1990).

## **Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson supported increased spending as part of the Great Society initiatives to remedy social problems. The mission of the increased spending was for our public education system to overcome problems of illiteracy, crime, violence, unemployment, urban decay, and even war among nations (Goodlad, 2004). Title I was enacted through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 to allocate additional federal dollars to schools with high concentrations of poverty in order to improve the educational opportunities and achievement of poor students, (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003; Kirst & Wirt, 2009; Murphy, 1971). The first six titles of this bill supported innovative programs, instructional materials, libraries, supplementary services, compensatory education, and strengthening state departments (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003). In 1978, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act allowed Title I money to be spent school-wide when 75 percent or more of the school's students were low income (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003).

## **Green v. County School Board of New Kent County**

While the federal government was implementing federal reforms, more cases regarding desegregation were brought before the courts. In New Kent County, Virginia, two schools existed, one for White students and one for Black students. In 1965 the county allowed students to choose a school to attend, and after three years, only 15% of the Blacks had chosen to attend the White school and no Whites had chosen to attend the Black school. Testimony in the *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* case revealed that the county's Black students were "counseled" out of choosing the White school and pressures from the community and the school guaranteed that no White families would send their children to the Black school (Gordon, 1994).

In 1968, the *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* decision ruled that the school board must not only submit a plan to achieve desegregation, but also prove that desegregation was being achieved. In the *Green* (1968) decision, the Supreme Court ruled that schools must dismantle segregated systems “root and branch” and that desegregation must be achieved with respect to facilities, student assignment, extracurricular activities, transportation, desegregation, faculty and staff assignment, and educational opportunities. This meant that local authorities were held responsible not only for their affirmative acts but also for their acts of exclusion (Gordon, 1994). These Green Factors have subsequently been used as a guide in developing desegregation plans and assist in determining whether school districts have achieved fully integrated schools or unitary status. The *Green* (1968) decision found that when educational choice is used to avoid racial integration it is unconstitutional.

It has been 47 years since the *Green* (1968) decision was reached. Since then, the courts have maintained that freedoms of choice plans are acceptable only if they are effective in promoting desegregation. Prior to the development of magnet schools in 1968, there was little educational excuse for freedom of choice, and where such justification was manufactured, it was easily defeated in the courts. The only component of freedom of choice that remains in use today is majority-to-minority transfer (Gordon, 1994).

### **Bilingual Education Act**

The 1960's in the United States continued to be a time of turmoil with big-city riots and growing class and racial strains. Later on, as the decade of the 1960's was winding down, President Lyndon Johnson put more federal dollars into the role of stimulating new teaching methods, experiments, and innovation in public schools across the country. In 1968, Congress

added the Bilingual Education Act to the Elementary and Secondary Act, adding more programs for minority-language students.

### **Alexander v. Holmes County**

During the late 1960s across the United States many school districts continued to separate students. Another case aimed at desegregating students was Alexander v. Holmes County (1969). Unitary status in 33 school districts in Mississippi was the impetus behind the Alexander v. Holmes County Supreme Court decision in 1969. The Supreme Court was weary of the South's evasion of its obligation under Brown I and declared that the school districts involved in the case may no longer operate a dual system based on race or color. The districts were ordered to begin immediately to operate as unitary school systems where no students may be excluded from any school because of race or color (396 U.S. 19, 21). The Court also introduced government affirmation of a desegregated system and busing into the equation to gain unitary status. School districts were no longer to delay in the implementation of desegregation plans (396 U.S. 19, 21).

### **First Elementary Magnet School Created to Reduce Segregation**

#### **McCarver Junior High School**

The late 1960's were a turbulent time. Racism was still rampant, riots took place in over 100 cities from 1964 to 1968, and Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968. In the late 1960's many school officials, boards of education, and concerned community members in public school districts throughout the United States realized that equal educational opportunity was not shared by all of the children and they began to try to find a volunteer and peaceful way to reduce racial isolation (Waldrip, 2000).

McCarver Junior High School in Tacoma, Washington was no different. During the late sixties the minority housing in Tacoma, Washington, was concentrated in one area. McCarver

Junior High School had a Black student population of 84%. Additionally, the elementary school in Tacoma was 91 percent African-American and was in violation of Washington's de facto segregation rule (Sergienko, cited in Rossell, 2005). The Assistant Superintendent, Alex Sergienko, and a citizens committee came across an article about someone in Pittsburgh advocating for the establishment of "a school that would do something so well that students would want to enroll" and "good enough to pull in white students from the more affluent neighborhoods" (Sergienko, p. 47, cited in Rossell, 2005). The citizen's committee wrote a proposal, called the "Exemplary Magnet Program" and received a \$200,000 Title III grant (Sergienko, cited in Rossell, 2005). Instead of mandating that students attend a specific school, this experiment would attempt to draw or invite more specifically, White students and their parents into a Black neighborhood school. Additionally, the hope was that a magnet school would guarantee continuous progress education in which students would progress at their own rates (Waldrip, 2000).

In 1968, McCarver Junior High School was converted into a magnet-type elementary school and was re-named McCarver Elementary School, housing grades Pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. McCarver Elementary School in Tacoma, Washington was the first magnet school created to reduce segregation (Kafer, 2005). That fall, McCarver Elementary invited students throughout the city to enroll, thus breaking the link between residential location and school assignments and beginning a nationwide experiment to integrate public schools with the purpose of using market-like incentives instead of court orders (Rossell, 2005). This new magnet school offered an education with a special curricular focus, resulting in a reduction of the Black student population to 53 percent (Rossell, 2005).

In 1969, the second magnet school in the nation opened in Boston, Massachusetts with the purpose of reducing racial isolation. The William Monroe Trotter School was built as “a showcase for new methods of teaching” – enough of a showcase to attract white children to a black neighborhood to attend school and provide a method of peaceful desegregation (Rossell, 2005). Although both McCarver Elementary and The William Trotter School offered a choice to parents and provided different organizational patterns than typical public schools, they bore characteristics of what we define as magnets but were referred to as "alternatives" (Waldrip, 2000). McCarver Elementary and William Trotter School would come to be known as two schools that forged a path toward not only desegregation of schools, but also a method of school choice. Additionally, some racial tensions were eased as these magnet schools began to offer students and their parents educational choices, instead of forcing parents to accept the court ordered and voluntary desegregation processes as found in some public schools (Waldrip, 2000).

## **The 1970's**

### **Court Cases and the Continuing Fight for Equality**

As the 1970's began, other types of magnet concepts were developed. Like numerous high schools across the United States in the late 1960's and early 1970's, Hillhouse High School in New Haven Connecticut erupted in racial violence. The school day was cut short to keep Whites and Blacks separated. Some teachers fought the segregation and in 1970 a magnet school opened which was a "high school without walls" and it was named High School in the Community (Musante, 1996). Today students are admitted to High School in the Community to maintain a racial balance of one third Black, one third White, one third Hispanic, one half male, one half female, and by lottery with no advantage for students with higher level ability. High

School in the Community became a beacon of a method to achieve voluntary desegregation (Musante, 1996).

Another magnet school which became a beacon of voluntary desegregation is the Skyline Career Development Center which opened in Dallas, Texas in 1971. Enrollment was on a voluntary basis with students drawn from every high school in Dallas. Students were allowed to select from twenty-eight choices and they spent half of the school day studying in their chosen field from such career areas as aeronautics, advanced science, architectural design, and construction (Estes & Waldrip, 1977).

### **Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg Board of Education**

In 1971 the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District in North Carolina had not completed its plan to ensure desegregation to the acceptance of the lower courts. The district ordered an outside expert to create a plan. This plan became known as the Finger Plan after John D. Finger, who designed the plan to show the equal percentages of races in the junior and senior high schools. This plan was to be achieved through a federal court order which forced the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District to use massive bussing and pairing and grouping of elementary schools to desegregate its schools (Ferrell, 2008). This bussing of students across town for the purpose of desegregating schools set a precedent in the history of education in the United States and the case went right to the Supreme Court which ruled in favor of forced integration (Rosell, 2005). The historic *Swann v. Mecklenberg* United States Supreme Court decision in 1971, or more specifically, the *Swann* (1971) decision, struck down "racially neutral" student assignment plans that produced segregation by relying on existing residential patterns in the south.

## **Emergency School Assistance Act (1972)**

As the 1970's progressed, the federal government continued to provide funding to assist public schools. The Emergency School Assistance Act began in 1972 and funded training, research on ways to improve race relations, intervention programs, new curricula development, and magnet schools for voluntary desegregation (Orfield & Eaton, 1996; Rossell, 2005; Waldrip, 2000). The Emergency School Assistance Act (ESAA) of 1972 authorized grants or contracts to local education agencies (LEA's) and nonprofit organizations (NPO's) to support the LEA's efforts to support school desegregation and to reduce the minority group isolation and its effects (Orfield & Eaton, 1996; Rossell, 2005).

The NPO's are funded on the assumption that certain activities relating to school desegregation can be effectively performed by organizations outside the regular school district structure and they are a small component of generalized assistance to school desegregation (Crocker, Sperlich, & Oliver, 1978). Many school districts applied for these funds to assist in the required desegregation process. Additionally, school choice, which was designed to combine equity with educational options, became a significant element in American education. Many magnet schools with enriched curricular offerings to attract majority students and their parents into minority school settings were formed under the ESAA (Rossell, 2005). The Emergency School Assistance Act ended in 1981 under the Presidency of Ronald Reagan (Orfield & Eaton, 1996). As a result of these federal monies provided by ESAA, numerous magnet schools, a method of school choice, began and spread under this program (Orfield in Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007). Many of these magnet programs provided exciting curricular offerings and attracted students from outside their neighborhood school area.



### **Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1 (1973)**

Segregation cases continued with the *Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1* (1973). The *Keyes* (1973) case was the first ruling on school segregation in the West and North, where there were no explicit statutes requiring segregation. In the *Keyes* case, it found that school authorities in Denver had deliberately maintained a segregated system in which a pocket of schools in an area populated mostly by Hispanics and Blacks was educationally inferior to the predominately White schools in other parts of the city (Gordon, 1994). Under the *Keyes* decision, school districts were responsible for policies that resulted in racial segregation in the school system, including gerrymandering attendance zones and constructing schools in racially isolated neighborhoods. The Court had to consider the question of *de facto* segregation versus *de jure* segregation. The Court ruled the district had to desegregate the inner cities, even though they were not segregated *de jure*. Once intentional segregation was found on the part of the school board in a portion of a district, the entire district was presumed to be illegally segregated (*Keyes*, 1973).

The *Keyes* case marked the first time the Court made a ruling outside the former confederate states and the last time the Court made a major decision in favor of desegregation (Ferrell, 2008; Orfield, 2004; Read, 1975). Additionally, the *Keyes* case recognized African-American and Latinos right to desegregation. After the United States Supreme Court ruling in *Keyes v. Denver School District No. 1* (1973) which authorized officials in the state of Colorado to mandate bussing to counteract the racial segregation which was occurring in Denver, even school districts in the West and Northeastern states which had never been explicitly segregated were subject to desegregation orders (Rossell, 1995).

### **Milliken v. Bradley (1974)**

The expansion of desegregation rights and the first major defeat of desegregation by the Court occurred in 1974 in Detroit, Michigan, with the Supreme Court decision of *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974). The ruling blocked efforts for inter-district, city-suburban desegregation remedies as a means to integrate racially isolated city schools and would have desegregated students from the largely minority city schools with suburban students in metropolitan Detroit. This rule was made in spite of findings of intentional discrimination by both state and local officials, thus intensifying segregation in the metropolitan area. Since many big cities had rapidly declining white minorities in their schools, this meant that the large metropolitan areas with many separate suburban school districts would lead the nation in segregation (Orfield & Yun, 1999). In order to stem the tide of White flight from cities and exacerbated by desegregation limited to central cities under Milliken, districts sought to incorporate at least some family choice into student diversity plans” (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009, p. 8). Magnet programs would later emerge as an uneasy compromise between desegregation requiring mandatory student reassignment and unrestrained school choice (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009).

### **Morgan v. Hennigan (1974)**

Little did the founders of the Boston Latin School realize that the city of Boston would continue to be an important player in the role of magnet schools in desegregation purposes across the United States over three centuries after the inception of the Boston Latin School. In the early 1970's, there were unequal opportunities and resources for the segregated Blacks in the city of Boston's public schools. Segregation continued to place Black students in school environments of concentrated poverty - marked by overcrowded classrooms, deteriorated facilities, inadequate learning materials, and diminished teaching and learning (Kozol, 1991). Sympathetic Whites and

many Blacks continued to demand change. As desegregation attempts continued across the country, a suit was filed by Black public school students and their parents against the Boston Public Schools. Black parents in Boston and the lead plaintiff Tallulah Morgan solicited the assistance of the NAACP and took the school committee to court after years of trying to improve their children's education. Louise Day Hicks, a member of the Boston School Committee voiced her opinion that the Black schools were not inferior and that racially imbalanced schools were not educationally harmful (www.pbs.org, 2014). The case, *Morgan v. Hennigan* (1974) was filed by 15 parents and 43 children against James Hennigan, President of the Boston School Committee (Spalding, 2004).

A federal district court in Boston, Massachusetts, ignored the original mission of the William Monroe Trotter School which was to provide a peaceful method of desegregation by attracting White students to Black neighborhoods. During this time, 80% of the White residents in Boston opposed desegregation due to compulsory busing. The Boston School Committee refused to devise a desegregation plan in good faith. Additionally, the demands of the sympathetic Whites and of many Blacks culminated in a ruling by the courts as Boston was found guilty of unconstitutional school segregation. In 1974, Federal District Court Judge W. Arthur Garrity ruled in favor of the parents, saying the school committee has consciously maintained two separate school systems. A peaceful method of desegregation was not to be as Judge Garrity then ordered students to be bused city-wide to integrate the schools in the White community of South Boston and the Black community of Roxbury. The city of Boston was ordered by Judge W. Arthur Garrity to devise a desegregation plan to bus over 17,000 students (Gelber, 2008).

The component of the plan that caused the most volatile response was the coupling of South Boston and Roxbury. South Boston and Roxbury were only one mile apart. South Boston was a White working class neighborhood with many residents who had helped form the city's anti-bus movement and Roxbury was a Black neighborhood. During the 1974-1975 school year many altercations occurred in the Boston schools. White parents staged a boycott and pulled their children from the schools, and anti-busers yelled racial slurs and hurled rocks at the buses (Gelber, 2008; Public Broadcasting System, 2014). Judge Garrity's desegregation order led to demonstrations and riots, resulting in turmoil in the city of Boston (Rossell, 2005). The altercations between Blacks and Whites brought national attention to Boston and more animosity between Blacks and Whites in the city.

In 1975, The Court of Appeals, 1<sup>st</sup> Circuit, ruled in *Morgan v. Kerrigan* that the school district must plan for six districts, with varying learning approaches available within each district. Parents would also be offered a choice of schools for their children, including special purpose high schools or magnet schools. Thus evolved in desegregation planning the concept of magnet schools with educational offerings so promising that, it was hoped, parents would overcome their fears and concerns about interracial contact and place their children in desegregated settings (Smrekar & Goldring, 1999).

In 1977 school committee member Louise Day Hicks was unseated and a Black school committee member was elected to the city. Eventually in 1977, the racial strife in Boston between Blacks and Whites began to stabilize.

### **Milliken v. Bradley II (1977)**

In 1977 the Supreme Court seemed to offer a new version of separate but equal as it faced the challenges of providing a remedy for the Detroit, Michigan schools, where *Milliken I*

(1974) made long-term integration impossible. *Milliken II* (1974) called for the state of Michigan to contribute 50 percent of the funding for enhanced reading programs, guidance counselor training, and teacher training to improve education in Detroit. The Supreme Court ruled that it could order a state pay for educational programs to repair the harm caused by segregation to make up for the history of discrimination.

### **First Annual International Conference on Magnet Schools**

The First Annual International Conference on Magnet Schools was held in 1977 in Dallas, Texas. Nolan Estes, Superintendent of Dallas Independent School District in the 1970's expounded on his experience in the magnet school process in 1977 in a report from this conference:

The First Annual International Conference on Magnet Schools was held in Dallas in the spring of 1977 to broaden understanding of, and sharpen insights into, an educational concept which has proved successful in the past under different names. The concept of Magnet School is not new in itself, but the application of the concept has been expanded and modified over the years as the needs of students in our society have changed. The Magnet School may very well play a starring role in the melodrama of current public education. In fact, it may turn out to be the Number One hero helping to restore the public's confidence in the public schools. One indication of this is the fact that some parents of students who reside within suburban school district boundaries are choosing to pay monthly tuition to send their children to Dallas high school Magnets. The Magnet Schools concept, then, can be considered critical to the future of public education in the United States. In order for the public schools to remain viable institutions, educators must offer many different options - options to meet the diverse needs of a modern, ever-changing society and the varying interests of parents and students. The Magnet School approach presents a workable method for developing schools of choice to match the needs and goals of each student. Magnet Schools also play an incredibly successful role in the desegregation of education institutions. They bring together students of different races and backgrounds who have common interests and goals, but for educational reasons rather than the mixing of bodies. In a Magnet School setting, racial and socio-economic barriers come tumbling down more rapidly than they do in settings where there may be an equal mix of races, but where there may also exist an isolating distance between these races. The exciting thing is that the Magnet School is a sound approach to education. Parents will choose to send their children to schools where they can find the best and most positive educational opportunity. Magnet Schools can, and will continue to compete successfully with the finest private schools anywhere. (Estes, 1977).

Dr. Mario Fantini also spoke at the First Annual International Conference on Magnet Schools in Dallas, Texas in 1977. Dr. Fantini spoke of the concept of magnet schools or what we consider "alternatives" that involve distinctive features that can be attractive to different learners. "The historical identification of education as something that takes place in a special building and with a certain standardization of conceptions that forced laymen into associating good (and bad) schools not so much with the quality of the programs they offer as with the socioeconomic composition of their students and the neighborhood in which they are located. In other words, a good school is a school where "good" students attend - which usually means middle-class students" (Fantini, in Estes & Waldrip, 1977, p. 14-15).

### **Chicago Opens Magnet Schools**

As the 1970's progressed, large metropolitan areas such as Chicago looked for more ways to help curb segregation as more minorities moved to the larger cities and suburban areas. Chicago Public Schools in Chicago, Illinois became one of the first school districts to build magnet schools. The first elementary magnet school built and opened for purposes of integration in Chicago in 1973 was Walt Disney Magnet. Much of the student body continues to be bused from neighborhoods within the city and they reflect the ethnic, racial, and socio-economic diversity of the city of Chicago (Walt Disney Magnet School, 2010).

In 1975, Whitney M. Young Jr. Magnet High School, named after a prominent civil rights leader, was the first public magnet high school to open in Chicago. The school was established in response to Black middle-class parents' concerns for a quality high school education for their children and with the mandate of creating a diverse student body. Admission

to Whitney Young is granted on the basis of elementary school grades and on entrance exam performance (Books LLC).

### **White Flight**

As desegregation moved north, many parents who lacked public school options that appeared to offer educational advantages could choose private schools or relocate to suburbs that were often beyond the reach of desegregation orders, thus resulting in white flight (Taylor & Yu, 1999). Statistics from Boston, Los Angeles, and Baton Rouge, found that on average, 55 percent of White students reassigned to schools with minority enrollment above 90 percent did not show up at their assigned schools; the same was true of 47 percent of those reassigned to schools between 80 and 90% minority, and 43 percent of those reassigned to schools between 50 and 79 percent minority (Rossell, 1990). Of all forms of white response to school desegregation, white flight is probably the most important because it directly affects the ultimate goal of any desegregation plan, interracial exposure (Rossell, 1990).

In the 1900's all of Chicago, Illinois' 76 neighborhoods were over 90% White and during the 1970's, 17 of the neighborhoods were 60% or more Black (Huffington Post, 2013). By the late 1970's almost half of the nonwhite children in the United States lived in the twenty to thirty largest public school districts. The minority population averaged 60 percent of the school population in these districts (Bell, 2004). Researchers analyzed the impact of desegregation plans on White enrollments in public schools but their findings were inconsistent (Giles, 1978; Farley, 1976; Farley, 1975; Coleman, Kelly & Moore, 1975; Rosell, 1975). The Reagan administration supported research on White flight and subsequently used this research to oppose desegregation in the federal courts (Orfield in Orfield & Eaton, 1996). The debate continued as to whether mandatory desegregation plans would or would not have been an effective means to achieve

school desegregation. As a result of White flight, some of the early magnet schools emerged in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Cincinnati, Ohio; and they set out to achieve desegregation and hold onto their rapidly fleeing middle-class White population (Wells, 1993). Although Whites support the principle of integration, they overwhelmingly oppose mandatory reassignment or busing as a method of desegregating schools (Rossell, 1990).

As magnet schools began to become more popular, scholars such as Gordon Foster argued for the point of view of the minority community:

One of the most spurious desegregation techniques is the "magnet school" idea....The magnet concept is a message to the white community which says in effect: "This is a school that has been made so attractive educationally (magnetized) you will want to enroll your child voluntarily in spite of the fact that he will have to go to school with blacks" (Foster, 1973, p. 24).

By the mid to late 1970's, some districts tried to encourage voluntary desegregation by creating magnet schools in inner-city areas, while many others, including many of the southern districts, had mandatory desegregation that included busing in urban school districts (Frankenberg & Lee, 2002). Magnet programs emerged as an uneasy compromise between desegregation requiring mandatory student reassignment and unrestrained school choice, and they became popular educational options in school districts (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009). Magnet schools were a way of creating desegregation without mandatory busing and a chance for educational innovation in city school systems (Metz, 2003). The intent of magnet schools has typically been to use incentives to create desegregation plans and diverse environments (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008; Rossell, 2003), while many magnet schools were designed to break down racial barriers and offer special educational opportunities that may not be offered in neighborhood schools (Orfield, 2008).



Magnet schools have three different characteristics that separate them from typical public schools. First, magnet schools are either different in what they teach curricula or their pedagogical approach. Second, they enroll students on a voluntary basis, usually outside of neighborhood school attendance areas. Third, to ensure a desegregated school they typically enroll students using racial quotas (Metz, 2003). Magnet schools were an attractive choice to parents, students, and educators (Estes, Leine, & Waldtrip, 1990). Magnet schools generally serve students from diverse and wide-ranging geographical areas and enrollment is voluntary, not compulsory (Blank, 1984).

By the late 1970's, some school districts tried to encourage voluntary desegregation by creating magnet schools in inner-city areas, while many others, including many of the southern districts, had mandatory desegregation that included busing in urban school districts (Frankenberg & Lee, 2002). The magnet school reform movement is distinguished by the concept of empowerment of both parents and the schools (Goldring & Smrekar, 2002).

## **The 1980's**

### **The Continued Quest for Educational Equity**

#### **A Nation at Risk Report (1983)**

While poverty and inequities in education persisted across the United States, President Reagan's Commission on Excellence released *A Nation at Risk* report in 1983. The report opened in this way:

All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interest but also the progress of society itself (United States Department of Education, 2010).

The Commission's membership included state and local education officials, higher education representatives, corporate CEO's, and one teacher. The Commission called for a reestablishment of national standards and standardized achievement tests at educational moments (United States Department of Education, 2010). The climate of educational reform after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* further stimulated the interest in magnet schools as a tool for educational reform (Blank, Levine, & Steele, 1996). The standards reform movement emerged in the aftermath as all of the states adopted this agenda.

### **Court Cases Against Desegregation Continue**

#### **Riddick v. School Board of the City of Norfolk, Virginia (1986)**

As the decade of the 1980's progressed, desegregation cases continued to be brought before the courts. *The Riddick v. School Board of the City of Norfolk, Virginia* (1986), was the first federal case that permitted a school district, once declared unitary, to dismantle its desegregation plan and return to local government control. The City of Norfolk, Virginia was allowed to return to a segregated system. Decisions with similar impact continued to be handed down by the Federal Courts in the 1990's.

#### **Missouri v. Jenkins (1990)**

In 1990, the Kansas City Missouri School District wanted to increase taxes to provide more revenue to support continued desegregation. The Supreme Court reversed the decision of the lower courts, and ruled such taxation unconstitutional. This ruling in *Missouri v. Jenkins* (1990), was the first major decision for the Court in regard to re-segregation. This decision was a blow to the efforts of those supporting desegregation, as the Supreme Court began to fragment school districts' responsibilities to comply with *Brown* (1954).

### **Board of Education v. Dowell (1991)**

In 1991, the Board of Education of Oklahoma v. Dowell case, the Oklahoma School District had been ruled unitary by a federal court, resulting in the school board voting to return to segregated neighborhood schools. The Oklahoma City Board of Education sought dissolution of the District Court-imposed school desegregation plan. The court held that this was constitutional and that “unitary status” released the district from its obligation to maintain desegregation.

### **Freeman v. Pitts (1992)**

In 1992, the Court ruling of Freeman v. Pitts, held that school districts could be partially released from their desegregation responsibilities even if they had not achieved desegregation in all areas such as transportation, facilities, and faculty, as specified in the Green decision. Additionally, in the case of Missouri v. Jenkins (1990), the Court ruled that equalization remedies for urban schools where desegregation was not feasible as was outlined by the Milliken II (1977) decision. Milliken (1977) ruled that a court could order a state to pay for educational programs to remedy the damage caused by segregation and should be limited in time and extent and that school districts need not show any correction of the educational harms of segregation. The Court in Missouri v. Jenkins defined rapid restoration of the local control as the primary goal in desegregation cases. Many researchers see these Court decisions taken together as the beginning of a turn around on the original Brown ruling (Langemann & Miller, 1996; Orfield & Eaton, 1996).

## **2000-2014**

### **No Child Left Behind (2002)**

As lawmakers continued to pass laws that would affect public schools, one decision would affect every public school in the nation. On January 8, 2002, Congress passed the No

Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law. This law reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the principal law affecting kindergarten through high school education. The NCLB law represented an overhaul of federal efforts to support elementary and secondary education. NCLB was built on four pillars: accountability for results, an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research, expanded parental options, and expanded local control and flexibility. The intent of NCLB was to close the achievement gap with accountability measures, challenging academic standards, flexibility, choice, and to improve the educational opportunities so that no child is left behind (United States Department of Education, 2010).

The NCLB Act brought to the forefront the inequities and the lack of accountability that existed in many schools throughout the United States. Along with the ineffectiveness of some schools to provide a high quality education for all students, many schools across the country had failed to provide opportunities for sociopolitical development and student diversity. NCLB specifically placed more of an emphasis on the education of marginalized students. The NCLB Act mandated that public school districts establish accountability measures and challenging academic standards to close the achievement gap. The results are evident nation-wide and indicate that subgroups of students such as: Black students, Hispanic students, Economically Disadvantaged students, and Students with disabilities are more likely unable to meet the standards set forth by NCLB within the subgroup categories (Giroux & Schmidt, 2004; Kaye, 1995).

### **Forms of School Choice under NCLB**

Some parents have been participating in school choice methods for many years. As a reform strategy, school choice promises an influx of educational alternatives to compete with public schools (Frankenburg, Hawley, 2009). The most popular of these choices include parents

sending their children to private schools and home schooling. Some parents have been able to exercise school choice through their decision about where to live which can result in their child attending the parent's choice of schools. The last half of the twentieth century witnessed a steady movement towards increased student and family choice in education (Frankenburg, Hawley, 2009). NCLB led to new choices for many families and was a contributing factor to motivating intolerant families to relocate, otherwise known as "White flight." Parental choice has been used for different reasons throughout the past half century.

Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley (2009), posit that proponents of school choice argue that creating an education marketplace of schools to meet student demand will force all schools to improve, which will result in improved student achievement. Additionally, choice of schools has captured the political imagination of stakeholders at all levels of government (Frankenburg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009).

### **Open-Enrollment as a Reform Strategy**

As parental choice in education continues to be a hot topic since the inception of NCLB, one form of choice is open-enrollment. To "level the playing field" and give disadvantaged students who cannot afford the higher-quality school options access to quality education, parents are now given more choices in public education for their children (Ozek, 2009). Open-enrollment policies allow a student to transfer to the public school of his or her choice. The two types of open-enrollment consist of intra-district and inter-district. Intra-district open-enrollment policies allow a student to transfer to another school within his or her school district while inter-district open-enrollment policies allow a student to transfer to a school outside his or her home district (Education Commission of the States, 2012; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). Voluntary open enrollment policies allow districts to choose whether or not to participate

in open enrollment policies while mandatory open enrollment policies require school districts to participate in the open enrollment program.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2013), 13 states have voluntary intra-district enrollment policies and 23 states have mandatory intra-district enrollment policies. Other data from 2013 indicates that 36 states have voluntary inter-district enrollment policies and 21 states have mandatory inter-district enrollment policies. Additionally, states may adopt more than one open enrollment policy or policies that have multiple provisions such as targeting certain student groups as those from low performing schools (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Over recent years open-enrollment has become increasingly popular, but inter-district has seldom been used as many districts won't accept students from outside their district. "Open enrollment," then as a process, is just one aspect of school integration. It provides the educational setting conducive to the integrated educational experience (Tyson, 1961).

### **Vouchers as a Reform Strategy**

Vouchers, sometimes known as scholarships, are tuition payments made typically by the government and private organizations to private schools on behalf of parents. Vouchers channel the money or scholarships directly to the families rather than the school district. With vouchers, parents are then able to spend the voucher at any school of their choice, public or private and students are able to have all or part of their tuition paid. Scholarships are advocated on the grounds that competition and parental choice between private and public schools will improve education for children (School Vouchers, 2012).

Vouchers use public dollars for private education and these government-run voucher programs have been controversial in recent years. Some criticize that competitive markets are not good for public education. Others believe that government-funded scholarships would not create

a free educational market but perpetuate dependence on government funding (School Vouchers, 2012).

### **Tuition Tax Credits as a Reform Strategy**

Tuition tax credits were proposed in the early Fifties by the Yale Alumni Board. The Yale Alumni Board hoped to obtain federal funds for higher education without submitting to direct federal control. Tuition tax credits were intended to allow individuals paying tuition to specified categories of educational institutions to deduct from the income taxes they owe to the federal government a specified percentage of the tuition paid, up to a specified maximum (Thackery, 1984). A tuition tax credit, also known as scholarship tax credit programs, allows individuals, businesses, or corporations to deduct a certain amount of their owed state income taxes to donate to private nonprofit school organizations that issue scholarships to K-12 students. The scholarship allows a student to choose among a list of private schools, and sometimes public schools outside of the district, approved by the school tuition organization. The scholarship is used to pay tuition, fees, and other related expenses (National Conference of State Legislators, 2012). Additionally, the tuition tax credit can cover educational expenses such as computers, tutoring, and texts. As a result, the state does not have to appropriate per-pupil education funding for those students that receive scholarships. As of July 2013, 16 tuition tax credit programs existed in 13 states (National Conference of State Legislators, 2012).

### **Charter Schools as a Reform Strategy**

In 1991 a group of policymakers and educators came together to develop the first charter school model and the first charter school opened in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1992. California followed suit and charter school legislation has been passed in 42 states and the District of Columbia as of the 2014 school year. To date, the states of Alabama, Kentucky, Montana,

Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota Vermont, and West Virginia have not passed charter school legislation (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

According to information from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools website (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015), charter schools were created to help improve our nation's public school system and offer parents another public option to better meet their child's specific needs. Charter schools were a new form of nonsectarian autonomous public schools outside of the traditional public school systems (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2012). Charter schools are independent public schools that are allowed to be more innovative, operate in accordance with a founding charter formulated by stakeholders, and are not subject to traditional school regulations. They are independent of laws but they are held accountable to the local school board and to their state. Unlike public schools, nearly 90% of charters do not have unions to represent their teachers as a collective bargaining unit (Ravitch, 2012). Today, accountability measures for charter schools vary considerably from state to state.

According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2012), typically charter schools are given the freedom to innovate while providing students with more freedom to learn while creating unique school cultures, adjusting curriculum to meet the needs of the students, developing next generation learning models, and offering longer school days. Public charter schools operate independently of the school district and are: tuition-free and open to all students; non-sectarian; non-discriminatory; publically funded by state and federal dollars based on enrollment; and held accountable to federal and state academic standards (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2012). Charter schools have the advantage of little additional cost to operate and none of the threat to middle class status quo posed by desegregation (Orfield & Frankenberg 2012).



Charter schools have appealed to energetic educators, foundations, business leaders, conservatives because of their autonomy, and to Democrats because they could help block the drive for vouchers, thus keeping funds in the public sector (Orfield & Frankenberg). Some for-profit companies such as New York City-based Edison Schools, are trying to make money by running charter schools (Olson, 2000). Some of the tax dollars received by charter schools owned by for-profit corporations are paid to investors and stockholders. One charter in Pennsylvania pays a \$16,000,000 management fee to their chief executive officer, whose for-profit company supplies all the services and goods to the charter, while some nonprofit charter schools pay exorbitant executive salaries and management fees to those who run them (Ravitch, 2012).

According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (2015), charter schools create an environment in which parents can be more involved, teachers are allowed to innovate, and students are provided the structure they need to learn; resulting in a partnership between students, teachers, and parents. The principle of the charter school model is the belief that public schools should be held responsible for student learning. In exchange for this accountability, school leaders should be given the autonomy to do whatever it takes to help students achieve and thus share what works with the broader public school system so that all students benefit (The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015).

Charter schools are working to improve student achievement. One way charter schools work to improve achievement is by adjusting curriculum to meet student needs. According to information from the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools website (2015), at charter schools, teachers have a say in the curriculum they teach, may change the materials to meet the students' needs, and they can provide students with more time on the core subjects they need the

most. A second way charter schools work to improve achievement is they have more autonomy to create a unique school culture as they are able to build upon the core academic subjects and adopt a theme and create a school culture centered around the theme. The third way that charter schools are working to improve student achievement is by developing next-generation learning models. According to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools report that charter schools are rethinking and reinventing the word “classroom” (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015).

According to the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (2015), by law, charter schools are publically-funded, open enrollment, free public schools operated by non-profit organizations. By law, all charters must be governed by a non-profit board of directors and this board may choose to contract out the management of the charter school to another non-profit management company. Charter schools may be sponsored by one of the three entities: the local school boards, the State Board of Education, or the State Board for Charter Schools (Meeks, Meeks, & Warren, 2000). A small 7% of charter schools contract with for-profit management companies and these contracts must be reviewed by the charter school organizers (Illinois Network of Charter Schools, 2015).

According to the Illinois Network of Charter Schools website (2015), Illinois law allows for 120 individual charter agreements to operate in the state with 45 of those charters carved out for schools outside of Chicago Public Schools and these schools can be both non-selective and selective. Illinois currently has 148 charter school campuses. Of these charter schools, 21 serve special populations such as alternative schools for drop-out recovery students. Uno Charter Schools Network operates 16 charter schools in Chicago. As of the 2013-2014 school year, charter school students made up 14% of Chicago Public School District, with 23% of these

students in high school and 10% in elementary schools. (Illinois Network of Charter Schools, 2015).

Charter schools in large metropolitan areas such as Chicago have seen incredible growth since Illinois opened up their first charter schools in 1997. According to data from the Chicago Public Schools website (2015), to date, there are 685 public schools in Chicago. Of these schools, 402 are neighborhood schools, 134 are charter schools, 42 are magnet schools, 28 are small schools, 25 are city-wide option schools, 10 are Special Education schools, 10 are regional gifted centers, 10 are selected enrollment schools, 7 are classical schools, 6 are military academies, 6 are contract schools, and 5 are career academies.

Over the past decade, charter schools have gained momentum across the United States. According to data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2015), from the 1999-2000 school year, the percentage of all public schools that were public charter schools increased from 1.7% to 5.8%, while the total number of public charter schools increased from 1,500 to 5,700. The percentages of charter schools with the largest enrollment sizes (500-900 students and 1,000 or more students) increased from 1999-2000, while the percentage of charter schools with the smallest enrollment of under 300 students decreased from 77% to 56%. Additionally, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools from the school year 1999-2000 to 2011-2012 increased from 0.3 million to 2.1 million students, resulting in a percentage increase from 0.7 to 4.2 percent of public school students who attended charter schools. Between the school years of 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools increased from 1.8 million to 2.1 million (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

As the number of students enrolled in public charter schools is reviewed, the race/ethnicity of these students must be taken into account as we examine school choice. From

the 1999-2000 school year to the 2011-2012 school year, the White population of students enrolled in United States public charter schools has declined from 42% to 36%, down 6 percentage points. The Black population of students enrolled in charter schools in the United States decreased from 34% during the 1999-2000 school year to 29% during the 2011-2012 school year, down 5 percentage points over the thirteen year time span. The data is in contrast to the Hispanic population of students enrolled in public charter schools. The Hispanic population of students enrolled in public charter schools has increased from 20% to 28%, up eight percentage points from the 1999-2000 school year to the 2011-2012 school year (National Center for Education Statistics, 2015).

Although the enrollment in charter schools continues to rise, results from a recent study (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2011) finds that charter schools are more racially isolated than traditional public schools in virtually every state and large metropolitan areas across the United States. In some regions, White students are overrepresented in charter schools and in some charter schools minority students have little exposure to White students (Frankenberg, et. al, 2011). Results from other studies show that charter schools often lead to increased school segregation (Bifulco & Ladd, 2007; Booker, Zimmer, & Buddin, 2005; Nathanson, Corcoran, & Baker-Smith, 2013).

### **Home Schooling as a Reform Strategy**

Another form of choice in educational reform includes informal home education or home schooling, which has been around since the beginning of mankind. When a child is educated at home typically by a parent it is referred to as home schooling or home education and is considered a form of private education and a method of school choice. Some parents decide to educate their child at home instead of sending them to a public or private school. In Illinois,

parents who home school their children must offer instruction in the core courses in the English language which includes: language arts, social sciences, mathematics, physical sciences, biological sciences, physical development, health, and fine arts. If parents decide to home school their child, they must meet the requirements of the Illinois Compulsory Attendance Law of the Illinois School Code.

### **Magnet Schools as a School Choice Reform Strategy**

Although desegregation is typically the goal of many magnet schools, some parents identify the “pull” of magnets as their “reasons for choice,” including school location, teacher quality, and safety (Smrekar & Goldring, 1999). A study of three small middle school magnets in Montclair, New Jersey (Anemone, 2008), found that the primary factor influencing the middle school choice decision was the quality of the teaching staff. Supplementary factors were identified as perception of the school and the magnet theme of the school. Those in favor of school choice have argued that allowing parents to choose their child’s school will result in competition amongst schools and the decline of bureaucratic structures, thus compelling schools to compete and improve (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Other researchers such as Lubienski (2005, p. 338), posit that public choice options are unequally distributed and are shaped by racial issues, geographic distance, and policy barriers.

A study by Cook (2008) of smaller city district magnet schools in Poughkeepsie, New York with 20,000 students in 15 elementary schools, found that families selected magnet schools based on the reputation of the school, school visits, and recommendations of others. Other reasons cited by parents for choosing magnet schools included school location, variety of available programs, high quality teaching staff, orientation sessions, school visits when school is in session, cleanliness of the school, and whether or not the parents attended the school as a child

(Cook, 2008). A study by McNally (2002) of magnet school choice options in 16 Connecticut towns produced results similar to those of Cook (2008). At the time of this study, Connecticut had 22 magnet schools with 5,000 students statewide. In this study, the factors that determined whether families would send their child to a magnet school included: good instruction provided and focused on thinking skills, the size of the classes and the school, diversity, good teachers and administrators, and school safety and discipline. Factors that were not important in this study included: bus rides, their child's friends attend the magnet school, positive reports from others, and location of the school (McNally, 2002).

In a large school district study by Goldring & Hausman (1999) of St. Louis, Missouri Magnet Schools, it was found that parents choose magnets due to the dissatisfaction with their neighborhood or local school. These results are supported in a study by Lee, Croninger, & Smith, (1994) of another large school district located in Detroit, Michigan. In Detroit's inter-district choice plan it was concluded that "opinions about school choice are driven by the negative views of the quality of local schools" (Lee, Croninger, & Smith, 1994, p. 443).

In public schools, "choice programs are premised on the hope that parents will choose better quality schools for their children" (Lubienski, 2005, p. 338). Additional research indicates that parents say they prefer schools that are academically superior as evidenced by test scores (Armor & Peiser, 1997; Schneider, Teske, & Marshall, 2000), and that increased parental choice allows families to select better schools for their children (Friedman & Friedman, 1980; Moe, 1995). Other research indicates that parents who were asked to state factors that influenced their decisions regarding school choice found that parents say they value academic characteristics more than other characteristics, resulting in their desire to have their child attend a specialized school, such as a magnet school (Schneider, et al., 2000). Typically, test scores are one of the

central indicators of student success in schools. This became even more evident with the NCLB legislation and the requirement for schools to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or face state and federal sanctions.

A study conducted by Schneider (et al., 2000) in four school districts in the New York metropolitan area, found that racial similarity is rarely reported to be important to parents in evaluating the quality of education and schools. In a similar study conducted four years later by Schneider & Buckley (2002) in Washington D.C., they found that although parents will almost always say that academics are important in their choice of schools for their children and rarely admit to caring about demographics, race is deeply important to them.

There are a variety of factors that have limited access for students to schools of choice: transportation, socioeconomic status, parental access to information, and language barriers to name a few, and many students attend their neighborhood schools that are poorly funded (Bifulco, 2005). Many of these same students do not have the access to transportation to help them leave their neighborhood school for their school of choice (Blank, Levine, & Steele, 1996; Nelson, Muir, & Drown, 2000). Increased parent choice would allow families a broader choice of schools for their children (Friedman & Friedman, 1980; Moe, 1995).

For school choice to enhance equity, parents must select from schools of varying quality (Bell, 2009). In a study by Bell (2009), working-class, middle-class, and poor parents did not choose from schools that ranged in quality. The schools selected were nonselective, both failing and non-failing, and free. Bell (2009) posits that “Although the supply of quality schools matters, if choice is to deliver significant equity gains, our policies must take better account of the almost invisible social and historical inequities that constrain the schools parents are willing to consider” (Bell, 2009, p.207).

Several issues need to be examined concerning equality of opportunity and magnet schools (Blank & Archbald, 1992):

1. Whether parents and students have adequate information;
2. How students are enrolled; and
3. The rate of acceptance of magnet school applicants. (pp. 4-5)

In an empirical study by Rossell (1990), questions were addressed of school choice, equity, and access in 119 school districts across twenty states. Some school districts in this study used magnet schools to desegregate schools while others placed magnet programs in schools that could not be desegregated by mandatory means because of White resistance. This study examined twenty large metropolitan areas including Buffalo, NY; Cincinnati, OH; Milwaukee, WI; Portland, OR; San Diego, CA; Boston, MA; Dallas, TX; Des Moines, IA; Louisville, KY; and St. Paul, MN. Rossell's (1990) study contradicted three decades of research and discovered that voluntary desegregation plans with incentives, or magnet schools, ultimately produce more interracial exposure than mandatory desegregation plans. In a following study of a 600 school district national sample by Rossell (2003), results indicate that the greater the percentage of magnet schools in a voluntary desegregation plan, the less the gain in interracial exposure and the greater the White flight.

A similar study by Saporito (2003) that analyzed magnet school application data from Philadelphia magnet schools, indicated that school choice does not reduce segregation by class and race, but in fact increases segregation of both class and race. Saporito (2003) found that White families typically use magnet school choice programs to avoid neighborhood schools composed of non-White children, while non-White families typically show no such sensitivity to race. A study by McNally (2002) of four inter-district elementary magnet schools in Connecticut



found that White families sent their children to magnet schools, partly for their racial diversity, and 100% of minority and White families chose to send their children to a magnet school outside their neighborhood.

In theory, school choice refers to allowing parents to choose the public school that best suits their child, regardless of where they live (Chubb & Moe, 1990; Elmore, 1987, Wagner, 1996). A study by Schneider & Buckley (2002), found that controlled choice plans impose regulations that limit choice and may therefore fail to attract the support of premarket proponents of choice. Choice experiments restrict the local education agency's traditional ability to assign children to a particular school, shifting this authority to parents (Fuller, Elmore, & Orfield, 1996). School choice allows parents to take individual circumstances into consideration as they attempt to provide the best education possible for their children. According to Brouillet (1999), school choice removes or reduces the importance of political and geographic boundaries, thereby encouraging greater racial, social, and economic integration of students. Choices in magnet schools are limited to prevent increases in racial segregation. Since their inception, magnet schools have continued to be accepted by the federal courts as a method of desegregation.

### **Magnet Schools of America**

Magnet Schools of America (MSA) was founded in 1980. This non-profit organization was incorporated in the state of Texas to sponsor conferences for magnet schools. The MSA was approved by the Internal Revenue Service in 1994 as a not-for profit professional educational association (Magnet Schools of America, 2014). Results from a recent survey completed in 2012 by MSA indicated that there were approximately 4000 theme-based and magnet schools across the United States. The results also indicated that 96% of magnet schools reduced racial disparities, 80% have school-wide programs, and 70% have diversity goals. The most popular

themes provided in magnet schools are fine arts, visual arts, performing arts; international baccalaureate, science, technology, engineering, and math.

Other results from the MSA survey indicate that magnet schools have innovative curriculum, increased parent satisfaction, improved academic achievement, diverse student enrollments, higher graduation rates, increased student attendance rates, and specialized teaching staffs. The MSA reports that magnet schools are outperforming other district schools throughout the United States and that 95% are closing the achievement gap, 83% are experiencing excellence in reading, and 84% are experiencing excellence in math. According to MSA, parent engagement is 52% higher than in neighborhood schools (Magnet Schools of America, 2014).

Other results from the MSA survey indicate that 91% of magnet schools are run by lottery. Of these magnet schools, 75% currently have waiting lists, 9% have no lottery, 13% utilize a blind lottery, 17% use academic criteria for admission, and 61% use a preference lottery for admission (Magnet Schools of America, 2014).

***Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 decided together with Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education (2007)***

As NCLB progressed and AYP became the standard, thus opening more opportunities for parents to have additional forms of choice in the school for their children, two new court cases would affect desegregation methods. For years, the Seattle School District in the state of Washington required that parents indicate what race their child is on their application for admission to school. Parents were able to choose "white" or "non-white" on the application. Since 1998 the school district used race as the qualifying factor on where to send the children to high school. Students and their parents were allowed to choose a high school, but when the enrollment was too high, the school district decided whether or not a student would be enrolled

based on the race of the child and if they have siblings in the schools. Parents of high school students denied enrollment in particular schools solely under this plan brought suit, contending that allocating children to different public schools on the basis of race violated the Fourteenth Amendment guarantee of equal protection (551 U.S. 701, 2007).

Jefferson County School District was created by a merger of both suburban and city schools in Louisville, Kentucky in the mid 1970's. Jefferson County Schools were originally ordered by the courts to desegregate their schools and mandatory bussing was enforced for racial desegregation. In the mid 1990's, Jefferson County Schools implemented magnet schools to create racial integration and parents had to indicate if their child was "black" or "other" on their registration form. Jefferson County Schools determined that they should have between 15 and 50 percent Black students at any one particular school. White parents in Jefferson County sued the school district in 2002, charging that the use of race in student assignment violated the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause (Kahlenberg, 2012). The dissent indicated that they must have a plan to ensure an equal student racial balance to remedy the issue of diversity or racial mixing (www.casebriefs.com, 2014).

The 2007 Supreme Court decision involving Louisville, Kentucky, and Seattle, Washington, – *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* decided together with *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education* (2007), prohibited assigning students to public schools solely for the purpose of achieving racial integration and declined to recognize racial balancing as a compelling state interest. This decision outlawed almost all of the methods through which urban schools could desegregate (Orfield & Eaton, 1996). More recently, public education in the United States has responded to the issues of desegregation in a variety of ways such as: programs for “at-risk” students, single ethnic and race schools, bilingual programs,

and magnet programs. Over the past half century, school districts have continued to use a variety of plans to desegregate schools.

### **Magnet Schools Enrollment Numbers**

As school choice and accountability remain in the forefront of our public education system, magnet schools continue to enroll large numbers of students. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2014) indicates that during the 1990-1991 school year, the total enrollment in elementary and secondary schools across the United States totaled 40,599,943 students which grew to 49,177,617 students during the 2010-2011 school year. During the 2000-2001 school year there were 1,469 magnet schools in the United States enrolling 1,213,976 students. Of these schools, 1,111 were elementary, 328 were secondary, 29 were combined elementary and secondary, and 1 was not classified by grade span. By the time the 2010-2011 school year began, the number of magnet schools increased to 2,722 with 2,055,133 students enrolled. Of these schools, 1,849 were at the elementary level, 746 were at the secondary level, 103 were combined elementary and secondary levels, and 24 were not classified by grade span (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Further, more than half of the nation's magnet programs serve elementary school students while 20% of magnets are at the high school level (Levine, 1997; Yu & Taylor, 1997). Today, over half of all magnet programs are located in low socioeconomic districts (Levine, 1997).

Enrollment in magnet schools across all fifty states reached 2,307,712 students within the 2007-2008 school year. California was noted to be in the lead with 508,863 students in 438 magnet schools, followed by Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, and Virginia. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). Of the previously noted students, 229,120 attended magnet schools in Illinois, with the total Illinois elementary and secondary

public school population at 2,119,707 students. During the 2007-2008 school year, Illinois had 337 magnet schools out of a total of 4,402 public schools.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2011), during the 2010-2011 school year the state of Michigan took the lead with 464 magnet schools enrolling 213,054 students. Florida followed in second place with 414 magnet schools with a total enrollment of 447,497 students, California placed third with 282 magnet schools housing 284,446 students, Texas was fourth with 219 magnet schools enrolling 191,597 students, Virginia was fifth with 131 magnet schools and 131,339 students, North Carolina was sixth with 126 magnet schools enrolling 69,500 students, Illinois and South Carolina tied for seventh place with 104 magnet schools each with South Carolina housing 79,630 students and Illinois housing 75,252 magnet students. Maryland placed eighth with 90 magnet schools and an enrollment of 81,050 students. Rounding out the top ten states with the largest number of magnet schools is Georgia in ninth place with 78 magnet schools enrolling 72,661 students and Minnesota placed tenth with 73 magnet schools and an enrollment of 36,998 students. The state of Nevada had an enrollment of 35,672 students in their magnet schools during the 2010-2011 school year although they did not have a large number of magnet schools. Another magnet school with high enrollment but with not enough magnet schools to make it in the top ten number of magnet schools in the individual states include Kentucky with 36,931 students enrolled in magnet programs, and Louisiana with 40,542 magnet students.

According to NCES, during the 2010-2011 school year, enrollment in all magnet schools across the United States was 2,055,2011 students, up 841,157 students from the 2000-2001 school year. Enrollment in elementary magnet schools during the 2010-2011 school year was 1,035,288 students, up 329,525 students from the 2000-2001 school year. Enrollment in

secondary magnet schools during the 2010-2011 school year was 944,434 students, up 459,750 students from the 2000-2001 school year. Enrollment in the combined elementary and secondary magnet schools during the 2010-2011 school year was 75,411 students, which was an increase of 50,882 students from the 2000-2001 school year. In Miami-Dade County School District in Florida, magnet programs have grown by 35% in the last four years. The students enrolled in these magnet programs now account for about one in six students in the district (Magnet Schools of America, 2014).

Of the top four largest school districts in the continental United States, Chicago Public School System placed third behind New York City Public Schools in New York with 1,496 public schools and Los Angeles Unified School District was in second place with 860 public schools. Chicago Public School District 299 has 288 magnet schools, which is 46% of the public schools in Chicago, and 47% of these students attend magnet schools. The total number of public schools listed on the Chicago Public School System website is currently 672. The enrollment in Chicago Public Schools has fluctuated over the years, with 408,830 students in the Fall of 1990, 435,261 students in the Fall of 2000, and then declining again to 405,664 students during the Fall of 2010 (NCES, 2011).

According to the information listed on their website (cps.edu, 2014), the Chicago Public School System (CPS) lists the following types of and number of schools in the city: Career Academy - 5 schools; Charter - 127 schools; Neighborhood - 402 schools; Military Academy - 6 schools; Small - 29 schools, Citywide Option - 17 schools; Special Education - 10 schools; Regional Gifted Centers - 10 schools, Magnet - 44 schools; Selective Enrollment - 10 schools, Contract - 6 schools, and Classical - 5 schools. Although Chicago Public Schools has 288

magnet schools, only 43 of these schools have "magnet" in the name of the school. Of these 43 schools listed specifically as magnet schools, the enrollment is 27,401 students.

While magnet schools have typically been located in larger urban districts, some magnet schools are located in smaller population centers across the United States. Much research on magnet schools in large urban areas has been conducted, with little research focusing on magnet schools in smaller population centers. Illinois has 337 magnet schools according to recent National Center on Educational Statistics (NCES, 2011). Given these numbers, there has been little research focusing on magnet schools in smaller population centers.

## **The Historic Promotion of Equity and Access for All Students**

### **Magnet Schools and Student Achievement**

The trend in academic and political circles indicates that the rhetoric surrounding education is increasingly focused on accountability and standards rather than access and equality (Metz, 1992; Rossell, 1990; Strauss, 2004). Magnet schools have occasionally been criticized for “skimming” the highest achieving students from their neighborhood schools (Moore & Davenport, 1989; Neild, 2004; Rossell, 1979) and the issue of “skimming” has often arisen in districts where not all parents are knowledgeable about magnet schools or not all students are accepted into these schools. Some critics claim that magnet schools do not get their “fair share” of low achieving or poor students (Moore & Davenport, 1989; Rossell, 1979) while magnets have been criticized for implementing screening procedures to avoid difficult students (Blank et al, 1983).

In addition to the issue of skimming within magnet programs, some magnet programs have been critiqued for diverting scarce resources from the school population and providing these resources to elite groups of children (Andre-Benchley, 2004; Eaton, 1996; Raywid, 1985).

Most magnet programs have higher start-up costs than traditional education programs and more expenses such as staffing needs unique to the program, transportation costs to bus students to and from the school, facility costs, and special equipment for the program (Blank et al, 1983; Raywid, 1985).

In a two-year national study commissioned by the United States Department of Education, Blank (1984) assessed the effects of magnet schools on both educational quality and desegregation. The study involved 15 school districts and 45 magnet schools. The conclusions were: (a) magnet schools can and do provide high-quality education in urban school districts; (b) a high quality education in magnet schools does not stem from highly selective methods of admitting students; and (c) school and district leadership, community involvement, and small additional expenditures are factors that produce a high-quality education in magnet schools. Of the schools surveyed, 80% had higher average achievement scores than the district average (Blank, 1989; Blank, Dentler, Baltzell, & Chabotar, 1983). In a follow-up summary of the 1983 report, four school districts in San Diego, California; Dallas, Texas; Austin, Texas; and Montgomery County, Maryland were highlighted. After controlling for differences in student backgrounds, magnet programs had positive effects on achievement test scores (Blank, 1989).

A review of magnet schools by Blank and Archibald (1992) suggested that magnet schools do improve student learning. However, the results of the studies analyzed overall district gains after implementing magnet programs without isolating the effects of magnets from other features that may have caused a change in student performance. Therefore, it is difficult to attribute the documented improvements solely to magnet schools.

Various studies still find that magnets are associated with positive academic benefits. In a study by Bifulco, Cobb, and Bell (2009), their results of this inter-district magnet high school



study indicate that inter-district magnet schools, on average, succeeded in providing their students more integrated, higher-achieving peer environments and the results suggest they represent a promising model for helping to address the ills of economic and racial isolation. However, the results do not indicate which aspects of inter-district magnet schools benefit students (Bifulco et al, 2009).

A 2006 study was conducted of grades 3-8 in a mid-sized school district in a Southern city with a population of 40% White, 48% Black, and 8% Hispanic. The students studied were admitted to the magnet program due to the school district lottery system and no special entrance exam was taken for admittance to the program. This study examined whether attending a magnet school raises standardized test scores in reading and math (Ballou, Goldring, & Liu, 2006). The results indicate a positive impact on mathematics achievement until they added controls for student demographics and prior achievement. The results of this study suggest that despite random assignment in the magnet lotteries, treatment and control groups differ with respect to student characteristics that have an independent impact on student achievement in reading and math (Ballou et al., 2006).

### **National Magnet Models**

Many magnet schools are known for and continue to maintain diverse student populations. Some of our magnet schools have desegregated students on a voluntary basis, and some were mandated by court order. Since the first magnet school opened in 1968, magnet schools are becoming more popular as a form of school choice as more and more are becoming laboratories for cutting edge educational teaching practices which focus on increasing student achievement.

According to Margaret Spellings, Secretary of the United States Department of Education in 2008, "Magnet schools in particular are excellent examples of how specialized programs can spark enthusiasm for learning and catalyze academic growth in students whose interests and aptitude may not be fulfilled by their neighborhood schools" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. v). The United States Department of Education completed a study in 2008 which focused on creating and sustaining successful magnet schools. This study focused on six successful magnet schools that are achieving the goals of: utilizing promising educational practices, maintaining diverse student populations, turning around low student performance, reversing declining student enrollment, advancing school choice, and have students who enter school with skills that are far below their grade level (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

The six schools examined in this United States Department of Education study from 2008 are from all over the United States and consist of:

1. AB Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School, Raleigh, North Carolina
2. FAIR (Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource School), Crystal, Minnesota
3. Mabel Hoggard Math and Science Magnet School, Las Vegas, Nevada
4. National Park Museum Magnet School, Chatanooga, Tennessee
5. Raymond Academy for Engineering, Houston, Texas
6. River Glen Elementary and Middle School, San Jose, California

The following research is a synopsis of the information garnered from the U.S. Department of Education report (2008).

### **AB Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School**

AB Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School in Raleigh, North Carolina, part of the Wake County School System, opened in 1982. The Wake County School System adopted the

schools of choice program to provide educational choice for students and parents through a more equitable format. As time passed and enrollment patterns in the 1990's indicated that the magnet theme was no longer compelling and the Combs Leadership Magnet was not attracting a diverse enough student population for the school district, resulting in the district deciding to phase out the extended day magnet programs. The principal of Combs had to devise a plan in order to keep the magnet program alive and to make the magnet theme "like none other in the state... preferably, like none other in the country" (U.S. Department of Education, 2008, p. 2). Without any funding from the school district, the principal of Combs went to the community to find out what their ideal school for their children looked like. The parent and community responses focused on character, thus a new mission was set to "develop leaders one child at a time." Character at Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School meant that they needed to raise the academic performance level and to increase the student's individual accountability by building a school culture of continuous improvement for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Combs Elementary follows a leadership model fashioned after the principles of Dr. Stephen Covey in his books *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* and *First Things First* and these principles are imbedded in the school's culture (Wake County Public School System, 2014).

### **Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource School**

Another school recognized by the United States Department of Education in their 2008 study entitled *Creating and Sustaining Successful K-8 Magnet Schools* is the Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource School. The Fine Arts Interdisciplinary Resource (FAIR) School located in Minnesota has two campuses. The Fair School Crystal is located on the Northwest suburb of Crystal, Minnesota, houses grades 4-8, and opened in 2000. The Fair School Crystal is committed to the fine arts and has been nationally recognized by the United States Department of

Education and the Kennedy Center for the Arts. The Fair School Downtown, is located in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota, and houses grades K-3 and 9-12 and opened in 2009. The Fair School Downtown is rich with community partnerships (West Metro Education Program, 2014).

The first FAIR school was founded by the West Metro Education Program (WMEP). The goal of the FAIR School Crystal was to form an inter-district fine arts school and to populate the school with a diverse mix of students from Minneapolis and the surrounding suburbs. Additionally, the intent was to invest in an innovative magnet school model by locating a school in one host suburban district that would have direct benefits for all participating school systems. The school community stretches across suburban and urban lines and is a collaborative effort between school districts (United States Department of Education, 2014). The West Metro Education Program serves 11 WMEP collaborative districts: Brooklyn Center, Columbia Heights, Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minneapolis, Richfield, Robbinsdale, St. Anthony/New Brighton, St. Louis Park, and Wayzata. Approximately 240 students who attend FAIR are from Minneapolis. Those interested in attending FAIR must fill out a magnet application and selection is through a lottery system (WMEP, 2014).

### **Mabel Hoggard Math and Science Magnet School**

Another magnet school recognized by the United States Department of Education is the Mabel Hoggard Math and Science Magnet School. Mable Hoggard Math and Science Magnet School is located in Las Vegas, Nevada, and opened in 1993 to serve approximately 410 K-5 grade students. Mabel Hoggard Math and Science Magnet School was part of Clark County's efforts to desegregate its schools, serve the Black neighborhoods, and attract wealthy White students to the inner-city schools. Hoggard was the first magnet school in Las Vegas to receive

funds from the Federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) to enrich the availability of resources and advanced curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Unique characteristics of Hoggard include a planetarium, three science labs, and live animal habitats. Students who attend Hoggard vary widely in ability levels ranging from students who have underdeveloped skills, students who have not been successful in other schools, and students who are gifted in science and math. Hoggard also teams up with local organizations such as the local water district to provide unique educational experiences for their students (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

### **Normal Park Museum Magnet School**

The Normal Park Museum Magnet School located in Chattanooga, Tennessee opened in 2001 as a magnet school with the hopes of reversing a declining enrollment and turning around student achievement. Funding was provided through the United States Federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program to convert Normal Park into one of four magnet schools designed to attract White, suburban parents who commuted into the downtown area (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Normal Park Museum Magnet School incorporates weekly class expeditions to partner museums and students get to experience many hands-on learning experiences. Differentiated instruction and engaged learning are the hallmarks of Normal Park Museum Magnet School.

### **Raymond Academy for Engineering**

Raymond Academy for Engineering is another magnet school that has been recognized by the United States Department of Education. Raymond Academy was established in 1998 due to the result of court-ordered desegregation efforts in attempts to increase the number of Black students in the predominately Hispanic school in Houston, Texas. Raymond Academy was

established as a magnet school in Aldine Independent School District. Parents were surveyed to determine the theme of the magnet school. Parents wanted their children to acquire skills which would be marketable in the Texas gas and oil industries, thus an engineering focused theme was born. Raymond Academy houses over 800 K-4 students and has been rated an "Exemplary School" by the Texas Education Agency (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

In 2002, Aldine Independent School District was declared a unitary status district, and was released from its court-ordered desegregation plan. The school district adopted a random lottery process for student enrollment and staff targeted recruitment from African-American schools and neighborhoods in an effort to maintain an integrated student body at Raymond Academy (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

The Hispanic population represents the majority of the population for third and fourth grade at Raymond Academy while the White and Black populations represent the minority of the population at Raymond. Overall there are 33 Black students, 13 White students, and 288 Hispanic students in the third and fourth grades at Raymond Academy. River Glen Elementary and Washington Elementary in San Jose, California housed a school within a school by providing a dual-immersion program for a population of over 90% Hispanics from 1986-1989. The original intent of the Spanish Dual Immersion magnet program was to recruit Black, White, and Asian families into Washington. In 1992 the magnet strand at Washington moved to a new site and became known as River Glen and expanded to a K-8 school. River Glen was one of the first magnets in San Jose Unified School District created as a result of a law suit filed by Hispanic families who feared that once old school buildings in San Jose would be replaced with new earthquake-proof facilities, segregation would remain. The results of the law suit required the school district to rethink its enrollment process. At River Glen students continue to learn a

second language without compromising their first language and equal value is placed on both languages, English and Spanish (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

### **How to Sustain Successful Magnet Schools**

Many magnet schools across the country have been established for a variety of reasons and continue to provide quality academic programs, attract students from across a wide range of nationalities and neighborhoods, and are producing positive academic results. Numerous magnet schools have been researched and highlighted in various reports since the first magnet school opened in 1968. Examples of these studies include from 2004, the United States Department of Education Office of Innovation and Improvement's report entitled: *Creating Successful Magnet School Programs*. This report profiled six successful school districts that house magnet schools and magnet programs. The districts included: Duval County Public Schools in Florida, Hamilton County Schools in Tennessee, Hot Springs School District in Arkansas, Houston Independent School District in Texas, Montclair Public Schools in New Jersey, and Wake County Public School System in North Carolina. Additionally, the magnet schools highlighted in the United States Department of Education's 2004 study *Creating and Sustaining Successful Magnet Schools* included magnet schools from the following counties: Wake County in North Carolina, Hennepin County in Minnesota, Clark County in Nevada, Hamilton County in Tennessee, Harris County in Texas, and Santa Clara County in California.

The United States Department of Education (2004, 2008) has found that the schools highlighted in their two reports used effective practices for planning, implementing, and sustaining success in magnet schools. Common practices used in planning for the development of magnet schools include:

1. Developing a viable theme and mission for the magnet school in conjunction with local needs, interests, and resources; and where all stakeholders are energized by the mission statement;
2. Establishing a rigorous and relevant curriculum for the magnet school that promotes high intellectual performance where students apply and master critical thinking, communication, and life skills in real world contexts; and
3. Attracting quality leaders and staff for the magnet school with the mission of a specialized program and are committed to collaborative leadership.

Practices for implementing successful strategies after the doors open in the new magnet school include (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008):

1. Focusing on integrity while maintaining and aligning the theme with district and state standards;
2. Establishing equitable practices for a diverse student population and ensuring that all students are meeting academic success while promoting positive intercultural contacts;
3. Developing a culture of empowerment where all stakeholders promote and cultivate a no-excuses attitude that fosters respect;
4. Providing ongoing professional development for theme-based curriculum and committing resources to support the staff in mastering effective instruction; and
5. Building leadership capacity by broadening of the school's leadership base through both formal and informal structures.

Practices for sustaining success and keeping the doors open once the magnet school has been established include (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, 2008):

1. Adopting a continuous improvement model which includes focusing on progress while using data to make changes and monitor results;
2. Build win-win partnerships by working with community members and organizations to mutually benefit the students, school, and community;
3. Developing community outreach by educating the public about the school's mission, needs, and achievement; and
4. Aligning with a district vision to lead school reform efforts, utilize best teaching practices, and collaborating with other school districts.



Over the past five decades, magnet schools have become a part of the reform efforts of our public school system. Today's magnet schools seek out and many provide unique and distinctive theme-based pedagogical approaches and effective techniques to improve teaching and learning.

### **Current Organizational Structure of Riverview School District Regular and Magnet Programs**

Today Riverview School District houses one magnet school, the Montessori Magnet for grades K-8. Riverview also houses one pre-school building with no magnet programs, three neighborhood K-3 primary schools which house no magnet programs, one primary K-3 school which houses one strand of the math magnet program along with one strand of regular programming, one primary K-3 school which houses one strand of the computer magnet program along with one strand of regular programming, and one primary K-3 school which houses two strands of the science magnet program and one strand of the fine arts magnet program along with three strands of regular programming. Riverview also houses one 4-6 middle school on the east side of the city that houses one strand of the math magnet and one strand of the computer magnet along with three strands of regular programming at each grade level. This school also houses one strand each of Tier II and Tier III self-contained gifted classes for grades 4-6. The other 4-6 middle school on the west side of the city houses one strand of fine arts magnet and two strands of science magnet programs along with five strands of regular programming at each grade level. This same middle school on the west side of the city also houses 14 third grade students in the self-contained Tier I gifted class for grades 3-4, and also houses one Tier I gifted class for grades 5-6.

## **Equity Framework for Magnet Schools**

Magnet schools continue to have programmatic specializations that parents can choose as an alternative to their child's regularly assigned schools. They are required to operate under racial-balance guidelines and school choice policies that open up choice to most or all schools within a district (Archbald, 2004). Many school districts continue to use a lottery system for student acceptance into a magnet school. Other magnet schools rely upon a first-come, first-served basis. Only about one-third of all magnet programs use a selective admissions policy such as a performance in an audition or a minimum test score requirement (Smrekar & Goldring, 1999).

Even today, choice experiments restrict local education agencies traditional ability to assign children to a particular school, shifting this authority to parents. There is disagreement by a number of educational researchers as to whether school choice promotes desegregation in public schools. This debate continues as some critics of magnet schools programs charge that when magnet schools are few in number, they can exacerbate existing class or socioeconomic distinctions (Smrekar & Goldring, 1999).

### **Framework That Informs the Role of Magnet Schools in Reform Efforts**

To understand the role of magnet schools in reform efforts we must first examine equity and equitable access to programs. Equity in a legal sense developed in England in reaction to the common law courts' inability to provide a remedy for every injury. The King established the High Court of Chancery to administer justice according to principles of fairness when common law would not give adequate redress, thus equity was a means to achieve a lawful result when the legal procedure was inadequate (Henderson & Kennedy, 1985). Typically, synonyms for equity include justice, equitableness, and justness while the contrast is inequity and includes bias,

unfairness, injustice, discrimination, and partiality. An equitable outcome for individuals is the basis for equity for all students (Bell, 2009; 1995; Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2009, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Levanthal, 1976). The debate over equity in education and the allocation of resources continues to be held by policy-makers, scholars, government officials, and policy analysts.

In theory, equity means that similarly situated people should be treated equally. Additionally, equity means fairness rather than equality in the sense of equal amounts (Rossell, 1990). According to Secada (1989), equality refers to that which can be measured while equity refers to judgment about what is most desirable and just. The concept of equity implies value judgments reflecting how things ought to be and directs attention to what is distributed.

Kranich (2001) defines equity as individuals being excluded or lacking the knowledge, equipment, or training necessary to participate in public discussion. These individuals must overcome obstacles to access in order to ensure fairness. In other words, fairness also demands remedies to redress historic injustices that have prevented or diminished access in the first place: for, just as there can be no fairness without equality, there can be none without justice. That is, in order to maximize opportunities for access experienced by certain groups, a good society commits resources in order to level the playing field.

In a study by Levanthal (1976), he proposed an alternative to the equity framework whereas the contributions rule dictates that recipients with better performance should receive higher reward; a needs rule dictates that recipients with greater need should receive higher reward; and an equality rule dictates that rewards should be divided equally. These rules change from one situation to the next and the weights assigned to them depend on the social setting and

the individual's role in that setting. Additionally, Deutsch (1975, p. 137) was "concerned with the distribution of the conditions and goods which affect individual well-being" and argues:

The sense of injustice with regard to the distribution of benefits and harms, rewards and costs, or other things which affect individual well-being may be directed at: (a) the values underlying the rules governing the distribution (injustice of values), (b) the rules which are employed to represent the values (injustice of rules), (c) the ways that the rules are implemented (injustice of implementation), or (d) the way decisions are made about any of the foregoing (injustice of decision-making procedures). (p. 137-138)

Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) propose that race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States. This has been well documented over recent years (Bell, 2004, Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007, Kozol, 1991, Omni & Winant 1994, Rothstein, 2004). Ladson-Billings & Tate also propose that our society is based on property rights and the intersection of property and race creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social and school inequity. In relation to many policy debates, equity is synonymous with social justice as the needs of individuals and groups differ. In school desegregation policy, equity claims are made by attorneys and civil rights leaders for equal treatment of Whites and Blacks. This translates into demands for equal access to and participation in educational programs (Rossell, 1990).

In the educational setting, Harvey & Klein (1989) note all systems of equity must originate from the following basic conceptual frames: initial input; educational processes; learner outcomes; and educational organizational goals and objectives. Schools that possess a high degree of perceived equity are schools in which the conceptual frames are perceived as operating in the context of educational equity. Harvey and Klein (1989) define equity in the educational organization as being one of mutual support, agreement, and comparability among the four conceptual frames of initial input, educational processes, learner outcomes, and educational

organizational goals and objectives. Henderson & Kennedy (1985) list the following questions important to a conceptual frame of equity:

1. Have educators changed their attitudes toward or their expectations of the learner as a result of the measured data?
2. Has teacher effectiveness increased or decreased as a result of measured outcomes?
3. Have overall test scores or the disparity between student groups changed as a result of measures taken toward equity? (p.40)

Jonathan Kozol (1991) responds to the questions of "How can we achieve both equity and excellence in education?" with:

When the recommendations of such studies are examined, and when we look as well at the solutions that innumerable commissions have proposed, we realize that they do not quite mean "equity" and that they have seldom asked for "equity." What they mean, what they prescribe, is something close enough to equity to silence criticism by approximating justice, but far enough from equity to guarantee the benefits enjoyed by privilege. The differences are justified by telling us that equity must always be "approximate" and cannot possibly be perfect. But the imperfection falls in almost every case to the advantage of the privileged. (p.175)

Describing equality versus equity, Kranich (2001) posits:

Policies that stress fairness as uniform distribution tend to succeed with Americans because they appear to entitle everyone; and, thus, reinforce Americans' dominant construction of fairness as equality. Conversely, policies aiming to achieve equity face recurring challenges as "unfair." Affirmative Action, Lyndon Johnson's attempt to overcome generations of discrimination and injustice against women and minorities, became the law of the land without achieving the approval of Americans who saw it as "unfair" because it appeared to favor some over others; and, thus, to negate the more commonly understood concept of fairness as equality and as uniform distribution. (pg. ?)

### **School Choice Continues to Grow**

As educators, we must always put the needs of the students first. Parental choice in education can benefit the student, the school system, and the community. More choice options continue to grow throughout the United States. According to Kafer (2012), as of 2012, students in Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin, and

the District of Columbia can receive state-funded scholarships to attend schools that best meet their educational needs. In Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota and North Carolina, parents can take credits or deductions for independent school tuition. In Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Indiana, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island corporations or individuals can receive a tax credit for contributions to scholarship organizations. The District of Columbia and 42 states have laws allowing for the creation of independent public charter schools. Some states have intra-district and inter-district public school choice laws which allow students to transfer to schools of choice (Kafer, 2012). As the school choice option gains momentum, some school districts continue to establish and maintain magnet schools, while some districts and private organizations establish charter schools.

### **The Politics of Integration**

The omission of the *Brown* (1954, 1955) decisions to provide prescriptive strategies to eliminate segregation or to incorporate desegregation has left a generation to continue to grapple with achieving a goal that has far-reaching underpinnings exacerbated by unforeseen circumstances, such as pervasiveness of racial separatism, changing national demographics, political decisiveness of this educational issue, unequal patterns of poverty, and the shift in the country's economic base from national to global (Meeks et al., 2000). Segregation has affected hundreds of thousands of public school students over the past four centuries. Residential segregation has been reviewed over and over through various state and federal court cases.

Sociologists Massey and Denton (1993) assert that:

Residential segregation is not a neutral fact; it systematically undermines the social and economic well-being of blacks in the United States. Because of racial segregation, a significant share of black America is condemned to experience a social environment where poverty and joblessness are the norm, where a majority of children are born out of wedlock, where most families are on welfare, where educational failure prevails, and

where social and physical deterioration abound. Through prolonged exposure to such an environment, black chances for social and economic success are drastically reduced. (p.2)

Over the past five decades, many magnet schools have attracted middle-class students to disadvantaged areas by offering choice in pedagogical approaches, themed programs, and location of the programs in specific schools. Some magnet schools have received financial assistance through federal dollars provided by the Magnet Schools Assistance Program to entice more-affluent schools to accept low-income students through voluntary transfers (Kahlenberg, 2012).

Today magnet schools make up one of the largest systems of school choice in the United States. As time has passed since their inception, the integrative mission of magnet programs has somewhat receded, particularly during the second President Bush Administration and the *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* decided together with *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education* Supreme Court Decision in 2007 (Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012).

According to NCES (2014), during the 2010-2011 school year, enrollment in all magnet schools across the United States was 2,055,2011 students, up 841,157 students from the 2000-2001 school year. Enrollment in the combined elementary and secondary magnet schools during the 2010-2011 school year was 75,411 students, which was an increase of 50,882 students from the 2000-2001 school year.

According to the United States Department of Education website (2015), in 1984, \$75,000,000 was provided through annual appropriations from the United States Federal Government to new and existing magnet programs and schools. This increased to \$100,000,000 in 1998, and remained somewhat consistent over the next twelve years. In 2010, \$100,000,000 was appropriated for magnet programs and schools with 36 new awards, 0 continuation awards,

and the average new award amounting to \$2,864,854. In 2011, the funding decreased slightly to \$99,800,000 with 2 new awards, 35 continuation awards, and the average new award amounting to \$1,681,056. In 2012, the funding continued to decrease with \$96,705,000 appropriated to magnet programs and schools with 0 new awards, and 37 continuation awards (USDE, 2015).

The funding trend for magnet programs and magnet schools continues to decline as evidenced by \$91,647,000 appropriated in 2013, with 27 new awards, 0 continuation awards, and the new awards averaging \$3,326,437. From this data, it should be noted that since 2010, 65 new appropriations awards were provided to magnet programs and schools. The amount of federal monies provided to magnet schools are on a downward trend, decreasing by \$8,353,000 over a four year time span from 2010 to 2013 (United States Department of Education, 2015). It should also be noted that the information gathered from the United States Department of Education website does not indicate if the new awards have been received by schools that are starting up new magnet programs, by schools who are adding additional magnet programs in their educational setting, or a combination of the two.

Over the past decade charter schools have gained momentum and their growth is on the upswing. From the 1999-2000 school year, the percentage of all public schools that were public charter schools increased from 1.7% to 5.8%, while the total number of public charter schools increased from 1,500 to 5,700. Additionally, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools from the school year 1999-2000 to 2011-2012 increased from 0.3 million to 2.1 million students, resulting in a percentage increase from 0.7 to 4.2 percent of public school students who attended charter schools. Between the school years of 2010-2011 and 2011-2012, the number of students enrolled in public charter schools increased from 1.8 million to 2.1 million (NCES, 2015).



Today, the amount of monies appropriated by the United States government for charter schools drastically surpasses that of magnet programs and magnet schools. In 1999, seven years after the first charter school opened in Minnesota, charter schools were appropriated \$50,000,000. During both 2011 and 2012, charter schools were appropriated \$255,519,000 (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015). This data indicates that the number of students attending charter schools and the number of new charter schools is increasing along with the federal funding.

### **Gaps in the Existing Literature**

Since the inception of magnet schools, numerous researchers have examined these educational institutions. Absent from the literature are studies that specifically address elementary and middle school magnets in smaller population centers and those that were established to stop white flight. Numerous studies have typically examined urban school districts and little research has been conducted on magnet schools in smaller population centers, specifically in Illinois and outside of Chicago Public School District.

### **Summary**

This chapter has provided scholarly research and an equity framework supporting the idea that it is important for educational practitioners to examine the historical reasons behind the implementation of magnet schools and their role in desegregation and reform. Initially, literature regarding unequal access to public schools was presented in order to understand desegregation in our schools. Since the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in 1954, the desegregation of public schools has been an important process across the United States. Inequities continue to exist as not all students are provided with similar access to programs and facilities. Since federal

law required that every public school must have eliminated the achievement gap by social class and race by the year 2014, educators continue to look for ways to provide equity and access to educational programs for all students. Magnet schools are a part of the educational reform movement with the goal of providing an alternative choice for students and parents to their neighborhood public school. School choice, and in particular to this study, magnet schools, continue as popular alternatives to failing schools.

Further examination of public magnet schools in smaller population centers and the reasons for their establishment is needed to ensure that we are providing all students with an equitable education. It is important to know the challenges facing educational administrators as well as the benefits and concerns associated with magnet programs and magnet schools. It is my hope that the history of magnet schools literature and the desegregation procedures implemented in Riverview School District provides an understanding of elementary and middle school magnet schools in Illinois in smaller population centers. This research provides potential direction for magnet school programs and the need for equitable access to other public school programs.

### **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

My interest in magnet schools is personal. Spending the last twelve years as an administrator in two schools in the same school district that house magnet programs within the schools piqued my interest in magnet schools. My interest evolved into an examination of the history of magnet schools with a historical case study of a small K-12 public school district in Illinois which houses magnet programs within some of their schools.

The purpose of this historical case study was to address the history related to the establishment of magnet schools nationwide and of the Riverview School District (pseudonym) in particular and to determine if the magnet programs integration process has made a difference in Riverview. Educational equity was used as a framework for this study. Educational equity, for the purposes of this study, was used to conceptualize the organizational approach of schools to students in a multiethnic setting (Henderson & Kennedy, 1985).

This section includes an overview of the methodology, personal standpoint, ethical considerations, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and limitations. In order to better understand the initial and current role of desegregation in magnet schools and in particular a small school district in Illinois that houses some magnet programs in three of the primary and all three middle schools, the following research questions will provide direction for the study:

1. What historical and political events led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview School District?
2. Has the establishment and continuance of magnet programs in Riverview School District improved integration in Riverview School District?
3. What differences, if any, exist in Riverview School District from the 1970's to today between students enrolled in magnet and non-magnet programs in grades four through six in terms of race and socio-economic status?

## **Overview of Methodology**

Investigators have many choices in their research approach. It is extremely important for a researcher to have a framework for the design of their research (Creswell, 2003). Researchers must find the best match that will guide them in their approach to answer their research questions. This study consisted of historical research. This researcher used historical research with some quantitative data.

The historical case study approach was beneficial for this study as I wanted to understand the role of magnet schools in desegregation and their effect on Riverview School District. According to McDowell (2002), "Historical research represents a systematic inquiry into the past and an attempt to separate true from fictional accounts of historical events, based upon the examination of a wide range of relevant source material" (p.5). Through an examination of the history of the establishment of magnet schools in Riverview, I made contrasts between the past and the present. By researching the history of these elementary/middle magnet school programs, new knowledge was gained that can inform meaningful changes in future practices for equity, access, and desegregation processes.

The first research question was answered in chapter four. The first question was, "What historical and political events in Riverview led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview School District?" This question was answered through an examination of the archival data of Riverview School District. The second question was also answered in chapter four. The second question was, "Has the establishment of and continuance of magnet programs in Riverview School District improved integration in Riverview?" The third question was answered in chapter four. The third question was, "What differences, if any, exist in Riverview School District from the 1970's to today between students enrolled in magnet and non-magnet programs

in grades four through six in terms of race and socio-economic status?” The third question was answered through an examination of de-identified student data from both the magnet and non-magnet programs in Riverview School District. The data examined included: race and socio-economic status of both students enrolled in the magnet program and students who are not enrolled in the magnet programs.

As stated in the literature review magnet schools originally were implemented to attract students for curricular purposes and were also used as a tool for desegregation. Today magnet schools are an established school model, they have a track record, they are a form of school choice, and they need to be explored more. The archival and student data examined will help determine how enrollment in magnet programs in Riverview School District in a smaller metropolitan area in central Illinois has changed from the late 1970’s to today.

In order to have a thorough understanding of magnet schools, I have set aside my own experiences, biases, and judgments to every extent possible. To achieve this I made every attempt to take a fresh perspective toward magnet schools, although the background knowledge I have of the school district was also beneficial to the study.

### **Personal Standpoint**

I have worked as an administrator for the past 13 years in the studied Pre-K through 12 public school district that houses magnet programs within schools and one Montessori Magnet program. This research focused on the school district where I am employed as an administrator, although a pseudonym is used to de-identify the school district and the schools. Magnet programs are provided for math, science, fine arts, and computer for grades kindergarten through sixth grade, while the Montessori Magnet is provided for grades kindergarten through eighth grade. Parents typically are able to enroll their child in their choice of magnet program, as the

requirement consists of the parents filling out a magnet application. A computer lottery is utilized to keep the magnets somewhat diverse if necessary. Many questions have crossed my mind over the previous years as the demographics of our community continue to change.

The magnet program in Riverview school district was originally initiated to stop White Flight (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1993), and questions of equity continue to abound. There are two middle schools in my district which house grades 4-8. Both schools are magnet schools within schools. One school is located on the west side of the city and houses the science and fine arts magnet, while the other school is located on the northeast side of the city and houses the computer and math magnet. The middle school on the west side of the city has always been considered by many as the “good school,” as it is located in a mostly White neighborhood, while the middle school on the northeast side of the city has always been considered the “not so good school” and it is located in a mostly Black neighborhood. My middle school is located on the west side of the city.

As principal of the “good school”, many times throughout the school year I am challenged by parents, students, and neighborhood citizens who make comments indicating they do not want to attend the school on the northeast side of the city because of what they believe to be student academic and behavioral issues in the “not so good” school. Prior to becoming principal at the middle school I was principal at one of the elementary magnet schools in the district. My elementary building housed the math magnet program within a school. My third graders at the elementary building were a part of the magnet strand that would attend the “not so good” school when it was time for them to enter fourth grade. I have experienced first-hand parents who wanted their child in the elementary magnet, but when it was time to go to the “not

so good” school, they did everything they could to get their child enrolled in a magnet on the west side of town.

In 2007, I began my Doctoral Program at the University of Illinois in Educational Organization and Leadership. As my cohorts and I continued in the program, we were encouraged early on to begin focusing on our dissertation topic and to choose a topic that we truly had an interest in and that was close to our hearts and vision. Many of our discussions centered around equity, access, and the marginalization of students. Many of my professors at the University of Illinois spoke passionately about these topics. As my cohorts and I continued in our course work, my thoughts kept returning to my own Pre-K through 12 school district and magnet schools. There are many underlying concerns of the magnet programs housed in my district. This study arose from my desire to explore the history of magnet schools after participating in dialogue regarding equity and access with my cohorts and professors.

In this research study I have described, examined, and have a greater understanding of the initial and current role of elementary magnet schools, and the racial representation of the communities in which these schools are located. I am an educator and district principal who believes that all students should be provided the same educational opportunities, regardless of their race or socioeconomic status. I approached this research from an equity and access framework, as I was interested in examining how elementary magnet schools have pursued their initial mission, and their role in educational reform and desegregation. I believe that public magnet school principals must have a clear understanding of the history behind the implementation of magnet schools and they must ensure that their enrollment procedures do not encourage segregation.

I assert that magnet school principals must be knowledgeable of the history of magnet schools and the reasons behind their implementation. School leaders must focus on the question if magnet schools are pursuing their original mission. I am cognizant that some principals may not have the awareness or knowledge of the importance of magnet programs and magnet schools and their role in desegregation. I did not have much knowledge of magnet programs and magnet schools before coming to Riverview, but I have gained much knowledge of magnets over the past 13 years.

### **Ethical Considerations**

During the compilation of data, I collected historical data including how and if Riverview School District has pursued their original mission of curricular choice and desegregation through the establishment of magnet programs. I collected de-identified student data comparing the race and socio-economic status data of students in magnet programs and those in the regular education program in Riverview. I took the appropriate measures to address ethical issues that commonly arise during historical case study research.

Some of the ethical considerations consisted of respecting the needs of vulnerable populations and avoid putting participants at risk, gaining the permission of individuals in authority, respecting the research site and minimizing disruption, and anticipating and avoiding the possibility of harmful information being disclosed (Creswell, 2003). The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) gave me permission to conduct the study. The names of the magnet schools are kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of the magnet schools.

I made great efforts to hide information that might identify any human subjects aside from me, the researcher. The topic of desegregation, curricular choice, and the establishment of



magnet schools are important to educational reformers and practitioners. This focus on magnet schools offers readers the opportunity to understand the historical reasons behind their establishment and the promotion of desegregation. This study will also inform educational practitioners of some considerations to ponder and examine relative to magnet programs and magnet schools.

### **Participant Selection**

This study was conducted to understand the historical reasons behind the implementation of magnet schools and their role in desegregation and educational reform. The study of the historical reasons behind the implementation of magnet schools across the United States and their role in desegregation was examined in Chapter II. De-identified student demographic data from the magnet programs and the regular education programs in Riverview School District was utilized. The role of magnet schools in educational reform was to some extent examined in Chapter II and was examined more thoroughly through my research as I examined the race and socio-economic status data of students in both magnet and non-magnet programs in Riverview.

This study utilized a criterion type of sampling for quality assurances. For criterion sampling, all participating elementary/middle schools were located outside of Chicago Public Schools in Riverview School District in Central Illinois. Other information that is provided includes Riverview School District de-identified student information concerning race and socio-economic status. I drew conclusions about the data after comparing the first years of the magnet program to the 2013 school year.

### **Site Selection**

My data is representative of the elementary and middle school magnet and non-magnet programs in grades four through six in Riverview School District. Riverview represents the smaller magnet population centers outside of Chicago Public Schools. Additionally, Riverview Magnet Programs qualify as magnet programs or magnet schools within schools. All student data is de-identified.

### **Data Collection**

For the purpose of this research, the data included historical and archival documentation pertaining to Riverview School District. Additionally, permission was granted from Riverview School District to review de-identified student data regarding race and socio-economic status.

### **Data Analysis**

The names of the schools in Riverview are masked. De-identified student data included data on race and socio-economic status of students in Riverview. Documentation regarding the data includes information from the 1979-1980 (the first year of magnet programs in Riverview) school year and the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years. Race and socio-economic status of both magnet and non-magnet fourth through sixth grade students in Riverview School District was examined.

### **Limitations**

This study was limited as it only examined the magnet programs in Riverview School District which houses both magnet and non-magnet programs at grades kindergarten through eighth. This study examined the student data in grades four through six and did not examine any

other grade levels in Riverview. Additionally, this study was limited to the documentation regarding the data from Riverview School District and any available related archival items.

### **Significance of Research**

Elementary and middle grade magnet school data is important to study as magnet principals are charged with the equitable distribution of quality programs to all students and the need to desegregate students. This study sought to fill a gap in the literature about elementary and middle school magnets in Illinois in smaller population centers outside of Chicago Public Schools. There is a lack of research and literature regarding elementary and middle grade magnet schools in Illinois in smaller population centers. The findings of this study suggest the need for more equitable access to programs for all students and the need for desegregation of students.

## **CHAPTER IV: DATA**

Previous chapters established that many magnet programs throughout the United States grew out of the desire to desegregate schools while others were intended to provide parents with more of a choice for their children. Information found in this chapter answered my three research questions, which include:

1. What historical and political events in Riverview led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview School District?
2. Has the establishment and continuation of magnet programs in Riverview School District improved integration in Riverview School District?
3. What difference, if any, exists in Riverview School District from the 1970's to today between students enrolled in magnet and non-magnet programs in grades four through six in terms of race and socio-economic status?

### **Historical and Political Events**

What historical and political events in Riverview led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview School District? This is a question that this researcher has had on the back of her mind for the past thirteen years. The answers are discovered in the following pages.

Riverview School District has a long history and the more we understand the history, the more we will be able to enhance the educational opportunities for all of our students. Riverview School District has been in existence since 1865. Riverview School District in the community of Riverview is located approximately 60 miles south of Chicago, Illinois, and houses the county seat of government. Riverview School District is a “special charter” district and was issued a school charter in 1865. This charter permits the local residents to levy taxes and issue bonds to build and operate elementary and secondary schools (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970). The school district encompasses 48 square miles including the city of Riverview, farming areas east and south of the city, and the village of Antler Park. From 1927 to 1950, grades kindergarten

through sixth grade in Riverview School District were segregated de-facto. One grade center housed all of the district students in grades 7 through 8 and one high school housed grades 9 through 12, resulting in integration for grades 7 through 12 (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

A reorganization of the schools in 1950 resulted in an imbalance of White and Black students in grades 7 through 9. The school district opened two junior highs, one on the east side and one on the west side of the city. As the years passed, more factories located to the area resulting in good paying manufacturing jobs from the 1950's to the 1970's. During the 1961-1962 school year, the junior high school on the east side had too many students and was over the maximum capacity for the school. The junior high on the west side of the city had room for any overflow of students from the east side of the city. During this time frame approximately 5% of the Black students were attending the junior high on the west side and 85% of the Black students were attending school on the east side of the city. To achieve more of a racial balance, Riverview implemented new boundary lines in September 1962. In 1962 with the re-establishment of boundaries, a shift of both Black and White students in grades seven through nine occurred, resulting in a more balanced racial enrollment between Eastside Junior High and Westside Junior High School (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

In Riverview, two new high schools, Westside High and Eastside High opened in September 1966, and housed an integrated student enrollment in grades 10 through 12. In September 1966, Eastside Junior High School was changed to Landing Elementary School and was used to house students in grades 1 through 6. Due to its' location on the fringe of the Black community, Landing Elementary School absorbed students from both the Black and White neighborhoods (Copy of the Desegregation Plan, 1970).

During the mid to late 1960's, Riverview experienced a period of racial unrest, similar to what was occurring in many school districts throughout the country. Additionally, during the late 1960's Riverview was experiencing a loss of middle-class, White students following this unrest, also known as "White flight." In the mid 1960's in an effort to keep upper-class property owners and Whites in Riverview School District, politicians and realtors began to incorporate farm land for development. Within a few short years by the late 1960's since the district's boundary lines extended ten miles south and east of Riverview, new neighborhoods were sprouting up in Riverview's attendance areas (Hardin, 1983).

Although new houses were being constructed in Riverview's attendance areas, enrollment would decline from September, 1968 to September, 1969. During this time frame, Riverview School District dropped in elementary school enrollment in grades 1-8 by 240 students and secondary school enrollment in grades 9-12 by 39 students. A Riverview School District building study was completed in December, 1969, and results of this study indicated that there would be more than adequate facilities for grades K-8 through September 1975. Eastside High School and Westside Side High School were 270 students over their combined capacity of 2,000 students in September, 1970 (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

Back in 1965, it had become the responsibility of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to prevent forms of discrimination and racial segregation against public school students. School districts were subject to the withholding of federal assistance from any school districts that did not comply with the law (Mills, 1974). The first school district to be reviewed by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare was Chicago Public Schools, in Chicago, Illinois, in 1965. Beginning in 1966, districts were selected by the office in Washington D.C., and decisions were based exclusively on whether a complaint had been received about a district.

In some instances, groups such as the NAACP had sent in complaints about school districts. District selections were based on several factors such as: the district had to have at least one school with an enrollment more than 50 percent minority; the districts had to be equally divided between Republican and Democratic congressional districts; the districts had to be evenly spread among different states; and the district could not be so large as to tie up all the staff (Mills, 1974).

Riverview was one of 84 public school districts in the Northern and Western states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Wisconsin where Title VI Reviews were being conducted. Riverview School District was one of the seven public school districts in Illinois that was reviewed by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare during their conduction of Title VI Reviews. Over a period of three years, reviews were conducted in Illinois in the cities of Cahokia, Chicago, Joliet, Maywood, Rock Island, Springfield, and Riverview (Mills, 1974).

The Board of Education adopted a reorganization plan to accommodate the additional enrollment assumed by the District when kindergarten was re-established by State Law in September, 1970. This plan was converted from elementary (1-6), junior high (7-9), and senior high school (10-12), organization to a K-5 elementary center, 6-8 upper grade center, and 9-12 senior high school grade arrangement. Building utilization made the current elementary neighborhood schools elementary centers, and the current junior high schools upper grade centers. Pupil re-assignment affected all sixth and ninth grade students in addition to a re-assignment of teachers at both the sixth and ninth grades (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

In January 1970, a committee composed of five men from the Civil Rights Compliance Division of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare conducted a Civil Rights Compliance Review of Riverview School District. On January 16, 1970, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare presented their findings to the school board. The review called for the integration of students and faculty in all schools (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

In 1970, Riverview School District's enrollment was 7,825 students (Mills, 1974). In late January, the school administration and Riverview School Board consulted with a representative from the United States Department of Education's Office of Equal Educational Opportunity. The representative discussed the possibility and feasibility of building upon the District's Reorganizational Plan an appropriate means for improving and equalizing the educational opportunities of all the District's pupils. This resulted in boundary line changes for the attendance centers (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

On January 26, 1970, the Riverview Board of Education approved the resolution to desegregate the schools in the district by integrating the students and faculty in the school. This change would result in the district meeting the requirements of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970). The new plan called for designating the two largest elementary centers, Fishton and Landing, as middle grade centers (grades 4-5). All other schools would be elementary centers (grades K-3). The rest of the previously adopted organization policy would remain the same. At the time, a ratio of 78.3% non-minority and 21.5% minority was established for each school. For the purpose of desegregation, students living a mile and a half away from their assigned school were bussed to grade appropriate schools.

Due to the racial isolation that had manifested problems in Riverview, the desegregation decision of the Riverview School Board, staff, and administration, led to voluntary integration



rather than threatened court action. Riverview was one of the first communities in the United States to voluntarily reject the neighborhood concept and begin bussing to maintain racial equality (Hardin, 1983). The workable and comprehensive desegregation plan was a resolution of the compliance pursuant to Title IV; 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Resolution to Desegregate is as follows and adopted by the Board of Education (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970, p. 16):

WHEREAS, The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has conducted in this school district a compliance review concerning Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and

WHEREAS, The NEW officials informed the Board, in person, on January 16, 1970, of their preliminary findings which include the need to achieve integration of faculty and students at all schools, and

WHEREAS, It is the desire of this board to be in full accord with the intent of the Civil Rights Act and the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, and

WHEREAS, The board is convinced that the educational opportunities of all students can be enhanced through social reorganization, and

WHEREAS, A consultant from the U.S. Office of Education has reacted favorably to an extension of the District's reorganizational plan as the best means of improving educational opportunity for all the District's pupils, including the benefits of racial integration;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That reorganizational plans for September, 1970, be extended to designate middle grade centers at Fishton and Landing schools to serve all fourth and fifth grade pupils of the district, and all other elementary schools to serve as kindergarten through third grade elementary centers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That the administrative staff be directed:

- 1) To form such committees and task groups from within the school system as will best develop the components of this plan and secure optimum education and economic benefits, and;
- 2) To secure such federal and state financial and consultant help as is available for in-service programs for all school employees for the planned changes.

Part of the Riverview Desegregation Plan Resolution (1970) included guidelines for teaching staff assignments for the 1970-1971 school year. The objectives were (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970):

- A.) Assignment of teachers will be made toward each school's having a 20% Black-White teacher ratio (at least two Black teachers). The Director of Personnel will immediately proceed to recommend the employment of black teachers.
- B.) Teacher's district seniority should be foremost in all assignments, and choice or preference shall be considered.
- C.) After all assignments, due to reorganization, have been completed, intra-building teaching re-assignments may be considered. (p.19)

For the middle schools, one of the guidelines included, "The first middle school filled by four black teachers will then be closed to the remaining black teachers. This will insure each middle school of at least three black teachers" (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

Specifically, the desegregation plan called for: grade-level reorganization which made the neighborhood school obsolete; extensive minority teacher recruiting efforts which provided a 47% minority staff increase; extensive District-wide transporting of students to insure that no one racial group bore the brunt of bussing; curricular improvements; establishment of a "Mothers Corps" to reduce cultural and environmental shock; an extensive program of in-service training for students, parents, staff, teachers, community leaders, and administrators; establishment of a pre-school screening program to identify high risk children with special needs; provide activities designed to improve self-concept in racially isolated students through Title IV and Title 45; and provide various curricular and in-service training materials for grades K-5 (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

At the start of the 1970-1971 school year, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare assisted in monitoring and evaluating the desegregation plan to insure effectiveness of

the plan. Consultant services were provided by the Riverview and the Illinois State Human Relations Commissions (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

The monitoring of the desegregation plan could not stop families from moving out of Riverview. The Board of Education's decision to voluntarily desegregate resulted in more White flight. Although parents of White students did not actively protest the reorganization of the neighborhood schools, many parents moved to all White neighborhoods or enrolled their children in parochial schools throughout the community and the neighboring towns (Green, 1993). In the first year of desegregation during the 1970-1971 school year, the student enrollment in Riverview School District's 15 schools was 7064. During this time, a ratio of 21.5% minority to 78.3% non-minority was established for each school as per the desegregation plan. For desegregation purposes, students living a mile and a half or more away from their assigned school were bussed to grade appropriate schools (Application, 1998). Although the intent of the voluntary desegregation plan was necessary, some White flight occurred to the surrounding public school districts and to local private schools, thus starting a pattern of re-segregating Riverview Schools (Riverview Public Schools Magnet Schools Programs, 1993).

In August, 1970, a petition was filed requesting a special election to determine whether the school district should be governed by a seven member board rather than a six member board. A special election was held and voters voted in favor of a seven member board under Article 10, Chapter 22, of the Revised Statutes of the State of Illinois (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970). The Riverview Board of Education governs the district as a separate agency of the State of Illinois under the Illinois School Code; the board is not a part of the municipal, township, or county governments; and the board members serve without salary (Copy of Desegregation Plan, 1970).

By 1978, the enrollment in the school district had declined by 458 students. Additionally, the minority population in 1978 was 38.8%, an increase of 17.3% minority students from 1971 (Rodgers & Stewart, 1980). In the late 1970's, one of the school board members in Riverview attended the National Association of School Boards Conference. At this conference, she joined in on a presentation of national magnet school models. This board member's four-year-old daughter attended a private pre-school Montessori program in a community adjacent to Riverview, and the child would be ready for kindergarten the following year. The board member convinced the other Riverview school board members that the district should apply for a federal magnet school planning grant to explore the possibilities of a magnet program in Riverview School District (Green, 1993).

In the late 1970's, Riverview School District invited Donald Waldrip, former Superintendent of Cincinnati, Ohio schools, and the President of Magnet Schools of America to speak of the magnet school concept to concerned parents of Riverview School District. According to information found in an article from the Riverview Daily Journal (Lloyd, 1978), Donald Waldrip spoke of the basic magnet themes: all children do not learn the same way; teaching styles are matched with learning styles; magnets would hold current students and attract new ones; students are served on a district-wide basis; and magnet schools are a stabilizing force.

After the visit by Donald Waldrip, the Grants Director in Riverview arranged for community-wide committees to study other magnet programs along with task forces to complete needs assessments in the Riverview area. If Riverview should receive grant funding, they could use the monies to study, develop, and implement the educational options that would be offered in the magnet schools (Lloyd, 1978). An advisory committee was established to consider a proposal for federal government funding under the Title VII ESAA Magnet School Project grant, and a

public hearing was held on November 22, 1978. The following week, an official magnet school proposal was presented to the Riverview Board of Education (Riverview Daily Journal, 1978).

In order to stop white flight and to offer special programs to middle-class parents, Riverview applied for and received a federal planning grant for the 1978-1979 school year and Riverview also received a \$190,000 Magnet School Assistance Program grant for the 1979-1980 school year. Riverview began the planning process during the 1978-1979 school year. The Director of Grants in Riverview School District reported that Riverview should pursue the magnet formula and encouraged the following approaches: attract and maintain middle income families in Riverview; reverse the trend of increasing minority enrollment and decreasing non-minority enrollment; and improve academic achievement of all children while emphasizing reading, math, social studies, and science (Lloyd, 1978). A report in the Riverview Daily Journal stated that Riverview School District conducted a parent survey and the results were positive, due partly to community involvement and administrative organization of the magnet project (Yohnka, 1979).

The magnet enrollment process for fall began in the summer of 1979. There was no extra charge for parents who wanted to enroll their child in a magnet program. The magnet programs would contain the same basic content of the traditional subject areas, but more of a focus on the magnet subject (Yohnka, 1979). Magnet programs were not available in the neighboring all-White school districts. Magnet program options in Riverview were designed to:

1. Encourage and maintain middle-income families in the public schools,
2. Prevent minority group re-isolation, and
3. Improve the academic achievement of all students (Rodgers & Stewart, 1980, p.1).

An additional goal of the Magnet Schools programs was to match student learning styles with teachers teaching styles. In the original magnet grant proposal, a College Preparation program was proposed for ninth graders, but this was not funded with federal funds for the 1979-1980 school year. At the elementary and middle school levels the available options were Montessori, Exposure to the Arts, and Individualized Education (Rodgers, Stewart, 1980). The six-option magnet school programs opened their doors in August, 1979. Student enrollment was multi-balanced and multi-racial in each magnet class – although no actual racial data was found by the researcher. Magnet options for all grade levels included exposure to the arts; nutrition awareness; individualized instruction, and college preparation, and Montessori (Rodgers & Stewart, 1980; Yohnka, 1979).

During the 1979-1980 school year, 285 Riverview School District students in grades 1-6 and grade 9 were involved in the magnet programs. Third grade had the most students enrolled in magnet programs with 75 students or 26.3% of the third grade population. Fourth grade had the second highest number of students enrolled in the magnet programs with 52 students or 18.2% of the fourth grade population. First grade had the lowest number of student participation with 13 students or 4.6% of the first grade population (Rodgers, Stewart, 1980). The ethnic comparison in Riverview School District in 1980 was 43.7% minority and 56.3% non-minority. There was no available data on the ethnicity of the students enrolled in the magnet programs during the 1979-1980 school year.

Table 1

*Number of Students Enrolled in Riverview Magnet Programs – 1979-1980 School Year*

<b>Grade Levels</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage of Students</b>
<b>1</b>	13	4.6
<b>2</b>	30	10.5
<b>3</b>	75	26.3
<b>4</b>	52	18.2
<b>5</b>	43	15.1
<b>6</b>	27	9.5
<b>7</b>	45	15.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	285	100.0

As indicated in Table1 (Evaluation of the Magnet School Project, 1980), third grade had the largest number of students enrolled in a magnet program. First grade had the smallest number of students enrolled in a magnet program. Over time, Riverview would soon see a significant increase in enrollment in their magnet programs.

Table 2

*Number of Students Enrolled by Magnet Program in Riverview – 1979-1980 School Year*

<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Percentage of Students</b>
<b>Exposure to the Arts</b>	148	51.9
<b>Individualized Education</b>	45	15.8
<b>Fundamental Skills</b>	27	9.5
<b>Montessori</b>	20	7.0
<b>Special Program (College Preparation)</b>	45	15.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	285	100.00

As indicated in Table 2, during the 1979-1980 school year, more students were enrolled in the Exposure to the Arts program than any other program. Additionally, the Fundamental Skills Program had the smallest number of students enrolled. At the end of the 1979-1980 school year, Riverview School District had an evaluation of the magnet school project conducted. The

project was completed in August of 1980. The summary of findings (Rodgers & Stewart, 1980) includes:

1. The Magnet School Program was well-received by children who were enrolled, teachers, and parents.
2. Parental involvement was high in all of the Magnet School Programs.
3. Teachers and parents wanted to increase the level of parental involvement in the magnet programs.
4. Problems related to exclusivity and favoritism were introduced when enrolling students in special Magnet School Programs.
5. The Montessori Magnet option was well received by all participants and parents.
6. Wide differences were apparent in the perceptions and conceptualizations expressed by staff members who worked in the Individualized Option program.
7. The Exposure to the Arts Magnet Option was well-received by participants and parents.
8. There was some confusion regarding the particular nature of the Fundamental Skills Program.
9. The average achievement gain for all participants in each magnet program option at each grade level was at least one year.
10. The average achievement gain for participants by grade level was at least one year for the year spent in the magnet program.

Additionally, the recommendations derived from the first year of the program suggest

(Rodgers & Stewart,1980):

1. In-service programs should be strengthened and expanded to deal with any problems with the magnet programs perceived by staff.
2. Efforts should be directed toward improving the articulation of magnet program option components and the specific conceptualization of each magnet program option.
3. Attention should continue to be focused on smooth organization and management of support services for magnet program options.



Data indicates that student participants demonstrated average or above average levels of achievement performance before entering the magnet school program options during the 1979-1980 school year. These same students continued to make average or above average gains after spending a year in one of the Magnet School Program options at each grade level (Rodgers & Stewart, 1980).

The Magnet Program Evaluation Director from a prominent research university in Illinois reported in a letter to the Riverview Magnet Project Director that “the Magnet School Program is well on its way to becoming an effective and positive force in the total district’s programs. You have a fine staff who do a great job. If you can continue the present course, I predict continued positive results in demonstrated achievement” (Rodgers, 1980, p. 2). The Magnet Program Evaluation Director also reported in a letter to the Superintendent of Riverview Public Schools regarding the final evaluation report of the Magnet School Programs that “the program is in good shape and has been well received. The Magnet School Program has generally achieved its major objectives and is very popular with parents of children in the program” (Rodgers, 1980, p. 1).

During the 1980-1981 school year, enrollment in Riverview School District was 6,127 students. The surrounding K- 8 elementary school districts of Brookside and Bridgetown (pseudonyms) housed 1,367 and 2,370 students respectively. Brookside and Bridgetown Elementary School Districts both fed into Brookside-Bridgetown High School (pseudonym), which housed 1,749 students. The surrounding eight private K-12 schools housed 2,728 students (Application of the Riverview Public Schools, 1993).

After completing a successful first year, Riverview School District would need federal funding to keep the magnet programs alive. On June 12, 1980, the Superintendent of Riverview School District sent a letter to the United States House of Representative Member George

O'Brien. The purpose of the letter was to request assistance of his office to help Riverview School District receive consideration for funding of the Magnet School Proposal. Portions of the four paged letter included the following (Doglio, 1980, p. 1):

Our District was ranked 79<sup>th</sup> out of 109 applications received, and the Magnet School Office expects to fund approximately 35 projects for the coming year. This rank was based strictly on the net change in isolation between the base year and the project year for the schools which applied. It is our contention that Riverview School District has compelling evidence of extraordinary circumstances which warrant special consideration for our district under the provisions of Par. 185.94B of the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) as recorded on Page 38379 Federal Register/Vol. 44 #127/Fri., June 29, 1979/Proposed Rules:

*If an application contains compelling evidence of extraordinary difficulty in effectively carrying out the project for which the applicant seeks assistance, the Commissioner may revise the rank order of applications under paragraph (a) to reflect the applicant's greater need for assistance.*

The Riverview School District Superintendent continued to stress the importance of the need for assistance in the letter as indicated in the following (Doglio, 1980, pp. 1-4):

- 1) Our District has had to involuntarily transfer students from some buildings to others in order to keep the racial balance for the 1980-1981 school year.
- 2) A successful magnet school program is absolutely essential for the stabilization of our district.
- 3) Funding for the Magnet School program is essential so that Riverview School District will become a model to show that integration of schools can work.
- 4) After a full year of planning and one year of implementation of our Magnet School programs, there are clear signs that our school system is becoming more attractive to both public and private school parents of the district as well as to families moving into the area. This program has placed us in a position to be competitive with surrounding all-white school districts because we are able to offer parents a choice of the kind of education that they want for their children. The excellent Magnet School program cannot be duplicated by all-white schools because they do not have the advantage of extra federal funds to promote their projects. Without extra federal funds for this Magnet School program, there is no viable way for us to compete for private and public school students.

- 5) Riverview School District should be given special considerations for approval of the magnet project because of the exemplary manner in which the magnet school program has been implemented in the district. (pp. 1-4)

The Superintendent of Riverview ended the letter with:

We are desperately seeking ways to stabilize our district's changing minority/majority student ratio. We firmly believe that, with the help that we could receive from the funding we can become a model of successful integration. We would appreciate any help that you can give us in receiving special consideration for the funding of this project. The President of the Board of Education, the Director of the Magnet School Project, and I would welcome the opportunity to come to Washington D.C. to talk to you and the federal Magnet School Program officers to present our request (Doglio, 1980, p. 4).

The Riverview School District Superintendent, the President of the Riverview School Board, and the Riverview Director of the Magnet School Project flew to Washington D.C on June 29, 1980. They met with Mr. Marion Burson, Aide to Representative George O'Brien and Jesse Jordan, Deputy Director of the Emergency School Assistance Program on June 30, 1980 (Riverview School District Flight Document, 1980). The purpose of this visit was to discuss the need for federal dollars to continue with the current magnet programs in Riverview.

Due to the success of the first year, the Riverview School District was provided with a \$388,000 two year renewal from the United States Federal Government for the 1980-1981 school year and the 1981-1982 school year (Hardin, 1983). The projected enrollment in the magnet programs for the 1980-1981 school year was 698 students. During the 1980-1981 school year there were 6,127 students enrolled in Riverview. The ethnic make-up of Riverview was 43.7% minority and 56.3% non-minority. During the 1981-1982 school year, 1,251 students were enrolled in the newly expanded magnet programs in Riverview. The programs included are listed in Table 3 (Hardin, 1983):

Table 3

*Riverview Magnet Programs by Grade Level – 1981-1982 School Year*

<b>Program</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Montessori Based Education</b>	K-4
<b>Awareness of the Arts</b>	1-4
<b>Exposure to the Arts</b>	5
<b>Creative and Performing Arts</b>	6-8
<b>Individualized Education</b>	1-5
<b>Academic Focus</b>	5
<b>Basics Plus</b>	6
<b>Basics Plus Math/Science Lab</b>	7-8
<b>College Prep</b>	9-12
<b>Computer Science</b>	11-12
<b>Creative &amp; Performing Arts</b>	9-12

As indicated in Table 3 above, one program was made available to kindergarten students; three programs for first, second, third, fourth and fifth grade students; two programs for sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth grade students; and three programs were made available for eleventh and twelfth grade students in Riverview School District during the 1981-1982 school year. As time passed, changes would continue to be made in the choices and selections parents and students would have in the magnet programs.

Bad news hit Riverview in 1982 and would again hit in 1988. Two major manufacturing plants in Riverview closed and re-located to the southern United States. The closing of these plants in 1982, and later in 1988, resulted in an economic decline in Riverview and a high unemployment rate. Many people left Riverview to find work in other communities, leaving many unemployed and unskilled workers in addition to many retirees (Green, 1993).

In 1982, Riverview School District applied for and received a three year federal magnet grant, for the 1982-1983, 1983-1984, and the 1984-1985 school years. Riverview applied again for the 1985-1986 school year and was denied. Riverview School District again applied for the 1986-1987 school year and was denied. No records were available for the Magnet Assistance

Grants written for the 1987-1988 and 1988-1989 school years. The magnet programs would continue in Riverview School District with local funds when federal funds were not received.

The administration in Riverview continued to seek out sources of revenue to fund the magnet programs. Riverview School District applied for and received the Magnet Assistance Program grant for the 1989-1990 and the 1990-1991 school years. In December, 1990, the Riverview Board of Education passed a resolution to the original 1970 desegregation plan to maintain integrated schools. Portions of the new resolution consisted of the following (Riverview New Resolution, 1990, p. 75):

WHEREAS, This Board of Education is convinced that the educational opportunities of all students can be enhanced through the use of Magnet School Programs and aid in process of elimination of minority groups isolation in its elementary and secondary schools;

NOW, THEREFORE, Be it resolved that the desegregation plan for the School District is hereby amended to include Magnet School Programs in designated schools that are minority group isolated.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the administrative staff be directed:

1. To expand and enlarge the use of Magnet School Programs designed to further reduce racial isolation in the schools, and
2. To seek such federal and state funds as is available to implement this amendment.

Riverview again applied for and received the Magnet Assistance Program Grants for the 1991-1992, and 1992-1993 school years (Riverview Magnet Assistance Program Grants Information, 1994). These funds were needed to keep non-minority populations in the school district. It shall be noted that the overall enrollment trends and the ethnic comparison of Riverview School District continued to fluctuate over the years as indicated in the following table (Riverview Local & Parochial Districts Enrollment Trends, 1992):

Table 4

*Local and Parochial District Enrollment Trends 1980 – 1992*

<b>School Year</b>	<b>Riverview Unit District (K-12)</b>	<b>Brookside Elementary School District (K-8)</b>	<b>Bridgetown Elementary District (K-8)</b>	<b>Brookside- Bridgetown High School District (9-12)</b>	<b>Private Schools (K-12)</b>
<b>1980-1981</b>	6,127	1,367	2,370	1,759	2,728
<b>Minority</b>	43.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Non- Minority</b>	56.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1981-1982</b>	6,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1982-1983</b>	5,882	1,306	2,253	1,610	2,725
<b>1983-1984</b>	5,739	1,293	2,251	1,610	2,725
<b>1984-1985</b>	5,480	1,270	2,205	1,612	2,656
<b>1985-1985</b>	5,654	1,242	2,160	1,629	2,675
<b>1886-1987</b>	5,578	1,255	2,209	1,594	2,506
<b>Minority</b>	56.0%	3.0%	7.0%	4.0%	N/A
<b>Non- Minority</b>	44.0%	97.0%	93.0%	96.0%	N/A
<b>1987-1988</b>	5,550	1,237	2,222	1,552	2,368
<b>Minority</b>	56.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Non- Minority</b>	44.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>1988-1989</b>	5,347	1,207	2,267	1,567	2,325
<b>Minority</b>	57.0%	2.0%	6.0%	4.0%	N/A
<b>Non- Minority</b>	43.0%	98.0%	94.0%	96.0%	N/A
<b>1989-1990</b>	5,469	1,196	2,265	1,575	2,290
<b>Minority</b>	58.7%	3.0%	6.0%	5.0%	N/A
<b>Non- Minority</b>	41.3%	97.0%	94.0%	95.0%	N/A
<b>1990-1991</b>	5,531	1,191	2,289	1,596	2,130
<b>1991-1992</b>	5,660	1,171	2,257	1,596	2,135
<b>Minority</b>	59.5%	2.7%	6.4%	4.6%	N/A
<b>Non- Minority</b>	40.4%	97.3%	93.6%	95.4%	N/A

It should be noted that any comparison of data that has a statistical difference of 5% or more will be considered a significant difference by the researcher. Much of the data that follows in the remaining chapters will follow this same statistical significance number.

As evidenced in Table 4, the enrollment in Riverview School District fluctuated from 1980 to 1992. Although the enrollment declined by 467 students between 1980 and 1992, it was on an upward swing in 1992, with the student population up by 313 students from the 1988-1989 school year, which had the lowest enrollment during the twelve year time span. The student enrollment in Brookside Elementary, a K-8 non-minority district in a neighboring village decreased by 196 students from 1980 to 1992. Bridgetown Elementary School District, also a K-8 non-minority school district, had remained more consistent from 1980 to 1992, with a decline of 113 students over the twelve year period. Both Brookside Elementary and Bridgetown feed into Brookside-Bridgetown High School, whose student enrollment declined by 172 students from 1980 to 1992. Additionally, it should be noted that between 1970 and 1990, the City of Riverview's ratio of minority to non-minority increased from 13.9% minority to 30% minority (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1998). Table 4 indicates the ethnic comparison of the five school districts.

As indicated in Table 4, there were significant population changes in Riverview from 1980 to 1992. The minority population increased by 15.8% and the non-minority (White) population decreased by 15.9% in Riverview School District. From 1986 to 1992 the minority and non-minority populations in Brookside and Bridgetown Elementary Schools remained consistent (1% or less difference) as did the enrollment in Brookside-Bridgetown High School.

In February, 1993, Riverview School District revised its desegregation plan to include new and expanded Magnet Program components. Items stated in the new modifications are as follows (Modification of Desegregation Plan for Riverview School District, 1993, pp. 2-3):

To amend the original desegregation plan of Riverview School District, which in effect is a new plan to ensure racial balance in the schools, the following modifications have been made:

1. The organization of the schools within Riverview School District has been changed to include: 3 schools with grade levels K-3; 1 school with grade levels K-2; 1 school with grade levels K-1; 1 school with grade levels 2-3; 1 school with grade levels K-6; 1 school with grade levels K-12 (K-6 Montessori and Creative & Performing Arts 7-12); 1 school with grades 3-6; 1 school with grades 4-6; 1 school with grades 7-8; and 1 school with grades 9-12.
2. The following schools will be Magnet Schools for the purpose of desegregation: Lighthouse grades K-1; Potawatomi grades 2-3; Antler Park grades K-3; Einstein grades K-3; Taylor grades K-3; Truman grade K-2; Landing Cultural Center (K-6 Montessori ) and grades K-6 and 7-12 Creative and Performing Arts); Keystone grades 3-6; Kickapoo grade 4-6; Riverview Junior High School grades 7-8; Riverview High School grades 9-12.
3. Any child within the district's boundaries is eligible to apply for any Magnet Program regardless of the distance he/she lives from the school.
4. Students will be selected by application for each Magnet Program. Parent choice of Magnet Program will be honored to the fullest extent possible; however, the desegregation goal is to achieve 50% minority/50% non-minority students in each of the Magnet Programs and in each of the schools in the district.
5. Students must apply for Magnet School Programs each year with the exception of those students continuing in the same program. (pp. 2-3)

Over time, the magnet programs in Riverview continued to change and expand in an attempt to stop the trend of White Flight and to continue their appeal to parents as evidenced in the Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs (1993) report. The Riverview School Board continued to fund the magnet programs to the best of their ability with local funds even during the years when they did not receive the Magnet Assistance Program Grants. During the 1992-1993 school year Riverview School District lost a substantial amount of categorical aid and



\$1.3 million in state aid. Despite the severe financial loss, the magnet programs would continue to exist as it was feared that failure to keep them would result in the loss of non-minority students and an increase in minority group isolation (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1998).

Since the original establishment of the magnet programs in Riverview in 1979, the Montessori Magnet grew from two original classrooms of kindergarten and first grade to nine classrooms from kindergarten to grade six in 1993. The Montessori Magnet population in 1993 was 53.4% minority and 46.6% non-minority. In 1993 the magnet programs in Riverview consisted of Montessori, Individualized, Creative and Performing Arts, Computer, Math, and Science. The Montessori Magnet was moved to its own facility at Landing Cultural Center and attracted students from throughout the district. The Individualized Education Magnet was expanded from two to seven classrooms for grades kindergarten through sixth grade and had a racial balance of 52.7% minority and 47.3% non-minority. The K-3 Math Magnet at Antler Park Primary School, the K-3 Computer magnet at Einstein Primary, the K-2 Arts Magnet and the K-2 Fine Arts Magnet at Truman Primary all showed a similar ability to attract White students and stabilize enrollment as evidenced by a racial composition of that which was better than the district-wide ratio of 59.5% minority and 40.4% non-minority. Table 5 specifies the enrollment in Riverview Magnet Programs in 1993 (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1993, p. 3).

Table 5

*Minority and Non-minority Enrollment in Existing Magnet School Programs in 1993*

<b>Magnet Program</b>	<b>Minority Enrollment</b>	<b>Non-Minority Enrollment</b>
<b>Montessori (K-6)</b>	53.4%	46.6%
<b>Individualized (K-6)</b>	52.7%	47.3%
<b>Math (K-3)</b>	51.5%	48.5%
<b>Computer (K-3)</b>	47.8%	52.2%
<b>Fine Arts (K-2)</b>	28.9%	71.1%
<b>Science (K-2)</b>	27.2%	72.8%

During this time period, both Riverview Junior High School and Riverview High School each had a Creative and Performing Arts Magnet. This program was developed with federal Magnet Assistance Funds and was widely supported by White parents and students in Riverview. This program had a wide range of fine arts courses available to Riverview students that were not available in the neighboring school districts. Riverview School District wrote and applied for another Magnet Assistance Program Grant so these programs could be housed at Landing Cultural Center, which housed the largest auditorium in the community, an ideal site for performances (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1993). If received, the grant would provide an expansion of the existing fine arts program and double the number of class sections offered during the school day to accommodate the growing need and interest in the program. Junior high and high school students would be able to use the same site at Landing Cultural Center for specialized instruction in the fine arts. This expansion could also lead to the development of a superior fine arts curriculum which was attractive to White students and their parents. During this time period, the Creative and Performing Arts Magnet had a racial balance of 46.7% minority and a 53.3% non-minority population (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1993).

The student selection procedure for the magnet programs established that (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1993):

1. Any student may apply for a magnet program of his/her choice as long as he/she is enrolled in the Riverview School District, will be in that grade when school opens and is willing to attend the school in which the magnet program is offered.
2. Applications will be mailed to all parents of school-age children who live in Riverview School District. If there are more applications by the stated deadline than the program can accommodate, a lottery will be held to determine who will be placed in the program. Enrollment will be controlled to ensure that all programs are racially balanced. (p.5)

In 1993, Riverview applied for and was denied the Magnet Assistance Program Grant for the 1993-1994 school year. The district would again need to fund the magnet programs with local funds to keep the programs alive. During the 1994-1995 school year, no grant was written for magnet program assistance.

As time passed, the popularity of the magnet programs grew, both with and without Magnet Assistance funds. Riverview was able to expand programs to attract non-minority White students to each school. This attraction translated to students wanting to attend the Math Magnet for grades kindergarten through third at Antler Park and at Kickapoo Middle School for grades four through six. Albert Einstein Middle School's Computer Magnet at grades kindergarten through third grade and Kickapoo Middle Schools fourth through sixth grade programs were able to help attract White students to each school. Additionally, the kindergarten through second Arts Magnet and the Science Magnet at Truman along with the third through sixth grade at Keystone Middle School have shown a better than district-wide ratio of 68.8% minority and 31.2% non-minority (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1998).

In 1997, enrollment in Riverview kindergarten through sixth grade buildings included the following (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1998):

Table 6

*Riverview Enrollment by Magnet Program and Grade as of October 1, 1997*

<b>School</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Magnet Program</b>	<b>Type of Program</b>
<b>Antler Park Primary</b>	K-3	Math	Programs-within-School
<b>Albert Einstein Primary</b>	K-3	Computer	Programs-within-School
<b>Lighthouse Primary</b>	K-3	None	None
<b>Landing Cultural Center</b>	K-6	Montessori	Whole School
<b>Taylor Primary</b>	K-3	None	None
<b>Shawnee Elementary</b>	K-3	Individualized	Programs-within-School
<b>Truman Primary</b>	K-2	Arts & Science	Programs-within-School
<b>Keystone Middle</b>	3-6	Arts & Science	Programs-within-School
<b>Kickapoo Middle</b>	3-6	Computer & Math	Programs-within-School

The enrollment by grade level in the primary and middle schools in Riverview as of October 1, 1977 consisted of the following (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1997):

Table 7

*District Enrollment in Magnet Programs by Grade, Minority & Non-Minority, & Total Number of Students - October 1997*

<b>Grade</b>	<b># of Minority Students</b>	<b>% of Total Students</b>	<b># of Non-Minority Students</b>	<b>% of Total Students</b>	<b>Total # of Students</b>
<b>K</b>	355	69.2%	158	30.8%	513
<b>1</b>	404	70.1%	172	29.9%	576
<b>2</b>	363	72.0%	141	28.0%	504
<b>3</b>	324	70.9%	133	29.1%	457
<b>4</b>	325	68.9%	147	31.1%	472
<b>5</b>	265	66.2%	135	33.8%	400
<b>6</b>	288	70.6%	120	29.4%	408

In 1998, Riverview conducted a review of each component of the Magnet Programs to determine how well each component of the program was meeting the goals of the program.

Focus groups were established and they examined application rates, waiting lists, parent involvement logs, and enrollment statistics. At the conclusion of the program review, priorities

were established to help ensure that the magnet programs would continue to assist in reducing minority group isolation. The focus groups determined that assistance would be needed in the following areas (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1998):

1. Substantial revision of the Computer Education Magnet in grades kindergarten through six to attract non-minorities to the programs.
2. Substantial revision of the Individualized Education Magnet at Shawnee Elementary to increase student achievement and to attract non-minority applicants.
3. Establishment of new magnet programs at Lighthouse Primary School and Taylor Primary School to attract new residents and non-minority students from the local private schools.

In the 1998 Application for Magnet Assistance, the applicant focused on the need for a continuation of the magnet programs:

Area realtors confirmed that the district's magnet school program is a powerful tool in getting non-minority families to purchase homes within the Riverview School District. The programmatic themes are appealing, and the neighboring all-white districts offer only the traditional classroom setting. However, realtors indicate that if magnet programs are going to continue to attract new families, parents must have the assurance that their children can stay in the same magnet program from kindergarten through sixth grade. Therefore, magnet programs were expanded and new ones added to meet the criteria indicated by the local representatives (Riverview Public Schools Magnet School Programs, 1998, p. 46).

Riverview School District's Magnet Programs Director solicited the assistance of United States Representative Thomas Ewing in a letter on May 22, 1998, along with the assistance of United States Senators Carol Moseley-Braun and Dick Durbin on May 18, 1988. In the letters, the Magnet Director listed two reasons for the need of assistance (Rainbolt, 1998, p.1):

1. To substantially revise two existing magnet programs. The Computer Education Program grades K-6 needs to replace out dated equipment and to add newer state of the art technology if it is to continue to attract students. The Individualized Education Magnet grades K-6 is not attracting students as it once did and needs to be revised. The plan is to develop a problem based learning approach with a history theme. This approach would capitalize on the historic community and neighborhood in which the school is located and help students apply their learning to real life problems.

2. Create two new magnet programs at schools where none currently exists. Taylor Primary School faculty wants to establish an ecology magnet where lessons are built around the ecology theme. Lighthouse Primary School seeks to establish Early Literacy Magnet where parents, community and the school come together to provide a rich environment where everyone reads.

United States Senator Carol Moseley-Braun also wrote a letter to The United States Department of Education Secretary on May 19, 1998, requesting grant assistance for Riverview School District (Braun, 1998). On July 23, 1998, the Superintendent of Riverview Schools received a letter from the United States Department of Education informing her that Riverview did not receive the Magnet Assistance Program Grant for the 1998-1999 school year (Cole, 1998). Riverview would have to again use local funds to continue with the magnet programs in an attempt to reduce or eliminate minority group isolation and attract new families to the district.

In 1998, Riverview consisted of the following building formations and Magnet Programs (Illinois Report Card, 2015):

Table 8

*Riverview School Formation and Magnet Programs in 1998*

<b>School</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Magnet Program</b>
<b>Potawatomi School</b>	Pre-School	N/A
<b>Antler Park Primary School</b>	K-3	Math
<b>Albert Einstein Primary School</b>	K-3	Computer
<b>Lighthouse Primary School</b>	K-3	N/A
<b>Landing Cultural Center</b>	K-6 & (6-12 Fine Arts)	Montessori & Fine Arts
<b>Shawnee Primary School</b>	K-6	N/A
<b>Truman Primary School</b>	K-2	Science & Fine Arts
<b>Keystone Middle School</b>	3-6	Science & Fine Arts
<b>Kickapoo Middle School</b>	4-6	Computer & Math
<b>Riverview Junior High School</b>	7-8	N/A
<b>Riverview High School</b>	912	N/A

In 1998, Riverview School District housed 5,401 students. Potawatomi School was located on the North side of the city in a racial balance neighborhood and only housed Head Start

pre-school students from Riverview and surrounding communities. Antler Park was located in a rural setting in an adjacent small town with a predominately White neighborhood and housed the Math Magnet Program. Albert Einstein Primary School was located in a mixed racial balance neighborhood and housed the Math Magnet Program. Lighthouse Primary School was located in a racial balance neighborhood and did not house any Magnet Programs. Shawnee Primary School was located in a racial balance neighborhood and did not house any Magnet Programs, although it did house primary bilingual students. Truman Primary School and Keystone Middle School were located in a predominantly White neighborhood on the West side of the city and housed the Science and Fine Arts Magnet Programs. The Montessori Magnet building, Landing Cultural Center, located near the city's downtown area and adjacent to Kickapoo Middle School, would continue to house the Montessori Magnet Program for grades kindergarten through sixth grades and the Fine Arts Programs for the junior high and high school. Kickapoo Middle School, located on the city's main thoroughfare and adjacent to Landing Cultural Center would continue to house fourth through sixth grade students and the math and computer magnet. Riverview Junior High would house seventh through eighth grade students and no magnet programs, and Riverview High school would house grades nine through twelve and no magnet programs.

The configuration of the schools in Riverview would remain consistent from 1998 to 2002. For the 2002 school year, Shawnee Primary School changed from a K-6 center to a K-3 center, while the remaining schools stayed the same. Additionally, Landing Cultural Center no longer houses a 6-12 Fine Arts Magnet Program, as this program was cut around 2006.

Politics would play a part in the future of the Montessori Magnet Program. In 2004, a group of Montessori Magnet parents approached the school board to petition for a change to the grade formation of Landing Cultural Center. These were parents of children who attended

Landing Cultural Center which housed the K-6 Montessori Magnet. Some of the parents had sixth grade students attending Landing Cultural Center Montessori Programs during the 2004-2005 school year, and their children would have to attend the junior high as seventh graders in 2005, since the Montessori Magnet Program only went up to sixth grade. Some parents did not want their child attending the junior high school. The parents were able to convince the school board members that the Montessori Magnet should include grades seven and eight. The school board agreed, and during the 2005 school year, the Montessori Magnet housed grades K-7. Eighth grade would be added during the 2006 school year. Landing Cultural Center would be the only building in Riverview that would house a Magnet Program from kindergarten to eighth grade. This grade level configuration is in existence today at Landing Cultural Center.

In 2005, Riverview School District solicited the assistance of an outside agency to conduct an audit of the Magnet Programs. The Riverview Magnet Program Report was completed and presented to the school district in January, 2006. Portions of the report are as follows: (Riverview Magnet Program Report, 2006, pp. 1-2):

The Magnet program has attained impressive longevity in this district. We imagine that few other public school programs in this state have survived 27 years. But its longevity has not decreased a certain discomfort with the program, intended originally to halt “white flight” from the public school system, as per the Riverview Magnet School background history reports. In an interview we heard the program referred to as “legalized segregation”. District statistics bear that out, showing almost a doubled cohort of white children in “white-preferred” magnets (Montessori and west-side): Montessori at 39% white, Science/Tech at 37%, Fine Arts at 43% compared to a 22% white population in the district as a whole. Although the program accepts applications from the entire community, has made an admirable attempt to reach all parents of children entering the system, and makes a concerted attempt to maintain racial balance within magnet classes, the reality is that parents see the program as a way of ensuring their child’s attendance either at a west-side school or in the Montessori program. Thus, community perception of the magnet school program seems by default to be elitist and segregated. A natural effect of maintaining the magnet program is to create a dual system, exacerbated by failure to sufficiently educate poor and minority families about application procedures.



On the other hand, if this picture of the program were used as a reason to eliminate it, we believe the repercussions would be disastrous. In our magnet parent interviews which included a diverse representation of all ethnic backgrounds, when asked how their child's school experience would change if the magnet program were eliminated, only thirty-two percent (32%) of parents interviewed said that they would stay in the system. Others said that they would likely either move out of town, attend private school or home school their children. Within the community, the belief exists that the magnet program adds value to RPS. With the departure from the district of higher economic families, and probably more highly educated families, test scores could fall. A more negative public perception of the quality of RPS, coupled with a higher number of families in private schools, could make passing a school referendum very difficult. An additional loss would be experienced by all magnet students who gain expanded opportunities and exposure to new experiences by being in the programs. Magnet students also benefit from being in classes with diverse populations from varied cultures.

Therefore, a recommendation to eliminate the magnet program would be counterproductive. Instead, we challenge the district to capitalize on the program. Rather than having the magnet program be "the elephant in the room" that everyone tries to ignore, we recommend transforming the program into a showpiece for how Riverview schools provide excellence in education. As we recommend in our report, changes can be made to improve the integrity of the varied magnets. Inclusion of minority and poverty-level students can be assured by altering the process of filling vacancies after second grade; this could be accomplished by seeking minority students who show magnet-specific ability based on standardized test scores given. Equal treatment of staff must be ensured to avoid resentment from undermining staff relations. By making a renewed commitment to the magnet program, Riverview Public School teachers, administrators, families and students can create a magnet model which could become one to imitate throughout our state (Riverview Magnet Program Report, 2006, pp. 1-2).

Included in the Riverview Magnet Program Audit were seven challenges that affect the Magnet Programs in Riverview School District and recommended actions. The challenges and the recommended actions include (Riverview Magnet Program Report, 2006. pp. 3-8):

1. The magnet program lacks the integrity that would allow it to provide a clear alternative program to regular district curriculum. Recommended actions included: Contract with a consultant to make annual reviews of the Montessori Magnet classes to assure adherence to the model; Collect data on magnet program students to monitor correlation between scores and specialization; Continue the process of articulating the curriculum for each magnet program across grades K-6. Use the common district curriculum template so as to clearly delineate the differentiation built into the program; Align magnet curriculum to state standards; Create magnet program addendum to district teacher evaluation instrument to assure that magnet teachers are in fact teaching differentiated curriculum. Tie satisfactory evaluations to continuance in program; and Drop "technology" from the title for the Science/Technology magnet to avoid confusion with the computer magnet.

2. The processes of accepting students into the program, filling opening, and removing students who are inappropriately placed in the program are not consistent or widely understood. Recommended actions included: Parent commitment to the magnet program should be honored by admitting siblings whenever desired and possible; Develop handbook which sets parameters for acceptance into program, defines means of filling vacancies, and is accessible to every principal with magnet classes; and Consider developing criteria which set expectations for participation in each of the magnet programs.
3. District opinions of the magnet program seem contradictory, thus projecting a confusing image. Recommended actions included: Write a mission statement for the magnet school program; Expand the markets where information on the program is disseminated; Begin tracking achievement of magnet program students into junior high and high school for the purpose of providing proof of the program's effectiveness; Examine programming and placement at the Junior High School to ensure that magnet students' academic needs are met; Promote the magnet program as a distinctive feature of the district; Survey parents whose children enter the program later than kindergarten to determine how/where information might reach them prior to entering the school system; Consider renaming it the Choice Program, and with that change, consider making it district wide at the elementary level; To ameliorate the belief that the magnet program is elitist, make a concerted effort to identify and place into the appropriate program minority and/or low income students whose ITBS scores indicate high potential in math and science. Similarly, find measures for talent in fine arts and computer skills to aid placement.
4. Communication between magnet program staff across grade levels and programs is infrequent and irregular, thus fragmenting efforts and understanding. Recommended Actions included: Hold an annual meeting of magnet program staff. At the meeting review current data on program, review curriculum updates and articulation, and share research/pertinent information peculiar to magnet programs; Develop an equitable system for sending magnet staff to appropriate training, conferences, etc., so that costs and frequency of attendance are spread evenly across programs and grade levels; and Set up a regular schedule to provide district funds alternately to each program to update equipment, resources, etc.
5. Administrative assignment for responsibility of magnet programs seems counter-productive. Recommended Actions included: Continue to have the office of Community Relations advertise and promote the program and take responsibility for student placement in the program; Consider placing responsibility for the magnet program curriculum within the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.
6. Insistence that magnet school classes adhere completely to district curriculum requirements, including textbook adoptions, has diminished the ability to offer a pure magnet approach in some cases. Recommended Actions included: If magnet curriculum

aligns with state standards, allow magnet teachers flexibility to teach to the standards within their theme.

7. A feeling of “haves and have-nots” exists within the schools housing the magnet programs. Recommended Actions included: Principals should avoid comparisons, even unintentional between test scores from magnet and non-magnet classes; and Equitable access should be assured to performances, special events, special equipment, field trips, speakers, etc. by both magnet and non-magnet classrooms whenever possible. (pp.3-8)

The recommendations were listed as items that can be done immediately, can be done within 6 months to one year, and could take one year or more to implement. Over time, some of the recommendations have been put into place by the district and others have not been completed. The results of these recommendations will be examined in Chapter 5.

Table 9 provided data on the racial enrollment at Landing Cultural Center Magnet School from 1998 – 2014 (Illinois Report Card, 2015), as all students at Landing are enrolled in the Montessori Magnet Program. As this data was examined, the researcher considered any percentage of difference between two specific statistical areas over 5% as significant.

Table 9

*Enrollment Statistics for Landing Cultural Center Montessori Magnet Programs – 1998-2014*

<b>School Year</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>Low Income</b>
<b>1998 (K-6)</b>	40.1%	51.2%	8.7%	69.8%
<b>1999 (K-6)</b>	38.8%	51.1%	10.1%	69.2%
<b>2000 (K-6)</b>	33.7%	52.2%	14.1%	71.2%
<b>2001 (K-6)</b>	33.8%	50.2%	15.4%	71.1%
<b>2002 (K-6)</b>	33.0%	55.7%	10.8%	67.5%
<b>2003 (K-6)</b>	38.7%	48.4%	11.5%	62.7%
<b>2004 (K-6)</b>	43.6%	43.2%	12.8%	62.0%
<b>2005 (K-7)</b>	39.0%	41.3%	16.5%	63.8%
<b>2006 (K-8)</b>	37.7%	39.6%	17.2%	59.3%
<b>2007 (K-8)</b>	34.7%	36.5%	21.3%	59.2%
<b>2008 (K-8)</b>	34.8%	36.0%	20.6%	58.1%
<b>2009 (K-8)</b>	36.4%	37.8%	20.4%	61.5%
<b>2010 (K-8)</b>	34.4%	39.6%	23.1%	61.2%
<b>2011 (K-8)</b>	33.3%	37.8%	23.7%	63.5%
<b>2012 (K-8)</b>	27.2%	39.4%	27.2%	71.6%
<b>2013 (K-8)</b>	26.3%	37.0%	30.4%	73.1%
<b>2014 (K-8)</b>	32.0%	38.9%	29.2%	75.9%

It was extremely important to analyze this data since all students who were enrolled in the Montessori School were enrolled in the Montessori Magnet program. These students, grades K-8 were able to stay in the same building for nine consecutive years if the student was enrolled in kindergarten. This is the only building in Riverview that has this school family community advantage. The other primary schools in the district are K-3 centers and the middle schools are 4-6 centers.

An analysis of the data in Table 9 which encompasses a 17 year period indicated that the White population in the Montessori Magnet Program in Riverview varied over the years from 1998-2014. The peak year was in 2004 when the White population accounted for 43.6% of the total population in the Montessori Magnet Program. The White population in 2013 accounted for 26.3 % of the students in the Montessori Magnet program, which was the

smallest percentage in relation to the other years included in the table. The average difference between the White population in the Montessori Program and the White population in Riverview School District from 1998 to 2004 was between 5.6% in 2000 and 19.8% in 2004. The average difference over the 17 year time span between the White population in the Montessori Magnet Programs and the White population in Riverview School District was 12.02%, which was a significant difference.

The Black population in Riverview Montessori Magnet also fluctuated over the 17 year time frame, and declined from 55.7% Black at its' highest in 2002 to 38.9% in 2013. Overall, from 1998 to 2014, the Black population in the Montessori Magnet Programs averaged a 15.81% difference from the Black population in the school district, which was a significant difference.

The Hispanic population in Riverview Montessori Magnet was the most similar to the school district's Hispanic population. The Hispanic population in the Montessori Magnet on the average gradually increased from 1998 to 2014 with a percentage increase from 8.7% to the highest at 30.4%. The Hispanic population in Riverview increased from 7.8% Hispanic in 1998 to 26.1% Hispanic in 2014. Overall, the average difference between the Hispanic population numbers in the Montessori Magnet and the school district was 3.02% over the 17 year time frame, which was an insignificant difference.

In the Montessori Magnet Programs, the number of students from a low socio-economic status increased from 69.8 % low income in 1998 and fluctuated throughout the years to 75.9 % low income in 2014. Overall, the average low income population in the Montessori Magnet Programs was 65.92% of the students enrolled. The district average of low income students over the same time frame was 79.27% low income, which was a significant difference.

## **Race Data**

It was necessary to look at racial data to answer questions 2 and 3 which focused on integration and race respectively. The racial population in the city of Riverview changed from 2000-2010. According to Census Bureau information (2015), the overall Hispanic population in Riverview grew by 102.53% over the ten year period while the White population decreased by -7.53% and the Black population increased by .04%. This was important information as data was analyzed from the 2010-2013 school years.

The researcher examined various historical data that covered the past few decades in Riverview and data for grades four through six was reviewed. Table 10 displayed Montessori Magnet, Science Magnet, Fine Arts Magnet, Math Magnet, Computer Magnet, and regular education classroom race distribution data for grades 4-6 at Landing Cultural Center, Keystone Middle School, and Kickapoo Middle School for the 2010-2011 school year.

Table 10

*Race Distribution by Program and School for Grades 4-6 during the 2010-2011 School Year\**

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
<b>Landing CC Montessori Magnet</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	46.3%	26.8%	26.8%	0.0%
<b>Grade 5</b>	35.5%	35.5%	25.8%	3.2%
<b>Grade 6</b>	55.0%	25.0%	20.0%	0.0%
<b>Montessori Magnet Total</b>	44.6%	29.3%	25.0%	0.0%
<b>Keystone Middle Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	36.9%	25.0%	34.5%	3.6%
<b>Grade 5</b>	28.9%	31.6%	28.9%	10.5%
<b>Grade 6</b>	39.2%	15.2%	40.5%	3.8%
<b>Keystone Magnet Total</b>	35.0%	23.0%	34.6%	6.0%
<b>Keystone Middle Non-Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	51.4%	31.3%	12.5%	2.8%
<b>Grade 5</b>	50.0%	28.8%	16.7%	3.8%
<b>Grade 6</b>	52.2%	27.6%	14.9%	4.5%
<b>Keystone Non-Magnet Total</b>	51.2%	29.2%	14.7%	3.7%
<b>Keystone Overall Total</b>	45.3%	27.3%	22.0%	4.5%
<b>Kickapoo Middle Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	46.7%	28.9%	15.5%	8.9%
<b>Grade 5</b>	64.6%	16.7%	14.9%	2.0%
<b>Grade 6</b>	72.0%	14.0%	12.0%	2.0%
<b>Kickapoo Magnet Total</b>	61.1%	19.9%	14.1%	4.3%
<b>Kickapoo Non-Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	73.8%	10.6%	13.9%	1.6%
<b>Grade 5</b>	64.5%	17.2%	11.8%	4.3%
<b>Grade 6</b>	56.0%	28.6%	13.2%	2.2%
<b>Kickapoo Non-Magnet Total</b>	64.8%	18.8%	13.0%	2.7%
<b>Kickapoo Overall Total</b>	64.4%	18.5%	13.6%	3.3%
<b>Overall Total – Grades 4-6</b>	52.4%	24.1%	19.1%	3.4%

\*Other minority races are not included in the above data

An examination of the 2010-2011 Magnet Programs Race Distribution data for grades 4-6 as indicated in Table 10 included the Black, Hispanic, White, and Mixed races. Other minority races were not examined in this study.

As this researcher examined the data, the most obvious information revealed was that the Kickapoo Magnet classes housed an average student population of 61.1% Black, while the Keystone Magnets enrolled an average of 35% Black students and the Montessori Magnet's average enrollment was 44.6% Black. It should be noted that Kickapoo Middle School and the Landing Cultural Center Montessori School are located adjacent to each other, and in the heart of a predominately Black neighborhood, while Keystone is located on the West side of the city. It should also be noted that the Kickapoo non-magnet classes average student enrollment was 64.8% Black, while in Keystone Middle School's non-magnet classes the average student enrollment was 51.2% Black. Landing Montessori does not house any non-magnet programs as they are strictly Montessori grades kindergarten through eighth grade. There was a 26 percentage point difference in student enrollment of Black students between the three schools that house magnet programs, 35.0% at Keystone Magnet to 61.1% in the Kickapoo Magnets. Kickapoo magnet and non-magnet classes averaged the highest number of Black students in grades 4 – 8 in Riverview School District at 61.1% Black and 64.8% Black respectively. The overall Black population in grades 4-6 in Riverview was 52.4% Black during the 2010-2011 school year.

The Hispanic population was more similar in numbers in the three schools than was the Black population. The Hispanic population ranged from 19.9% in the Kickapoo Magnet while Keystone Magnet had 23.0% Hispanics enrolled. The largest percentage of Hispanics in a magnet program was 29.3% in the Montessori Magnet. There was 9.4% difference between Kickapoo Magnet and Montessori Magnet. There was 10.4% difference between the non-magnet



classes at Kickapoo Middle and at Keystone Middle. The Kickapoo non-magnet enrollment was 18.8% Hispanic while the Keystone non-magnet classes had a 29.2% Hispanic enrollment. Overall, the Hispanic student enrollment in grades four through six in Riverview School District averaged 24.1% Hispanic.

The White population in the grades four through six magnet programs in Riverview during the 2010-2011 school year ranged from a 14.1% at Kickapoo, while Montessori Magnet had 25.0%, and Keystone had the largest percentage of White students at 34.6%. There was a 20.5% difference in the number of White students in non-magnet classes between Kickapoo and Keystone. The White students enrolled in non-magnet classes was very similar at 13.0% at Kickapoo and 14.7% at Keystone. The overall Hispanic population in all of the magnet and non-magnet classes in Riverview was 19.1% Hispanic.

The next table displayed the racial make-up of the three middle school centers in Riverview during the 2011-2012 school year.

Table 11

*Race Distribution by Program and School for Grades 4-6 during the 2011-2012 School Year\**

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
<b>Landing CC Montessori Magnet</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	38.1%	21.4%	30.9%	9.5%
<b>Grade 5</b>	46.3%	29.3%	24.4%	0.0%
<b>Grade 6</b>	41.9%	35.5%	19.3%	3.2%
<b>Montessori Magnet Total</b>	42.1%	28.1%	25.4%	4.4%
<b>Keystone Middle Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	34.5%	22.6%	29.8%	11.9%
<b>Grade 5</b>	37.0%	24.7%	34.6%	3.7%
<b>Grade 6</b>	23.4%	35.1%	29.9%	10.4%
<b>Keystone Magnet Total</b>	42.5%	29.7%	20.4%	6.2%
<b>Keystone Middle Non-Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	44.1%	36.8%	14.0%	5.1%
<b>Grade 5</b>	51.1%	29.2%	11.7%	5.1%
<b>Grade 6</b>	52.0%	27.5%	15.7%	3.9%
<b>Keystone Non-Magnet Total</b>	49.0%	31.2%	13.7%	4.7%
<b>Keystone Overall Total</b>	42.5%	29.7%	20.4%	6.2%
<b>Kickapoo Middle Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	67.2%	25.4%	3.6%	1.8%
<b>Grade 5</b>	66.7%	14.8%	18.5%	0.0%
<b>Grade 6</b>	60.0%	20.0%	12.0%	8.0%
<b>Kickapoo Magnet Total</b>	64.8%	20.1%	11.3%	3.8%
<b>Kickapoo Non-Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	60.9%	18.1%	13.0%	7.2%
<b>Grade 5</b>	74.0%	15.4%	7.4%	2.9%
<b>Grade 6</b>	66.2%	13.7%	12.5%	6.2%
<b>Kickapoo Non-Magnet Total</b>	67.0%	15.7%	11.1%	5.4%
<b>Kickapoo Overall Total</b>	66.1%	17.5%	11.2%	4.8%
<b>Overall Total – Grades 4-6</b>	51.6%	24.8%	17.3%	5.5%

\*Other minority races are not included in the above data

An examination of student data from grades four through six during the 2011-2012 school year indicates that the Montessori Magnet enrolled 42.1% Black students, Keystone magnet enrolled 42.5% Black students, and Kickapoo magnet enrolled 64.8% Black students. There was a 22.7 percentage point difference in the number of Black students at Montessori Magnet and in the Kickapoo Magnet. The Black population in the Keystone non-magnet classes averaged 42.5%, while the Kickapoo non-magnet classes averaged 66.1%. This was a 23.6 percentage point difference in Black enrollment between the Keystone non-magnet and the Kickapoo non-magnet classes. The overall Black population in both the magnet and non-magnet classes in grades four through six in Riverview School District during the 2011-2012 school year was 51.6%.

An examination of student data from grades four through six during the 2011-2012 school year indicates that the Montessori Magnet enrolled 28.1% Hispanic students and Keystone was similar in comparison with 29.7% Hispanic students, while Kickapoo housed 20.1% Hispanic students. There was a 9.6 percentage point difference between the Montessori Magnet and the Kickapoo magnets. The non-magnet classes had the biggest difference in Hispanic student enrollment with Keystone enrolling 29.7% Hispanic students and Kickapoo enrolling 15.7% of Hispanic students, a difference of 14 percentage points between the two. The overall average of the Hispanic population in the three middle schools was 24.8% Hispanic.

As indicated in Table 11, the White population was 25.4% at the Montessori Magnet, 20.4% in the Keystone magnet classes, and 11.3% White in the Kickapoo magnet classes. The percentage of difference between the school with the largest White population and the school with the smallest White population was at 14.1%. The non-magnet White populations were very similar in that Keystone had a 20.4% White population and Kickapoo had a 17.3% White

population, a 3.1 percentage point difference between the two. The overall White population in Riverview was 17.3%.

Table 12

*Race Distribution by Program and School for Grades 4-6 during the 2012-2013 School Year\**

	<b>Black</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Mixed</b>
<b>Landing CC Montessori Magnet</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	35.8%	23.1%	35.9%	5.1%
<b>Grade 5</b>	37.1%	22.8%	28.6%	11.4%
<b>Grade 6</b>	45.1%	32.2%	22.6%	0.0%
<b>Montessori Magnet Total</b>	39.0%	25.7%	29.5%	5.7%
<b>Keystone Middle Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	40.0%	27.5%	21.2%	11.25%
<b>Grade 5</b>	48.1%	25.9%	17.3%	8.6%
<b>Grade 6</b>	39.0%	26.0%	31.2%	3.8%
<b>Keystone Magnet Total</b>	40.3%	26.5%	23.1%	8.0%
<b>Keystone Middle Non-Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	45.4%	26.9%	21.5%	4.6%
<b>Grade 5</b>	38.3%	32.0%	19.5%	9.4%
<b>Grade 6</b>	51.9%	31.0%	8.5%	5.4%
<b>Keystone Non-Magnet Total</b>	45.2%	30.0%	16.5%	6.5%
<b>Keystone Overall Total</b>	44.2%	28.6%	19.0%	7.0%
<b>Kickapoo Middle Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	66.7%	15.7%	9.8%	7.8%
<b>Grade 5</b>	63.0%	27.8%	7.4%	1.8%
<b>Grade 6</b>	54.2%	22.9%	20.8%	2.1%
<b>Kickapoo Magnet Total</b>	61.3%	22.1%	12.7%	3.9%
<b>Kickapoo Non-Magnets</b>				
<b>Grade 4</b>	55.5%	19.4%	15.7%	9.2%
<b>Grade 5</b>	61.8%	22.8%	9.8%	4.9%
<b>Grade 6</b>	75.9%	10.6%	10.6%	2.9%
<b>Kickapoo Non-Magnet Total</b>	64.4%	17.6%	12.0%	5.7%
<b>Kickapoo Overall Total</b>	63.3%	19.2%	12.2%	5.1%
<b>Overall Total – Grades 4-6</b>	51.4%	24.6%	17.1%	6.1%

\*Other minority races are not included in the above data

An examination of the fourth through sixth grade student race data in Riverview during the 2012-2013 school year indicated that the Montessori Magnet enrolled 39.0% Black students with Keystone Magnet classes slightly higher at 40.3% Black and Kickapoo magnet classes the highest at 61.3% Black. The difference between the Montessori Magnet with the least number of Black students and Kickapoo magnet classes with the most number of Black students was 22.3 percentage points. The Keystone non-magnet classes and the Kickapoo non-magnet classes were also significant with a 19.2 percentage point difference. The overall average Black population in Riverview fourth through fifth grade classes was at 51.4% Black.

An examination of the fourth through sixth grade student Hispanic race data in Riverview during the 2012-2013 school year indicated that the Montessori Magnet housed 25.7% Hispanic students with Keystone magnet classes slightly higher at 26.5% Hispanic and Kickapoo Middle School magnet classes slightly lower at 22.1% Hispanic. There was only a 3.6% average difference among the Hispanic population in the magnet classes in the three schools. There was a 12.4 percentage point difference between the percentage of students enrolled in a magnet program with Keystone non-magnet classes at 30.0% and 17.6% for the Kickapoo non-magnet classes. The overall average percentage of Hispanic students enrolled in both magnet and a non-magnet class was 24.6%.

An examination of the fourth through sixth grade student White race data in Riverview during the 2012-2013 school year indicates that the Montessori Magnet housed 29.5% White students with Keystone magnet classes slightly lower at 23.1% White and Kickapoo Middle School magnet classes slightly lower at 12.7% White. There was a significant difference of 17.68 percentage points between the number of White students in the Montessori Magnet and the White students housed in the Kickapoo magnet classes. The enrollment in the non-magnet

classes at Kickapoo and Keystone was very similar with 16.5% White at Keystone and 12.0% White at Kickapoo. The overall average percentage of White students enrolled in both magnet and non-magnet classes was 17.1%.

A lot has changed in Riverview in the past 50 years in regards to demographics. Table 13 provided the non-minority and minority statistics from 1970 to 2014. This data was important to study as we examined demographic trends in Riverview.

Table 13

*Demographic Non-minority and minority Trend Data in Riverview School District - 1970-2014*

Year	Percentage and Race of Non-minority Students in Riverview School District	Percentage and Race of Minority Students in Riverview School District
1970	78.3% - White	21.5% Black & Hispanic
1980	56.3% - White	43.7% Black & Hispanic
1990	42.3% - White	58.7% Black & Hispanic
2000	62.2% - Black	28.1% White & 9.4% Hispanic
2010	53% - Black	19.7% White & 22.4% Hispanic
2014	49.4% - Black	23.3% White & 26.1% Hispanic

In 1970, Riverview School District had a population of 78.3% non-minority and 21.5% minority. At that time, the minority population was Black and the non-minority population was White. Ten years later in 1980, Riverview School District had a population of 56.3% non-minority and 43.7 minority, which was a 22% reduction in the White population and was a 22.2% increase in the Black population over a ten year time span. In 1990, the White population was still the non-minority, but had decreased by 14% over ten years. Data from 1998 (Illinois Report Card, 2015) showed that the Black population enrollment in Riverview School District was at 61.1% while the White enrollment was at 30.6%. From the available

records, the Black population in Riverview School District was the majority as far back as 1998.

By the year 2000, the Black population had increased to 62.2%. The White and Hispanic populations were now the minority population in Riverview with 28.1% White and 9.4% Hispanic. For the first time in the history of Riverview School District the Hispanic population was at 20.5% and surpassed that of the White population at 20.3% in 2008. According to data from the United States Census Bureau (2015), it should be noted that the Hispanic or Latino population in the city of Riverview grew by 102.53% from 2000-2010 (U.S. Zip Code Database, 2015). As the population in Riverview changed, so did the enrollment in the Riverview Schools. In 2010 Riverview's Black population was at 53% which was the non-minority, the White population was 19.7% and the Hispanic population had grown to 22.4%. In 2014, the White population remained the minority at 23.3% while the Hispanic population continued to steadily rise at 25.5% and was still a part of the minority population. The Black population in 2014 declined to 49.4%.

Over time, changes have occurred in regards to racial enrollment in Riverview School District since the population in the city of Riverview has changed dramatically from 1970 to 2014. We must be mindful that although magnet programs were initiated to stop White flight, the White population is now 23.3% in Riverview School District. It must be noted that the White race is now the minority and the Black race is the non-minority. The Hispanic race population has now surpassed the White race in enrollment, and both the White and Hispanic races are now the minority.



## Socio-economic Data

Socio-economic status data was important to examine in this study as to ensure equitable access to programs for all students in both magnet and non-magnet classes, regardless of their socio-economic status. Typically, students who qualify for free or reduced lunch are from a lower socio-economic status. The examination of the socio-economic data assisted in determining if more students of poverty level were enrolled in either the magnet or non-magnet classes. Table 14 data focused on the socio-economic data of students in grades 4-6 in the magnet and non-magnet classes from 2010-2013.

Table 14

*Socioeconomic Data of Students Grades 4-6 in Magnet & Non-Magnet Classes – 2010-2013 School Years*

School Year	Total Number & Percentage of Students in Poverty in Magnet Programs	Total Number of Students in Magnet Programs	Total Number & Percentage of Students in Poverty in Magnet Programs	Total Number of Students in Non-Magnet Programs
2010-2011	<b>372 – 78.98%</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>658 – 91.77%</b>	<b>717</b>
2011-2012	<b>400 – 81.96%</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>679 – 90.77%</b>	<b>748</b>
2012-2013	<b>410 – 82.66%</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>652- 90.43%</b>	<b>721</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,182</b>	<b>1,455</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>2,186</b>

During the 2010-2011 school year, there were 471 students enrolled in the fourth through sixth grade magnet programs in Riverview. Of these students enrolled, 372 of them were on free and reduced lunch status or what we consider today as low income or poverty level. Overall, 78.98% of the magnet students were on free or reduced lunch status. During the same year, 717 fourth through sixth grade students were enrolled in non-magnet classes in the three middle

schools in Riverview. Of these 717 students, 658 were on free or reduced lunch status. This total equaled 91.77% of students in non-magnet classes were on free or reduced lunch status. There were 12.79% more low-income students in the fourth through sixth grade non-magnet classes than magnet classes in Riverview School District, and this was significant.

During the 2011-2012 school year there were 488 students enrolled in the fourth through sixth grade magnet programs in Riverview. Of these students enrolled, 400 of them were on free and reduced lunch status, which equals 81.96% of the students enrolled in the magnet programs were low income. During the same year, 748 students were enrolled in the fourth through sixth grade non-magnet classes in Riverview. Of these 748 students, 679 of them were on free and reduced lunch. This total equaled 90.77% of students in the non-magnet classes were on free or reduced lunch, or were considered low income. This translates to a significant 8.81% difference between the number of low-income students in the non-magnet and magnet fourth through sixth grade classes in Riverview, as more low-income students were in the non-magnet classes.

During the 2012-2013 school year there were 496 students enrolled in the fourth through sixth grade magnet programs in Riverview. Of these students enrolled, 410 of them were on free and reduced lunch status, which means 82.66% of the students enrolled in the magnet programs were from a low income socio-economic status. During the same year, 721 students were enrolled in the fourth through sixth grade non-magnet classes in Riverview. Of these 721 students, 652 of them were on free and reduced lunch. This total equaled 90.43% of students in the non-magnet classes were on free or reduced lunch. This equaled a 7.7% significant difference between the students from a low socio-economic status in both non-magnet and magnet classes, with non-magnet housing more students from poverty level.

Overall, there was a significant difference in the percentage of low income students between both the magnet and non-magnet classes between 2010 and 2013. During the 2010-2011 school year there was 12.79% more low-income students in the non-magnet classes than in the magnet classes. During the 2011-2012 school year there was 8.81% more low-income students in the non-magnet classes than the magnet classes. Additionally, during the 2012-2013 school year there was 7.77% more low-income students in the non-magnet classes than in the magnet classes. This data indicates that overall, there were more low-income students in the non-magnet classes than in the magnet classes, and this was a significant difference.

## **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH**

### **Overview**

The purpose of this chapter was to apply an analysis of the historical documents related to Riverview School District to respond to the research questions presented in this study. Although some magnet schools began under court orders to desegregate, others, like Riverview School District were used as a voluntary method to reduce racial isolation. Many changes have occurred in the magnet programs over the years and this study examined these changes.

Chapter V has been organized to provide a summary and discussion of the findings regarding information gathered from historical data of Riverview School District. Finally, recommendations for further research and practice are presented.

This study examined the history of desegregation in the United States and the impact that desegregation had on a mid-size school district in central Illinois. Additionally, this study also examined this school district's subsequent establishment of magnet programs, and the impact magnet programs have made in the district. This research may assist school administration, teachers, staff, and community members in small and mid-size communities as they review their current magnet programs and/or decide whether or not magnet programs would enrich the educational programming and provide more choices for students and parents in their district.

### **Purpose of Study and Research Questions**

This study focused on the role of magnet school programs in the desegregation process, and more specifically, in Riverview School District. The study had three questions to answer: (a) to determine what historical and political events in Riverview led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview School District; (b) to determine if the establishment and

continuation of magnet programs in Riverview School District improved integration in the district; (c) to determine what differences, if any, exist in Riverview School District from the 1970's to today between students enrolled in magnet and non-magnet programs in grades four through six in terms of race and socio-economic status.

## **Findings**

### **Results of 2006 Riverview Program Report**

In 2006 Riverview School District solicited an outside agency to conduct an audit of the magnet programs to fully understand the overall effectiveness of the magnet programs in Riverview. Provided in the audit were the challenges and recommended actions. The following information includes the follow-through by the school district. This information was important to examine as we gain a deeper understanding of the magnet programs in Riverview School District. To determine if the district had followed-through on the recommended actions, the researcher received verbal feedback from the current Director of Enrichment Programs in Riverview School District. The results are as follows:

**Challenge 1:** The magnet program lacks the integrity that would allow it to provide a clear alternative program to regular district curriculum.

Recommended actions and follow-through:

- (a). Contract with a consultant to make annual reviews of the Montessori Magnet classes to assure adherence to the model: Incomplete
- (b). Collect data on magnet program students to monitor correlation between scores and specialization: Incomplete
- (c). Continue the process of articulating the curriculum for each magnet program across grades K-6. Use the common district curriculum template so as to clearly delineate the differentiation built into the program: Incomplete
- (d). Align magnet curriculum to state standards: Complete
- (e). Create magnet program addendum to district teacher evaluation instrument to assure that magnet teachers are in fact teaching differentiated curriculum. Tie satisfactory evaluations to continuance in program: Differentiation is part of the new Teacher Evaluation tool. The teacher evaluation is not tied to continuance in the program.

(f). Drop “technology” from the title for the Science/Technology magnet to avoid confusion with the computer magnet: Complete

**Challenge 2:** The processes of accepting students into the program, filling openings, and removing students who are inappropriately placed in the program are not consistent or widely understood.

Recommended actions and follow-through:

- (a). Parent commitment to the magnet program should be honored by admitting siblings whenever desired and possible: Complete. Parents with siblings have first choice.
- (b). Develop handbook which sets parameters for acceptance into program, defines means of filling vacancies, and is accessible to every principal: Complete
- (c). Consider developing criteria which set expectations for participation in each of the magnet programs: Complete. Parents, student, and teacher must sign a magnet contract. Students may be removed from a magnet program due to grades and/or poor behavior.

**Challenge 3:** District opinions of the magnet program seem contradictory, thus projecting a confusing image.

Recommended actions and follow-through:

- (a). Write a mission statement for the magnet school program: Incomplete.
- (b). Expand the markets where information on the program is disseminated: Advertising is done through newspaper, radio, school marquee, and district webpage. Parents of incoming kindergarten students are invited to a magnet showcase in January.
- (c). Begin tracking achievement of magnet program students into junior high and high school for the purpose of providing proof of the program’s effectiveness: Incomplete
- (d). Examine programming and placement at the Junior High School to ensure that magnet students’ academic needs are met: Incomplete
- (e). Promote the magnet program as a distinctive feature of the district: Magnet programs are highlighted during the kindergarten showcase and teacher recruitment fairs.
- (f). Survey parents whose children enter the program later than kindergarten to determine how/where information might reach them prior to entering the school system: Incomplete
- (g). Consider renaming it the Choice Program, and with that change, consider making it district wide at the elementary level: Incomplete
- (h). To ameliorate the belief that the magnet program is elitist, make a concerted effort to identify and place into the appropriate program minority and/or low income students whose ITBS scores indicate high potential in math and science. Similarly, find measures for talent in fine arts and computer skills to aid placement: This has not been accomplished as the magnet programs in Riverview are parent choice. The programs are not based on skills. The magnet coordinator makes a concerted effort to mirror the racial make-up of the district and of the individual school in the magnet programs.

**Challenge 4:** Communication between magnet program staff across grade levels and programs is infrequent and irregular, thus fragmenting efforts and understanding.

Recommended Actions and follow-through:

- (a). Hold an annual meeting of magnet program staff. At the meeting review current data on program, review curriculum updates and articulation, and share research/pertinent information peculiar to magnet programs: Complete. Meetings are held once a year.
- (c). Develop an equitable system for sending magnet staff to appropriate training, conferences, etc., so that costs and frequency of attendance are spread evenly across programs and grade levels: Due to the lack of funding and subs, this occurs infrequently.
- (d). Set up a regular schedule to provide district funds alternately to each program to update equipment, resources, etc.: No funds are specifically allocated district-wide for the magnet programs. It is up to each building principal to allocate for magnet programs from their control budget.

**Challenge 5:** Administrative assignment for responsibility of magnet programs seems counter-productive.

Recommended Actions and follow-through:

- (a). Continue to have the office of Community Relations advertise and promote the program and take responsibility for student placement in the program: Riverview no longer has a full-time Community Relations Department.
- (b). Consider placing responsibility for the magnet program curriculum within the office of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction: Complete

**Challenge 6:** Insistence that magnet school classes adhere completely to district curriculum requirements, including textbook adoptions, has diminished the ability to offer a pure magnet approach in some cases.

Recommended Actions and follow-through:

- (a). If magnet curriculum aligns with state standards, allow magnet teachers flexibility to teach to the standards within their theme: Complete

**Challenge 7:** A feeling of “haves and have-nots” exists within the schools housing the magnet programs.

Recommended Actions and follow-through:

- (a). Principals should avoid comparisons, even unintentional between test scores from magnet and non-magnet classes: Principals attempt to follow-through.
- (b). Equitable access should be assured to performances, special events, special equipment, field trips, speakers, etc. by both magnet and non-magnet classrooms whenever possible: This is intended but does not always occur.

The results of the magnet program audit from 2006 provide valuable information to educational practitioners in Riverview School District, and more specifically, the Director of Enrichment Programs who oversees all of the magnet programs.

## **Findings**

### **Research Question 1**

The first question focused on history of the Riverview School District: What historical and political events led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview School District?

### **Discussion of Findings**

Many events transpired in the city of Riverview and in Riverview School District that led to the establishment of magnet programs. These changes have helped to make Riverview School District what it is today. The boundary lines are still in effect, but some parents find ways to enroll their children in the school of their choice even if their child is not in a magnet program. A few of these strategies used by some parents include: fabricating residency to attend a specific school, indicating the student lives with a parent in the district when they actually live with the other parent in an adjoining community, and registering their child late to ensure that they can get them into a specific school due to enrollment of students in different classes and schools, are just a few.

The school district configuration has changed considerably over the years. Today Riverview consists of one Early Childhood center, six K-3 graded centers, one K-8 Montessori Magnet school, two grades 4-6 middle schools, 1 junior high, and one high



school. The 1970 desegregation plan led to voluntary integration rather than threatened court action and a ratio of 78.3% non-minority and 21.5% minority was established for each school. The non-minority and minority that was established in 1970 is no longer in effect since the population has changed so significantly. Students living 1.5 miles or more away from their assigned school were bussed to grade appropriate schools in 1970 and this remains true today. Students who are enrolled in magnet programs are still bussed across the city if they live 1.5 miles or more away from the magnet program they are attending. Faculty integration is no longer a requirement, although the district makes a concerted effort to hire minority teachers. Although Riverview was one of the first communities in the U.S to voluntarily reject the neighborhood concept and begin bussing to maintain racial equality, there are currently three K-3 primary centers that are considered neighborhood schools and do not house any magnet programs.

The desegregation plan did not stop White families from moving out of Riverview. Some White flight occurred as a result of the voluntary desegregation plan, resulting in a pattern of re-segregating Riverview Schools. Some of the students left and enrolled in neighboring parochial schools while some families moved from the Riverview area. The purpose of the magnet programs in the late 1970's was to stop White Flight through the establishment of magnet choice programs. Magnet programs began during the 1979-1980 school year. They were intended to encourage and maintain middle-income families in the public schools; prevent minority group isolation and; improve the academic achievement of students. This actions did not occur.

## **Research Question 2**

Has the establishment and continuation of magnet programs in Riverview School District improved integration in Riverview School District?

## **Discussion of Findings**

The magnet programs in Riverview School District were initiated to improve integration by preventing White flight. According to the results of the Magnet School Project (Rodgers & Stewart, 1980, p. 8), Riverview School District also established the magnet programs to encourage and maintain middle-income families in the public schools, prevent minority group re-isolation, and improve the academic achievement of all students. In 1970, Riverview School District had a population of 78.3% non-minority and 21.5% minority. At that time, the minority population was Black and the non-minority population was White. In 2013, Riverview School District was 23.3% White, 26.1% Hispanic, and 49.4% Black. Over time the White population had decreased, the Black population had increased and the Hispanic population had increased significantly. Some of the changes in population can be attributed to White flight, lack of major manufacturing in the city, high poverty levels, lack of good paying jobs, low graduation rates year after year in Riverview School District, the depressed socio-economic status of various parts of the city, and the reputation of the school district in comparison to the neighboring school districts with significantly larger White populations. Although Riverview's population has changed significantly over the years, the neighboring and adjacent public schools in Brookside and Bridgeview have remained more consistent. Their current combined Black population is 10%, Hispanic is 9.8%, and the White population has gradually changed over the past 44 years to 74%.

Although much has been done over the years to keep the White middle-class population in Riverview, this has not occurred. In 1970, the population in Riverview School District was 78.3% White. Today, only 23.3% of Riverview School District students are White, which is a decrease of 33% White students since the second year of the magnet

programs, and today Whites are the minority. The establishment of magnet programs, which were originally intended to stop White flight, encourage and maintain middle income families in the schools, and prevent minority group re-isolation, has not improved integration as was expected. However, Riverview does currently have a very diverse population of 49.7% Black, 25.5% Hispanic, 18.9% White, and 6.1% Mixed. Both the magnet and non-magnet classes are racially mixed. The magnet programs did not maintain the White population nor did they encourage and maintain middle-income families in the public schools.

### **Research Question 3**

What differences, if any, exist in Riverview School District from the 1970's to today between students enrolled in magnet and non-magnet programs in grades four through six in terms of race and socio-economic status?

### **Discussion of Findings**

Surprisingly, since the magnet programs were originally established to stop White flight, there was no available data on the race of the students enrolled during the first year of the magnet programs in 1979 from any of the available documentation. The first year of available racial data on magnet enrollment was from the 1991-1992 school year, and the minority population was significantly higher at 16.67% than the non-minority. It should be noted that the White population was the non-minority and the Black population was the minority in 1992, which means that there were more Whites than Blacks in the magnet programs in 1992, and the magnet program enrollment did not match the district enrollment numbers.

Recent magnet enrollment numbers from the 2012-2013 school year were very similar to the overall racial population in each middle school. The overall difference between the

Black population in the magnet programs and in the overall school population averaged 1.4%. The overall difference in the Hispanic population in the magnet programs and in the overall school population averaged 2.25%, while the overall difference between the White population in the magnet programs and in the overall school population averaged 2.0%.

In the early years there was a significant difference between the race of the students in the non-magnet and the magnet classes. Recent non-magnet enrollment numbers from the 2012-2013 school year were very similar to the overall racial population in each middle school and the difference was insignificant. Today, the Enrichment Program Director makes a concerted effort to keep the magnet population consistent with that of the schools in which the magnet program is housed, and this held true according to the data.

### **Socio-economic Data Results**

In regards to socio-economic status, overall, there was a significant difference in the percentage of low income students between the fourth through sixth grade magnet and non-magnet classes between 2010 and 2013. This data indicates that overall, there were significantly more low-income students in the non-magnet classes than in the magnet classes. This can be explained that parents of poverty level do not have the same access to information regarding the choices of magnet programs as other parents.

## **Further Discussion**

The historical and political events in Riverview that led to the establishment of magnet programs in Riverview have been examined. These events began with a reorganization of the district in 1950 which resulted in an imbalance of White and Black students in grades 7-9. In 1970 the district voluntarily desegregated the schools. In 1979, to stop White flight, magnet programs were established with federal grant monies. As time passed, the White population continued to move from the district and today the White population is 23.3%. Much has been done to keep the White population in Riverview with the establishment of magnet programs.

The White population in Riverview School District has declined significantly since 1970, and the magnet programs did not achieve what they set out to do – stop White flight. Originally there was a significant difference between the racial population in the magnet and non-magnet programs in Riverview School District but in recent years the Director of Enrichment has intentionally mirrored the magnet population to the building population in which the magnet program is located, but this is not mirrored in the area of socio-economic status. Currently, the low income population is 86% in Riverview. Data indicated that recently there was a significant difference between the percentages of students of poverty level in a magnet program and in a non-magnet program, with more students of poverty level enrolled in non-magnet programs.

## **Recommendations for Further Research**

This study was limited to using the available documentation to provide an historical analysis documenting the role of magnet schools in the desegregation of Riverview School District. A review of the literature and a study conducted by the researcher has led to several recommendations for further research.

1. A re-examination and further research on what “true magnet programs and schools” are meant to be in the public education setting and apply these structures in Riverview School District. Refer to United States Department of Education magnet practices reports (2004, 2008).
2. Further research into developing some of the schools other than just the Montessori Magnet into full magnet schools, rather than housing both magnet programs and regular programs in the same school.
3. Further research regarding magnet integration processes to assure that magnet programs and resources are open to all students is needed.
4. Further research regarding the magnet application process and admittance procedures needs to be examined.
5. Further research of the “school within a school” magnet model of choice is needed if this model is to remain in Riverview.
6. Further research on methods to expand the magnet programs within Riverview to provide more students with an equitable access to a wide variety of magnet programs is needed.
7. Further research on the socio-economic status of the students in both the magnet and non-magnet programs is needed.
8. Further research on the academic achievement of students enrolled in the magnet programs and those in the regular education programs is needed.

## **Recommendations for Practice**

1. The current make-up of the magnet programs other than the Montessori Magnet are not “true magnets.” The current magnet programs are watered-down versions of what magnet programs were meant to be. A re-examination of what “true magnet programs” are needs to be re-examined in Riverview. The district should follow the United States Department of Education’s (2004, 2008): Common practices used in planning for the development of magnet schools, Practices for implementing successful strategies after the doors open, and Practices for sustaining success and keeping the doors open once the magnet school has been established.
2. If Riverview decides to keep the current structure of the “magnet programs”, then change the name to “choice programs” rather than magnet programs.
3. Much effort has been made by the Riverview administration to assure that all parents are provided the opportunity to participate in the magnet programs. In spite of these attempts, equity has not been achieved to its desired state. Although the Enrichment Program Director made every attempt to match the magnet enrollment to the school enrollment, the difference in the socio-economic status between the students in the magnet classes and students in the non-magnet classes was significant. Further promotion of the programs must be achieved. This might mean that district administrators or magnet teachers would need to speak during local church services, speak before or after sporting events, and even walk the neighborhoods that typically have fewer magnet students enrolled to explain the programs to the parents. More needs to be done to recruit parents who do not have

the same access to the information as others. Additional outreach strategies must be developed to actively involve more low income and minority families in the magnet programs. If parents do not know of the magnet programs or the benefits they could provide for their child, the district must actively ensure that all parents and students are knowledgeable of the available options.

4. Equity can be addressed by expanding the number of magnet programs throughout the school district. The Montessori Magnet has students continuously enrolled for 9 years, which leads to a sense of a school and community family with stakeholders in the Montessori program, which has resulted in less mobility, and higher student achievement in the Montessori Magnet.
5. The magnet school concept could be expanded by creating new programs or expanding current programs to serve more students in kindergarten through sixth grade classrooms. This could also be established by changing some of the schools from schools within schools to full magnet schools. True magnet schools could allow students to attend the same school from kindergarten through sixth grade. True magnet schools would also focus specifically on one content area such as science, math, technology, etc., thus permeating the magnet theme throughout the school. Additionally, personnel from the two primary schools that do not house any magnet programs should develop a magnet program of interest survey and survey the neighborhood children, their parents, and families for their magnet program interests and suggestions.



6. Since Riverview has not received any federal magnet grant funds in a number of years, equitable allocation of resources must be examined for the benefit of all students. Magnet Assistance Program grants are still available through the federal government and district personnel should apply for these funds.
7. Riverview Magnet programs are parent choice. The district should examine other avenues for admittance to specific magnet programs, such as standardized achievement tests, talent performances, etc.

### **Conclusion**

Today, Riverview School District enrollment is 5,292 Pre-Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students housed in eleven schools. Riverview has a 23% mobility rate, a graduation rate of 74%, and a low income rate of 86%. Additionally, Riverview has a population of English Language Learners at 11%, students with disabilities at 12%, and a homeless population at 2%. The racial demographics of students in Riverview include 49.4% Black, 26.1% Hispanic, 23.3% White, and 1% of the students are of two or more races. Riverview School District has changed considerably with the passage of time, as have many school districts. The Hispanic population is growing rapidly in the school district as the demographics of the community changes. The Black population is now the non-minority and the White population is the minority, in stark contrast to 1979, the first year of the magnet programs in Riverview.

I have researched the timeline of what led to magnet programs in Riverview. I have also concluded from this study that there are numerous concerns with the current processes with the magnet programs in Riverview. The magnet programs did not accomplish what they set out to achieve, which was to stop White flight. Additionally, the magnet programs have

not maintained middle-income families in the public schools as the 2014 low income in the district was at 86%.

As we look ahead to the future, Riverview must continue to embrace the changes as they occur. In recent years, Riverview School District has made a concerted effort to keep the racial enrollment in the magnet programs consistent with the individual schools and the district population. There are still many concerns with the current magnet programs, but the district is on the right track by ensuring that the racial make-up of the magnet programs mirrors that of the building in which the program is housed. Riverview must re-examine the integrity that true magnets schools entail and seek out funding to develop full magnet schools. Riverview School District must also continue to seek out avenues that provide all students with an equitable education and access to programs of interest.

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