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What's Race Got to Do with It?: A Historical Inquiry into the Impact of Color-blind Reform on Racial Inequality in America's Public Schools

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WHAT'S RACE GOT TO DO WITH IT?:
A HISTORICAL INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF COLOR-BLIND REFORM ON
RACIAL INEQUALITY IN AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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A HISTORICAL INQUIRY INTO THE IMPACT OF COLOR-BLIND REFORM ON
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prepared by

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is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Leadership & Change.

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the history and impact of color-blind educational reform in the post-*Brown* era on racial inequality of educational opportunities and outcomes in America's public schools. Through the lens of critical race theory and race critical theory, the dissertation employs a dual analysis. A macro analysis of the evolution and impact of color-blind educational reform on the national level is juxtaposed with a micro, case-study analysis of the history of color-blind educational reform at a historically Black high school. The historical analysis of the relationship between race and education encompasses intellectual and social aspects of education in the U.S. during the pre-*Brown* era, however, this dissertation's primary interest is on the past forty years, 1970 to the present. The dissertation draws on the work of traditional critical race scholars, critical race theorists in education, and critical theory pedagogues. Largely informed by document and policy evidence, the aim of the macro analysis is to reconstruct the history of education in the U.S. from a race-critical perspective. While archival evidence is very important to the microanalysis, the locus of analysis at the micro level centers on the narrative, antenarrative, microstoria, and lived experiences of the people most closely associated with the case study. By making the people its focus, the dissertation uncovered nuanced understandings and submerged interpretations that provide valuable insight into the relationship between race, education, and educational reform in the African American community. The resulting narrative exposed the racialized oppression of color-blind educational reform and the effects of internalized racism, and suggested the need for a counterhegemonic culture and emancipatory pedagogy in predominantly African American schools, thus revealing hopeful

possibilities in the development of a race-critical twenty-first century conscientization. The

electronic version of this dissertation is at OhioLink ETD Center, www.ohiolink.edu/etd.

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Introduction

> One ground of hope for the Negro is in the fact that the discussion still goes on. . .
> Without putting my ear to the ground, I can even now hear the anxious inquiry as to
> when this discussion of the Negro will cease. If you wish to suppress it, I counsel
> you, my fellow citizens to remove its cause. The demand for Negro rights would
> have ceased long since but for the existence of a sufficient and cause for its
> continuance. . . . Until the public schools cease to be caste schools in every part of
> our country, this discussion will go on. (Douglass as cited in Ritchie, 1968, pp. 182-
> 183)

> It is crucial for an understanding of American educational history to recognize that
> within American democracy there have been classes of oppressed people and that
> there have been essential relationships between popular education and the politics of
> oppression. Both schooling for democratic citizenship and schooling for second-
> class citizenship have been basic traditions of American education. (Anderson, 1988,
> p. 1)

Renowned historian and orator Frederick Douglass, in a speech entitled "The Negro

Is a Brilliant Success," and venerable historian James D. Anderson (1998), in the seminal

work, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860–1935,* captured the essence of the

unsettling phenomenon that inspires this research: racial inequality of educational

opportunity and outcomes in America's public schools. Since the inception of public

education, this pervasive American phenomenon has historically and disproportionately

plagued African Americans. Despite the advancements Black Americans achieved during

the Civil Rights movement and the implementation of almost half a century of subsequent

educational reform agendas, allegedly focused on equity, an unequal public education

system still persists and African American youth continue to suffer unduly from the

persistence of failure in urban schools. As the provocative title of distinguished professor

and author Charles M. Payne's (2008) book so aptly suggests, we have seen *So Much

Reform, So Little Change*.

In the past 20 years alone, we have witnessed unprecedented experimentation with ways to improve the education given to children in low-income schools. What, then, is the problem with the schools in urban America? Why do their problems seem so insurmountable? How is it that after years of relentless attention and billions of dollars spent on reform, we seem to have so little to show for our efforts? Rogers and Oakes (2005) suggested the reason for our lackluster success is the consequence of our failure to understand and confront "the broader social conditions, cultural norms, and power relations that sustain structures of segregation and inequality and resist change, both inside and outside schools" (p. 2181). We fail, they argued, because we refuse to recognize that privilege and exclusion are ideologies endemic to the logic of our educational system.

Despite the esteemed legacy of Horace Mann's common school as society's great equalizer, the fact of the matter is that schools also serve the purpose of preparing students for their prescribed places in an unequal labor market and society. While Americans may be more comfortable addressing what they consider to be the more neutral issue of poverty, the unsettling reality is that social hierarchies in this country are inseparable from racial hierarchies; consequently, disparate and stratified schooling opportunities and outcomes favor the higher status White racial population. Rogers and Oakes (2005) argued:

> Social science research, even in the hands of committed and skillful change agents or backed by court orders, is too weak an instrument to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of racial inequality. At root, the cultural norms of meritocracy and the politics of White and middle-class privilege are impervious to such an attack. Schooling's continued role in the reproduction of race and social class inequality, mediated by cultural norms and political processes that are complicated, mutually constituted and on their face, racially neutral. (p. 2187)

Indeed, the dominant paradigm in educational reform today pursues a race-less and color-blind agenda. Many White and some African Americans now discount the relation of racism to inequality in education and the necessity of race-conscious educational reform. Rather

than blaming racially skewed educational outcomes on racist norms and politics and their manifestations in equal resources and opportunities, we prefer to blame the victims—the children who do not fit the dominant ideologies of intelligence and merit. We justify the persistence of inequality and mask our racism in the guise of color-blind, race-less reform.

In the opening epigraph of this dissertation, Frederick Douglass asserted that as long as a caste system exists in the nation's schools, the problems of equity, equality, race, and racism will linger and discussion will continue. I posit that color-blind policies threaten to end this discussion. James D. Anderson (1988) argued that we must acknowledge our history of a "politics of oppression" (p. 1) in our nation. We must admit to ourselves that we have a dual educational system in which we educate some, presumably the White majority, for "democratic citizenship" (p. 1) and others, essentially African Americans and other minorities, for "second-class citizenship" (p. 1). I contend that color-blind reform agendas diminish our desire and capability to recognize the systematic role oppressive politics play in our schools and society. I worry that we might be exacerbating the very problem we wish to eradicate or, even worse, that many Americans do not really want an equitable educational system. I am certain, at any rate, that Americans cannot afford to retreat from our moral obligation and social responsibility to provide equality of educational opportunity and outcomes for all students in our schools. Theodore Sizer (as cited in Meier & Wood, 2004) reminded us:

> The measure of the worth of a society is how it treats its weakest citizens. By this standard, America—the richest nation in the world falls visibly short. We are long on rhetoric and short on resolute action. The gap between our articulated ideas and our practice is an international embarrassment. It does not have to be so. (p. xvii)

The phenomenon of racial inequality of educational opportunity and outcomes in America's schools is, quite simply, unacceptable.

Overview of the Study

The central research question guiding the research is: How have allegedly race-less, color-blind educational reform agendas in the post-*Brown* Era, intentionally or unintentionally, affected racial inequality of educational opportunity and outcomes in America's public schools? Because I am interested in how educational reform agendas have affected racial inequality in America's public schools over time, I chose historical inquiry as my primary methodology. The purpose of my research is to present an interpretation of the impact of educational reform that takes to task the assumptions of the traditional narrative as it exposes and expands subaltern narratives. By taking a race-critical view of the history of educational reform and investigating what happens when race becomes a much more central focus in understanding the history of education in America, my aim is to educate and disturb all who read my work on such a manner that they are moved to deeper critical reflection and poised for active resistance to the perpetuation of racial inequality in America's schools.

The epistemological and philosophical foundations for this dissertation are rooted, generally, in qualitative ways of knowing. The research is an empirically informed historical inquiry that is framed within a critical race theory (CRT) perspective. My views are deeply influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Carter G. Woodson, and W. E. B. Du Bois. In the next several paragraphs, I explain the key terms, concepts, and theoretical precepts that undergird my research.

Qualitative Ways of Knowing

The primary purpose of qualitative research is to study others holistically as individuals within systems or organizations. Human beings cannot be understood outside of

the entirety of a larger, natural context and without an in-depth awareness of and sensitivity

for their unique perceptions (Howard & Borland, 2001, p. 6). I posit that absolute truth is

impossible to establish and, furthermore, that even relative and relational truths are bound by

the context (time and place), as well as the perceptions of participants, the researcher, and

the audience. Hence, my research is based on constructivist ways of knowing. Multiple

socially and historically constructed meanings from individual experiences were generated

in order to develop a theory or pattern. I assume an advocate/participatory perspective that

is political, change-oriented, and issue-laden (Creswell, 2003). My position in the research

is clear. It is neither detached nor impartial. As an African American educator, I advocate

for educational leadership and change aimed at achieving equity and equality in opportunity

and outcomes through race-conscious and race-critical reform, particularly with respect to

African American youth and urban schools.

History, Historiography, and Critical Race Theory

> History . . . can bind us or free us. It can destroy compassion by showing us the
> world through the eyes of the comfortable. . . . It can oppress any resolve to act by
> mountains of trivia, by diverting us into intellectual games, by pretentious
> "interpretations" which spur contemplation rather than action, by limiting our vision
> to an endless story of disaster and thus promoting cynical withdrawal, by befogging
> us with the encyclopedic eclecticism of standard textbook. (Zinn, 1973, p. 54)

"We would not deprecate the fact, then, that America has a race problem" (Cooper,

1892, p. 178). Two facts hold true in the history of America and its public education system.

Echoing the words of Omi and Winant (1994), the first is that "the Unites States is and has

always has been a racialized state founded on a belief in the inherent inferiority and

superiority of certain groups of people based on color of their skin and other physical

characteristics" (Lynn, 1999, p. 622). The second truth is that public schools have

consistently failed to effectively educate the majority of culturally and racially subordinated

students, especially Black students. At what point will Black children have equal access to quality education and some assurance of equal outcomes?

Many Americans are baffled by this question. Does not equal opportunity equate to color-blindness? Does not one lead to the other? After all, the goal of a color-blind America is a long-standing idea. When segregation was legal and the color of one's skin determined where one could live, work, sit, eat, play, and learn, the adoption of a legal posture of color-blindness was viewed as a viable means of abolishing color-coded laws of a southern racial caste system. In the post-*Brown*/post-Civil Rights Era, however, color-blind ideology has deemphasized race as a prevalent social issue and, in so doing, has led to the coexistence of "de facto White privilege and White resentment of race-conscious remedies" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 30). The "durable persistence of racial inequality" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 12) in American society and America's public schools is worsened by the current paradigm of color-blindness and color-blind educational reform.

I argue, as have many critical scholars (Anderson, 1988; Butchart, 1988; Du Bois, 1935, 1994; Woodson, 1993), that race and racism cannot be viewed independently from the history of education in America. Yet, in the years following the Civil Rights Era, the American legal system has consistently worked to deradicalize the impact of the racial freedom movement. Educational reform has taken on a dangerous and covertly oppressive posture of color-blindness. "Fifty years later when state sanctioned racial segregation is illegal and people of color have still to achieve truly equal opportunity with White Americans, the color-blind ideal actually impedes efforts necessary to eliminate racial inequality" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 58). It has become a "powerful sword and near-impenetrable shield, almost a civic religion that actually promotes the unequal racial status

quo" (p. 58). Color-blind ideology, in the 21st century, contributes to a complex and all too familiar history of educational reform aimed at the preservation of White privilege.

History

History, in the minds of many, provides, at the very least, a factual, if not neutral account or reconstruction of real events as they occurred in the past. Indeed, historians seek to uncover artifacts, documents, traditions, and cultural data that provide vital information about the past. History, however, provides few concrete answers to the sweet mysteries of life. "Accordingly, we tend to think of history as a *reconstruction* of actual events as they unfolded in time . . . apparently purged of any subjective elements, history appears as factual, objective, and neutral as any disciplines in the sciences" (Nealon & Giroux, 2003, p. 97). If only things were so simple! It provides a context within which interpretation occurs and, if it is to be of value, must also be mediated. Critical theorist Walter Benjamin (1968) once observed "the past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again" (p. 255). His insightful observation reminds us that "meaning doesn't simply emanate from random events; rather, it is the historian who not only assigns order and coherence to events but also renders them significant or not" (p. 98). History, then, must be deciphered and, like literature, is a narrated point of view about the occurrence, meaning, and significance of actual events. Even the past we seek to understand is already a representation.

Nealon & Giroux (2003) explained:

Writing history is very much akin to writing a story with a plot—focusing on the development of an idea, the causes and effects that have led up to the present. Events within such a story must be ranked according to their significance and evaluated in terms of the larger developing plot. . . . It's the over-arching plot, the "master narrative," the bigger context, that gives meaning to the otherwise random events of history. (p. 100)

The master narrative within traditional history has tended to portray history from the top down. That is to say, traditional history is based on the accounts of the victors, the powerful, the privileged and the most educated members of society (Nealon & Giroux, 2003). Nineteenth century philosopher G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) suggested that history is primarily political history and mostly concerned with the public sphere as opposed to the "daliness" (Ulrich, 1990, p. 9) of ordinary people. He asserted that traditional history advances the privileges of victors by reinforcing the misconception that only the powerful make history. The consequence of this misconception is that the powerful and the powerless become immune and accustomed to abuse of power and injustice. The marginalized are forgotten. They become virtually invisible.

It is the responsibility of present-day historians to do history differently. In the eloquent words of Nealon and Giroux (2003), "our task is both critical—to complicate our understanding of history by virtue of its complicity, at least potentially, with power and creative, to consciously construct meanings that inspire action in and for the present" (p. 108). Postcolonial theorist Edward W. Said (1935-2003) found hope in the concept of history as a forum for critique and an avenue for marginalized peoples to tell their own counter-stories. Ironically, traditional history's nemesis may be that it is the least scientific of the social sciences and that is a very good thing because it leaves a crack in the door for history to become the most hopeful and humanizing social science. For history:

> Can suggest to us alternatives that we would never otherwise consider. It can both warm and inspire. It can warn us that it is possible for a whole nation to be brainwashed, for "enlightened" and "educated" people to commit genocide, for a "democratic" country to maintain slavery, for oppressed to turn into oppressors, for "socialism" to be tyrannical and "liberalism" to be imperialist, for whole peoples to be led like sheep. It can also show us that apparently powerless underlings can defeat their rulers. (Zinn, 1973, p. 281)

Historiography

Historiography, an often semantically ambiguous term, is sometimes misunderstood. In a broad sense, historiography, a qualitative research method, is synonymous with the larger category of historical inquiry. It is not, as is commonly thought, a singular methodology. There are, for example, several methods by which to pursue historical inquiry (i.e., social history, intellectual history, quantitative history, political history, biographical history, case study, and more). More often than not, researchers employ more than one method in a single research design. Historiography might also be viewed in a slightly different perspective as the study of how the history of a certain phenomenon has been researched over time. In this case, the emphasis is on identifying the prevalent subject matter, themes, and interpretations of historical inquiry of a particular person, place, or phenomenon during various epochs. Historian Ronald E. Butchart (1988), for instance, identified three eras within the historiography of African American education.

According to Butchart (1988), the first era of historiography of the African American struggle for education, dated from the turn of the 20th century into the Depression, was dominated by two tendencies: "a triumphalist history arising from the Dunningite tradition (a now largely discredited interpretation of the Reconstruction era that glorified the South and vilified the North) and a corrective, vindications history written as a defense against the fabrication of the former" (p. 334). This era was replaced by a second period that lasted from the 1930s into the late 1960s in which the focus centered on liberal progressivist presumptions that embraced neither the claims of White supremacists nor the defensive vindicationists. The third era evolved in the late 1980s and is evident, to some degree, today in the historiography of African American education. Marked by an "iconoclastic

revisionism" (p. 334), this most recent era is characterized by "the least unity of interpretation, but perhaps the greatest commitment to a liberatory political agenda" (p. 334). I bring to light Butchart's assessment of the historiography of African American education to call attention to the fact that the current trend toward color-blind reform and the White-washing of race and racial issues threatens to hoodwink the naïve about the significance of race in American schools and society and disempower the informed who strive for a race-critical educational reform agenda that emancipates the historically subordinated. The point I hope to make very clear here is that doing history is not simply the recanting of an unmediated past, but rather, doing history is about using the past to learn how to construct new strategies for the future. Doing history is a politically purposeful undertaking.

My purpose, as I have previously stated, was to educate and disturb educational leadership and the public about the impact of color-blind reform on the racial inequality of educational opportunity and outcomes in America's public schools so much so that all stakeholders in the educational process are called to effect a race-conscious agenda aimed at a creating a just and equitable educational system. In this dissertation, I focused on the intellectual and social history of large-scale American educational reform from the post-*Brown* era to the present. I sought to give voice to those for whom reforms were often targeted and those in whom the success of any reform lies. Consequently, oral histories from the margins are central to my research. An essential first step in the practice of historical inquiry is to address the role of objectivity and the meaning of truth in the research.

Just as revisionist history, researcher subjectivity, and the acknowledgement of a dissensus of truths are relatively new concepts in the historiography of African American

education, they represent fairly recent developments within the historical profession as well.

As historian Peter Novick (1988) pointed out in his seminal work, *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the America historical Profession*, for much of the 20th century, there was no self-consciousness among historians about objectivity, and, indeed, no questioning within the profession about the gold standard of objectivity. Not until after the 1960s did the entire topic of the objectivity question become legitimized among historians, and even today, many historians challenge the validity and scholarship of those who veer too far away from the objectivity standard. Clearly, I took a calculated risk in this endeavor by choosing to position myself very subjectively within the research and not only acknowledging, but seeking to uncover the untold relational truths shared by the uncomfortable, the disenfranchised, the historically marginalized voices of Black people.

Critical Race Theory

CRT "reject[s] the prevailing orthodoxy that scholarship should be or could be neutral and objective" (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995, p. xiii). The following declarations express the tenets of CRT:

1. CRT recognizes that racism is endemic in U.S. society, deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and even psychologically.
2. CRT crosses epistemological boundaries.
3. CRT reinterprets civil rights law in light of its limitations, illustrating that laws to remedy racial inequality are often undermined before they can be fully implemented.
4. CRT portrays dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness, and meritocracy as camouflages for the self-interest of powerful entities of society.
5. CRT challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical examination of the law and society. (Tate, 1997, pp. 234-235)

Critical race theory is an offshoot of a more general critical theory related to the resistance and oppositional pedagogy founded by critical scholars and theorists such as Paulo Freire,

Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, Michael Apple, and others, and more specifically, critical legal studies (CLS). The difference between CLS and CRT is that CRT extends its assessment of the impact of racist ideology beyond the courtroom and places race at the core of the broader context of social inequity in all areas of American society.

Critical race theorists contend that, in the years since the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, a conservative backlash against the great society gained credibility and momentum in the Reagan-Bush revolution of the 1980s. Thus, a misleading racial paradigm has emerged based on three erroneous precepts: (a) the Civil Rights Movement successfully eradicated the problem of racism in America, save for a few ignorant, racist extremists, (b) if any remnants of racism persist, it is because Blacks have failed to take advantage of the opportunities afforded them, and (c) the U.S. is becoming color-blind and there is no need for race-conscious policies (Brown et al., 2003). CRT is committed to presenting a critical and oppositional historical narrative predicated on racial consciousness. Within the last decade, CRT has been expanded to include a critical race theory, pedagogy, and methodology of education.

CRT and Education

In 1994, Ladson-Billings and Tate (as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006) proposed to the American Educational Research Association "race, unlike gender and class, remains undertheorized in education" (pp. 4-5). They posited further that CRT could be used to examine the role of race and racism in education. To this end, they attempted to "theorize race and to use it as an analytical tool for understanding school inequity" (p. 5). Building upon the importance of historical context, they and other critical race scholars have begun to look more closely at the patterns of racial inequality in America's public schools. Research

confirms, among other things, that racism is endemic and ingrained in American life and there is a need to reinterpret ineffective civil rights law and challenge claims of neutrality, objectivity, color-blindness, and meritocracy in educational policy, practice, and reform (Delgado, 1989a; Ladson-Billings & Tate as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Orfield, 1988; Wellman, 1977).

CRT advocates challenging the majoritarian narrative and allowing the historically marginalized to name their own reality (Delgado, 1989a, 1989b). It also honors and revitalizes the visionary insights of African American historians and intellectual pioneers like W. E. B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson in a manner that not only heightens the awareness that racial ideology and racial power still matter in America, but also evokes action toward teaching oppositional and resistance pedagogy in our nation's schools. In this study, the critical race lens was used to reevaluate the history of education and educational reform through the eyes and hearts of the very people for whom much of the reform agendas were targeted—African Americans. Recently, in fact, a number of scholars have applied critical race theory to education (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Lynn, 1999; Solorzano, 1997, 1998; Solozano & Villalpando, 1998; Tate, 1997). According to Solorzano and Yosso (as cited in Lynn, 1999):

> Critical race theory in education is defined as a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of education that maintain the marginal position and subordination of [African American and Latino] students. Critical race theory asks such questions as: What role do schools, school processes, and school structures play in the maintenance of racial, ethnic, and gender subordination? (p. 611)

To be sure, CRT neither ignores nor discounts the impact of other factors such as class and gender that have also historically been used to oppress Blacks, women, the poor, and other

subordinated populations. Ladson-Billings and Tate (as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006)

contended, however, that:

> Class-based and gender-based explanations are not powerful enough to explain all of
> the differences (or variance) in school experience and performance. Although both
> class and gender can and do intersect with race, as stand-alone variables they do not
> explain all of the educational achievement differences apparent between Whites and
> students of color. (p. 15)

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) echoed these sentiments in their definition of critical race

methodology. They wrote:

> We define critical race methodology as a theoretically grounded approach to research
> that (a) foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process. However,
> it also challenges the separate discourses on race, gender, and class by showing how
> these elements intersect to affect the experiences of students of color; (b) challenges
> the traditional research paradigms, texts, and
> theories used to explain the experiences of students of color; (c) offers a liberatory or
> transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination; and (d) focuses on
> the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of students of color. Furthermore,
> it views these experiences as sources of strength and (e) uses the interdisciplinary
> knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, humanities,
> and the law to better understand the experiences of students of color. (p. 24)

While I cannot and do not wish to downplay class, gender, and other important factors in the

history of educational reform, due to the limitations of the scope of this dissertation, these

factors are addressed only inasmuch as they naturally coincide with my analysis of the

impact of color-blind reform on racial inequality in education.

This relatively new critical race methodology embraces a variety of narrative

approaches, all of which are amenable to my goal of reinterpreting the history of educational

reform, particularly the color-blind reform era prevalent in the post-*Brown* era. CRT, as a

methodology, encourages the use of stories, counter-stories, personal vignettes, creative

narrative, and other literary forms, such as poetry and music. Arguing that political and

moral analysis is situational, critical race theorists maintain "truths only exist for this person

in this predicament at this time in history" (Delgado, 1990, p. 111). "A theme of 'naming of

one's own reality' or 'voice' is entrenched in the work of critical race theorists" (Ladson-

Billings & Tate as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006, p. 20). Delgado (1989b) pointed to at

least three reasons for naming one's own reality:

1. Much of reality is socially constructed;
2. Stories provide members of outgroups a vehicle for psychic self-preservation; and
3. The exchange of stories from teller to listener can help overcome ethnocentrism and the dysconcious conviction of viewing the world in one way. (p. 2073)

"Stories by people of color can catalyze the necessary cognitive conflict to jar

dysconscious racism" (Ladson-Billing & Tate as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006, p. 21)

within the oppressor. Dysconsious racism is the cultural and linguistic insensitivity of

teachers toward students of color caused by failure to confront stereotypical views they have

which stem from hidden racism (Gay, 2000). Whether telling the stories of Black people

successfully fleshes out obscured racism in others or not, no analysis of the history of

educational reform is complete without giving voice to the untold stories of Black people. It

is not, however, only the research participants who find their voice in critical race

methodology; the researcher is encouraged to name her reality as well.

> Thus, CRT asks the critical qualitative researcher to operate in a self-revelatory mode, to acknowledge the double (or multiple) consciousness in which she is operating. My *decision* to deploy a critical race theoretical framework in my scholarship is intimately linked to my understanding of the political and personal stake I have in the education of Black children. All of my "selves" are invested in this work—the self that is a researcher, the self that is a parent, the self that is a community member, the self that is a Black woman. (Ladson-Billings as cited in Chapman, 2002, pp. 16-17)

CRT is a discipline that honors my history and my story, as well as the stories and

histories of others. It is clear that CRT blends extremely well with historiography and

provides a foundation for discourse on the components of a liberatory and more just

educational reform agenda. My research was informed by the work and wisdom of

extraordinary critical scholars: Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux, Carter G. Woodson, and W. E. B. Du Bois.

Michel Foucault

Foucault analyzed the relation of truth, knowledge, and power in school and society and the integral functionality of racism. He argued that power is not given, taken back, or refused, but rather, is exercised and, essentially, exists only in action. Schools, and other institutions, create what Foucault (1995) called "docile bodies" (p. 135) by exerting power over others through discipline, examination, routinization, punishment, selection, hierarchalization, centralization, and normalization. These goals inscribe on society the political rational for racism, marginalization, and subjugation of certain peoples (Foucault, 1995). One of the most important questions Foucault asked, in my view, however, is: what makes power powerful? In an interview conducted by Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino (1984), Foucault explained the complexity of power and how it functions. He theorized:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it. What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses, and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body. (as cited in Rabinov, 1984, p. 61)

Foucault posited that power generates truth and knowledge; the three form a triangular relation in which hegemony, among other things, thrives. He went on to say, however, that "where there is power, there is resistance" (Foucault, 1990, p. 95). It is in this statement that I find hope—hope that educators can disempower regimes of truth that stem from various forms of hegemony.

Antonio Gramsci

The concept of ideological hegemony is considered the cornerstone of Gramsci's social theory and political philosophy. "By hegemony, Gramsci meant the permeation throughout society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations" (Boggs, 1976, p. 39). He held that hegemony is sustained by formal and informal education, coercive, and non-coercive institutions, and traditional and organic intellectuals. All of these forces work in concert to formulate organizing principles of ideological hegemony. "School," Gramsci (2008) alleged, "is the instrument through which intellectuals of various levels are elaborated" (p. 10). Yet, what impresses me most about Gramsci's work is the transformational possibilities he saw in education. I am encouraged by his vision of the hopeful possibility that a subordinate social group, the organic common sense intellectual, could generate, through critical awareness, its own organic intellectuals so as to create a counter hegemony that would undermine existing relations (Bocock, 1986; Boggs, 1976; Giroux, 1988, 2005; Gramsci, 2008).

Paulo Freire

Freire founded critical theory on the basis of critical awareness. In his 1970 landmark work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (reprinted in 2007), he introduced a critical theory predicated on the assertion that education should be a liberating experience. He asserted that schools perpetuate a culture of oppression—an inauthentic or consciousness— by encouraging silent resignation, fatalistic worldviews, and compliant attitudes and behaviors. Through a process that he called "conscienticacao" (p. 35) or conscientization (as it is referred to by English-speaking scholars), Freire opined that education could bring about

a "real consciousness" (p. 113) that would ignite social change through heightened critical awareness and praxis, the conjoining of critical reflection and action. I see in Freire's theory great potential for transforming schools into meaningful sites of transformational learning where the value of social justice prevails. I believe that critical awareness holds the power to arouse the sometimes dormant resistance to power that Foucault asserted is inherent to all power relations and also bring into being the counter hegemony to which Gramsci alluded for a more just society and educational system.

Henry Giroux

Henry Giroux expanded on Gramsci's belief in transformational possibilities of education. According to Giroux, one of the pioneers of critical theory and pedagogy, "resistance is a valuable theoretical and ideological construct that provides an important focus for analyzing the relationship between school and the wider society" (Giroux, 1983, p. 107). The theory of resistance regards the school as both an institution and a set of social practices in conjunction with other socio-economic and political institutions that manage the production, distribution, and legitimization of economic and cultural resources within the dominant society. It analyzes how power and knowledge implicate schools in perpetuating the inequalities created in the greater social structure. It focuses on the historical and social factors that dictate the selection and validation of knowledge forms and associated practices (Giroux, 1983). Giroux called upon schools to develop oppositional strategies that might serve as the basis for a viable political force and change agent. To these ends, resistance theory honors a dialectical concept of human agency in which domination is unfixed and incomplete. It supports Foucault's notion that the power of truth can be detached from forms of hegemony and Gramsci's theory that critical awareness and reflection can create a

counter hegemony (Giroux, 1983 p. 95). The notion that schools are responsible for social change is endemic to the history of educational reform and inherent in original Deweyian philosophy.

John Dewey

It is not, however, the most popular Deweyian philosophy that I summarize here. In his later works (1925-1935), Dewey became increasingly concerned with ways to engage the public in the critical social inquiry of inequality and special privilege in education. He began to call for a public sphere in which experts and citizens, alike, could come together in participatory social inquiry. Dewey (1937a) wrote:

> Democratic means and the attainment of ends are one and inseparable. . . . The crusade can win at best but a partial victory unless it springs from a living faith in our common human nature and in the power of voluntary action based upon public collective intelligence. (p. 299)

True to his prescient vision and remarkable intellect, Dewey recognized the "intellectual blindness caused by privileged and monopolistic possession is evident in the rationalization of the misery and cultural degradation of others which attend its existence" (Dewey, 1932, p. 348). According to Dewey, the blame for these inequities has been passed on to those who suffer and in so doing, the inequities of our social order have become ideologically justified. Dewey helped me to see that the lackluster success of color-blind reform in eradicating racial inequality in America's public schools is largely attributed to the failure of theorists and would-be educational reformers to recognize the need "to treat equity reform as distinctly different from other school improvement efforts that may entail controversy but evoke far less political or self-interest backlash" (Rogers & Oakes, 2005, p. 2188). Furthermore, educators are not likely effectively balance multiple and competing pubic demands without political pressure for racial equity in education.

Carter G. Woodson

Critical race theory owes an "intellectual debt" (Ladson-Billings & Tate as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006, p. 14) to Woodson who argued that race is the most essential construct for assessing social and educational inequality in America. As founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and editor of its *Journal of Negro History,* Woodson was among the first to establish race as a topic of scholarly inquiry. Although his work was often marginalized by traditional academia, Woodson (1993) "revolutionalized thinking about African Americans from that of pathology and inferiority to multitextured analysis of the uniqueness of African Americans and their situation in the United States" (p. 14) and clearly identified the role that schooling plays in institutionalizing inequality and destroying the motivation of Black children to learn. In his most notable work, *The Mis-education of the Negro*, Woodson wrote:

> The same educational process which inspires and stimulates the oppressor with the thought that he is everything an has accomplished everything worthwhile depresses and crushes at the same time the spark of genius in the Negro by making him feel that his race does not amount to much and never will measure up to the standards of other peoples. (p. xiii)

Critical of the education Blacks in America traditionally receive, Woodson maintained that "what others have written the Negro during the last three centuries has been mainly for the purpose of bringing him where he is today and holding him there" (p. 194).

W. E. B. Du Bois

Du Bois is instrumental in encouraging all Americans to never forget that we do not live in a race-less, colorblind society. The preface of Du Bois' (1994) legendary *The Souls of Black Folk* begins with these haunting words:

> Herein lie buried many things which if read with patience may show the strange meaning of being Black here in the dawning of the 20th century. This meaning is not

without interest to you Gentle Reader; for the problem of the 20th century is the
problem of the color-line. (p. v)

His uncanny prediction is still pertinent in the 21st century, evidenced by the pervasive inequality of educational opportunity and outcomes in our public education system. Du Bois gave all thoughtful Americans an intellectual legacy that is unparalleled. For me, his gift was more personal. Du Bois' reinterpretation of American history and African American education grounds my understanding of the inextricable relation between history and race in America. In the midst of the permanence of racism and inequality, his sensitive explanation of the meaning of "spiritual strivings" (p. 1) of Black people and compassion for what troubles the very souls of Black folk inspire me to use my intellect to lead and inspire an organic uprising in America's schools of resistance to social injustice.

This dissertation represents much more, however, than an intellectual exercise. My primary motivation for doing this research is deeply personal.

Rationale and Purpose—A Personal Vignette

Ever since I grew old enough to reflect, I have been deeply troubled by the insidious persistence of racism and inequality of opportunity in America's public schools. At various junctures throughout my life, I have had the occasion to ponder the impact of growing up Black in America.

In 1962, I was one of 60 Black children crammed into a partitioned second grade classroom. There were two teachers, Mrs. Hart and Mrs. Lyle. My teacher was Mrs. Lyle. We did not know we were overcrowded because everybody acted like they had good sense, for the most part, so there were no major distractions, of which we were aware, to teaching and learning. We all knew one another from the neighborhood, we were sure that our teachers loved us, and we learned what we needed to learn to be ready for third grade. That

was all that mattered. It was not until I became old enough to reflect on the situation that I

realized the inequity of our circumstances. I later learned that our school was overcrowded,

but across town, classes in the all-White schools had only 20 students.

It was not until I became a teacher that I realized that there had to have been

numerous caveats to teaching and learning from Mrs. Hart and Mrs. Lyle's perspective:

caveats like not being able to give individual attention to those students who probably

needed it most; having to insist on absolute order, discipline, and control when a little

unorthodox active learning might have occasionally better suited the learning environment;

and being forced to teach to the middle in deference to the infamous bell curve, which

automatically discounts children who appear as outliers in the larger spectrum. In retrospect,

I wondered what happened to the much-anticipated reform that was supposed to follow the

Brown v. Board of Education (1954) victory. At the time, however, in my innocence, I

knew nothing of the *Brown* decision, segregation, or the interest that fueled. My world was

Black and it felt and looked pretty good to me.

I first felt the sting of racism in the seventh grade. I was one of a select group of

African American students bussed across town to integrate an all-White middle school in

Gary, Indiana. While some students were unfriendly, it was not their unfriendliness that

bothered me the most. It was not a personal prejudice that I felt; it was more of systematic,

institutionalized, collusion of life-long perceptions of being marginalized because of my

color. What troubled me most was a nagging sense of self-doubt. It was a self-doubt borne

out of being ignored and feeling diminished in the White environment—ignored at lunch,

ignored in class, and rarely asked for my opinion. It was a feeling of doubt that my dad may

have unknowingly nurtured as I often heard him lament "if you're Black, you have to be perfect and then improve." What a tall order! I doubt that it is possible.

At any rate, I began to second-guess my intellect and ability alongside the majority population of White students. Suddenly, everybody seemed smarter than I was just because they were not Black. It was a very unfamiliar feeling because I was accustomed to being the smartest person in the class. I did not realize that I still may have been the smartest person in the class even if the class was full of White people. Despite loving parents, both of whom were career educators, and numerous positive Black role models within my family, church, and neighborhood, the ravaging effects of institutional racism in American society had managed to teach me that White was naturally right and better and that being Black made me not quite good enough.

I came home and announced that I just did not feel as smart as the White kids. "They're smarter than I am," I cried. It took a stern talking to from my father, one I will never forget, to jolt me out of this destructive self-talk. His words hit me like a splash of cold water in the face. "Don't ever doubt yourself or what you can do. You are just as good, just as smart as anybody else. Keep your eyes on the prize." I took his words to heart, consecrating them in my memory, and have, since then, often culled great strength from their remembrance at critical junctures throughout my life. In one sense, I have never looked back, that is to say, I rarely doubt my capacity to achieve great things. Yet, in another vein, I am constantly reflecting on the why of that lived experience. Several niggling questions come to mind.

How is it that such effects are learned and through what everyday mechanisms? How do the pedagogical dimensions of overt White supremacy differ from the more covert

expressions of White dominance in the alleged raceless or colorblind contemporary era and what effect do they have on Black youth? Do children of color still learn from school and society that they are inept and if so, to what degree? Do they learn this differently and if so, how? What happens to children who rarely hear positively affirming words? What happens to children who accept the negative identity frequently ascribed to them? What happens to them?

I fear that many children die inside. Without a language of hopeful possibility, children become fatalistic about their future, grow cynical, and become what society tells them they are. They become low-achievers. All too often, in the midst of progress in more privileged school districts and wealthy suburbs, many African Americans attend sub-standard schools with sub-standard resources and sub-standard teachers who race to beat the children out of the doors at the close of the school day. Of course, this is not the case everywhere, but if it is the case anywhere, that is one case too many.

This personal vignette expresses the passion and motivation that drives this dissertation. It names my reality about the impact of racism upon my life as Black schoolgirl in Gary, Indiana. Whether my experience is typical or not is irrelevant. What is relevant is that this is my story. Of course, this brief vignette in no way covers all of my school experiences, only those that jumped out at me as I wrote. I sense that as the research process unfolds and counter-stories and new historical perspectives are uncovered, additional personal stories are sure to be revealed.

Gary

Gary, Indiana, the planned "City of the Century," or so it has been called by historian James B. Lane (1978) in his book entitled *City of the Century*, was an up and coming steel

mill hub at the turn of the 20th century. Located approximately 30 miles east of Chicago, Gary was founded in 1906. The city quickly became home to thousands of eastern European immigrants and Blacks from the South. The promise of jobs in the mill and later, a premier school system, the Gary Plan, also known as the Platoon School, heralded for its efficient use of space and time and availability to students and the community beyond the school day, proved enticing to would-be newcomers.

Like many communities across the nation that sprang into being because of the allure of manufacturing jobs, corruption and exploitation of the historically subordinated, namely Black citizens, by the White and the powerful went unchecked. Despite the supposedly progressive school system, the booming steel business, and appeal of newfound economic opportunity for Blacks in the North, Gary had all the familiar trappings of the South. Racial injustice, inequality of opportunity, and forced segregation were evident everywhere: the mills, the schools, businesses, churches, housing, even the parks and beaches that framed Lake Michigan. As time went on, Gary's opportunity and good fortune waned. Gary was confronted with too much change too fast. Jobs in the mill went away, court-ordered integration moved in, a Black mayor was elected, and White flight spread like wildfire. The long gone Platoon System was barely remembered. The citizens of Gary live amidst blatant racial inequity and pervasive inequality of opportunity and outcomes economically, politically, socially, and educationally. Yet, Theodore Roosevelt High School survives in spite of all the injustice.

Theodore Roosevelt High School

Theodore Roosevelt High School (Roosevelt) possesses a unique history that is rich in excellence and pride. Built for Blacks, staffed by Black teachers, and populated by Black

students, Roosevelt is fondly remembered in northwest Indiana for its legendary accomplishments and standards of excellence academically and athletically. Many of its graduates, over the years, have gone on to continue their education at some of the finest universities in the nation. Others have acquired fame and fortune in a myriad of professions. More importantly, Roosevelt graduates are proud of their heritage. My father is a living example of Rooseveltian tradition. A graduate of the class of 1942, my dad came home to Roosevelt after serving in World War II and earning a B.S. and Master's degree from Indiana University in education, where he taught physical education and health and coached a variety of sports for 38 years before retiring as the athletic director. He is not as unique as one might think.

Many Roosevelt graduates of his era returned from college or the war to teach at the "Mighty Velt." Unfortunately, much of Roosevelt's glory now lies in its past. Currently in terms of school improvement, the consequence of failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress according to No Child Left Behind mandates, Roosevelt has been put on notice. It is on probation. Narrowly escaping closure, it opened its doors in 2009 as a technical and vocational academy. Despite its lackluster state rating, Roosevelt remains an icon in the nearly all-Black Gary community. It is also the only surviving historically Black high school in the state of Indiana.

Roosevelt's historic and uninterrupted Blackness certainly distinguishes it from most high schools in urban areas, but it has not existed and does not exist in a vacuum. It is not exempt from the brunt of so-called color-blind educational reforms spawned by panic-inducing neo-liberal agendas, campaigns for educational excellence on neutral terms, and unrealistic, underfunded federal mandates. I wonder what impact the steady movement

toward color-blind reform agendas has had on teaching and learning at this much-loved

learning institution in the years since *Brown* and the fight for civil rights that followed.

Perhaps, because I have always loved learning and academic rigor, I am baffled and

deeply disturbed to see so many Black youth, particularly those in high school, appear to

give more lip service to learning than effort, and schools that serve predominantly Black

youth seem, at least by current measures, to be failing. I am confounded by the fact that so

many of the descendants of African Americans who sacrificed their lives for the right to

learn, now seem disenchanted with education and skeptical about what schools can and will

do for them. While the impact of recent color-blind school reforms on urban education is a

well-trod topic, there is a dearth of research on the impact of such reforms on schools like

Roosevelt that have prevailed in spite of pervasive racial inequity and inequality in the

general community and school system—schools like Roosevelt that have never effectively

been desegregated and in which Black youth have historically been taught by Black teachers.

Theodore Roosevelt High School and the community it serves provide a fertile foundation

for a historical inquiry that may contribute significantly to the field of knowledge on the

impact of color-blind reform and racial inequality of educational opportunities outcome in

America's schools.

Research Design and Methodology

This dissertation was a two-pronged, empirically informed, historical inquiry that is

framed within a critical race theory perspective. One investigation was focused on the

consequences of reform on a macro-level within the larger national context. The other

inquiry was concerned with the impact of color-blind reform on a micro-level within the

context of one urban, all-Black high school. Both studies ran concurrently in a parallel

design with the macro-level research providing the backdrop for the micro-level investigation. My objective was to tease out the effects of color-blind educational reforms in the post-*Brown* rights era on racial inequity of educational opportunities and outcomes by conducting a race-critical analysis of the intellectual and social history of educational reform in the post-*Brown* era and juxtaposing the research findings on the national level with those at Roosevelt High School.

 Situated at the core of the research design, Roosevelt was the subject of an atypical instrumental case study. In an instrumental case study, "we have a research question, a puzzlement, a need for general understanding, and feel that we may get insight into the question by studying a particular case" (Stake, 1995, p. 3). I intentionally selected Roosevelt for the following reasons: (a) it has a unique history and cultural heritage within the community, (b) it has never been integrated, (c) it holds great sentimental value for me, and (d) I was in an advantageous position to do research there. Even though I never attended Roosevelt, my family background afforded me the opportunity to function as an outsider with insider privileges. Most of the empirical research in the study was gathered from Roosevelt and the community it serves.

Throughout the undertaking, I honored the historical voices of Black people—parents, teachers, students, administrators, community leaders, and scholars. I allowed Black people to historicize their stories in the hope of formulating a rich and multi-layered tapestry of new counter-stories and counter-narratives that challenge the majoritarian narrative advanced by the status quo. To clarify, counter-story is defined as:

> A method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The counter story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-

> stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform. (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32)

I aimed to uncover some of these stories and, thereby, not only educate others about the lived experience of racial inequality, specifically in public education, and the need for race-conscious educational reform, but also give voice and strength to traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance.

The sources that enabled a thorough account of the impact of race neutral educational reform on racial inequality in educational opportunities and outcomes included archival data and primary and secondary sources. Instead of relying solely on test scores and other supposedly objective, color-blind data typically used to determine progress and success, I focused on more subjective data from both primary and secondary sources: school archives, school yearbooks, valedictory speeches, graduation programs, School board minutes, principal addresses and notes, Black newspapers and journals, schools newsletters and memorandum, personal narratives, cultural artifacts, artistic medium, and the work of African American historians and scholars. These atypical data were juxtaposed with the interpretations and perspectives of primary and secondary mainstream sources: traditional historical accounts, federal and state government reports and documents, mainstream journals, publications, political speeches, presidential addresses, internet sources, and various forms of communication media.

The historical inquiry covered a 40-year period, from the early 1970s to the present. Using purposeful sampling and snowballing to identify interviewees, personal narratives were gathered from four people who represent each decade: a teacher, a student or alumni, a parent, a community member, and a school or district administrator. One teacher, who taught for more than 40 years at the high school, served as my primary research liaison.

Based upon guidelines provided by Denzin and Lincoln (1998), Fontana and Frey (2005), Kvale and Brinkman (2009), Merriam (1988, 1998), and Stake (1995), a qualitative single instrumental case study and interview protocol was established. Permission was obtained from participants in a brief preliminary interview held two weeks prior to the more formal interview. When necessary, follow-up face-to-face interviews or telephone follow-up interviews were conducted. All interviews were tape recorded and professionally transcribed for accuracy. I also listened to the original transcripts to ascertain emotion and tone. Professional transcripts were informally coded for themes. Whenever possible, the narratives were transformed into stories. Participants were given the opportunity to review and edit the transcripts. In the spirit of self-relevatory research, I reserved the right to interject personal counter-stories and create composite counter-stories and narratives when appropriate (Delgado, 1989a, 1989b; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

It was critically important to obtain a feel for the culture and climate of the school selected to be the subject of the instrumental case study; therefore, I spent several hours at the school time. In keeping with my commitment to transparency as the researcher, the tenor of my observations and interpretations reflected my position as an advocate for race-conscious, race-critical school reform that maintains a critical awareness and consideration of the impact that various practices and decisions have on the educational opportunities and outcomes for African American youth.

Important Ethical Considerations

Because I was engaged with so many different sources, issues of privacy, dignity, and respect for the data, living and non-living were tantamount to my research. Honesty and trustworthiness are essential to my integrity as the researcher throughout the research

process. It was imperative that I protect the dignity of the high school, honor its legacy in the community, and respect the time and effort of all those affiliated, now or in the past, with teaching and learning in the school. In short, at no time did I exploit what I learned or the people from whom I learned. My priority was to use the understanding, knowledge, and wisdom I acquired to better the lives of others.

I believe that improving the quality of life for all citizens is inextricably related to what happens or does not happen in classrooms across the nation. Change in education can never occur in a meaningful way without focusing on educational practice and understanding the dynamics that affect teaching and learning. Michael Fullan (2007), well-known international scholar of educational reform, reminded us "reform is not just putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of classrooms, schools, districts, universities, and so on" (p. 7). I assert that educational leadership must understand that what matters most in teaching and learning is the securing of human diversity, the actualization of compassionate justice (Simon, 1992, p. 23), and the development of human capability to recognize and resist the mechanisms of racism that work in concert to define and diminish the quality of educational opportunity and outcomes for children of color. Studying the history of educational reform through the lens of race can guide our efforts for meaningful change. "For those struggling against oppression and for justice, history must appraise the past to suggest political, social, and economic strategies for the present and future" (Butchart, 1988, p. 333).

In the chapters that follow, I expose subaltern accounts of the historical character of public education in America and explore patterns and effects of school reform through the lens of critical race theory. In a preliminary review of the literature, chapter 1 critically

analyzes extant literature on the history of education and school reform from provincial America through the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision and desegregation. Two foreshadowing questions guide the review. First, what assumptions are historically endemic to the history of educational reform? Second, how have these assumptions intentionally or unintentionally affected racial inequality of opportunity and achievement in America's public schools? Chapter 2 explains the theoretical relation of race, power, resistance, school, and society through the lens of critical race theory, resistance theory, and critical philosophy. With a keen eye on racial inequity and political and economic injustice, Chapter 3 gives a historical overview of Gary, Indiana and its public school system. Chapter 4 reviews the history of Theodore Roosevelt High School from its inception in 1929 through 1970. Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 trace the evolution of color-blind educational reform over four decades, from 1970 to the present. Throughout the study, the impact of color-blind reform on the national level is juxtaposed with the effect of color-blind reform at Roosevelt High School. Research conclusions and recommendations are presented in chapter 9. Notes on methodology are presented in chapter 10.

Chapter I: The Black/White Divide

"We need to turn facts into puzzles in order to perceive alternatives both in the past and in the present. The way we understand that past profoundly shapes how we make choices today" (Tyack, 1974, p. 4).

My goal in researching the history of education and educational reform in America between 1780 and 1930 was to develop a broad, prerequisite understanding of the history of reform and racial inequality in public schools, an understanding that would better enable me to make sense of the continuities and discontinuities of more recent reform initiatives. It did not take me very long to come to the realization that there are two very complex and diverse narratives of education and educational reform in 18th and 19th century America: the well-known, established mainstream account of education for White Americans and the lesser-known, still-emerging history of the African American experience. The former has been taught, and to the credit of critical historians, tweaked on occasion, over the years. The African American story, more often than not, surfaces as an embarrassing caveat and a peripheral and corollary history to the more popular grand narrative, the story of education for White Anglo Protestant America. It became obvious to me that to better understand the history of educational reform and racial inequality in America's public schools, I would be required to tell the tale of two very different American experiences.

I also discovered something else about the telling of American history, something more than the evident Black/White divide. I discovered an incredible dissensus in historical accounts that turned out to be racially predicated. Every scholar and every historian constructs a framework unique to the perspective he or she wishes most to express. Facts and events may not appreciably differ, but the manner in which historians interpret and

position the pieces of the puzzle renders a certain subjectivity and even some ambiguity for those who wish for absolute and objective historical truths. What I observed is that, while there is no completely linear, objective history of American education and educational reform, as analyses vary and time frames overlap, there is an irrefutable pattern of systematic racial inequality of educational opportunity. I chose to review the literature from a viewpoint informed by critical race theory and critical pedagogy.

This chapter is divided into five parts. Part one, "The White Experience: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness" is divided into three sections: "The Ideal Republic," "The Common School," and "Evolution of the Progressive Era." I call attention to values and ideologies that defined the character of the nation. I also review the literature on the transition form agrarian to industrial life and the impact of that change on the evolution of the common school. Highlights in the literature on the Progressive Era are discussed as well.

In part 2, "The Black Experience: Self-Evident Truths," there are three sections: "African American Education during Slavery," "Reconstruction and the Common School," and "African Americans and the Progressive Movement." I review the literature on African American determination to educate themselves during slavery and then focus on the efforts of freedpeople to establish common schools for Blacks and Whites in the in the South. I also examine the literature on the strivings of Blacks to organize higher education.

Part 3, "What to do with the Negro: American Education from Jim Crow to *Brown*," examines the years in the history of educational reform between 1930 and 1954 when the problem of race was brought to the forefront of American consciousness. It is divided into three sections. The first section, "American Morality and Jim Crow," addresses the moral

issues centered on the separate-but-equal precedent. The second section, "Legislating the American Way," chronicles government attempts to legislate change in the racial caste system in society and the schools. The third section, "The Turn toward *Brown*," describes the gradual shift in the opinion of the Court toward segregated education.

Part 4, *"Brown v. Board of Education, 1954: A Dream Deferred*," focuses on the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision and its impact on schooling and the nation and has six sections. The first section, "The History of *Brown*," traces events that led to the *Brown* decision. The second section, "Reactions to *Brown*," examines the strong defiance of *Brown*. The third section investigates alternative explanations for Brown. The fourth section analyzes the relationship of this opposition to theories of race, racism, and the power relation between racism and segregation. The fifth section challenges traditional discourse on *Brown*, integrationism, and anti-defiance/anti-discrimination strategies. In the sixth section, I examine the phenomenon of color-blindness and what it means within the historical context of *Brown*.

Part 5, "Strange Bedfellows: Color-blindness, Race, and Civil Rights in the Post-*Brown* Era," reviews educational reform during the 1960s. It is divided into three sections. A brief introduction reiterates the tenets of critical race theory and further explains the ideology of color-blindness. Section 1, "The Great Society," reviews the initiatives of President Lyndon B. Johnson in the early 1960s and describes prevalent feelings of Americans about the role of education in the war on poverty. The second section, "ESEA and Educational Reform," discusses cornerstone reform legislation in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and critiques emerging paradigms related to race at the time. The third section, "Project Head Start: A Hopeful Possibility," pays special attention

to this most long-standing compensatory education reform program in the history of education in the United States.

The chapter ends with concluding remarks. I share how the knowledge I acquired informs my understanding of the nature of more recent reform initiatives.

Part 1: The White Experience—Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness

Life for many White, native-born, Anglo Protestants in the 19th century held great opportunities for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. White Americans understood well the challenges created by the ongoing processes of transplantation, adaptation, imitation, and invention that were inherent to the growth of America. In the midst of great change, two goals remained constant: America had to preserve its distinct and collective identity, and the nation must sustain a strong democratic republic government. For most Americans, education held the key to achieving these goals.

The ideal republic. Magisterial historian Lawrence A. Cremin wrote four volumes on the history of education in America. In the first volume, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783,* Cremin (1970) reminded us that Aristotle foresaw a propensity among political men to debate the ends and means of education, and certainly, throughout our nation's history, men and women have debated these issues. For the first White settlers in the New World, charged with the difficult and urgent responsibility of building a society, education was an integral component of that new society and, hence, of tantamount concern. Within this new society, education would assume utmost importance, not merely as an instrument for systematically transmitting an intellectual heritage, but as an agency for deliberately pursuing a cultural ideal. "Family, church, school, university, the community itself—all would be dedicated to the task of molding men" (Cremin, 1970,

p. 16). In his second influential work, *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876*, Cremin (1980) suggested that the architects of the new republic understood that education happens not just in schools but in all aspects of society and, furthermore, that the totality of educational vehicles must work in concert to build a desirable society and cultivate good citizens. Benjamin Rush and his compatriots, chief among the builders of the new republic, debated the feasibility of numerous political and educational arrangements. What was so unique about their discussions, notwithstanding certain disagreement on some matters, was the nature of their consistent tone and language. Even English non-conformist Richard Price, who stepped outside the traditional calling of education by espousing an unorthodox paideia of educating people how to think as opposed to what to think, held that whatever prescription of education was adopted, must "render the American Revolution a blessing to mankind" (Cremin, 1980, p. 1). Hence, "there was," according to Cremin (1980), "a characteristic cast about their discussions, a characteristic agenda and rhetoric, that holds key to much of what they proposed and eventually wrought" (p. 2).

Cremin (1980) posited that there were four characteristics central to the education agenda in the ideal Republic. The first characteristic would require an "education to virtue," (p. 2) an assumption akin to Montesquieu's position that the laws of education should compliment the laws of government. Framers of the reform agenda conceived that successful establishment of a new republic would require citizens to put the good of the republic over personal interests. Virtue, for Americans in the 1780s and 1790s, implied an appropriate combination of piety, civility, and learning. By education, they meant "the full panoply of institutions that had a part in shaping human character—families and churches, schools and colleges, newspapers, voluntary associations, and, most important perhaps in an

era of constitution making, the laws" (p. 2). Education, therefore, was viewed as a comprehensive undertaking in which the molding of a virtuous citizenry would hang in the balance.

The second characteristic of the reform rhetoric was the insistence on a "truly American education, purged of all vestiges of older monarchial forms and dedicated to the creation of a cohesive and independent citizenry" (Cremin, 1980, p. 3). The conscious and deliberate creation of a new American character and a novel and noble American citizenry mandated defining the American character. Education played a crucial role in defining that character. Benjamin Rush (as cited in Cremin, 1980) went so far as to advocate structuring a uniform educational system that would produce men who functioned as "republican machines" (p. 3). In a bold statement espousing the cultivation of national pride, Noah Webster (as cited in Cremin, 1980) called upon citizens:

> To unshackle your minds and act like independent human beings. You have an empire to raise and support by your exertions and a national character to establish and extend by your wisdom and virtues. To effect these great objects, it is necessary to frame a liberal plan of policy and build it on a broad system of education. (p. 3)

Architects of the new American character, like Benjamin Rush and Noah Webster, set out to define a paedeic fitting the expectations of a young nation. "Their goal," wrote Cremin (1980), "was to create a new republican individual of virtuous character abiding patriotism, and prudent wisdom, fashioned by education into an independent yet loyal citizen" (p. 5).

Cremin (1980) contended that the third characteristic of education in the early years of the new Republic was its propensity toward utilitarian education. Much of the American perspective on the usefulness of education was drawn from the philosophy of John Locke. In his classical work, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Locke (as cited in Cremin, 1970) enumerated four ends of education:

> Virtue, wisdom, breeding, and learning, with virtue as the good life based on belief in Christ; wisdom as the able management of one's business affairs, breeding as the ability to think well of oneself and others, and learning as the possession of an ample stock of useful knowledge. (pp. 361-362)

Americans enthusiastically embraced the usefulness of education as an ideal befitting a new nation intent on preparing its youth to seize hold of the certain opportunities the new society would offer.

The fourth principal characteristic of the education agenda was a dominant assumption of self-righteous entitlement. Engineers of the new republic of America were convinced that the educational system they designed should and would inform the world. In a letter written to Joseph Priestly in 1802, Thomas Jefferson (as cited in Cremin, 1980) wrote that the education offered in America would "excite emulation through the kingdoms of the earth, and meliorate the condition of the human race" (p. 4). Confident that America would undoubtedly lead the world and all of humankind in the pursuit of liberty and learning, architects of the republic insisted that America's schools, churches, museums, libraries, colleges, academies, and all institutions of learning would be envied and emulated by the rest of the world. Invigorated by the sense that they were acting not merely for themselves, but for the betterment of the entire world, America's leaders assumed that they were "chosen by God to lead the way to a millennium of truth, knowledge, love, peace, and joy" (p. 4). The original hope of the new republic was that the world "might save itself by emulating the American system" (Hofstadter, 1963, p. 43). Americans perceived the new nation as a republic with endless prospects for innovative human affairs, a growing empire of vast potential wherein freedom, science, and virtue would flourish, and a refuge for the oppressed and disaffected. At first glance, it would appear that the flourishing opportunities

and beneficence of the great republic were accessible to all inhabitants of the states. This, of course, was not the case.

There were many caveats to the history of the ideal republic. Despite claims of a virtuous republic, the fact remained that slavery, though carefully excluded from the explicit vernacular of the constitution, was openly acknowledged and sanctioned in state codes. American Indians, the real Native Americans, suffered immense subjugation to White rule and assigned an ill-defined status in which they were considered "alien members of their respective tribes, with the United States negotiated treaties, but they were accorded few of the traditional prerogatives of aliens" (Cremin, 1980, p. 7). Women held a status unequal to men. And, then there were the immigrants, many of whom, for all the talk of America being a refuge, were met with oppression and attitudes of *arrogant perception*, a term introduced by Marilyn Frye (as cited in Madison, 2005) that refers to "the failure to identify with someone that one views arrogantly or that one has come to perceive as the product of arrogant perception. Arrogant perception objectifies the Other and casts the Other as an inferior being" (p. 102).

Despite these ethical indiscretions, the responsibility for erecting and maintaining the noble dream of a virtuous republic was given to the American educational system. All of this would be accomplished with God's help.

Religion and education. From the onset of new Republic, Americans perceived their empire as "benevolent, virtuous, and committed to serving the Lord" (Cremin, 1980, p. 8). That religion was so endemic to the gospel of democracy and the ideal of republican institutions presented the educational leaders with a daunting challenge. As Cremin (1980) so eloquently explained:

If the centrifugal forces of selfishness (individualism) were to be countered, it would not be through governmental constraint but rather through voluntary acquiescence in the laws of God. The good citizen was the individual dedicated to God, and the good society was simply a society composed of such individuals. Only as a brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God would the United States fulfill its God-given purpose in history. And the creation of that brotherhood was the task of education. (pp. 48-49)

The challenge facing educational and community leaders in the 18th century grew more pronounced with the ongoing influx of foreign ideas, sometimes dissenting ideas, and unfamiliar relationships predicated by massive social and geographic changes that, in the eyes of most citizens, threatened the security of American life and very foundation of the republic they had worked so deliberately to create. Much of this foundation lay in the bedrock of religion and the spirit of evangelism.

Richard Hofstadter (1963), author of *Anti-intellectualism in American Life,* asserted that "the American mind was shaped in the mold of early modern Protestantism" (p. 55). He posited that, because of America's strong appeal to so many of Europe's "disaffected and disinherited" (p. 56), the new republic was the perfect setting for religious enthusiasm and evangelistic fervor. The Protestant faith, however, was fragmented by dissent and conflict and the new Americans, once removed from Europe, brought those tensions with them. As the number of immigrants increased during the 18th century, heightened insecurities wrought fear in Americans and awakened familiar questions about the relative place of religion and intellectualism in education, questions that had long been debated in the short history of the new republic. America was ripe for evangelical awakenings.

Cremin (1980) discussed what he referred to as the latter 18th century "second awakening" (p. 50) during which revivals spread across the Northeast within the various sects of American Protestantism:

> Sending sparks in every direction and creating innumerable "burned-over" neighborhoods, urban as well as rural, where the fires of enthusiasm waxed and waned for a generation. In the process, evangelism solidified its hold on the forms and institutions of American Protestantism. (p. 51)

As a consequence of the evangelical crusades, new institutions were created and old ones transformed, but the influence enjoyed by the evangelical movement was not limited to formal institutions.

The *awakenings* were also very personal, touching families, ministers, schoolteachers, librarians, and drastically affecting American educational pedagogy. Their long-term effect was the subordination of education and, essentially intellectualism, to religious factionalism. The awakenings "pushed doctrinal and pietistic considerations forward at the expense of human learning" (Hofstatder, 1963, p. 72). Evangelism pit intellectualism against character, thus allowing Americans to exchange contemplative intellectualism for self-serving rationalizations that often legitimized the abuse of power and the infliction of grave injustice as evidenced in racism and the perpetuation of racial inequality. Anti-intellectualism and racial inequality plagued the nation for years to come as was evidenced in the development of the common school.

The evolution of the common school.

Call for reform. With the incessant influx of immigrants, the westward expansion of the continental empire, and the fervent outcry for a literate citizenry, by the early 19th century, education had become widespread in most states, not as a consequence of state policy, but on a local level. By 1830, most White males and a growing number of White females in the Northern states were attending some form of locally controlled schooling. School enrollment for Whites in the Southern states tended to be lower than in the North but, as Carl F. Kaestle (1983) reported in his pioneering study of pre-Civil War common-school

development, Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780 to 1860, "comparisons are made difficult by lack of detailed information about the unregulated schooling typical of this period" (p. 62). Kaestle described the nature of schooling of the nineteenth century in the following way:

> In the North, rural district school enrollment became almost universal, and throughout the nation, charity schooling for the urban poor was advocated with little opposition and with increasing organizational vigor. Locally controlled, voluntary elementary schooling was a common feature of life in most American communities by 1830. Most states, North and South, had little legislation on elementary schooling and offered little or no financial assistance to localities. In many communities, school sessions were brief, facilities were crude, and teachers were only a few steps ahead of their pupils. Uniformity was provided only by the strong Protestant religious content of most schools, by the popularity of certain textbooks, and by informal traditions of school architecture. America had schools, but, except in large cities, America did not have school systems. (p. 62)

Lack of systematic uniformity caused education to take on a rather formless character and schooling looked differently between and within rural and urban communities in both the North and the South. To understand the outcry for common-school reform, it is important to understand the nature of the original rural school, the shift toward urban education, and the social and economic changes that brought about that transition.

In his seminal work, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*, David B. Tyack (1974) examined the rural school highly appraised, initially, for its traditional agrarian, yeoman culture, and later, assailed for its backward ways and closely analyzed the organizational shift in education toward institutionalizing and systemizing schooling that occurred as consequence of the urbanization of community living and the emergence of Industrial Revolution. According to Tyack, families and communities in rural areas took great pride and ownership in their schools. "Most rural patrons had little doubt that the school was theirs to control (whatever state regulations may say) and not the

professional educator" (p. 17). While rural schoolteachers may have been poorly trained, as would-be reformers would later vehemently argue, those who endeared themselves to the community were often considered intellectuals in the eyes of parents and, consequently, given great, but tenuous, respect. Because of the power of the rural community over the operation of its schools, teachers were wholly accountable to parents and other taxpayers and they knew it. Parents wielded a great deal of decision-making power. According to Kaestle (1983), parents had the power to hire and fire schoolteachers, determine the textbooks teachers used, and decide the subjects that would be taught. Tyack asserted that teachers were expected to conform to the ways of the community:

> With no bureaucracy to serve as a buffer between himself and the patrons, with little sense of being part of a professional establishment, the teacher found himself subordinated to the community. Authority inhered in the person, not the office, of schoolmaster. (p. 19)

The problem with rural schooling was manufactured and widely publicized by would-be reformers when the nation moved away from an agrarian culture and economy and transitioned toward an urban, industrialized, capitalistic system in which experts, professionals, and goals of efficiency and finding the one best system ruled (Callahan, 1962; Kaestle, 1983; Tyack, 1974). Beginning in the 1890s and continuing through the 20th century, education reformers and muckrakers magnified the *rural problem* and repudiated rural education. The biggest complaints about rural education were its "bookish curriculum, haphazard selection and supervision of teachers, voluntary character of school attendance, and discipline" (Tyack, 1974, p. 21). In short, "What was basically wrong with rural education, was that rural folk wanted to run their own schools and didn't know how to do it" (p. 21).

Despite the somewhat sarcastic tone of Tyack's (1974) statement, he made a valid observation about the self-righteous disposition and arrogant perception of Cubberly and other reformers who helped fuel the common-school reform crusade. In 1914, Ellwood P. Cubberly, President of Stanford University and spokesperson for anglicizing America, forewarned Americans of the difficult task that lie ahead in reforming rural education:

> Because the rural school is today in a state of arrested development, burdened by educational traditions, lacking in effective supervision, controlled largely by rural people, who, too often, do not realize either their own needs or the possibilities of rural education, and taught by teachers who, generally speaking, have but little comprehension of the rural-life problem . . . the task of reorganizing and redirecting rural education is difficult, and will necessarily be slow. (Cubberly as cited in Tyack, 1974, p. 21)

Of utmost concern to Cubberly was the new immigrant population moving into the rural areas. As far as Cubberly was concerned, the foreign Americas, whom he identified as being largely from southern and Eastern Europe (two populations not yet considered White and, thus, historically subjected to Anglo domination), were "thrifty but ignorant, and usually wretchedly poor" (Cubberly as cited in Tyack, 1974, p. 22). According to Cubberly (as cited in Tyack, 1974), "they come from countries where popular education and popular government have as yet made little headway; they are often lacking in initiative and self-reliance; and they lack the Anglo-Teutonic conception of government by popular will" (p. 22). Cubberly's goal was to lift the rural public to an "American standard of manhood" which he defined as "middle class and public spirited" (p. 22). What better institution to delegate the responsibility for such an undertaking than the common school? Urban education and would serve as the beacon of the common-school reform.

Urban schooling and charity schooling. Urban schools and charity schools were supported in different ways for different students. Many parents paid quarterly tuition fees

to send their children to independent pay schools in the 1780s and 1890s. According to

Kaestle (1983), about three-fourths of the urban families were able to afford the fees for this

type for schooling. Dame schools, managed by women in their homes for young children,

provided custodial care and basic training at relatively low costs. Children whose parents

could not afford the common pay school options sought elementary education through

apprenticeships or church charity schools. However, with the increase in industrialization

and growing dependency on a capitalist economy, the availability of apprenticeships sharply

declined, causing charity schools, an extension of the former Sunday schools, to grow in

popularity. "The goal of the charity schools," wrote Kaestle (1983), "was to produce adult

citizens who would be minimally literate, have a chance at salvation, and behave according

to the moral standards taught in schools" (p. 33). Designed to intervene between parent and

child, charity schools were intended to save the poor from themselves. The presumption

was, as Cubberly (1914) intimated, that poverty was somehow a personal flaw. Hence,

charity schools were viewed as a means of fixing the child through the inculcation of Anglo,

Protestant, capitalistic values. Kaestle explained the dynamic relationship between urban

schooling and the charity schools:

> Although charity schools served fewer students than pay schools in American cities
> of the early national period, charity schooling was the innovative sector in urban
> education. Here began the pedagogical, organizational, and financial reforms that
> extended public schooling, and with it Anglo-American Protestant culture, to
> growing numbers of poor people. As charity schooling expanded during this period,
> independent pay schooling was on the wane, becoming progressively more elite and
> expensive. But the charity-school movement was more than just a proliferation of
> separate benevolent societies working with
> different indigent children for a common purpose. It began that way, but by the
> 1820s, in New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, a single monitorial school
> organization became dominant, controlling the bulk of charity schools and attaining
> favorable status for financial assistance from the city and state. In many cases, the
> charity schools literally became the public common schools. (p. 57)

With all the talk of charity schools and benevolence toward the disenfranchised, one might wonder where African Americans fit into the scheme of things. Through the efforts of Quakers, the Friends of Education, and African Americans, some strides were made in the provision of education for free Blacks in the North. In 1770, Quakers established a school for African Americans in Philadelphia, after which followed the provision of a school for Black girls in 1878 and African American adults 1789. Similar schools for freed Blacks opened up in New York in 1787 and Baltimore in 1792. African free schools were also operating in Boston, Providence, Rhode, Island, and Burlington, New Jersey. While elementary schooling for Blacks increased in some of the larger Northern cities and the success of the students educated Whites about the capability of Blacks, it was difficult to determine just how much benefit Black children gained in terms of personal advancement from formal schooling (Kaestle, 1983, p. 38). One graduate of the New York African School wrote:

> Am I arrived at the end of my education, just on the eve of setting out into the world, of commencing some honest pursuit, by which to earn a comfortable subsistence? What are my prospects? To what shall I turn my head? Shall I be a mechanic? No one will employ me; White boys won't work with me. No one will have me in his office; White clerks won't associate with me. Drudgery and servitude, then, are my prospective portion. (Kaestle, 1983, p. 39)

Most Whites were unconcerned with the upward mobility that an education might offer Blacks or anyone else. Their primary aim was child-saving and the homogenizing of America. Anglo Americans, fearful of the growing heterogeneity within American character and culture brought on by the socio-economic transformations from rural and agrarian lifestyle to an increasingly urban and industrial heavily increasingly tied to capitalist values, were determined to preserve and protect the dominant Anglo Protestant culture. Maintaining the power of the dominant culture was becoming increasingly difficult. Overwhelmed, the

proponents of charity schools began to reconsider what Jefferson and Rush had proposed during the Revolutionary years: state-supported public education or the common school. Proponents of the common school were now in a prime position to promote the ideology of the common school (Kaestle, 1983).

Leadership, ideology, and the common school program. Kaestle (1983) drew a provocative conclusion about the relative importance of the heroic individual efforts of men and women in bringing about educational reform. He determined that one must be careful not to create a false dichotomy between the individual efforts of a few heroic men and women and functional adjustment of institutions to larger social changes. To be sure, social, economic, and political factors influenced the climate for change. However, it was also true that "individual achievements are real; processes of educational change can be hastened, retarded, or altered by the actions of forceful individuals" (p. 63). For this reason, I chose to frame my discussion of the common school program through the eyes and efforts one of most well known leaders of the common school program, Horace Mann. In order to see points and events in time as Horace Mann saw them, it was necessary to understand the ideological underpinnings of the time.

Kaestle (1983) defined ideology as:

A set of apparently compatible propositions about human nature and society that help an individual to interpret complex human problems and take actions that the individual believes is in his or her best interest and the best interests of the society as a whole. Ideology is the aspect of culture that attempts to justify and defend a set of social relations and institutions. (p. 76)

Based upon a variety of primary documents such as sermons, domestic reports, education reports, and social commentaries, Kaestle listed 10 propositions of the Protestant ideology prevalent during the rise of the common school:

The sacredness and fragility of the republican polity (including ideas about individualism, liberty, and virtue); the importance of individual character in fostering social morality; the central role of personal industry in defining personal rectitude and merit; the delineation of a highly respected but limited domestic role for women; the importance of character building of familial and social environment (within certain racial and ethnic limitations); the sanctity and social values of property; the equality and abundance of economic opportunity in the United States; the superiority of the American Protestant culture; the grandeur of America's destiny; and, the necessity of a determined public effort to unify America's polyglot population, chiefly through education. (p. 76)

Mann embraced the mutually supportive social beliefs of republicanism, capitalism, and the native Protestant ideology. He understood well the integral relationship between freedom, popular education, and republican government. Like the founding fathers, Mann supported the Jeffersonian proposition that popular education was the only means of providing a secure basis for a successful republican government and that the central goal of education was the moral elevation of the people (Kaestle, 1983). In a series of annual reports on education written during his tenure as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, Mann (1957) wrote:

Never will wisdom preside in the halls of legislation and its profound utterances be recorded on the pages of the stature book, until common schools . . . shall create a more far-reaching intelligence and a purer morality than has ever existed among communities of men. (p. 7)

From Mann's perspective, republican education could never be solely intellectual because knowledge could be used for good as well as evil purposes; education had to be value-centered. The common school was expected to train children to be good citizens, teach moral character and good work habits, draw people into the native Protestant ideology, spread literacy, and incidentally offer opportunities for individual advancement.

Dissent from these ideals was discouraged. Horace Mann (as cited in Reese, 2005) went so far as to state that controversial subjects not be taught in the common schools.

Contemporary and critical historian, Michael J. Reese (2005), contended that Mann may have been blinded by his own rhetoric. Reese reminded readers of two statements commonly associated with the principles Mann stood for: "education is the balance wheel of the social machinery" and "the great equalizer if the conditions of men" (p. 28). Referring to Mann as the "circuit rider of the next generation," Reese asserted that Mann believed public schools would "uplift the poor, protect the property and wealth of the successful, and obliterate factitious distinctions in society" (p. 28). The challenge was to make public schools good enough for the rich and open to the poor, while providing all citizens with equal opportunity and a fair chance. The fact of the matter, however, was that equal opportunity was only available, for the most part, to White, native males. Women and Black people were largely excluded and immigrants faced debilitating discrimination. Even among White males, mobility was not stressed as much as was the inculcation of White, Protestant values.

If I may pause for a moment in my argument, I think it is important to clarify my intent. I drew attention to the discrepancies between rhetoric and reality to raise awareness about the historically systematic exclusion of non-White, non-Anglo Americans from equal educational opportunity. I did not mean to imply that Horace Mann did not do a great service to the growth and development of public education in America, nor do I aim to discredit Horace Mann. To the contrary, Mann provided a vision of education unsurpassed during his era for its attention to both purpose and pedagogy.

Mann believed that the purpose of the common school should be to offer every child in the commonwealth a general education. He could have easily yielded to the growing outcry for vocational education, but instead, stood steadfast in his belief in general

education. "The man is the trunk," said Mann (1957), "occupations and professions are only different qualities of the fruit it should yield" (p. 12). Recognizing the derision caused by religious factions, Mann foresaw a solution in the provision of a non-sectarian, liberal Protestant education based upon certain common principles he believed could be culled from several sectarian creeds. He was one of the first American reformers to seriously consider pedagogy.

Mann's pedagogical vision was extraordinarily progressive for his day. Profoundly influenced by the teaching of Swiss educator and philosopher, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Mann believed that the child was to be treated with gentleness and warm affection. After visiting Prussia and observing the Pestalozzian educational school system in action, Mann was convinced that positive student-teacher relationships were critical to learning. "Reward rather than punishment should be the propellant of instruction; meaningful learning rather than rote memorization should be the goal" (Mann, 1957, p. 16). Although many of Mann's goals were unmet, his leadership and vision did a great deal to further idea of public education and the common school in America.

The common school program laid the framework for the public school system, as we know it. Common school reform called for longer school terms, graded classrooms, better daily attendance, consolidation of schools, uniform textbooks, and a standardized traditional curriculum that offered, at minimum, instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and history. More advanced knowledge was offered in the high schools, the first of which opened in Boston, for White boys only, in 1821. Additionally, the common school reform agenda pressed the hiring of women teachers and the professional training of teachers. While their benefits have been hotly debated, two of the most significant developments that

came out of the common school reform effort were the provision of school boards to serve as

educational decision-making bodies and the creation of the school superintendency, both of

which represented the beginning of an effort known as "taking the politics out of education"

(Cremin, 1980; Reese, 2005). It seems to me that "taking the politics out of the schools"

might be synonymous with taking the public out of public schools, an interesting

phenomenon that gained momentum during the Progressive Era.

The Progressive Era, 1890-1930.

The nation's climate. The Progressive Era in America evolved as a response to the

times. Despite the fact that, at the turn of the century, any White American male could get a

relatively good education and, in many cases, professional training, Americans were

consumed with widespread nervousness. A climate of fear and a sense of urgency pervaded

the nation. "It was bad enough," explained Reese (2005), "that thousands of Irish, Germans,

and other European Catholics were arriving on the East Coast, but Asian immigration to the

West coast, particularly Chinese immigration, also frightened the native born" (p. 52). To

make matters even more precarious, the nation was plagued by a pervasive ambivalence

about race and gender. The status of Blacks, Native American Indians, women, and foreign

immigrants was tentative at best (Cremin, 1988; Reese, 2005). The valued responsible

citizen was no longer perceived as the "self-instructed person of virtuous character, abiding

patriotism, and prudent wisdom. Progressive reformers foresaw the responsible citizen as

necessarily informed by the detached and selfless expert" (Cremin, 1988, p. 7). Threatened

by a growing foreign populace and newly Black freedmen, Americans moved away from the

commitment to teach the rest of the world about social justice toward a more isolationist

view, one they believed would somehow mend the deep chasm between the North and South

and revive the failing nation's economy caused by the Depression of 1876. Education in the

South, reformers believed, would be redeemed by separate and unequal schools while

schools in the North would work diligently to take the politics out of education by

centralizing education and delegating the governance of public education to professionals,

experts, non-partisan school boards, and business-minded state superintendents. Americans

had consistently put their faith in education and its power to transform the nation. The

feeling in the late 19th century echoed these sentiments. Schools and the American

educational system needed to begin to do things differently. The nation's climate was ripe

for new leadership, different strategies, and philosophical change.

Change in the Progressive Era. Historians have failed to discover a single unified

single progressive movement in education (Reese, 2005, p. 79). Hofstadter (1963) argued

that the Progressive Era, also referred to the New Education Era, "rested on two pillars: its

use, or misuse, of science and its appeal to the educational philosophy of John Dewey"

(p. 359). I begin with the progressive philosophy of John Dewey.

Dewey brought to education a fresh perspective on teaching and learning based on an

intellectual philosophy of how children learn best. Vehemently opposed to the abuse of

adult authority in the classroom, Dewey was a champion for child-centered education and a

proponent of learning as an active process. He thought of the individual learner as "using

his mind to solve various problems presented by his environment, [and] went on to develop a

theory conceived as the growth of the learner" (Hofstadter, 1963, p. 362). Dewey asserted

that the modern educational system would best meet the demands of industrialization,

democracy, and science by abandoning old practices associated with aristocratic, elitist

views that conceived of knowledge as fixed truths. He strived to find the duality between

knowledge and action. Hofstadter (1963) explained, "For Dewey, action is involved in knowledge. . . . Knowledge is subordinated to action and inferior to practice . . . in the sense that knowledge is acquired and used" (p. 362). According to Hofstadter, unlike the proponents of science of its own sake, Dewey believed that the power of science comes from its ability to enlighten educational thought. Science, in and of itself, was the not powerful element in education. Dewey tried to take certain ideas about the child, which were gaining in popularity around the nineteenth century, and link those ideas to practical philosophy and the increasing call for social reform (Hofstatder, 1963).

Many pragmatic changes in education occurred as a consequence of Dewey's philosophical influence. School systems expanded, as the percentages of students attending school on both ends of the spectrum, kindergarten, on the hand, and high school, on the other. In 1915, the influential Education of the Association appointed a group of individuals to form a Commission on the National Reorganization of Secondary Education. Three years later, in 1918, the Commission issued a set of seven objectives called the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education. Listed below are brief explanations of each:

1. Health: secondary schools should encourage good health habits, give health instruction, and provide physical activities.
2. Command of fundamental processes: writing, reading, oral and written expression, and math.
3. Worthy home membership: development of qualities that enable an individual to make a positive contribution to a family. This principle was thought to be best taught through literature, music, social studies, and art.
4. Vocation: the ability to select suitable careers and understand the relationship between the vocation and the community.
5. Civic education: develop an awareness and concern for the community; promoting democracy in the classroom.
6. Worthy of leisure: education should enrich the whole child and provide for appropriate recreation.
7. Ethical character: the notion of personal responsibility and initiative. (Raubinger, Rowe, Piper, & West, 1969, p. 106)

In conjunction with these principles, curriculum, particularly at the secondary level, was expanded and reorganized to include greater opportunities for work in trades, business, agriculture, home economics, physical education, and the arts. Extracurricular activities increased, as did non-instructional student services such as vaccinations, health examinations, meals, and counseling. There were more variations of groupings of students within and among schools. Discipline became significantly less harsh as teachers began to realize the benefits of encouragement and reward over chastisement, ridicule, and punishment. Schools even began to look differently as the architecture was modified to include assembly rooms, swimming pools, gymnasiums, kitchens, laboratories, and lounges. Not all of the changes were deemed positive and there were plenty of critics to vouch for what they viewed as negative outcomes of the movement (Cremin, 1988).

Cremin (1988) called attention to some of the less favorable outcomes. Disparity between and within schools increased. The gap in opportunity provided in segregated schools for Blacks and schools widened in the North and in the South. As the comprehensive high school expanded, it became the standard for secondary education, while vocational education, though popular in Northern big cities and often the preferred option for Blacks in the South, was distinguished from the comprehensive high school along social class lines. While the increased variation in the grouping of students may have been intended to allow for more individual attention to student needs, it often resulted in restrictive and discriminatory tracking of students. Hence, as with all reforms, unexpected consequences occurred. Unfortunately, Dewey, greatly misunderstood, was unfairly blamed for failures of progressive education. Hofstadter (1963) opined that Dewey may have been his own worst enemy because his work was incomprehensible to most people, thus,

obscuring the brilliance of his ideas. There was, however, nothing obscure about the counter movement of the era—the push for science and positivity in education, better known as the cult of efficiency.

The literature suggested that the push for efficiency evolved from the mounting pressure of common school reformers to systemize, unify, consolidate, and take the politics out of the schools. As previously stated, reformers during the school movement concluded that the only way to save schools from inept and corrupt local politics was to consolidate wards and districts into single school systems and replace local and public control with expert nonpartisan leadership and supervision. As a result, school boards became increasingly dominated by businessmen and business values (Callahan, 1962).

The business influence permeated education in many ways. Through newspapers, books, and journals, muckracking journalists constantly compared schools to business, seizing every opportunity to accentuate inefficiency and waste in the schools. The influence of business values was exerted through speeches at educational meetings, in studies by educational researchers, even by the President of the U.S. In 1925, Calvin Coolidge was quoted as saying, "the business of America is business" (Callahan, 1962, p. 2). In 1907, William C. Bagley, one of Dewey's most outspoken critics, stated that:

> The problem of classroom management was primarily a problem of economy: its seeks to determine in what manner the working unit of the school plant may be made to return the largest dividend upon the material investment of time, energy, and money. (as cited in Callahan, 1962, p. 7)

Business vernacular and principles seeped into the bloodstream and boardrooms of public education.

One of the most important business values that gained strong momentum in education was utilitarianism. Hofstatder (1963) and Callahan (1962) concurred that the

pressure on schools to teach more vocational courses discouraged intellectualism while

encouraging the utility of education. Year after year between 1900 and 1910, schools were

pressured to offer more practical courses. According to Callahan, the turning point of the

utilitarian movement may have come in 1909 when the Superintendent of the Illinois

Farmer's Institute, in a speech given before the National Association of Education (NEA),

linked morality to utilitarianism, placed vocational education above citizenship, and boldly

stated that educations should guide young people toward "acquisition by earning" (p. 10).

He stated further,

> Ordinarily a love of learning is praiseworthy; but when this delight in the pleasures
> of learning becomes so intense and so absorbing that it diminishes the desire, and the
> power of earning, it is positively harmful. Education that does not promote the desire
> and power to do useful things—that's earning—is not worth getting. Education that
> stimulates a love for useful activity is not simple desirable; it is in the highest degree
> ethical. . . . Personally, I would rather send out pupils who are lop-sided and useful,
> than those who are seemingly symmetrical and useless. A man without a vocation is
> more to be pitied than the man without a country. . . . And the country of which he is
> an inhabitant is to be commiserated, too. (p. 10)

By 1910, business principles of efficiency, utility, and economy were widely accepted goals

in education. The public was ready to accept the "gospel of efficiency, Frederick W. Taylor,

and his disciples" (Callahan, 1962, p. 18).

Taylor advocated for a theory of scientific management in education. According to

Taylor (1948), there was always one best method for doing any particular job and this best

method could be determined through scientific method. The best method involved a

complex system of initiatives and incentives, which even Taylor admitted may not always

work. The inherently lazy nature of human beings, he posited, would often require external

pressure from management in order to ensure maximum productivity. Cubberly (as cited in

Callahan, 1962) hoped that the new scientific movement would help create standards so that

the efficiency of schools could be accurately measured and effectively communicated to the

public. It became essential, then, for tests to be devised that would measure student

achievement, and ultimately the efficiency of the schools. Pioneers in the development of

achievement tests like Joseph M. Rice, Edward L. Thorndike, and Lewis B. Terman

provided some of the measures by which school efficiency would be calculated. "They

viewed themselves," stated Cremin (1988), "as experts seeking to place schooling on a

sound scientific foundation" (p. 234). The trouble was that all too often the support for

differentiation and sorting of youth based on test results contributed to the already pervasive

inequality of opportunity in the nation's schools.

> Dewey may have diagnosed the situation accurately when he wrote that it was:
>
> Very easy for science to be regarded as a guarantee that goes with a sale of goods
> rather than as a light to the eyes and a lamp to the feet. It is prized for its prestige
> rather than as an organ of personal illumination and liberation. (Dewey as cited in
> Callahan, 1962, p. 247)

With the lofty goals espoused by Horace Mann of education as the great equalizer and the

social machinery of the nation displaced, education veered even further away from serving

the public and democracy. "The administrative progressives," wrote Tyack (1974), were, for

the most part, strangely silent about Black children. The inferior status of Blacks was a fact

of life to which the schools in their "realism must adjust" (p. 217). Cremin (1988) observed

that the experts concerned themselves with the dominant citizenry, only insofar "as those

needs were defined by articulate, educated, White, native-born, and usually male

representatives" (Cremin, 1988, p. 246). Where did this leave the Negro?

Part 2: The Black Experience—Self-evident Truths

> It is crucial for an understanding of American educational history to recognize that
> within American democracy there have been classes of oppressed people and that
> there have been essential relationships between popular education and the politics of

oppression. Both schooling for democratic citizenship and schooling for second-class citizenship have been basic traditions of American education. (Anderson, 1988, p. 1)

The history of education and educational reform for Blacks rendered a different account of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness from the history of education for White Americans, but it is, nevertheless, a triumphant narrative despite some pretty ugly self-evident truths, such as an American Negro male, according to the Constitution of the United States, was considered three-fifths of a human being; African Americans were legally and openly enslaved by Whites; and Blacks were denied most of the rights and privileges that Whites took for granted, including the right to an education, just to name a few. The history of education for African Americans provided telling evidence of the American notion of society and progress and the belief that "peace, prosperity, and civilization depend, just as much, if not more on, the containment and repression of literate culture among its enslaved populations as it did on the diffusion of literate culture among its free population" (Anderson, 1988, p. 1).

African American education during slavery. An unnamed ex-slave from Tennessee wisely advised "if you want Negro history you have to get it from somebody who wore the shoe, and by and by and from one to the other you will get a book" (Webber, 1978, p. xiii). Thomas L. Webber (1978), in his landmark work, *Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831—1865*, heeded this advice. Inspired by Cremin's (1970) definition of education, Webber examined the education of Blacks during slavery from the slaves' perspective.

What Whites taught. In American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607 to 1783, Cremin (1970) defined education as "the deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to

transmit or evoke knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and sensibilities" (p. xiii). Drawing on this definition, Webber (1978) theorized "the ostensible teaching goal of the planter class, with respect to its slave population, was to have them internalize the knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and sensibilities of the perfect servant" (p. 27). According to Cremin (1970), Whites never intended to educate Blacks in the same manner or for the same purposes that White children were educated. "We have as far as possible," boasted an unnamed Virginia state delegate, "closed every avenue by which light may enter their minds. If we could extinguish the capacity to see the light our work would be completed" (Webber, 1978, p. 27).

In the awarding-winning book, *Self- taught: African Americans during Slavery and Freedom*, author and historian, Heather Andrea Williams (2005) documented a series of legal statutes in states across the South that criminalized the actions of those who taught slaves or supported the efforts of Blacks to teach themselves. She contended that the reason for the determination of Whites to deprive Blacks of an education is indicative of the conflict inherent to the relation of education and power. The literature confirmed that education has always held great value for Americans because of its power to mold, change, and influence the character of men and women and the nation. Inarguably, literacy, in particular, has held historical significance for all Americans, native-born and not. Clearly, it was not in the best interest of Whites for Blacks to acquire skills of literacy and Blacks in the South were categorically denied the opportunity to learn to read and write. It was, therefore, no coincidence that, by 1860, 95% of the African American population was illiterate (Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 1935, 1969; Webber, 1978; Williams, 2005).

Webber (1978) posited that the arguments for religious education provided by Whites for Blacks in the slave quarter community fit into one of three categories: "those which appealed to the planter's pocketbook; those which appealed to his sense of Christian responsibility; and those which assuaged his fear of slave rebellion" (p. 43). According to Webber, the profit-related argument was supported by the rationale that religious training would make slaves more content, obedient, hard-working, and subservient, and many Whites believed it was their God-given moral duty to deliver religious instruction to the slaves. The argument that it was the responsibility of White Christians to provide religious instruction to slaves was grounded in the belief that even though Blacks were biologically and culturally inferior, they still were entitled to salvation.

> Because Blacks on the plantation were thought to have no means of seeking or providing their own religious instruction, it was doubly incumbent upon all Christian masters to take upon themselves the biblical responsibility of spreading the Gospel to their servants and thus providing them with the possible salvation of their eternal souls. (p. 44)

A big part of salvation for slaves was acceptance, even gratitude, for their station in life. Support for the third argument was strengthened by the assumption that if slaves believed they were meant to be slaves, they would be less likely to revolt. Below is an excerpt from one former slave's account of his religious instruction:

> When we were in our native country, Africa, we were destitute of the Bible light, worshipping idols of sticks and stones, . . . God put it into the hearts of these good slaveholders to venture across the bosom of the hazardous Atlantic to Africa . . . "Oh, nigger! How happy are your eyes which see this heavenly light; many millions of niggers desired it long, but died without the sight! (pp. 49-50)

Hence, the religious education provided by Whites to Blacks was critical to sustaining White control over Blacks—a primary goal of the White teaching. The question Webber asked was what did Blacks actually learn?

What Blacks learned. Webber (1978) posited that that there was a critical difference between what Whites taught and what Blacks actually learned and, contrary to the beliefs of many Whites, many Blacks rejected the White teachings of Black inferiority. They learned not to trust White people. In their churches, they learned to have faith in a God that would deliver them as He had delivered Moses and the Jews from bondage. They learned to honor one another, particularly those who could read a little bit. Deprived of books and prohibited from any formal or informal schooling, Blacks taught themselves. Williams (2005) found evidence in the narratives of ex-slaves that Blacks learned a great deal, for instance, from eavesdropping on the conversations of their masters. Often, they would sneak books and newspapers and teach themselves by candlelight to recognize a few words here and there. Occasionally, kind-hearted Whites risked their safety and reputations and took it upon themselves to teach their slaves how to read. But, the self-determinedness of enslaved African Americans to become literate went much further than eavesdropping or sneaking books and papers from the master's house.

According to noted historian James D. Anderson (1988), some schools founded by Blacks for Blacks "predated the Civil War period and simply increased their activities after the war started" (p. 7). Anderson discovered one school for Blacks in Savannah, Georgia, that managed to keep its doors open, without the White man's knowledge, from 1833 to 1865. "Its teacher, a Black woman by the name of Deveaux," wrote Anderson, "expanded her literacy campaign during and following the war" (p. 7). Deveaux was just one example of the self-determination of Blacks to become literate even as slaves. There were many well-documented incidences of the efforts of Blacks to teach themselves and be taught by

those who were willing to teach them. More formal efforts within the Black community to

learn to read and write began as soon as the prospect of freedom became more a reality.

The first educational efforts of Blacks to openly seek an education came during the

Civil War. Black soldiers and refugees all but demanded to be taught how to read and write.

Williams (2005) documented the educational mission of escaped slaves who joined the

military to the fight for their freedom:

> If the war provided pathways into freedom enlistment in the military enabled Black
> men to expand educational opportunities that they hoped in turn would improve their
> ability to intervene in civic governance. Military service combined with education
> would, they believed, enable them to claim and exercise the rights of citizenship.
> (p. 47)

The mission of Black solders was clear; they understood the relationship between power and

literacy. Soon, schools were started among the African Americans in the peninsula of

Virginia and Port Royal, South Carolina, as soon as they were captured (Du Bois, 1935,

1969). In 1861, the first day-school for Blacks was started in Hampton, Virginia by Miss

Mary Peake, an African American schoolteacher (Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 1935, 1969;

Williams, 2005). As the possibility of freedom grew more real, Blacks all over the South

clamored, more than ever, for an education.

When Emancipation finally came, African Americans jumped at the chance to learn

to read and write. In the words of Booker T. Washington (1901):

> Few people who were not right in the midst of the scenes can form any exact idea of
> the intense desire which the people of my race showed for education. It was a whole
> race trying to go to school. (p. 27)

Reconstruction and the common school.

Historical context. The period of Reconstruction marks the years in American

history between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and the election of Rutherford B. Hayes in

1876. It represents an era in which the country hoped to heal the ravages of a war that had

freed almost four million slaves, but destroyed cities and homes, dismantled the plantation-

based economy, and dislocated thousands of Blacks and Whites alike. Many were left

hungry, homeless, and jobless. The South needed a massive overhaul in many areas and

education was no exception. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands,

better known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was formed in 1865 to aid tens of thousands of

former slaves and impoverished Whites in the Southern states and in the District of

Columbia. The Bureau, under the general supervision of John Alvord, was charged with

building a new social order in the South. This would not be an easy task in any respect, but

especially not where education and schools were concerned (Anderson, 1988; Du Bois,

1935, 1969).

Before Emancipation, the South had no general system of public education, with the

exception of North Carolina. For the most part, the South managed to elude the common

school reform movement that changed the organization of education in the northern states

between 1830 and 1860. Du Bois' (1969) analysis of White Southern resistance to public

education and his account of the very different attitude of African Americans toward

education bear repeating:

> The fact of the matter was that in the pre-war South, there were two insuperable
> obstacles to a free public school system. The first was the attitude of the owners of
> property. They did not propose under any circumstances to be taxed for the
> education of the laboring classes. They believed that labourers did not need an
> education; that it made their exploitation more difficult; and that if any of them were
> really worth educating, they would somehow escape their condition by their own
> efforts.
>   The second obstacle was that White labourers did not demand education, save
> in exceptional cases. They accepted their subordination to the slaveholders, and
> looked for escape from their condition only to the possibility of becoming
> slaveholders themselves. Education they regarded as a luxury connected with
> wealth.

> It was only the other part of the laboring class, the Black folk, who connected knowledge with power; who believed that education was the stepping-stone to wealth and respect, and that wealth, without education was crippled. Perhaps the very fact that so many of them had seen the wealthy slaveholders at close range, and knew the extent of the ignorance and inefficiency among them, led to that extraordinary mass demand that this was the effective force for the establishment of the public school in the South on a permanent basis for all people and all classes. (p. 641)

Despite intense opposition from Whites, the eagerness to learn among the newly emancipated freedpeople was exceptional. John W. Alvord, General Superintendent of Schools for the Freedmen's Bureau, noted the tendency toward self-reliance among Blacks in the South during his first tour of eight southern states in 1865. He is reported as saying, "Throughout the entire South an effort is being made by the colored people to educate themselves. In absence of other teaching, they are determined to be self-taught" (Williams, 2005, p. 81). Yet, traditional historiography of this era often paints a different picture.

Reframing history: Black Reconstruction. The Reconstruction Era is troublesome because its history has been markedly distorted by traditional historiography. Traditional accounts of the period of American Reconstruction depict the era as wrought with failure and corruption, effectively reducing the years between 1865 and 1876 to an embarrassing moment in American history. Furthermore, many historians, intellectuals, and journalists erroneously credit White northern benevolent missionary societies with spearheading the development of the first public schools for freed slaves while downplaying the critical initiative of African Americans in the establishment of common schools, not only for Blacks, but for Whites as well. Arguably, the first historian to reframe the history of the South after the Civil War and during period of American Reconstruction was W. E. B. Du Bois.

Du Bois (1969), far ahead of his time, reinterpreted this period in American history

in *Black Reconstruction in America (1860-1880)*, as he explained:

> The whole history of Reconstruction has with few exceptions been written by passionate believers in the inferiority of the Negro. The whole body of facts concerning what the Negro actually said and did, how he worked, what he wanted, for whom he voted, is masked in such a cloud of charges, exaggeration and biased testimony, that most students have given up all attempt at new material or new evaluation of the old, and simply repeated perfunctorily all the current legends of Black buffoons in legislature, golden spittoons for fieldhands, bribery, and extravagance on an unheard-scale, and the collapse of civilization until an outraged nation rose in wrath and ended the ridiculous travesty. (pp. 381-382)

Specific facts, however, were clearly incompatible with this history. Southern civilization

did not collapse disintegrate between 1869 and 1876. The cotton crop recovered in 1870.

Most importantly, Black folk managed to cultivate a "little group of trained leadership which

grew by leaps and bounds until it gripped and held the mass of Negroes at the beginning of

the 20th century" (Du Bois, 1969, p. 667). Of the 10-year period of Reconstruction, Du Bois

(1969) asked "if a poor, degraded disadvantaged horde achieves sudden freedom and power,

what could one ask of them in 10 years?" (p. 637). According to Du Bois, within 10 years of

freedom, Blacks acquired some degree of social leadership, sought assistance from able and

appropriate groups, and strove to obtain enough knowledge to "teach themselves wisdom

and the rhythm of united effort" (p. 637). The greatest achievements, in Du Bois'

estimation, were the advancement of the Negro in education and the training of Black

teachers.

Du Bois (1969) and Anderson (1988) identified short and long-term educational

goals set by African Americans following Emancipation. The short-term goal was to

provide the masses of freedpeople with rudimentary literacy skills and basic citizenship

awareness that would enable them to participate in a democratic society. The long-term

purpose for schooling of the ex-slaves was to achieve the "intellectual and moral

development of a responsible leadership class that would organize the masses and lead them

to freedom and equality" (Anderson, 1988, p. 31). Both goals differed sharply from the aims

of White teaching. Anderson (1988) explained:

> Foremost among the Whites pushing for universal schooling were those who
> promoted southern industrialization. They viewed mass schooling as a means to
> produce efficient and contented labor and as a socialization process to instill in Black
> and White children an acceptance of the southern racial hierarchy. (p. 27)

In other words, much like White planters during slavery attempted to inculcate

values that would encourage Blacks to accept their inferior status within Southern culture,

many conservative White missionary societies from the North aimed to superimpose similar

values designed specifically and exclusively for African American children that would

preserve White dominance and protect the racial caste system. Just as in slavery days, the

newly freedpeople resisted White teaching. The efforts of freedmen during Reconstruction

to be educated are well documented.

Anderson (1988) referred to the Reconstruction Era as the first common school

crusade of the South, the first wave of educational reform. He described this era as a time

when Blacks took control of their own education, with the help of northern associations like

the American Missionary Association (AMA), and began establishing common schools for

Blacks and Whites. Sabbath schools, reminiscent of the northern Sunday schools, were

established even before the first public schools. These church-sponsored schools, operated

mainly in the evening and on weekends, offered basic instruction in literacy. Anderson

reported that not much is known about the Sabbath schools, save that they were common in

ex-slave communities across the South and managed and supported by Blacks. The Sabbath

schools were important because they served as a primary means of advancing the education

of Blacks and inspired Blacks to assume responsibility for their education. With the

combined efforts of African American leadership, the Freedmen's Bureau, and the American

Missionary Association, the first common schools soon followed the Sabbath schools.

The passage of the Military Reconstruction Acts in 1867 also played a major role in

the advancing the common school and the education of Blacks in the South. This legislation

empowered the generals of the armies of occupation to call for the South to form state

conventions in which Black and White politicians would participate for the purpose of

establishing public education in the South. For the first time, Black politicians and leaders

acquired newfound respect, influence, and decision making power as they joined White

Southern Republicans in mapping out a plan for public education in the South (Anderson,

1988). The progress achieved by the coalition of Blacks and Whites working together to

establish the common school in the South was obvious. By 1870, almost a fourth of the

Southern Black population was enrolled in a public school and the numbers continued to

grow. Tragically, the revolutionary progress made toward advancing the education of

African Americans was short-lived. The freedmen's revolution evoked a nasty counter-

revolution (Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 1935, 1969).

Progress for African Americans in the South came to a screeching halt in 1876.

Anderson (1988) elaborated:

> The moment of broad retrenchment came with the disputed Presidential election of
> 1876 and the settlement that resulted the compromise of 1877. Southerners elected
> Rutherford B. Hayes and Republicans agreed to remove federal troops from the
> South. The planters' resistance virtually froze the ex-slaves
> educational campaign in its mid-1870s position. (p. 23)

"It was no secret that many Whites believed that learning will spoil the Nigger for work"

(pp. 20-21). Hayes had run on a campaign promise to remove the occupation of federal

troops in the South. With the troops gone, Southern Whites regrouped, reversing much of

the progress toward racial equality of opportunity achieved in the early years of

Reconstruction. Reese (2005) asserted:

> Southern Democrats began to 'redeem' the region in the 1870s. . . . Southern schools, except for a brief period in New Orleans after the war, were racially segregated, and by the end of the century, Jim Crow had established itself throughout southern society. (p. 71)

Despite Jim Crow with all of its ugly violence and deliberate educational goals aimed at

denigrating, decimating, and degrading the "souls of Black folk," Du Bois (1935, 1969,

1994) reminded us that the gains made by "the astonishing movement of Negroes in "to

plant the New England college in the South" (1969, p. 667) (i.e., embracing the classical

liberal arts curriculum characteristic of traditional British education prevalent at prestigious

New England universities, and "to give the Southern black man a leadership based on

scholarship and character" (p. 667) was "the salvation of the South and the Negro" (p. 667).

He argued further that the period of Reconstruction was not a failure for the newly

freedpeople, but rather a time of growth and advancement in the midst of great turmoil.

Contrary to the propaganda of traditional history, Du Bois (1969) insisted that the period of

American Reconstruction served as the "salvation of the South and the Negro" (p. 667). He

wrote:

> These "carpetbaggers" deserve to be remembered and honored. Without them there can be no doubt that the Negro would have rushed into revolt and vengeance and played into the hands of those determined to crush him. As it was, when the reaction triumphed in 1876, there was already present a little group of trained leadership which grew by leaps and bounds until it gripped and held the mass of Negroes at the beginning of the 20th century. (p. 667)

This leadership carried the torch into what Anderson (1988) called the second common

school crusade. While the rest of the nation was debating how to best educate White

children to meet the demands of a capitalist economy and efficiency-driven society, African Americans were fighting Jim Crow in the South and racist ideology everywhere in order to receive a quality education.

African Americans and the Progressive Era.

The climate on the other side of the color line. Many traditional historians focused on progressivism as a "middle class urban movement that, at best, made Blacks only marginal participants in the struggle for social change" (J. Franklin, 1990, p. 1). Over the course of the past two decades, a broader examination history of progressivism, particularly within the Black community in the South indicates that the American progressivism movement failed to effectively address issues of equality of opportunity for African Americans, especially educational opportunity. In Origins of the South, 1877-1913, historian C. Vann Woodward (2006) noted that in the South, Progressive Era reforms generally benefitted White men. Woodward strongly suggested that progressivism was a Whites-only movement that did not effectively bring about sweeping reforms for African Americans. "Southern progressivism generally was progressivism for White men only, and after the poll tax took its toll not all the White men were included" (Woodward, 2006, p. 373). August Meier (1968) posited in Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 that "Negroes were practically omitted from the Progressive Era's program of reform" (p. 165). The literature suggested a systematic effort on the part of the U.S. government and White Americans to deprive African Americans of equal opportunities for a quality education and a life commiserate with their White counterparts. The citizenship status of African Americans steadily declined after Reconstruction.

The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision delivered one of the most pivotal and devastating blows to the progress of African Americans in the acquisition of equal rights. By ruling that Homer Plessy, who was seven-eighths percent White and one-eighth percent Black, could not ride in the Whites-only car on a railroad train, the practice of segregation was legally sanctioned across the South and the nation. Harvey Fireside (2004), author of *Separate and Unequal: Homer Plessy and the Supreme Court Decision that Legalized Racism,* suggested "one of the most insidious ways the Plessy ruling was used to subvert the future progress of Negroes was the decision's explicit connection to 'separate but equal' schools" (p. 241). Fireside pointed out that, by the early 20th century, there were 17 southern and border states with segregated school systems. The conditions in many of the segregated Black schools were often appallingly substandard due to a deliberate lack of adequate state funding. Pupils in Black schools rarely profited from the advantages White children gained from the efforts of northern White educational progressives, such as graded classrooms, broadened curriculum, better teacher training, and more child-centered pedagogy. According to Fireside, conditions in Black schools were "ostensibly separate but equal; though in most rural areas their conditions were particularly abysmal" (p. 242). Fireside continued:

> Pupils of several grades were often crowded into one room, and they were perennially short of textbooks and other equipment. Their teachers were paid substantially less than White teachers and very little in state funds was spent on school buses for Black people. During agricultural seasons when the need for labor was high, no effort was made to enforce truancy rules for Black children working on the farm. Only a small percentage of such children were able to attend segregated colleges, where standards were lower than in White universities. (p. 242)

The inequitable conditions of Black schools were as undeniable and deliberate as was the "generally accepted credo of race," (Woodward, 2006, p. 355) indicative of the Southern

caste system. The best indication of the most incriminating southern White sentiment regarding the education of Blacks may reside in a racial creed set down by educator Thomas Pearce Bailey in Woodward's work, *Origins of the New South*. Portions of the creed read as follows:

1. Blood will tell.
2. The White race must dominate.
3. The Teutonic peoples will stand for race purity.
4. The Negro is inferior and will remain so.
5. This is a White man's country.
6. No social equity.
7. No political equity.
8. In educational policy let the Negro have the crumbs that fall from the White man's table.
9. Let there be such industrial education of the Negro as will best suit him to serve the White man. (Woodward, 2006, p. 356)

Although this creed was associated with the sentiments endemic to the South, it is important to remember that racism was by no means exclusive to the southern states. Inferior learning conditions for African Americans prevailed in the North, as well.

During the Great Black Migration, which coincided in part with the Progressive Era, Black Americans in the North became victims without crimes. Tyack (1974) commented:

To have been born Black was normally to have been labeled a failure—an inferiority all too often justified by a bogus science—as millions of Negro children learned in school systems which were consciously or unwittingly racist. Black Americans arrived in northern cities in large numbers at a time when centralization had undermined ward school politics, when educators were increasingly empowered to make classifications of pupils according to their notion of what was best for the client, when the results of biased test were commonly accepted as proof of native ability, when those in control of schooling generally agreed that the function of schools was to sort and train students to fit into the existing order, and when much writing in education and social science tended to portray Black citizens as a social problem. . . . The inferior status of Blacks was just a fact of life to which the schools in their "realism" must adjust. (p. 217)

The systematic denial of equality of educational opportunity for African Americans was pervasive in both the north and the South; the consequences Blacks suffered from an inferior education may not have been as palpable, but they were no less real.

Carter G. Woodson (1993), a visionary and radical Black historian and founder of the *Journal of Negro Education* and the *Negro History Bulletin*, examined these consequences from a different perspective in his landmark work, *The Mis-education of the Negro*. He addressed the damage done to African Americans by the dominant, European-Anglo American educational process. According to Woodson, "the so-called modern education, with all its defects, does so much more good than it does the Negro because it has been worked out in conformity to the needs of those people who have enslaved and oppressed weaker people" (p. xii). Woodson located the "seat of the trouble" in the fact that Blacks are taught to "admire the Hebrew, the Greek and the Teuton, and to despise the African" (p. 1). Calling for Blacks to take control of their own education, Woodson advocated for Black self-reliance, Black political education, and a commitment of Black service to the Black community. Woodson was not the only African American to debate the kind of education Blacks should have.

The great debate. The debate within the African American community about the kind of education Blacks should receive actually began before 1890. Washington (1901) supported a focus on vocational education that would enable Blacks to accommodate themselves to the position afforded them by Whites society. Du Bois (as cited in Gates & West, 1996) on the other hand, favored a classical education from which a "talented tenth" (p. 133) or Black intelligentsia could be formed to lead and educate other African Americans. In The Souls of Black Folk, first published in 1903, Du Bois (1994) associated

the beginning of this debate with the industrialization of the South, the gradual displacement

of the agrarian society, and the struggle of White educational reformers to establish a

universal educational system in the South that would meet the demands of a new and

growing capitalistic economy. Normal schools for the newly freedpeople and colleges to

train Black teachers were established, often at the expense of quality. Du Bois (1994)

described the situation:

> The Negro colleges, hurriedly founded, were inadequately equipped, illogically
> distributed, and of varying efficiency and grade; the normal and high schools were
> doing little more than common-school work, and the common schools were training
> but a third of the children who ought to be in them, and training these too often
> poorly. (p. 58)

Northern philanthropists and educational reformers proposed two simultaneous reform

agendas: universal schooling for all students, both Black and White, and industrial training

for Blacks. The aim, however, of industrial education for Blacks was not the same as the

northern push for useful and efficient education that was gaining popularity in the White

progressive educational movement in the North. Industrial training in the South focused less

on fulfilling a general utilitarian philosophy of education and more on keeping Blacks in

their place and maintaining traditional inequalities of wealth and power (Anderson, 1988).

Ex-slave Booker T. Washington, the most ardent philosophical rival of Du Bois, avidly

supported industrial education for Blacks.

The opening of Hampton Institute in 1868, the first experiment in industrial

education for Blacks and later Tuskegee Institute, represented early victories for segregated

Black industrial education. Anderson (1988) explained:

> The Hampton-Tuskegee Institute curriculum of industrial education was central to
> the philanthropists' educational ideology, not as a means to reconcile White
> supremacists to the idea of Black public education, but as a program to reinforce the

existing structure of the South's political economy and make it run more efficiently. (p. 82)

Washington supported the Hampton Idea and eventually took over the reins of the Tuskegee Institute. The literature suggested strong and differing opinions amongst historians about Washington.

Woodward (2006) wrote:

It was an ex-slave who framed the *modus vivendi* of race relations in the New South. Booker T. Washington was more than a leader of his race. He was also a leader of White opinion with a national following and propounded not merely an educational theory but a social philosophy. (p. 356)

Anderson (1988) said of Washington, "to prevent racial strife, Washington discouraged Blacks from voting, running for political office, and pursuing civil equality" (p. 103). Du Bois (1994) criticized Washington for asking Black people to "give up, at least for the present, three things—first, political power, second, insistence on civil rights, and third, higher education of Negro youth" (p. 30). Eventually, students at Hampton and Tuskegee and the Black intelligentsia began to complain about the limitations of industrial education and Blacks began to embrace the classical New England curriculum. The planting of the New England college was revived.

The Washington and Du Bois debate represents "one of the great battles in the long war to determine whether Black people would be educated to challenge or accommodate the oppressive southern political economy" (Anderson, 1988, p. 77). According to Anderson (1988), Washington and Du Bois were both "seeking to educate, organize, and direct the same segment of Afro-America . . . 'the selected youth' (prospective teachers, editors, ministers, and businessmen) to guide the race's social development" (p. 104). Interestingly, both Du Bois and Washington, disillusioned by the power of racism and the status quo,

modified their earlier positions. The question of what to do with the Negro was thrust in the

forefront of educational reform. This debate, by the way, very much rages yet today and

continues to shape the common sense of the present, again pitting utilitarianism against

intellectualism. Ironically, despite the original call of educational reformers to take the

politics out of education, the vision of integrated, common schools, if there ever really was

such a dream, withered under the unmitigated pressure of racial politics. The question

remained: What to do with the Negro? Might the lessons we learn from "the Negro

problem" be the answer for public education for all Americans?

Part 3: What to Do with the Negro—Education in America, Jim Crow to *Brown*

> Negroes have no control over their education and have little voice in their other
> affairs pertaining thereto. . . . The education of the Negroes, then, the most important
> thing in the uplift of the Negroes is almost entirely in the hands of those who
> enslaved them and now segregate them. (Woodson, 1993, p. 22)

> Despite frequent good intentions and abundant rhetoric about equal opportunity:

> Schools have rarely taught the children of the poor effectively—and this failure has
> been systematic, not idiosyncratic. . . . Americans have often perpetuated social
> injustice by blaming the victim, particularly in the case of institutionalized racism.
> (Tyack, 1974, p. 11)

At the conclusion of part 2 of this chapter, I noted that the persistent "problem" of

the Negro and the racial educational caste system in America's public schools and posed a

thoughtful question—might the lessons we learn from "the Negro problem" be the answer

for public education for all Americans? I asked this question to point out that the Negro's

struggle for education is the nation's struggle. As I review the literature in the present

discussion on the history of education and school reform from 1930 through the 1954, I

invite readers to consider the possibility that doing what is educationally right for African

Americans may ultimately provide answers for how to educate all people. But, first, I want

to share some thoughts gleaned from the literature about the interrelation of race, Jim Crow, and American morality.

American morality and Jim Crow. Following the demise of Reconstruction Era in 1876, the institutionalization of apartheid schooling and Jim Crow in the South and ambivalent acceptance of segregation in northern cities through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the fight for quality education for African Americans again fell primarily to African Americans at the turn of the 20th century. Being Black in America meant segregation from Whites in school, at home, on the train, on the bus, in restaurants, at work—most everywhere Blacks lived as second-class citizens. Slavery was outlawed but freedom and equal treatment under the law at all levels of government remained elusive for many Blacks, as the Supreme Court of the land passed and upheld legislation that sanctioned the practice of segregation. State and local courts failed to enforce the 14th Amendment of the Constitution and turned a blind eye to violence against Blacks in the South and the outright deprivation of voting rights and other basic civil rights for African American citizens. Because of racist practices, the educational opportunities and outcomes for Blacks and Whites remained largely uneven. Accordingly, the conversation about education and school reform in the United States between 1930 and 1954 remains, by necessity, a tale of two very different school experiences and the Black/White divide continues. Segregated schools and society created a racial caste that pervaded the times and contributed to a history alive with conflicted values, overt oppression, and hypocrisy. The problem of the Negro just would not go away.

Many scholars attempted to explain the unsettling Negro situation. Gunnar Myrdal (1944), in the highly publicized work, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and*

Modern Democracy, fashioned "the Negro problem" as a moral issue. The book, the result

of a two-year research project led by Myrdal at the request of the Carnegie Corporation,

became internationally known and was frequently placed in the same category with other

monumental work such as Alexis de Toqueville's *Democracy in Education* (1835) and

James Bryce's *The American Commonwealth* (1888) (as referenced in Appelqvist &

Andersson, 2005, pp. 199-120). Major tenets of Myrdal's (1944) assessment of the

American dilemma are:

> To the great majority of White Americans, the Negro problem has distinctively
> negative connotations. It suggests something difficult to settle and equally difficult
> to leave alone. It is embarrassing. It makes for moral uneasiness. The very presence
> of the Negro in America; his[sic] fate in this country through slavery, Civil War and
> Reconstruction; his recent career and his present status; his
> accommodation; his protest and his aspirations; in fact his entire biological,
> historical, and social existence as a participant American, represent to the ordinary
> White man in the North as well as in the South an anomaly in the very structure of
> American society. To many, this takes on the proportion of a menace—biological,
> economic, social, cultural, and, at times, political. This anxiety may be mingled with
> a feeling of individual and collective guilt. A few see the problem as a challenge to
> statesmanship. To all it is trouble. (p. xiv)

Myrdal viewed the Negro problem a problem in the heart of Americans, an ongoing conflict

between espoused and lived values. The central point of Myrdal's treatise was:

> The ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the
> general plane which we shall call the "American Creed," where the American thinks,
> talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on
> the other hand, the valuation on specific planes of individual and group living, where
> personal and local interests; economic, social, and sexual jealousies; considerations
> of community prestige and conformity; group prejudice against particular persons or
> types of people; and all sorts of miscellaneous wants, impulses, and habits dominate
> his [sic] outlook. (p. xlvii)

The moral dilemma, as Myrdal saw it, raged within and among White and Black Americans.

Drawing upon the work of Dewey in *Freedom and Culture,* Myrdal (1944) sought to "follow

through Dewey's conception of what a social problem really is" (p. xlvii). *Freedom and*

Culture was an analytical defense of democracy and came at a time when democracy was

being threatened by Marxism and totalitarianism. Quoting Dewey, Myrdal wrote:

> Anything that obscures the fundamentally moral nature of the social problem is
> harmful, no matter whether it proceeds from the side of the physical or of
> psychological theory. Any doctrine that eliminates or even obscures the function of
> choice of values and enlistment of desires and emotions in behalf of those chosen
> weakens personal responsibility for judgment and for action. It, thus, helps create the
> attitudes that welcome and support the totalitarian state. (p. xlvii)

Cognizant of the precarious position America held during the 1940s, Doxey Wilkerson (as

cited in Aptheker, 1946) wrote "the post-war drive of reaction against the Negro people is

approaching a stage of crisis" (p. 7). Wilkerson (as cited in Aptheker, 1946) reminded

readers:

> The wartime fair employment practice program of the Federal government has been
> repudiated. Poll tax has repeal legislation has been blocked. The War Department
> has reaffirmed and strengthened the Jim Crow policy of the army. . . . A wave of
> anti-Negro police brutality is mounting in northern cities. . . . The Ku Klux Klan
> rides again. Lynch-terror stalks the South. (p. 7)

He concluded that the newly intensified oppression of Negroes stemmed from the rulers of

American society realizing that "now they are in grave danger of losing the vested material

interests they have in the system of anti-Negro discrimination" (p. 13). Simply put, Negroes

were getting out of their place and it was time to see to it that they were put back in their

place. Although he spoke of moral issues, Myrdal managed to encourage a negative

perception of the Negro and promoted a subjective conglomeration of causes to explain

segregation and the racial caste system in America. One cause of segregation, according to

Myrdal (as cited in Aptheker, 1946), was the inferiority of the Negro. He wrote:

> In attempting to understand the motivation of segregation and discrimination, one
> basic fact to be taken into account, is, of course, that many Negroes, particularly in
> the South, are poor, uneducated, and deficient in health, morals, and manners, and,
> thus, not agreeable as social companions. (p. 58)

Throughout his work, negative stereotypes of Negroes were reiterated. Herbert Aptheker (1946) strongly rebutted Myrdal's (1944) claims in a brilliant critique entitled, *The Negro People in America: A Critique of Gunnar Myrdal's "An American Dilemma."* Dismissing Myrdal's history as an egregious "miscellany of misinformation" (p. 66), Aptheker averred that "the Negro question is basically a material one, not a moral one," and "there is no dilemma for believers in democracy and full rights for all people" (p. 66).

> We do have a situation involving choice, but the alternatives are not equally unsatisfactory. The choice lies between the attempted preservation of our existing exploiting system, which nurtures the oppression of minority peoples, or the introduction of vital changes now, and the consequent hastening of the transformation of our society into a pattern socialism. (p. 66)

Wrought with conflicting messages and arrogance about knowing the American Negro, Myrdal's work was particularly dangerous because it was so widely heralded as a masterpiece. Given the time period, it is highly unlikely that Aptheker's critique received attention or respect anywhere equal to that bestowed upon Myrdal's work. Conventional wisdom and the status quo were much more akin, for certain, to look upon the Negro problem in school and society as a moral dilemma encumbered by people vested in values of the American creed. According to Myrdal, Americans were confronted with a choice: "America is free to choose whether the Negro shall remain a liability or become her opportunity" (p. 1022). The biggest irony in this declaration was the implication that the fate of African Americans lay in the hands of White Americans. That is to say, Whites controlled the future of African Americans. The literature has suggested that White Americans chose to keep the Negro as a liability for a few more years. Unequal opportunities were maintained for African Americans in many aspects of life, including education.

Within the White mainstream, progressive school reform was the prevalent philosophy in education until the 1940s. Despite the criticisms of many notable conservatives, "in the end, the congeries of reform efforts that constituted the movement wrought major transformations in the nature and character of American schooling" (Cremin, 1988, p. 230). School systems expanded as the number of pupils enrolled in public school kindergartens and high schools increased sevenfold and tenfold, respectively, even though the actual number of kindergarten age and high school age pupils decreased within the same time period. School curricula were enlarged and reorganized across all levels, especially at the secondary level, where opportunities greatly increased in areas of trade, commerce, agriculture, home economics, physical education, and the arts. Concomitantly, with the popularization of high schools, extracurricular activities were also expanded as schools were increasingly viewed a social centers more clubs, athletics, and opportunities for student government. In keeping with the philosophy of teaching the whole child, many more noninstructional student services were provided in the schools, such as health examinations, school meals, and vocational and psychological counseling. Dramatic changes occurred in instructional materials: flash cards, more colorful textbooks, phonograph records, slides and film strips were widely used to enhance instructional delivery. Discipline became more relaxed and systems for reward and encouragement replaced harsh punishments. Even school architecture changed as schools were built with gymnasiums, pools, laboratories, shops, kitchens, clinics, cafeterias, playgrounds, and auditoriums. Priority was given to efficient use of time, space, and instruction. Grouping students by ability or academic tracking as measured intelligence tests became increasingly popular as a means of providing a varied and appropriate education for students based upon their God-given ability.

Tracking was soon regarded as the practical solution to the long-standing question of what schools should aim to do and how, a question that had been debated within the councils of White professional school people and Black intelligentsia for years (Cremin, 1988, pp. 230-231). The primary motivation of many White reformers, in contrast, was to preserve White privilege and keep Blacks in their place as evidenced by the push for inferior normal training schools of Blacks in the South, indiscriminate determination that vocational and trade education was the most appropriate education for Blacks, and consistent underfunding of any kind of education for Blacks in the South, and quietly as it was kept, in the North as well (Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 1935, 1969). The educational rhetoric of elite reformers touted structural and curricular differentiation as a means of individualizing instruction.

Years earlier Charles Eliot (as cited in Tyack, 1974), in a speech to the Harvard Teachers' Association in 1908, was among the first to encourage schoolmen and women to "face the facts" (p. 129) about school and society in America:

> Our society is divided, and is going to be divided into layers whose borders blend, whose limits are easily passed by individuals, but which, nevertheless, have distinct characteristics and distinct educational needs. *Freedom produces inequalities and it is foolish to educate each child to be President of the United States* [emphasis added]. There are "four layers in civilized society which are indispensable, and so far as we can see, eternal:" a thin upper one which "consists of the managing, leading, guiding class—the intellectual discoverers, the inventors, the organizers, and the managers and their chief assistants;" next the skilled workers, whose numbers are growing with the application of technology to production; third, "the commercial class, the layer which is employed in buying, selling, and distributing;" and finally the "thick fundamental layer engaged in household work, agricultural, mining, quarrying and forest work." By discovering the talented child in the lower layers— "the natural-history 'sport' in the human race"—the school might foster mobility among the layers, but it should be recognized to serve each class "with keen appreciation of the several ends in view"—that is, to give each layer its own appropriate form of schooling. (p. 129)

The idea of sorting students and curriculum was inextricably tied to the early development of intelligence and achievement tests and the later push for efficient and scientific education

that came to be regarded as conventional wisdom in the 1930s. Edward L. Thorndike,

Hubbard Judd, and Lewis M. Terman "saw themselves as the experts seeking to place

schooling on a sound scientific foundation—they were quintessentially progressive in

education" (Cremin, 1988, p. 234). The reliance on testing as a diagnostic tool that could,

theoretically, delimit a pupil's capability quickly became a placement tool used to label and

stifle opportunity. Determining how best to use test results raised hard questions.

> Did an IQ of 95 mean that Johnny needed special assistance in learning algebra or
> that he was incapable of learning algebra? Did it mean that Johnny should continue
> to study fractions and not go on to algebra or that he should discontinue mathematics
> entirely and substitute woodworking? Did it mean that Johnny should be grouped
> with other children having similar IQ levels or with other children having very
> different IQ levels? (Cremin, 1980, p. 234)

Whatever the ostensible goal of testing may have been, it was increasingly used to classify

schoolchildren and extend the political and social agenda of the status quo.

To be sure, Blacks gained little from maintaining the status quo. In fact, as the

number of Black and White students attending school increased, so did the degree of

differentiation within and between schools. In other words, "separate schools for Black

children abounded as a result of legal or neighborhood segregation or of the gerrymandering

of school districts" (Cremin, 1980, p. 231). The increase in vocational programs resulted in

more social and racial stratification. Many Whites clung to the racist presumption that most

Blacks were cognitively inferior and thus, better suited for the lower end vocational

education tracks. Education for Blacks in the southern states emphasized training for lower

mobility vocational occupations. Inequity in the allotment of resources and inequality of

opportunity and outcomes was easily accomplished by discriminatory and inadequate state

funding of education.

In 1939, Black activist Wilkerson, an Associate Professor of Education and Director of Summer School at Howard University, conducted a study of "Special Problems of the Negro." The data were gathered in Southern states as was most of the educational data during this time. The investigation was one of several studies commissioned by then President of the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Excerpts from a summary of Wilkerson's (1970) original 1939 findings are reported below:

1. In the numbers of children out of school, in the length of school terms; in the progress of pupils through the grades; in facilities for transporting pupils to school; in the pupil-loads of teachers, their educational qualifications, and their salaries; and finally, in the adequacy of school plants and equipment—in all these respects there is reflected a program of public elementary and secondary education for Negroes which is far less extensive than, and markedly inferior to, that afforded for the White population. . . . It is reasonable to suppose that Negro pupils, required to attend school in a physical environment which is not conducive to learning, are thus confronted with a major deficiency to scholastic efficiency. (p. 34)

2. The degree of popularization achieved by the Nation as a whole in the field of public secondary education has been approximated fairly closely for the White population of the South. However, despite notable gains between 1920 and 1934, public secondary education for Negroes in the Southern States was popularized less than one-third the extent which obtained for the country as a whole. (p. 47)

3. In order to bring current per capita expenditures for Negro schools in the 18 Southern states to the level for White schools during 1935-36, there would have to be spent on Negro schools alone a total of 94 million dollars annually. (p. 57)

4. More than 90% of both the institutions and the students [of higher education] were located in 17 Southern States. Only one Negro institution in the Nation has been "approved" by the Association of American Universities. Opportunities for graduate and professional education are extremely meager for Negro students in the South. Though all of the Southern states deny admittance to Negroes to their state universities, only seven of them provide scholarships to aid Negro students to attend graduate and professional schools elsewhere. (p. 85)

5. Racial inequalities in educational opportunity are not restricted to educational programs financed from state and local revenues alone. Negroes may be expected to share equitably in federally subsidized educational programs only when Federal policies for the administration of such programs expressly require. (p. 146)

Wilkerson conducted numerous other studies and, by 1940, he had concluded that even in Northern states, Black education was inherently unequal and separate. He found in further research that "the degree of such separateness tends to be most pronounced in areas where the Negro population is relatively most heavily concentrated, and where the general social status of the Negro is lower than in the North as a whole" (Wilkerson as cited in Tyack, 1974, p. 229). Du Bois and Black activist, Carter G. Woodson, had already begun promoting the idea that Black children could not be appropriately educated in White schools. Du Bois surmised that "there are many public school systems in the North where Negroes are admitted and tolerated, but they are not educated; they are crucified" (Du Bois, 1935, p. 331). Woodson (1993) shared Du Bois' concern and lamented the control of Black education by Whites and mis-educated Negroes:

> Negroes have no control over their education and have little voice in their other affairs pertaining thereto. . . . The education of the Negroes, then, the most important thing in the uplift of the Negroes is almost entirely in the hands of those who enslaved them and now segregate them. With mis-educated Negroes in control themselves, however it is doubtful that the system would be very different from what it is or that it would rapidly undergo change. . . . The present system under the control of the Whites trains the Negro to be White and at the same time convinces him of the impropriety or the impossibility of his becoming White. (pp. 22-23)

As far as Du Bois and Woodson were concerned, the main problem for Blacks was developing a sense of self-knowledge and self-respect, both of which, they feared, could not be taught in White schools or by Blacks who did not know their own heritage. Whether they were right or not, by 1940, the structural existence of separateness and inequity in schoolhouses spread into massive ghettoes in large American cities, creating an ugly reality that the nation could no longer ignore. "The poverty and racism that produced the nation within a nation became a bitter heritage for the future" (Tyack, 1974, p. 229).

But it was not just the dilemma of what to do with the Negro that troubled the Nation in the 1940s; there were also worries about the influx of immigrants and how the country could hire enough teachers and build enough schools to educate the new Americans. The country, in a déjà vu scenario, was again facing the same challenge with which it had been confronted almost a hundred years earlier—how to Americanize immigrants, homogenize the public, and preserve the Anglo-Saxon standard. The racial problem, however, posed a larger threat for two reasons. First, the number of lawsuits claiming racial discrimination was increasing and difficult to morally defend. Second, the growing racial tension in America had the potential to tarnish the international image of the United States, something that the nation's leaders wanted to avoid, especially during and after World Wars I and II. It appeared that the problem of the Negro loomed larger than ever and it was beginning to get in the way of important national concerns. The American Way might just have to be legislated.

In 1946, President Harry S. Truman appointed a Commission on Higher Education. The commission's report, "Higher Education for American Democracy," strongly condemned racial discrimination in the nation's colleges and universities and also suggested that higher education not be preserved for the only the elite, but that it be "the means by which every citizen, youth, and adult is enabled and encouraged to carry his education, formal and informal, as far as his native capacities permit" (Cremin, 1988, p. 251). The Commission recommended, among other things, that "historic patterns of discrimination in high education, based on race, color, gender, and income, be attacked by federal legislation" (p. 251). The response of legislators to the commission's report was no response. Not a single hearing, legislation, or appropriation immediately followed release of the report. Five

months later, Truman appointed a Committee on Civil Rights whom he instructed "to inquire into and to determine whether and in what respect current law-enforcement measures and the authority and means possessed by federal, state, and local governments may be strengthened and improved to safeguard the civil rights of the people" (Truman Committee on Civil Rights, 1947, p. VIII). In December of 1947, the committee produced a report entitled "To Secure These Rights: The Report on the President's Committee on Civil Rights." I have elected to discuss this report in some detail because it provides valuable insight into the psyche of the educated elite at the time, reveals the impact of historic precepts and assumptions related to race and the civil rights of Black Americans, and explains the future actions of the federal government.

Three themes prevailed in the report: (a) the right of Americans to be free from fear, (b) the preservation of the legacy and image of the well-intentioned, fair-minded "American Way," and (c) the responsibility of government to guarantee individual liberties and equal protection under the law. The opening statement read:

> Freedom from fear is more fully realized in our country than in any other on the face of the earth. Yet all parts of our population are not equally free from fear. And from time to time, and in some places, this freedom has been gravely threatened. It was so after the last war, when organized groups fanned hatred and intolerance, until at times, mob action struck fear into the hearts of men and women, because of their racial origin or religious beliefs. (Truman Committee on Civil Rights, 1947, p. VII)

That some Americans, presumably Black Americans, would be thrust into situations in which they are fearful, commissioners reported, was inexcusable. More Americans, the report stated, needed to become aware of the chasm between the civil rights principles we profess and our daily practice. To this end, the report identified four "essential rights" for all U.S. citizens were identified: the right to safety and security, the right to citizenship and its

privileges, the right to freedom of conscience and expression, and the right to equality of

opportunity.

While clearly protective of America's world status and honor, the report was not

ambivalent about the problem of race, the wrongness of racism, or the injustice of depriving

any group of people of their civil rights based on racial discrimination:

> Our American heritage of freedom and equality has given us prestige among the
> nations of the world and a strong feeling of national pride at home. There is much
> reason for that pride. But pride is no substitute for steady and honest performance,
> and the record shows that at varying times in American history the gulf between
> ideals and practice has been wide. We have had human slavery. We have had
> religious persecution. We have had mob rule. We still have their ideological
> remnants in the unwarrantable "pride and prejudice" of some of our people and
> practices. (Truman Committee on Civil Rights, 1947, p. 9)

The Truman Committee on Civil Rights (1947) followed historical patterns of discrimination

against Jews and Catholics, African Americans, and Native Americans, and Hispanics,

Filipinos, and Asians. By revealing the subterfuges that work in concert to disenfranchise

and oppress Blacks and immigrants, the report made plain the undeniable interrelationship

between discrimination in employment, housing, education, and health and rejected, in no

uncertain terms, any assumption that separate facilities could ever be equal. "A law which

forbids a group of American citizens to associate with other citizens in the ordinary course

of daily living," the report averred, "creates inequality by imposing a caste status on the

minority group" (p. 82). Based on the findings, the Commission offered several

recommendations. It called for, in general terms, "the elimination of segregation, based on

race, color, creed or national origin" (p. 166) and specifically recommended the enactment

of "a federal Fair Employment Practices Act prohibiting all forms of discrimination in

private employment, based on race, color, creed, or national origin" (p. 167). Regarding

education, however, the committee recommended the "enactment by *state* [emphasis added]

legislatures of fair educational practice laws for public and private educational institutions,

prohibiting discrimination in the admission and treatment of students based on race, color,

creed, or national origin" (p. 168). State laws would, then, be enforced by "independent

administrative commissions" (p. 168). Whether intentional or not, turning the matter of

ending discrimination in schools over to the jurisprudence of each state encumbered the

process of ridding the nation of racist educational practices.

It is noteworthy that, although strong moral justification was given for putting an end

to racial discrimination, what may have been more powerful justifications were the

economic and international reasons given in the report for ending discriminatory practices in

the United States.

> One of the principal economic problems facing us and the rest of the world is
> achieving maximum production and continued prosperity. The loss of a huge,
> potential market of goods is a direct result of the economic discrimination, which is
> practiced against many of our minority groups. (Truman Committee on Civil Rights,
> 1947, p. 141)

The report reminded Americans that discriminatory practices not only hurt minority groups,

but the entire population. In addition, the report cited concern for the deteriorating image of

the United States in foreign nations.

> Our foreign policy is designed to make the United States enormous, positive
> influence for peace and progress throughout the world. We have tried to let nothing,
> not even extreme political differences between ourselves and foreign nations, stand
> in the way of this goal. But our domestic civil rights shortcomings are a serious
> obstacle. . . . We cannot escape the fact that our civil rights record has been an issue
> in world politics. (pp. 146-147)

The fact that none of these justifications resulted in immediate changes in racist policies in

the nations' schools is well known. President Truman, however, took the commission's

report seriously and included many of its recommendations in his legislative program. He

included the four essential rights identified in the document as one of the five goals outlined

in his 1948 State of the Union address. A month later, Truman called for federal legislation

prohibiting lynching, outlawing the poll tax, and establishing both a Fair Employment

Practices Commission and a Commission on Civil Rights. Four years before the *Brown*

decision, his Department of Justice argued to repeal the separate-but-equal principle and, in

1952, submitted a brief in support of the plaintiffs in the pending *Brown* case. He was

unable, however, to move Congress.

I am reminded of Derrick Bell's interest-convergence theory, in which he asserts that

Whites only do right by Black when it is, somehow, to the mutual advantage of White

people. In fact, Bell posits that it was the threat of international outrage that prompted

passage of the *Brown* decision. If Bell is right, one could assume that in 1947, Whites were

not yet convinced that it would be to their benefit to end racial discrimination in the schools

or workplace nor did they care too much about the injustices being done to Blacks. But, that

is a topic to be debated at another time. To continue with the subject at hand, the question of

what to do with the right of the Negro to an education between 1930 and 1954, I now turn

my attention to the legislative battles over segregated education that led up to the *Brown*

decision.

The turn toward *Brown*. My purpose is to demonstrate the evolution of a slow but

steady movement against the reigning separate-but-equal doctrine. To do so, I briefly

highlight six court cases in which Blacks (and one other minority) sued for the right to attend

White schools. The case tried prior to 1930 is discussed because of its significant indication

of the depth of racism and bigotry in the history of education in America.

1. In the case of *Gong Lum et al. v. Rice et al.* (1927), a young girl of Chinese

   descent in Mississippi was forbidden to attend a high school for White children

solely because she was not White. The girl's father, Gong Lum, petitioned the

U.S. Supreme Court claiming that his daughter's 14th Amendment rights had

been violated. He contended that his daughter was neither Black nor of mulatto,

so she should be able to attend the White school. Because the girl was

Mongolian and of the Yellow race, the court held that this case was no different

than any other case involving the separation of the White race from the colored

races which included not only Blacks, but the brown, Red, and Yellow races.

The Supreme Court upheld the school district's decision on the grounds that the

high school was in accordance with the 14th Amendment (Dorsey, 2008, p. 15;

Johnson & Lucas, 1947, p. 262).

2. The first court decision to directly address segregation in higher education was

the case of *University of Maryland v. Murray* (1936). Murray, a Black man, had

applied to the University of Maryland Law School, but was rejected on the basis

of his race. The case was heard at the state level. The University of Maryland

argued that it had not violated any laws because it provided adequate

opportunities to Negro students by offering scholarships to attend colleges in

other states that accepted Negroes. The state court found that the scholarships

provided were too few and too limiting and, hence, ruled that Murray would be

admitted to the University of Maryland Law School (Dorsey, 2008, p. 16).

3. In a court case two years later, the Supreme Court heard the case of *Missouri ex

rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938), the first education-related legal battle waged by the

NAACP in the federal courts. In this case, Lloyd Gaines, a Black man, petitioned

to be admitted to the University of Missouri Law School. Gaines had been

denied admission because of a state statute prohibiting integrated education.

Relying on the precedent established in the Murray case, the Supreme Court

determined that Missouri did not provide a legal education for Negro students

and, thus, Gaines had the right to attend the University of Missouri Law School

(Dorsey, 2008, p. 16).

4. In yet another case involving the right of Blacks to higher education, Ada Sipuel,

a Black woman, was denied admission to the University of Oklahoma Law

School because of her race. In the *Sipuel v. Board of Regents of the University of*

Oklahoma (1948), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Sipuel would be allowed to

attend the law school on the grounds that the state had to provide a legal

education equal to that of White students (Dorsey, 2008, p. 17).

5. In the case of *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950), the Supreme Court upheld the Equal

Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment and ruled that Sweatt, a Black man,

should be allowed admittance to the University of Texas Law School. "The

Court ruled that the White majority, who were attending the University of Texas

Law School that had the rich traditions, prestige, and history of excellence and

opportunities, would not want to attend the newly created Black law school that

was partially staffed with few resources and no reputation or privileges" (Dorsey,

2008, p. 17). Despite the admission of inequity between law schools, the

Supreme Court refused to revisit the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision and

hence upheld the legality of the separate-but-equal doctrine, stating that there was

no cause to "reach petitioner's contention that *Plessy v. Ferguson* should be

reexamined in the light of contemporary knowledge respecting the purposes of the 14th Amendment and the effects of racial segregation" (Dorsey, 2008, p. 17).

6. The *Graham v. Board of Education* (1941) might be considered a precursor to the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Oaland Graham, Jr., a Black boy, was denied admission to Boswell Junior High School, a White junior high school in Topeka, Kansas. The city of Topeka Board of Education operated a dual high school system, which resulted in White-only seventh and eighth grade schools. The counsel for young Graham argued that the differences between the quality of educational opportunities offered White and Black students clearly indicated that the Topeka Board of Education had failed to provide equivalent educational facilities to the Black children. The Board argued, on the other hand, that the court must bear in mind that difference, did not on its face, constitute discrimination. On June 13, 1941, the Kansas Supreme Court ruled that the dual system, of junior high schools did, in fact, discriminate against Black children and failed to provide them with equal educational advantages (Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence, & Research, 2000, pp. 840-850).

These examples reflect the changing thought patterns within the legal system toward racial discrimination in education. Even though racism lived in people's hearts and played out in their actions, the courts were finally beginning to take the lead in acknowledging the unfairness of racial discrimination. How aware the average American was of the strides being made in the courts varied, but one thing was for certain—change was on the horizon. That change was put off for a bit, however, by the Cold War and new worries about the state of education in America.

Mainstream America, in the 1950s, was confounded by a combination of confidence and anxiety. On the one hand, confidence in the economic promise of the United States swelled as Americans recovered from the great Depression and the new economy abounded with opportunities for victorious veterans returning from the Great War. The United States was building the world's largest material society and was now "a military and economic titan even if rivalry with the Soviet Union, the success of the Chinese Revolution, and the war in Korea directly challenged American hegemony and self-confidence" (Reese, 2005, pp. 219-220). On the other hand, Americans began to fear the consequences of the sweeping social changes created by the baby boomer phenomenon, the multinational corporations, and big monopolies, and even the affluent society. They worried about the high demand on the schools. Fear and skepticism began to sweep the nation about progressivism, the comprehensive high school, and what the children were or were not learning in school. Yet, Americans reverted to what they had historically done in the antebellum period and the Progressive Era—pinning their hopes and fears on the schools.

The whole situation must have been overwhelming for those who seriously pondered the magnitude of changes and uncertainties. In the midst of great change, one thing, however, remained the same—the problem of what to do with the Negro. The race problem, a seemingly separate but not so separate issue from the wrangling over progressivism or not, still hovered like dark cloud over the country. With the *Brown v. Board* decision of 1954, the cloud burst. To most Black folks, it seemed that the sun had never shone brighter and the future had never looked more promising; for many Whites, things looked grim and the future—well, the future would require calculated and stone cold defiance.

Part 4: The *Brown v. Board of Education Decision* (1954)—A Dream Deferred

> The landscape for meaningful racial reform is neither smooth nor easily traveled. History's lessons have not been learned, and even at this later date may not be teachable. Racial reforms that Blacks view as important are opposed by many Whites as a threat to their status, an unfair effort to make them pay for wrongs that neither they nor their families have committed. Color blindness, now as a century ago, is adopted as the easy resolution of issues of race with which the nation would rather not wrestle, much less try seriously to resolve. . . . *Brown v. Board of Education* was a dramatic instance of remedy that promised to correct deficiencies in justice far deeper than the Supreme Court was able to understand. (Bell, 2004, pp. 9-10)

Inarguably, one of the most significant decisions in the history of the U.S. Supreme Court, the *Brown* ruling exemplifies the multiplicity of complex issues related to race and racism in America. There is nothing simple about *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Its history, like the history of the color line, is fluid and riddled with hope and dread, indecision, and resolve. Because it is impossible to bind a story of human lives and experiences within a tight time frame, my analysis tends to go back and forth in time, but most of the discussion focuses on the years between 1954 and 1965. While it is important to understand the factual history of *Brown,* what I want to capture here is more than the simple bare bones account of specific events or litigation related to desegregation. Instead, I challenge the traditional interpretations of *Brown* and integrationists and investigate alternative theories of motivation and strategy related to White dominance, White privilege, and the subjugation of Blacks. I commence with a brief historical account of the events that led to the *Brown* decision and reactions that followed.

The history of *Brown*. As far back as the mid-19th century, the policy of racially segregated public schools was challenged. By the early 1930s, the NAACP had structured a concentrated effort to fight segregation in the courts. Strategies were devised to combat segregation not only in schools, but throughout society as a whole. The public schools,

however, presented "a far more compelling symbol of the evils of segregation and far more vulnerable target than railroad cars, restaurants, and restrooms" (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. 6). With the help of the NAACP and the prestigious cadre of attorneys affiliated with the organization, Blacks continued to contest the denial of their admission to White schools on the grounds that the Black schools were inadequately staffed or resourced, or as was the case in many petitions involving higher education, Black colleges and universities did not offer the same certain post-graduate level opportunities. Finally, in 1952, five great cases were combined into one case known as *Brown v. Board of Education*, named for the first of the five cases.

In the first case, Brown, the plaintiff contested the ruling of a lower Federal court that had upheld the segregated school system in Topeka, Kansas. In the second case, *Briggs v. Elliott* (1952), Negro appellants alleged that the schools for Blacks and Whites were unequal in Clarendon County, South Carolina and that, pending improvement of the Black schools that Black pupils be allowed to attend White schools. The third case, Prince Edward County, Virginia proposed a similar contention of inequalities in separate schools and a need for improvement in the quality of education in Black schools. The fourth case, Delaware*,* involved a Negro plaintiff who requested admission to a White school until the acknowledged inequalities were rectified. The fifth case contested legislation requiring segregated education in the nation's capitol.

Under normal circumstances, a decision would have been rendered within a year but, the Court, mindful of the complexity of the issue of segregation and the certain far-reaching ramifications of any decision, determined that each case should be reargued in the fall of 1953. Hence, the *Brown I* decision was not handed down until 1954, two years after the

cases appeared on the Court docket. Each case presented a unique set of circumstances

related to the common problem of what to do with the Negro and segregated education.

Two distinguished attorneys served as lead counsel for the five "great cases" (Shoemaker,

1957, p. 4): Thurgood Marshall, general counsel for the NAACP and John W. Davis, a one-

time Democratic Presidential nominee. The crux of their case relied on legal arguments,

historical evidence, and psychological studies:

1. In *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court had misinterpreted the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Equal protection of the laws did not allow for racial segregation.
2. The 14th Amendment allowed the government to prohibit any discriminatory state action based on race, including segregation in schools.
3. The 14th Amendment did not specify whether the states would be allowed to establish segregated education.
4. Psychological testing demonstrated the harmful effects of segregation on the minds of African American children. (Smithsonian Museum of American History, n.d.b, p. 1)

Attorneys for the defendants built their case on four arguments:

1. The Constitution did not require White and African American children to attend the same schools.
2. Social separation of Blacks and Whites was a regional custom; the states should be left free to regulate their own social affairs.
3. Segregation was not harmful to Black people.
4. Whites were making a good faith effort to equalize the two educational systems. But, because Black children were still living with the effects of slavery, it would take some time before they were able to compete with White children in the same classrooms. (Smithsonian Museum of American History, n.d.a, p. 1)

The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) ruling was actually rendered in two parts.

On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court determined in *Brown I* that segregation in public

schools was unconstitutional, thereby, invalidating the legality of the separate-but-equal

precedent previously established in the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) ruling. *Brown I*

followed two years of rigorous argumentation in the consolidation of five separate cases

initially brought before the Supreme Court in 1952. It was to be carried out with all

deliberate speed and the NAACP advocated for schools to be desegregated immediately, but it took almost a year for the ruling to even become enforceable. *Brown I* remained on the court docket as new hearings debating its implementation began in April of 1955. A month later the court rendered, *Brown II*, its implementation decision, as Shoemaker (1957) explained, gave the first *Brown* teeth:

> Basic to the Court's opinion was a recognition of the wide variety of local school problems involved. Because of this the Federal district courts were told to look at the integration plans separately submitted by the authorities of each school district against which enforcement actions should be brought, not to achieve uniformity but rather, to achieve good faith implementation of the desegregation principle as applied to local facts. "Equitable principles," traditionally characterized by practical flexibility and by a facility for adjusting and reconciling public and private needs, were to be the guide. The Court called for a "prompt and reasonable start" toward compliance with the new constitutional requirement, to be then carried out "with all deliberate speed." Federal District courts were to retain jurisdiction of cases before them throughout the implementation process, as a check upon compliance. Thus, the Court not only decided the cases immediately before it, but laid down pattern for lower courts to follow in handling the mass of anticipated future litigation. (p. 4)

Reactions to *Brown*. Reactions to *Brown* were cacophonous. *Time* magazine deemed it the most important Supreme Court decision of all time, notwithstanding the Dred Scott decision; *The Chicago Defender* (one of the first African American newspapers in the country) viewed the decision as the beginning of the end of the racial caste system; staunch supporters of segregation looked upon the mandate as "virtually the end of the Western society" (Payne, 2004, p. 84). Clinging to the optimistic "American Creed" that Gunnar Myrdal saw as the answer to the persistent "Negro problem," many Whites and Blacks expected great change to come from the ruling (Carson, 2004, p. 26). Many Blacks saw the brilliant lawyers who tried the five great cases as nothing less than "social engineers" (Guinier, 2004, p. 92). Others Blacks were skeptical about the effect that integration would have on Black learning institutions. Without a doubt, integrationists and segregationists,

Blacks and Whites were conflicted over what the impact that *Brown* would have on the nation.

Despite all of the confusion and discord over the decision, the conventional wisdom in 1954 was that the *Brown* ruling possessed the power to bring about a full-fledged social revolution (Guinier, 2004; Payne, 2004). Payne (2004) asserted that the confusion over *Brown* was indicative of larger pattern of confusion in the larger discourse of racial oppression in American. "A part of the mystification process was the reduction of the systemic character of White supremacy" (Payne, 2004, p. 84). Historian John W. Cell (1982) suggested that the mystification of the term segregation became "profoundly ambiguous and self-contradictory" and was no accident. The mystification of racism was by design, claims Cell, and "has been one of segregation's greatest strengths and achievements" (pp. 2-3). It is doubtful, however, that most Americans were intellectually dissecting their feelings on the matter. Those who were vehemently opposed left little confusion about there they stood.

In a 1956 publication of *The Journal of Negro Education,* Herbert O. Reid, Associate Professor of Law at Howard University addressed *Brown* and "interposition as a strategem of noncompliance" (Reid, 1956, p. 109). He candidly assessed the situation:

> Don't throw away your confederate money, the South may rise again, an expression current a few years ago, is descriptive of the spirit of defiance against integration current in some of the so-called Southern states today. (p. 109)

That is not to say that no progress toward desegregating the schools had been made. According to Reid (1956), a Gallop Poll taken just two months after the rendering of the first *Brown* showed that "71% of the people of the south were opposed to the ruling" (p. 109). Since then, however, Reid noted that substantial progress had been made in most of the 17

states and the District of Columbia in complying with the mandate. Nevertheless, several states were developing plans to evade the Court's ruling. Herein, a pattern and "spirit of defiance against integration" (p. 109) became increasingly evident. Reid discussed eight separate plans to avoid compliance.

- Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, and Mississippi suggested that public school be turned over to private concerns as way to avoid integrating the schools. The rationale was that "since the 14th Amendment inveighs against state action and does not prohibit private action, the decree may be avoided by removing the hand of the state" (p. 109). This was suggested in Virginia's Gray Plan.

- A second proposal was that segregation be continued based upon the police power of the state and the belief that the 14th Amendment was not designed to interfere with police power of the state. In November 1954, Louisiana enacted such a law "to promote and protect public health, morals, better education, and the peace and good order in the state, *and not because of race"* [emphasis added] (p. 110).

- Another idea was to make compliance with the law "criminal" (p. 110) by punishing those who attended or taught in integrated schools. Mississippi passed such a law in April of 1955.

- A fourth strategy, legislated in the state of Georgia, was to revoke the license of teachers who worked in mixed schools.

- Another suggestion was to empower school superintendents with the authority to assign students so that racial segregation could be maintained.

- North Carolina created a local option that gave responsibility for assigning students to city and county boards, as opposed to state boards. It was hoped that this would deter the integration of schools.

- Seventh, it was proposed that school districts be "so gerrymandered that Negroes will still attend separate schools" (p. 110).

- An eighth suggestion, as adopted in Mississippi in the fall of 1954, "prohibited the fomentation and agitation of litigation" (p. 110). In other words, this plan sought to circumvent the potential of litigants bringing any legal complaints to the law regarding violation of the *Brown* mandate.

Clearly, interposition was seen as a way to continue segregated education and a reassertion of the traditional states' rights position, and it worked. As one writer observed eight years after *Brown,* in 1962, "at the then-current pace, Deep South schools could be completely desegregated in just a bit over seven thousand years" (Payne, 2004, p. 83). It was not only the Southern states that put up bold opposition to the ruling; Northern states dragged their feet as well. E. H. Hobbs (1952) noted:

> The record of the South in providing professional education to Negroes from both North and South in segregated schools has been exemplary when compared with the ratio systems of Northern mixed professional schools. For years the northern Negro has been discriminated against through biased admission policies of northern professional institutions and the professionally inclined northern Negroes have had to come by droves to segregated southern schools. (p. 509)

One must remember that *Brown* did not apply directly to states outside of the 17 southern states and the District of Columbia; therefore, little pressure was put on states in the North or West to desegregate. Even the Commanders-in Chief were reluctant to get involved the enforcement of Brown.

Although Eisenhower never officially opposed the *Brown* decision and, in fact,

insisted that all Americans obey the law, he "made clear his distaste for the *Brown* decision"

(Greenberg, 2004, p. 57). Jack Greenberg, one of several contributors to the Southern

Education Foundation's reflective report on the 50th anniversary of *Brown,* described

Eisenhower's position in the wake of the famous Little Rock desegregation case.

> President Eisenhower, no friend of integration, called upon federal troops to quell armed opposition to the court order requiring Little Rock high School to admit (a number that ultimately was reduced to) nine Black children. To him it was more important that the law be obeyed than for White Southern racial social mores to be upheld. (p. 57)

Kotlowski (2005) suggested that Presidents Kennedy and Johnson were reluctant to take

action in school desegregation cases as well. The *Brown* (1954) ruling "presented a

dilemma for national politicians of both parties" (Kotlowski, 2005, p. 155). Kotlowksi

(2005) elaborated:

> School desegregation policy challenges several long-held views—of President John F. Kennedy as a reluctant, but then public, a champion of civil rights; of President Lyndon B. Johnson as steadfastly (or newly) liberal on race; of President Richard M. Nixon as captive to White backlash and a politically inspired "southern strategy." A closer inspection reveals a flatter line. Seeing school desegregation as an especially difficult route instead sought expanded voting rights and job opportunities for Blacks. LBJ, realizing that desegregation would stir political troubles difficult to resolve via arm-twisting and legislation, relegated the matter to his Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW).
> Thus, the unfinished task of school desegregation, and the edicts of an increasingly impatient Supreme Court fell to Nixon when he became president. (p. 155)

In fact, Kennedy, in a 1963 conversation with American Protestant church leader Eugene

Carson Blake, explained, "If I had a child there putting him [in a school with] 30 to 40%

Negro[es] when they're so far behind—that's really tough" (p. 160). Indeed, rather than run

the risk of offending conservatives and Southerners or angering liberals, the nation's leaders

preferred to act on other matters involving civil rights that did not involve the touchy subject

of school desegregation. While the *Brown* decision may have warmed some hearts, it outraged and frightened others; the latter caused great delay in its effective implementation.

Gary Orfield published a study in 1983, "Public School Desegregation in the United States, 1968—1980," in which he identified three stages of desegregation. The first stage began, he asserted, in 1954 in the 11 states of the South and the six border states that had been segregated by law and was marked with great opposition. This second period began in 1968 "when the Supreme Court required rural southern school districts to adopt desegregation plans that would do away with racially identifiable schools" (p. 1). The third phase began in 1973 with the pivotal *Keyes v. Denver* decision in which Denver became the first northern school district ordered to desegregate by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Denver case opened the floodgates for desegregation to finally be extended beyond the South into the northern and western states. By that time, *Brown* was almost 20 years old.

It is obvious that adherence to *Brown* was neither swift nor easy. One needs only to read a letter written in 1963 from then Executive Secretary of the NAACP, Roy Wilkins to President John F. Kennedy for proof of the slow compliance with the constitutional change set forth by the *Brown*. In the correspondence, Wilkins described the lack of compliance with the *Brown* decision in the Prince Edward County case, one of the five great cases in the 1954 *Brown* decision. On May 15, 1963, eight years after *Brown II*, Wilkins wrote:

> As you are aware, Prince Edward County was one of the governmental units involved in the Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. Rather than accept the law of the land as enunciated by the Court in its decision in that case, county authorities closed the public schools. Since 1959 the county has provided no education for its children.
>   The petitions here presented request the assistance of the Federal Government in solving, so far as is possible, some of the problems created by this gross denial of human rights by local governmental action. (p. 1)

With all deliberate speed? I should say not. And what of the American Creed? Something does not make sense. The original 1954 narratives of *Brown* suggested that *Brown* was inspired by the expert arguments of a brilliant team of lawyers, the realization of the injustice and immorality of racism, or maybe even the desire to finally do right by Blacks. I would like to explore alternative theories because nagging question remain: Why 1954? What made the time ripe for *Brown?*

Alternative explanations for *Brown*. University of Southern California Law School Professor Mary L. Dudziak (2004) advanced a theory that correlates the timing of *Brown* with the Cold War. She argued "hearing speakers in 1954 call segregation 'un-American' helps situate the school segregation cases within their cultural context" (p. 32). Dudziak pointed to a trajectory that places the Cold War and *Brown* in a "dichotomous narrative" (p. 33) with McCarthyism and anti-communism on the one hand and Brown on the other. Her reasoning makes sense when we recall that in the Truman Committee Report of 1947, a large part of the rationale for better treatment of Blacks was to improve the international image of the United States. Almost a decade later, the image of the U.S was still tenuous. "Racial discrimination furnishes grist for the Communist propaganda mills, and it raises doubts even among friendly nations as to the intensity of our devotion to the democratic faith" (p. 34). According to Dudziak, the "connections between *Brown* and the Cold War are so ubiquitous in the primary sources that it is more difficult to explain them away than to find a place for them in historical narrative" (p. 35).

> In the American press, for example, *Brown* was called a "Blow to Communism."
> The *Pittsburgh Courier* said that Brown would "stun and silence America's
> Communist traducers behind the Iron Curtain. It will effectively impress upon
> millions of colored people in Asia and Africa the fact that idealism and social
> morality can and do prevail in the United States, regardless of race, or creed, or
> color." Sharing this concern, the *San Francisco Chronicle* suggested that the ruling's

greatest impact would be "on South America, Africa, and Asia," since it would restore the faith of people in the justice of American democracy." (p. 35)

Indeed, the United States could have truly served as a leader and beacon of light for the democracy everywhere. *Brown* signified an intolerance for racial "arrogance or discrimination for which [the United States] criticizes other nations" (p. 35). The evidence suggests a correlation between the timing of *Brown,* the Cold War, and the need to improve the nation's image abroad. Could there be a bit of interest-convergence here?

Advancing a theory of interest-convergence, Bell (2004) argued that "Black rights are recognized and protected when and only so long as policymakers perceive that such advances will further interests that are their primary concern" (p. 49). To put it another way, the interest of Blacks in attaining equity will be obliged only on the condition that it converges with the interest of Whites. In other words, Whites give Blacks nothing unless Whites get something in return. Bell alleged:

> Throughout the history of civil rights policies, even the most serious injustices suffered by Blacks, including slavery, segregation, and patterns of murderous violence, have been insufficient, standing alone to gain relief from any branch of government. Rather, relief from racial discrimination has come only when policymakers recognize that such relief will provide a clear benefit for the nation or portions of the populace. (p. 49)

In *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (Bell, 2004), I have identified four primary reasons, all related to the timing of pivotal historical events, for the *Brown* decision and the ultimate reversal of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* separate-but-equal precedent. The first was that *Brown* bolstered the positive image of the United States abroad, particularly with the Soviet Union, our staunchest rival in the race to gain influence and, ultimately control of third world nations. The second impetus for *Brown* stemmed from the potentially volatile situation here at home: *Brown* helped

"uproot subversive elements" (p. 49) in the United States. A third motive for the *Brown* ruling was that it reassured Blacks in America that the basic tenets of freedom and equality, so much the focus of the Allies in World War II, actually meant something at home. Fourth, many Whites realized that the South could not transition from the rural plantation society of old unless it ended state-sponsored education. Segregation was perceived as a barrier to the progress of industrialization in the South.

Bell (2004) argued further that "interest-convergence covenants" (p. 49) are evidenced in the abolition of slavery in the North, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Civil War amendments to the Constitution. He avowed that the *Brown* decision is the "20th century counterpart to the Emancipation Proclamation" (p. 52). According to Bell, *Brown* and the Emancipation Proclamation shared the following characteristics:

1. In both enactments, when Blacks acquired relief from racial injustice, that relief also served the best interest of the country.
2. Blacks and Whites focused on the relief, with little regard for the fact that it might never have been granted had not the self-interests of Whites converged with the assistance given Blacks.
3. The immediate benefit to Blacks was more symbolic than substantive and was often portrayed by working-class Whites as undeserved and a betrayal by White elites. (p. 56)

If Bell's theory is correct and we look at the initial resistance to *Brown,* the antidefiance/ antidiscrimination legislation that followed, and the gradual resegregation of public schools, we may conclude that there has been a steadily growing divergence of Black and White interests Combine with previous paragraph. To better understand the how and why of such resistance to desegregation, it is important to analyze the deep-seated dynamics of the concept of race, racism, and the concept of power associated with racial segregation.

Race, racism, and the power of segregation. The *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision was inextricably related to, if not borne out of, common and dominant

understandings about race, racism, and the power relations integral to the racist practice of imposed segregated education. The question of what to do with the Negro resurfaced in *Brown.* I draw upon the work of several critical scholars to shed light on the meaning and significance of race and racism in American society.

Goldberg (2002), in his provocative work *The Racial State,* argued that race is "integral to the emergence, development, and transformations (conceptually, philosophically, materially) of the modern nation-state" (p. 4). He opined "race may be thought of as the social or cultural significance assigned to or assumed in physical or biological markers, including the presumed physical or physiognomic markers of cultural attributes, habits, or behavior" (p. 118). According to Goldberg, "racial states, one might say, are places among others where states of being and states of governance meet" (p. 98). In other words, a racial state is as much a condition of being as it is governance. The objective in a racial state is to "strive for racial subjection which, though usually perceived as imposed upon subjects, actually is self-fashioned and promoted" (p. 106). Goldberg elaborated:

> It must be insisted relatedly that the racial state is racial not *merely* or reductively because of the racial composition of its personnel or the racial implications of its policies—though clearly both play a part. States are racial deeply because of the structural position they occupy in producing and reproducing, constituting, and effecting racially shaped spaces and places, groups and events, life worlds, and possibilities, accesses and restrictions, inclusions and exclusions, conceptions and modes of representation. They are *racial,* in short, in virtue of their modes of population definition, determination, and structuration. And they are *racist* to the extent such definition, determination, structuration operate to exclude or privilege in or on racial terms, and in so far as they circulate in and reproduce a world whose meanings and effects are racist. This is a world we might provocatively identify as a *racist world order.* (p. 104)

Based on Goldberg's interpretation, it is reasonable to view the United States as a racial nation. As discussed previously, White Americans have historically based racist attitudes

and actions toward African Americans on naturalist or historicist regimes, or a combination of the two. Whites who held to naturalist regimes regarded Blacks as inherently inferior, unworthy of full citizenship rights and privileges. Those who supported historicist racial regimes saw Blacks as the victims of maturational underdevelopment. Either way, Blacks were perceived as lesser than Whites and accordingly, subjugated to White dominance. The aim of such racial subjugation was to bring about a "self-fashioned and promoted" subjection, one that turned "imposition into self-assumption, assertive charge into autonomous, self-imposed choice, harness into hegemony" (p. 106). Goldberg's line of reasoning suggested that the legal system of segregation was not only designed to enforce apartheid schooling but also to advance the self-subjugation of Negroes in both the private and public spheres.

Goldberg (2002) theorized that racism infiltrates public and private spheres. There is, indeed, no concrete delineation between "state and individual, between asserted institutional power and capillary governmentality" (p. 106). Similarly, Foucault (1991) emphasized that there no distinction between state and individual—"what is within the competence of the state what is not, the public versus the private," (p. 103) are myths of modern discourse. Gramsci (2008) captured, in a slightly different sense, the relation of the public (political) sphere and the civil society as they conjoin to form a state in which hegemony is protected by coercion and then reinforced by the oppressed themselves (p. 263). Freire (2007) spoke to the pedagogy of the oppressed in which oppressed peoples learn resignation, despair, and how to perpetuate a process of oppression. Hence, *Brown I*, may have contributed to a self-fashioned subordination of the Black community to White

hegemony. Bell (as cited in Crenshaw et al., 1995) discussed the powerful relation of segregation and subordination:

> The real evil of pre-*Brown* public schools [is] the state-supported subordination of Blacks in every aspect of the educational process. Racial separation is only the most obvious manifestation of this subordination. Providing unequal and inadequate school resources and excluding school resources and excluding Black parents from meaningful participation in school policymaking are at least as damaging to Black children as enforced separation. (p. 10)

Clearly, segregation can have powerfully detrimental effects on self-perception and stifle political autonomy among Blacks because the practice is rooted in racism. Antidiscrimination legislation such as *Brown*, however, while forcing racial balance and integration, created new problems for a Black community that was becoming increasingly fractured.

Challenging *Brown*, integrationism, and antidefiance remedies. Long before the term critical race theory was invented, Black activist Malcolm X conceived an alternative, racialized theory about *Brown* and integration:

> I just can't see why, if White people can go to school with no negroes and it doesn't affect the academic diet they're receiving, an all-Black classroom can be affected by the absence of White children. . . . So, in my opinion, what the integrationists are saying when they say that Whites and Blacks must go to school together, is that the Whites are so much superior that just their presence in a Black classroom balances it out. I can't go along with that. (Malcolm X, 1970, pp. 16-17)

Du Bois (1994) and Woodson (1993) predicted, almost 30 years earlier, that the greatest challenge facing the Negro race would be to counteract those forces that would mis-educate and rob them of their self-respect and dignity and many Blacks did, indeed, develop self-deprecating ideas about themselves and the reason to integrate. Black educator and activist Dr. Benjamin Mays addressed this very issue in a statement he made following the 1974 school desegregation controversy in the Atlanta public schools:

> More importantly, Black people must not resign themselves to the pessimistic view that a non-integrated school cannot provide Black children with an excellent educational setting. Instead, Black people, while working to implement *Brown*, should recognize that integration alone does not provide a quality education, and that much of the substance of quality education can be provided to Black children in the interim. (Mays as cited in Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. 10)

Critical race theorists have suggested that the assumptions of traditional civil rights theory and proponents of integration are faulty. Bell (1995) challenged the assumption that "Blacks must gain access to White schools because 'equal educational opportunity' means integrated schools, and because only school integration will make certain that Black children receive the same education as White children" (p. 7). Hopeful Americans, Black and White, believed that the *Brown* decision would be instrumental in diminishing the significance of race, leveling the playing field between Blacks and Whites, even resolving problems caused by racism. The impact of *Brown,* however, fell short of its expectations. *Brown* was fighting an uphill battle to change hardened hearts and remedy unjust life circumstances perpetrated by years of systematic and systemic racism. Unfortunately, enforcing *Brown* involved a litany of legal battles in which the courts focused more on tempering the discriminatory actions of perpetrators than the larger life conditions of the victims.

In a thoughtful reinterpretation of *Brown* entitled, "Legitimizing Racial Discrimination through Antidiscrimination Law: A Critical Doctrine of Supreme Court Doctrine," critical race theorist Alan David Freeman (1995) asserted that in the years between 1954 and 1965, Americans were consumed with uncertainty and a "jurisprudence of violations" largely due to a barrage of post-*Brown* antidefiance legislation rooted in what he calls a "perpetrator perspective" as opposed to a "victim perspective" (Freeman, 1995).

> From the victim's perspective, racial discrimination describes those conditions of actual social existence as a member of a perpetual underclass. This perspective includes both the objective conditions of life (lack of jobs, lack of money, lack of

housing) and the consciousness associated with those objective conditions (lack of choice and lack of human individuality in forever being part of a group rather than as an individual). The perpetrator perspective sees racial discrimination not as conditions but as actions, or series of actions, inflicted on the victim by the perpetrator. The focus is more on what particular perpetrators have done or are doing to some victims than on the overall life situation of the victim class. (p. 29)

Antidiscrimination and antidefiance legislation (in the aftermath of *Brown*) law are entrenched in the perpetrator perspective. From this perspective, the law views racial discrimination in ahistorical terms, as isolated or specific actions committed by specific or particular actors, separate from any systematic, systemic, or historicized institutional form of racism. According to Freeman the perpetrator perspective conceives of:

A world in which, but for the conduct of these misguided ones, the system of equality of opportunity would work to provide a distribution of the good things in life without racial disparities, and a world in which deprivations that did correlate with race would be "deserved" by those deprived on grounds of insufficient merit. (p. 30)

There is, in this rationale, a clear shift toward such beliefs as "vested rights," objective selection," and adventitious decisions," (p. 30) all of which imply a certain sense of resignation, inevitability about life that has virtually nothing to do with racial discrimination. Freeman hypothesized that the perpetrator perspective advances "twin notions" (p. 30) of fault and causation that work in concert to absolve the perpetrator of responsibility. Fault implies intention; hence, only those intentional acts are addressed by the law. Causation places the burden of proof on the victim. In the *Brown* case, the Court was more concerned with identifying wrongdoers than confronting the larger issues even implicated by the victims or remedying the larger problems. By leaving the resolution of how to enforce the reversal of the separate-but-equal precedent up to the states in *Brown II,* the scope of remedial obligation was left unclear. The ambiguity of *Brown II* created a smooth transition for the subsequent evolution of antidefiance or antidiscrimination law in the aftermath of

Brown. Freeman argued five ways in which the meaning of *Brown* might be interpreted, all of which pervade the gradual evolution of antidiscrimination law and the perpetrator perspective: equality of educational opportunity, White oppression of Blacks, freedom of association, integration, and color-blind constitution.

I briefly summarize the first four interpretations directly. The fifth, color-blind constitution interpretation of *Brown* is treated separately. In the first interpretation of the meaning of *Brown,* Freeman (1995) contended that while the Court affirmed the right of Black children to an education equal in quality to the education received by White children, it maintained a perpetrator's perspective, in that it recognized only the right of Black children to attend schools that were intentionally segregated. It did not refute the legitimacy of segregation itself. *Brown* merely outlawed de jure segregation (p. 33). In the second interpretation, Freeman opined that *Brown* "was a straightforward declaration that segregation was unlawful because it as an instance of majoritarian oppression of Black people" (p. 33). This interpretation, while focusing on historical instances of segregation, makes no attempt to "find a neutral abstraction from which one can deduce the invalidity of segregation" (p. 33). Freeman's third interpretation of *Brown* identified the principle of freedom of association. He maintained that the freedom of association theory "is as much about the right to discriminate as it is about the right not to be discriminated against" (p. 34). Given this understanding, racism is removed from the its complex social structure and placed within the realm of individual private behavior, thus, negating its systematic and pervasive grip on society. The fourth way in which Freeman interpreted the *Brown* decision is connected to three versions of integrated society. The first version envisions the disappearance of race altogether as the result of a "genetic entropy" (p. 35). The second

version conceives of a society in which race is no longer a relevant identifying factor, for instance, a society in which race is no more important than eye color. In the third version of an integrated society, race functions as a "cultural, unifying force" (p. 35) for different groups. According to Freeman, each version has resulted in a utopian society that is casteless, classless, and color-blind. The notion of color-blindness causes serious concern. There is a strong relation between color-blind theory and a change in focus from the struggle for social justice and analysis of complex systems of inequality and oppression to implementation of equality before the law and the very narrow view of equal treatment. The law, especially within a color-blind framework, only addresses concrete behavior (e.g., oral, written, or physical), but never systemic "isms" (P. Essed, personal communication, October 16, 2009).

Brown **and the color-blind constitution.** "To explain [the meaning of] *Brown* by invoking the slogan that the 'Constitution is color-bind' reflects a means-oriented view of the equal protection clause" (Freeman, 1995, p. 31). Entrenched in a perpetrator perspective, the color-blind view of the constitution begins with a means-oriented assumption that race and racial classification is irrational and unrelated to any valid government purpose. In contrast, a victim's conception of equal protection would suggest that the problem of racial discrimination or the assurance of equal protection under the law would necessitate the elimination of all conditions associated with discrimination and unequal treatment. If the problem were seen from the victims' perspective, greater effort would be undertaken "to remedy the situation would [demand] affirmative efforts to change the condition" (Freeman, 1995, p. 29). The perpetrator conception merely seeks to neutralize the wrongdoing of the perpetrator; the structural, systemic core of the problem remains. Racial classifications,

interpreted within the perpetrator perspective, are considered legally "suspect" and subject to "strict scrutiny," holding their own only if they are found to serve "compelling government interest" (Freeman, 1995, p. 31). The problem is that this initial assumption can only be upheld "in the context of a particular historical situation, and the source of the assumption that underlies the color-blind theory can easily be found in American history by taking a brief glance at relationships between Whites and Blacks" (Freeman, 1995, pp. 31-32). Herein lies the amazingly deceptive and cunning rationale of color-blind theory. Color-blindness, in its purest form, would have to discount racial classification no matter the context. Answers to racial questions would be quite simple as long as the theory remains separate from the actuality of race relations. By placing racial discrimination into a mythological world in which Black-White relations are tradeable under contract, the color-blind theory is able to deny specific demands of Blacks on the grounds that every other ethnic group can justifiably make those demands.

When we look at *Brown* as a precursor to color-blind theory, we see that in merely invalidating the practice of segregation and identifying segregation as "wrong," *Brown* assumed the perpetrator perspective. It emphasized specific wrongdoing rather than positively remedying conditions, "with a consequent inability to deal with ostensibly neutral practices" (Freeman, 1995, p. 32). Furthermore, although not official law, per se, the color-blind theory pressures antidiscrimination law to invent special justifications for deviations from a pre-supposed norm in order to maintain a fictional color-blind abstract world. The color-blind theory has been gaining momentum since *Brown* and particularly in the post-Civil Rights Era.

Part 5: Strange Bedfellows—Color-blindness and Civil Rights in Post-*Brown* Era

> The civil rights movement profoundly changed America, bringing a measure of racial justice and hope to people of color. Barely 40 years later, racial justice has ceased to be a priority, and in some instances, the gains of the 1960s and 1970s have been reversed. (Brown et al., 2003, p. vii)

In the years since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, we have seen the conservative backlash against the Great Society gain credibility and momentum in the Reagan-Bush revolution of the 1980s. A conveniently misleading racial paradigm has emerged in recent years based on three erroneous precepts. First, the Civil Rights Movement successfully eradicated the problem of racism in America, save for a few ignorant, racist extremists. Second, if any remnants of racism persist, it is because Blacks have failed to take advantage of the opportunities afforded them. Third, the U.S. is becoming color-blind and there is no need for race-conscious policies. This way of thinking conveniently takes race off the table, so to speak, as a serious, national concern and deceives Americans into believing they actually are upholding age-old, cherished American ideals of equality and freedom. Authors such as Jim Sleeper (1997), Tamar Jacoby (1998), Dinesh D'Souza (1995), and most importantly, Stephen and Abigail Thernstrom (1997) have successfully convinced many Americans that race no longer matters. Racial realism and racial realists embrace the concept of color-blindness.

The term color-blind was conceived more than 100 years ago by civil rights activist Albion Tourgee (former Civil War officer, Reconstruction carpetbagger, and lead counsel for Homer Plessy, the plaintiff in the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896). Tourgee unsuccessfully argued that justice should be color-blind. Despite his efforts, the Supreme Court rendered the ill-fated landmark decision that upheld the legality of racial segregation, legitimized the authority of Jim Crow in the South, and licensed the orthodoxy of a racial

caste system in the United States. Ironically, even the arguments of the dissenting judge in

the *Plessy* case, Judge John Marshall Harlan, revealed the powerful preeminence of racism

in America. Justice Harlan's dissent (1896) decision read:

> *The White race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country. And so it is, in prestige, in achievements, in education, in wealth, and in power. So, I doubt not, it will continue to be for all time if it remains true to its great heritage and holds fast to the principles of constitutional liberty* [emphasis added]. But, in view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is colorblind and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. (p. 1)

Judge Harlan's statements clearly suggested a basic belief in the permanence of racism and

White privilege.

Some 50 years later, the celebrated *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision

symbolically overturned the pernicious Plessy decision and, by many traditional historical

accounts, vindicated the rights of Black Americans. In presumably denouncing the caste

system of racialized classifications and segregative practices in the nation's schools, the

Brown ruling adhered to a jurisprudence of color-blindness that helped destroy the legality

of racial taxonomy and overt racial discrimination. On May 17, 1954, the presiding justice

in the *Brown v. Board of Education* case, Mr. Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote:

> Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. Compulsory school attendance laws and the great expenditures for education both demonstrate our recognition of the importance of education to our democratic society. It is required in the performance of our most basic public responsibilities, even service in the armed forces. It is the very foundation of good citizenship. Today it is a principal instrument in awakening the child to cultural values, in preparing him for later professional training, and in helping him to adjust normally to his environment. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.
>
> We come then to the question presented: 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 the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does.

       To separate them from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.

       Segregation of White and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law, for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn. Segregation with the sanction of law, therefore, has a tendency to [retard] the educational and mental development of negro children and to deprive them of some of the benefits they would receive in a racially integrated school system. (*Brown v. Board of Education, 1954,* paras. 10, 11, 13, 18, 19)

The truth of the matter is, however, that in the aftermath of *Brown*, while the efforts of "civil rights advocates met with some success in the nation's courts and legislature," (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xv) the American legal system consistently worked to deradicalize the impact of the racial freedom movement. They explained:

> Along with the suppression of explicit White racism (the widely celebrated aim of civil rights reform), the dominant legal conception of racism as a discrete and identifiable act of "prejudice based on skin color" placed virtually the entire range of everyday social practices in America—social practices developed and maintained throughout the period of formal American apartheid—beyond the scope of critical examination or legal remediation. (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xv)

Crenshaw et al. (1995) suggested that mainstream legal thinking reduced racism to "specific, discrete acts of racial discrimination," (p. xv) a very narrow view of a pervasive public evil. "Given this essentially negative, indeed, dismissive view of racial identity and its social meanings it was not surprising that mainstream legal thought came to embrace the ideal of color-blindness" (p. xv). Ironically, mainstream legal discourse used Dr. Martin Luther King's moral mandate that Americans judge one another by the content of their character, not the color of their skin, to justify the notion of color-blindness. Color-blindness then became synonymous with traditionally reigning Anglo American ideologies of equal opportunity and meritocracy. Color-blind vision, in its claim that race does not matter, has

essentially turned the fight for racial equity and equality on its heels. This reversal process began, strangely enough, during a time of high hopes in American history.

The Great Society.

The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice. But that is just the beginning. The Great Society is a place where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents. (Johnson, 1964b, p. 51)

There are three central places where we must begin to build the Great Society—in our cities, in our countryside, and in our classrooms. . . . There our children's lives are shaped. Our society will not be great until every mind is set free to scan the farthest reaches of thought and imagination. (Johnson, 1964b, p. 54)

President Lyndon Baines Johnson (1964b) wrote these words in a book he authored entitled, *My Hope for America.* Indeed, Johnson had high hopes for his presidential legacy and the future of America. In an attempt to understand the implications and expectations of the Great Society, I first address the political, social, economic, and racial pulse of the nation of the 1960s and LBJ's War on Poverty. Second, I examine the educational legislation Johnson engineered, particularly the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). In the last section of this portion of the essay, I focus on the development and significance of Project Head Start, one of the most enduring educational programs instituted during the LBJ era.

The pulse of nation and the war on poverty. Johnson inherited the presidency at one of the nation's darkest hours. Historian Vaughn Davis Bornet, editor of the 1983 American Presidency Series' account of the LBJ years—The Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson—aptly described Johnson's challenge:

The first mandate that served the new president in the years 1963 and 1964 was—as he himself put it before a nationwide audience—the *"legacy to continue"* from where John F. Kennedy could be shown to have left off. Johnson would take the

reins and drive the carriage along a path inescapably identifiable with that of the fallen leader. Here was, in a sense, his inheritance. (Bornet, 1983, p. 45)

According to Bornet (1983), Johnson acquired a second mandate in the 1964 election when he handily defeated his Republican opponent, Arizona's Senator Barry Goldwater. Johnson considered his overwhelming victory a mandate for change. Johnson, being the master politician that he was, resolved to make the most of this opportunity. LBJ wasted little time in setting his agenda.

Johnson set out to build what he called a Great Society fashioned around a rhetoric that espoused a new liberalism. In his own words, this would mean confronting the "challenges of justice," declaring a "War on Poverty," identifying "the nature of the Communist Threat," "building the Atlantic partnership," and protecting "our free system" (Johnson, 1964a, p. 5). On May 22, 1964 Johnson delivered what many consider his signature speech to students and their parents in a commencement address at the University of Michigan in which he introduced his concept of the Great Society and clarified his vision of carrying out an ambitious reform agenda focused on poverty, civil rights, and education. "The Great Society demand[ed] an end to poverty and racial injustice, [but this was] just the beginning" (Johnson as cited in Milkus & Mileur, 2005, p. 7). The Great Society, according to Johnson (as cited in Milkus & Mileur, 2005), was a place:

> Where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents. It is place where leisure is a welcome chance to build and reflect, not a feared cause of boredom and restlessness. It is a place where the city of man serves not only the needs of the body and the demands of commerce but the desire for beauty and the hunger for community. (pp. 7-8)

Two years later, in his State of the Union Address, Johnson credited his administration with leading the nation toward greater economic growth, justice for all races, and liberation to use the fruits of prosperity to improve the quality of life for all Americans.

Listing several noneconomic goals, such as health and education programs and reforms aimed at the revitalization of urban areas, Johnson was determined to shift national attention from quantitative issues to more qualitative concerns. He observed:

> A great people flower not from wealth and power, but from a society which spurs them to the fullness of their genius. That alone is the Great Society. . . . Slowly, painfully, on the edge of victory, has come the knowledge that shared prosperity is not enough. In the midst of abundance modern man walks oppressed by forces which menace and confine the quality of his life, and which individual abundance alone will not overcome. (Johnson, 1964c, pp. 5-6)

By embracing a more qualitative focus, Johnson hoped to awaken and alert an indifferent American people to the potentially fatal social ills of poverty, racial injustice, and inequality of educational opportunity. He believed that the means to reform lay in education, participatory democracy, and community action. As far as Johnson was concerned, the federal government had to lead the way. The road to reform, however, would not be easy. The invasive racial caste system and omnipresent assumption of White privilege presented familiar obstacles to change and aides warned Johnson about potential White backlash. A memorandum from presidential aide Horace Busby demonstrated the potential for political disaster that Johnson faced.

> America's real majority is suffering a minority complex of neglect. They have become the real foes of Negro rights, foreign aid, etc., because, as much as anything, they feel forgotten, at the second table behind the tightly organized, smaller groups at either end of the U.S. spectrum. (Bornet, 1983, p. 52)

Aware of the prospective repercussions, Johnson pressed forward. Who and what fueled his passion and vision for societal reform and how did he endear the American people to the notion of a great society? The answers are both simple and complex.

Simply put, much of Johnson's motivation came from his undying belief that education was the antidote for poverty. Americans did not need to be convinced that

education could cure society's ills as this was an assumption ingrained in the American psyche by the founding fathers. In a letter written to Joseph Priestly in 1802, Thomas Jefferson proclaimed that the education offered in America would "excite emulation through the kingdoms of the earth, and meliorate the condition of the human race" (Jefferson as cited in Cremin, 1980, p. 4). Horace Mann, the pioneer of the common school, perceived education as "the balance wheel of the social machinery" and "the great equalizer if the conditions of men" (Mann, 1957, p. 87). Johnson, a former schoolteacher in Cotulla, Texas, never gave up on the transformative power of education. He believed, as did Horace Mann, that education could "uplift the poor, protect the property and wealth of the successful, and obliterate factitious distinctions in society" (Reese, 2005, p. 28). Education coupled with opportunity would rid the nation of poverty.

As mentioned earlier, Johnson found poverty, a misfortune experienced by Blacks and Whites, more approachable than civil rights, desegregation, or any other topic directly related to race. It was easier to identify what was ethically right and wrong with so many Americans living in poverty than it was to explain America's ongoing struggle with racism and racial injustice. In *My Hope for America*, Johnson (1964b) expressed his views on poverty:

> Poverty not only strikes at the needs of the body; it attacks the spirit and undermines human dignity. There is a difference between being poor and being in poverty. But while we were poor, we were not the prisoners of poverty; we were not caught in the backwash of an industrial revolution as the people of Appalachia are today. We had a chance to break out and to move up—a chance many Americans don't have.
> Some people say that if Americans are poor, it is their own fault. I have even heard some argue that God ordains poverty for the poor. I don't think God believes them either. I believe the reason most poor people are poor is that they never got a decent break.
> Some people never got that break because they were born in the wrong part of the country; or because they were born with the wrong color of skin; or because they

went into farming and couldn't get enough land to make a decent living when farm prices were too low and operating costs too high. (pp. 40-41)

Matters of poverty, social change, and education, however, swiftly turn from simple to complex when race enters the picture. Race invariably colors the face of things, especially when it comes to education. Goldberg (2002, 2009) helped us understand why.

In *The Racial State*, Goldberg (2002) explained the history of racism and advanced a theory of how racism permeates the social order within a racial state. According to Goldberg, there are two traditional concepts of racism: naturalist and historicist. He argued:

The naturalist conception, the claim of inherent racial inferiority, dominated from the 17th well into the 19th century; the historicist or progressivist commitment concerning itself with contrasting claims of historical immaturity displaced the dominance of naturalism in the second half of the nineteenth century but far from displaced it. (p. 74)

Despite their apparent theoretical dichotomy, Goldberg posited that both regimes coexist historically. Evidence of each can be seen during the 1960s—they function in concert to complicate matters. One example of how the research on education, desegregation, poverty, and race amalgamated racist regimes is the work by Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Commissioned by the Office of Policy, Planning, and Research within the U.S. Department of Labor, Moynihan studied Negro family life and its relation to poverty. His research culminated in an influential report, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action* (Moynihan, 1965). In the report, Moynihan (1965) identified a crisis in family stability whose origins, he argued, went back as far as slavery. According to Moynihan:

The fundamental problem, in which this is most clearly the case, is the family structure. The evidence—not final, but powerfully persuasive—is that Negro family in the urban ghettos is crumbling. A middle class group has managed to save itself, but for the vast numbers of the unskilled, poorly educated city working class the fabric of conventional social relationships has all but disintegrated. There are indications that the situation may have been arrested in past few years, but the general post war trend is unmistakable. So long as this situation persists, the cycle of poverty and disadvantage will continue to repeat itself. (Moynihan, 1965, para. 12)

He stressed the importance of jobs, housing, and the capability to rise above one's circumstances. Moynihan (1965) favored birth control within the Black community and spoke openly of the plight of the Black males, stating that the military might be the only place Black youth could amount to something. In the final chapter of Moynihan's report, he described the nature of what he called, the "tangle of pathology" (Moynihan, 1965) endemic to the Black culture and family. His diagnosis of pathology within the Black family and culture portrayed Blacks as unfortunate victims on the one hand and then blamed them for their woes, on the other. Moynihan implied that Negroes and the Black family were inferior to the dominant White culture or at least debilitated and misguided in their cultural mores and development. He predicted the situation would worsen over time if there were no national action to save the Black family from itself. His assertions were based on one of two racist conceptions: either Blacks are lesser by nature, as in the naturalist racial conception, or they are inferior because of circumstances and life conditions dating back as far as slavery, as purported in the historicist view.

Moynihan's (1965) notion of a disadvantageous, if not dysfunctional, Negro subculture contributed to what historian Michael B. Katz (as cited in Milkus & Mileur, 2005) called "the culture of poverty" (p. 120), a buzzword adopted by proponents of the war on poverty and popular phrase that still prevails in the 21st century. Katz explained "by default, the War on Poverty adopted the culture of poverty" (p. 120). Milkus and Mileur (2005) reasoned that, "in embracing the notion of a culture of poverty, the war on poverty sought to change the individual rather than the structure of the labor market because it lacked the resources to do the latter" (p. 120). Changing the individual meshed rather well with Johnson's mystical faith in the transformative, if not healing powers, of education and

reinforced the all-too common but ineffective approach of most reform agendas. Impressed

by Moynihan's research, Johnson held fast to his deep conviction that education could

eradicate the "age-old evil of poverty" (Bornet, 1983, p. 54). In a speech drafted by

Moynihan, Johnson (as cited in Bornet, 1983) assured students at the historically Black

institution of Howard University, that his administration would "seek equality as fact and

equality as a result" (p. 53), thus stressing, as Bornet (1983) pointed out, issues of

opportunity and the law. In keeping with the American ideal of meritocracy, Johnson sought

to increase individual initiative. His goal was to increase opportunity through education and

training, jobs, and provide the opportunity for all Americans to live in decency and dignity.

Yet, despite all of the rhetoric and idealism around education and equality of opportunity,

Johnson struggled personally with the matter of race, as did the nation, particularly when it

came to education and school desegregation. Tension in the 1960s grew more and more

intense as Blacks became outraged, impatient, and disillusioned with the lack of racial

justice, especially in the nations' public schools. In spite of the *Brown* decision and the

passage of the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Acts, inequality of opportunity as well as

outcomes for African Americans persisted. Even though Title I of the Civil Rights Act

empowered the government to withhold federal monies from schools and school districts

that refused to desegregate, school desegregation during the Johnson era seemed more an

illusion than a reality.

Of course, none of us can know with certainty Johnson's true motives and

sentiments. To be sure, political gain, an admiration for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the

New Deal, and a desire to leave a positive legacy, especially in the shadow of the beloved

JFK, were contributing factors to the actions Johnson took, but the literature suggested that

LBJ sincerely desired to improve the quality of life for lesser privileged Americans and eradicate racial discrimination. He recognized the ravages of racism. Two days after the assassination of JFK, in a conversation with NAACP leader Whitney Young, Johnson (as cited in Rosenberg & Karabell, 2003) spoke about hate and racism: "The hate that produces injustice—that's why we got to have a civil rights bill. . . . This—it's a cancer that just eats out our national existence" (pp. 201-202). Just five days after taking office on November 27, 1963, Johnson gave a speech before the nation on national television in which he implored:

> I urge you, as I did in 1957 and again in 1960, to enact a civil rights law so that we can move forward to eliminate from this nation every trace of discrimination and oppression that is based upon race or color. (as cited in Rosenberg & Karabell, 2003, p. 198)

The trouble was that Johnson thought education would purge the nation of poverty and racism. From a practical and political point of view, after passing the Civil Rights Bill and soon after, the Voting Rights Bill, Johnson knew he stood a better chance of successfully promoting a war on poverty than school desegregation. It was much safer, much more comfortable to aggressively attack poverty than any matter of race, let alone desegregation of the nation's schools.

Consequently, Johnson used his political muscle to push for a series of color-blind legislation more apropos to economic considerations. At his urging, Congress adopted the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) on August 20, 1964, in the White House Rose Garden. At the signing ceremony, Johnson proclaimed that the American people were making history:

> My fellow Americans, on this occasion the American people are making history. For so long as man has lived on this earth poverty has been its curse. On every continent in every age men have sought escape from poverty's oppression. Today for the first

time in all history of the human race, a great nation is able to make and is willing to make a commitment to eradicate poverty among its people. (Johnson, 1964a, p. 1)

The EOA established eleven new programs, among the best known were Job Corps, Work Study, Adult Basic Education, and Neighborhood Youth Corps. Esteemed educational scholar and prominent demographic historian, Maris Vinovskis (2005), asserted that although clearly more focused on economic opportunity, the EOA "paved the way for the 1965 passage of the historic Elementary and Secondary Education Act" (p. 59).

ESEA and educational reform. The ESEA of 1965, a cornerstone legislative achievement of the Great Society, initiated the involvement of the federal government in K-12 education policy. Prior to the passage of ESEA, America had a long-standing tradition of allowing local and state authorities to control education and schooling. The *Brown v. Board* (1954) decision profoundly altered the status quo as education gained salience on the nation's radar. Four years later, Sputnik and the Cold War spurred public interest in improving and expanding its educational system leaving cause to tie together national security and educational advancement. As a result, Congress passed the National Defense Act of 1958 (NDEA). Its objective was to provide categorical aid to states for the improvement of math, science and foreign language instruction in America's schools. The American public supported the government's assumption that the national security bore a direct relationship to the quality of education. Under the provisions within the NDEA, funding directly to schools remained meager as most of the federal monies were used to finance narrow purposes such as collecting statistical data, conducting specialized research, writing demonstration grants, supporting vocational education, and paying for the school lunch program (Milkus & Mileur, 2005).

Just as Americans began to pay more attention to education as a national concern, the Civil Rights Movement began picking up momentum. Jolted by a heightened awareness of racism and social injustice, some Americans developed a newfound sense of urgency for change and equity (Milkus & Mileur, 2005). Additionally, a large body of social research proliferated in the media raising the level of public outrage and social consciousness. Influential work by Michael Harrington (1962), James Conant (1961), and others emphasized the inferior educational circumstances and opportunities of the poor and drew stark contrasts between life for the middle-class and the poor. The time seemed right for federal intervention in public education and Johnson's education bill. Political opposition, however, threatened to derail passage of the bill. According to Milkus and Mileur (2005), "from the outset . . . Johnson and his advisors were cognizant of the political obstacles— intense opposition to government support for integration, Catholic schools, and centralized administration" (p. 294). Known as the "three R's—race, religion, and the 'Reds,'" (p. 294), Johnson had his work cut out for him. Hugh Davis Graham (1984), explained in *Uncertain Triumph*,

> To propose federal intrusion into the sanctity of the state-local-private preserve of education was to stride boldly into a uniquely dangerous political mine field that pitted Democrat against Republican, liberal against conservative, Catholic against Protestant and Jew, federal power against states rights, White against Black, and rich constituency against poor in mercurial cross-cutting alliances. (p. xv)

Johnson, however, remained determined.

Several factors worked in concert to ensure that Congress passed the ESEA. First, the direct impact of race was diminished in the ESEA bill because of the earlier passage of the Civil Rights Act and the stipulations outlined in Title VI, which withheld federal funds from school that failed to desegregate. In effect, I posit that the ESEA, like the war on

poverty, was accepted largely because it was it addressed issues less related to race and more concerned with economics. It was a color-blind educational reform. Second, Francis Keppel, Johnson's commissioner of education, diminished the issue of religion by formulating a brilliant compromise that marked federal aid for poor youngsters regardless of whether they attended public or private schools. Third, LBJ capitalized on two cherished American assumptions: that the quality of education and schooling and a well-educated citizenry are positively related to the economic future and prosperity of the nation, and that education and opportunity are the cure-alls for poverty. Arguing "very often, a lack of jobs and money is not the cause of poverty, but the symptom," Johnson convinced legislators as well as the American people that "the cause [of poverty] may lie deeper—in our failure to give our fellow citizens a fair chance to develop their own capacities in a lack of education and training" (Johnson as cited in Milkus & Mileur, 2005, p. 293). Johnson's political prowess and Keppel's ingenious compromise solution coupled with the nation's newfound wakefulness to social injustice enabled the ESEA to pass both the House and the Senate.

The ESEA contained five titles, the cornerstone of which was Title I. Title I solidified the government's commitment to financially subsidize the special needs of the nation's economically and educationally deprived. Congress initially appropriated $1.3 billion for ESEA with the vast majority, almost $1.6 billion, going to Title I. Title II funded a five-year program to finance library resources, instructional materials, and textbooks by state educational agencies. Title III instituted a five-year program of matching grants to local educational agencies to fund supplemental education centers and services. Title IV authorized the commissioner of education to contract with universities and state educational agencies to conduct research. Title V provided monies over a five-year time to enhance the

development of state departments of education (McGuinn & Hess, 2005, pp. 295-296).

Thus, the ESEA demonstrated the consensual agreement of educational policymakers and researchers that the federal government should and would address the perceived educational crisis among poor children of all races. As previously mentioned, politicians were still at odds about the level of government best suited to achieve school reform, but that is not all that divided legislators. An important ideological rift persisted between liberals and conservatives about the cause of poverty.

Conservatives viewed poverty from the deprivation perspective while liberals tended to see poverty from a structural perspective. Deprivation theories espouse that poor children suffer from a culture of poverty, essentially blaming the victim, while structural theories support the notion that the problem lies within the schools, attributing more responsibility to external factors. Educational historian Diane Ravitch (1983) observed "the vigorous advocacy of differing theories obscured the fact that educators did not know how best to educate poor children or even whether it was possible to eliminate the achievement gap between poor and middle-income children" (p. 150). As a result of the ideological confusion, ESEA funds were allocated to support a myriad of programs of varying quality and the bill, intended to be primarily redistributive, ended up being a hybrid program, both redistributive and distributive in its design and scope. Lack of consistency and continued confusion seriously compromised the effectiveness of the provisions granted in the ESEA. Fault-finders were quick to point out its shortcomings. Critics, such as Peterson and Rabe (1983), asserted that "passage of the ESEA . . . provided for greatly increased support for public education, but, it hardly took the form that traditional educational interest groups had long advocated" (p. 717). They contended that by targeting the poor instead, the ESEA,

intended originally to be redistributive in nature, required federal institutions to focus more on supervising how funds were spent than on information gathering and research. McGuinn and Hess (2005) postulated that:

> One of the most significant features of the ESEA was what it did not do: it did not provide general federal aid to public schools in the U.S. Instead, it targeted the poor and concentrated resources on educationally disadvantaged children in low-income areas. (p. 299)

Many supporters of the bill grew increasingly concerned about its failings—"poor targeting, conflicting educational philosophies, and ambiguous implementation authority" (McGuinn & Hess, 2005, p. 297).

Although the ESEA offered categorical aid to children of poverty, it did not specify how greater educational opportunity would be achieved. The wide latitude given to school districts and the lack of compliance mechanisms in the ESEA created serious barriers to effective implementation. As civil rights historian Hugh Davis Graham (1984) discussed, "the crux of the matter was that money was being spent too fast in too many places and under too many categorical programs" (p. 22). There was, however, one program that emerged from the ESEA that remains the most resilient and, arguably, the most successful in bringing better quality to the lives of America's impoverished children. That program was Project Head Start.

Project Head Start: A hopeful possibility. In reviewing the literature on the history of Head Start, two stories emerge: an intellectual (or anti-intellectual, depending on one's perspective) narrative and a political narrative. As mentioned previously, educational reform is not ahisotrical, thus, any effort to understand the nature and impact of educational reform must be viewed within a historical framework. To understand Head Start as an

educational initiative, I review the intellectual and political context of the 1960s and then situate those contexts within the broader history of educational reform in America.

"Project Head Start has been one of the most popular and enduring legacies of President Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society" (Vinovskis, 2005, p. 1). In an introduction written for the 1979 work, *Project Head Start*, edited by Head Start pioneers, Edward Zigler and Jeanette Valentine, co-founder Robert E. Cooke explained, "In retrospect, Head Start still stands out as one of the major social experiments of the second half of the 20th century" (p. xxviii).

Despite the fact that many questions linger about the long-term effectiveness of Head Start, Republicans and Democrats, to varying degrees, continue to support its expansion and improvement. The unprecedented longevity and bi-partisan political support of Head Start suggest it remains an evolving educational enterprise with hopeful possibilities. The story of Head Start's evolution, however, is a complicated one because it involves:

> The social and political struggles of the civil rights era and the war on poverty; the revival of scientific interest in the role of the environment in human development; and the design of educational-intervention efforts for children of the disadvantaged. (Zigler & Valentine, 1979, p. 3)

From one perspective, the story begins in the 1960s when the country "awoke to the realization that millions of Americans were poor" (Zigler & Valentine, 1979, p. 4). In another sense, the intellectual, philosophical, and theoretical suppositions behind the program were deeply rooted in traditionally racist White, Anglo-Saxon American beliefs and values. Let us examine what the literature offers from both perspectives.

 Johnson's war on poverty, predicated on the assumption that education is an antidote to poverty, gained momentum in the wake of mounting concern among White Americans that the inequality in housing, employment, education, and living conditions highlighted by

the Civil Rights Movement was not only affecting Blacks, but Whites as well. In other

words, it is debatable whether or not Americans would have so readily joined the War on

Poverty if the ramifications of poverty had been limited to Blacks and other minorities. This

could be cited as an example of Bell's (2004) interest convergence theory, particularly by his

two rules:

> Rule 1: The interest of Blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated
> only when that interest converges with the interests of Whites in policy-making
> positions. This convergence is far more important than the degree of harm suffered
> by Blacks or the character of proof offered to prove that harm.
> Rule 2: Even when interest-convergence results in an effective racial
> remedy, that remedy will be abrogated at the point that policymakers fear the
> remedial policy is threatening the superior status of Whites, particularly those in the
> middle and upper classes. (p. 69)

Although the War on Poverty was not sold on a racially motivated agenda, I argue that race

had everything to do with its popularity and much of the legislation that followed. We know

from previous discussion that a large part of the reason why Congress passed the ESEA

stems from the fact that because the Civil Rights Act had already addressed the problem of

race and desegregation, Johnson was able to avert the contentious topic of race on his fight

on Capitol Hill for passage of the ESEA. To clarify, in order to ensure its success, the ESEA

was not billed as a race issue, and certainly not as categorically providing financial

assistance to Negroes, but rather as the bill was promoted as an antidote to poverty, a crisis

that confronted all Americans and threatened the economic security of the nation.

Americans were generally appalled by what they learned about poverty.

Research initiated during the Kennedy administration laid the groundwork for public

alarm and Johnson's color-blind War on Poverty. "According to studies undertaken by the

Kennedy administration, poverty was widespread, and its consequences were threatening the

nation's social and economic well-being" (Zigler & Valentine, 1979, p. 4). The authors

explained:

> In their 1964 report to the president, the Council of Economic Advisors stressed that much of the country's poverty existed in pockets, "physically or culturally isolated enclaves in both urban and rural areas." . . . In 1963, there were 9 million families with annual incomes below $3,000. Sixty percent of these families were headed by a person with only a grade-school education. . . . The legacy of this "other America" could be seen in the rising crime rate and the decline of qualified manpower for military service and private industry. The 1963 report of the President's Task Force on Manpower Conservation found that one-half of the men called by the draft were physically unfit or mentally unfit for military service because of deficiencies arising from poor health and inadequate education. Forty percent of those rejected had never even entered the ninth grade. . . . The Task Force on Manpower Conservation suggested that the inferior living conditions and social behavior which seemed to characterize the poor were passed on from generation to generation in a "cycle" of poverty. *The President's Panel on Mental Retardation concluded that the persistence of these inferior conditions and behavior patterns meant that the economically deprived were somehow "culturally deprived" as well* [emphasis added]. The failure of the poor to acquire middle-class attitudes and middle-class incomes was attributed to a lack of education. Education, it was believed, could compensate for the "cultural deprivation" and allow the poor to break out of the "cycle" of poverty. According to this reasoning, once the poor were skilled and educated for employment, they could achieve middle-class economic and social status. (p. 5)

There is much in this passage with which I am concerned.

First, the fact that the President's Panel on Mental Retardation weighed in on a

discussion of poverty seems, at minimum, misguided. The literature confirmed, however,

that the first proposal for a public compensatory education program came from the

President's Panel on Mental Retardation (Zigler & Valentine, 1979). The panel's analysis of

the problems of education and poverty was predicated on the dominant cultural-deprivation

stereotype and "its recipe for reform typified New Frontier liberalism" (p. 12). The plan was

focused on the impact of the environment on education, academic achievement, highly

idealistic goals. The fact that the plan boasted that compensatory education could reduce

mental retardation by 50% indicates its misconceptions about the causes of educational

problems in children of poverty. A factor worth considering is the potential negative impact that a presumed relation between poverty, education, and cultural deprivation might have on Black children who, more than likely, already suffered from the stigma associated with being Black.

Second, the term *culturally deprived* suggests racist assumptions of White superiority and begs clarification. Explanations found in the literature were disturbing. Theories of cultural deprivation and the environmental approaches to compensatory education that followed did not begin with the war on poverty or Head Start. The current notion of cultural deprivation, according to Zigler and Valentine (1979), first emerged as a consequence of social scientists addressing issues "outside of an academic context" (p. 8) and educators misinterpreting the findings. The research of Joseph McVickerHunt and Jerome Bloom during the 1960s challenged the established geneticist views on intelligence and "maturationist and hereditarian" (Zigler & Valentine, 1979, p. 7) traditions in educational philosophy by introducing ideas to support an environmentalist perspective on education. Educators, researchers, and politicians went overboard in support of environmentalist theory. "Environmentalists were ignoring biological factors just as their predecessors had ignored environment" (Zigler & Valentine, 1979, p. 7). A similar abuse of scholarly work occurred with the misinterpretation of the concept of a culture of poverty. Oscar Lewis (1970), an anthropologist working in the slums of Latin America, "identified characteristics common to impoverished communities the world over and suggested that these characteristics constituted a culture of poverty" (Zigler & Valentine, 1979, p. 8). The popular interpretation of the relationship between poverty and culture morphed into what became known as "culturally deprived, if a group could be deprived of its own culture" (p. 7). The core of this

interpretation was, of course, the middle-class assumption that anyone who was culturally different was culturally inferior.

Finally, the presumption that White middle–class values are both desired and desirable is debatable and speaks to the preponderance of White superiority. Who is to say that everyone wants to achieve middle-class status, whatever that is, or that such status is necessarily desirable?

Both the environmental perspective and the emphasis on intellectual achievement complimented traditional American ethos. As Zigler and Valentine (1979) explained, "Environmentalism offered the possibility of achieving the equality and opportunity of Americans felt were promised in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; emphasis on intelligence and academic success reinforced the Protestant work ethic" (p. 11). These two concepts laid the common ground on which early intervention and the war on poverty converged. Erroneous assumptions about the relation of mental retardation and poverty along with overly optimistic expectations that eight weeks of intervention could "inoculate a child against the effects of poverty for the rest of his life" (p. 11) coupled with very little practical knowledge and experience characterized the early stages of planning for Project Head Start.

Head Start actually began as an effort by Sergeant Shriver, President Johnsons' czar, to use a contemporary buzzword, of the war on poverty to head off opposition from critics to the Community Action Program (CAP), a provision of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act. The following passage from the Senate Report on the EOA had opened the door for a program for child development program:

> A balanced program of educational assistance might included, although it need not be limited to, the following: creation of, and assistance to, preschool day care, or

nursery centers for 3 to 5-year-olds. This will provide an opportunity for a Head Start by canceling out deficiencies associated with poverty that are instrumental in school failure. . . . Such special education programs could be open to all needy children. (Zigler & Valentine, 1979, p. 139)

After consulting with renowned Harvard psychologist Jerome Bruner, Shriver (as cited in Zigler & Valentine, 1979) decided on a program "aimed at 12 million children whose families were below the poverty line" (p. 12). In a rare, but direct reference to Black people, Sergeant Shriver (as cited in Zigler & Valentine, 1979) expressed the vision that Head Start would "overcome a lot of hostility in our society against the poor in general and against Black people who are poor in particular, by going at the children" (p. 12). Political pressure forced Shriver to commit himself to a preschool intervention program that served at least 100,000 children at the outset. Incredibly, this figure rose to 500,000 by the end of the first summer. The program fell under the war on poverty's mandate to strike at the root of poverty while simultaneously diverting attention from the unpopular Community Action Programs vilified in the political arena for alleged corruption and waste. Shriver put the program into the hands of Dr. Robert Cooke, the chief pediatrician at Johns Hopkins University. Cooke and the committee he formed were uncomfortable with the lofty plans, but adhered to the political demands imposed upon them, and spent a mere three months trying to plan an "in-depth, practicable intervention program on a national scale" (Zigler & Valentine, 1979, p. 14). In February of 1965, the plan was submitted to Shriver.

Flexible in nature, the plan did not specify exactly how it would achieve its goals or the nature of the effects it might attain. Planners emphasized the importance of maintaining enough flexibility to tailor the program to the needs of each community. Although there was no endorsement of a particular curriculum or philosophy of intervention, the committee did specify six clear goals:

1. The improvement of the child's health and physical abilities, including appropriate steps to correct present physical and mental problems and to enhance every child's access to an adequate diet; the improvement of the family's attitude toward future health care and physical abilities;
2. the encouragement of self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity, self-discipline, which will assist in the development of the child's social and emotional health;
3. the enhancement of the child's mental processes and skills, with particular attention to conceptual and communication skills;
4. the establishment of patterns and expectations of success for the child, which will create a climate of confidence for present and future learning efforts and overall development;
5. an increase in the ability of the child and the family to relate to each other and to others; and,
6. the enhancement of the sense of dignity and self-worth within the child and the family. (Grimmett, 1989, p. 30)

Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of Head Start was its emphasis on parental involvement and family support. The program offered full-day, half-day, summer only, full-year, and, eventually, follow-through programs, aimed at extending its long-term benefits to children. As expected, there was great variation in the quality of each program, a factor that contributed to criticism and skepticism about the long-term effectiveness of Head Start and compensatory education in general, thus renewing philosophical debates between hereditarians and environmentalists. Politicians, policymakers, and the media pushed for formal evaluation studies to be conducted on the merit of Head Start.

The evaluation process was a murky one. As Vinovskis (2005) recalled, "evaluation was a political instrument to be trotted out when it supported one's objectives or undercut one's opponents and to be suppressed, if possible, when it opposed one's objectives or strengthened ones' opponents" (p. 102). Far from being an instrument for even-handed, objective deliberation, evaluation was transmuted into "forensic social science" (p. 102). Arguably, the most famous, or infamous depending on one's perspective, evaluation study of Head Start was the Westinghouse-Ohio Study (Ciracelli, 1969), the results of which were not released until President Nixon took office. In short, the study questioned the long-term

effectiveness of Head Start, created doubt about the merit of its continued funding, and ignited a barrage of evaluations in support of Head Start. It was attacked on several fronts for its suspect research method and design, as well as its statistical analysis. History proves that Head Start continues to be regarded as a viable educational intervention.

What I want to stress are the many lessons to be learned from Head Start. First, education is not a cure for poverty because poverty is not simply a consequence of ignorance. Second, educating children is a multi-faceted undertaking that must remain flexible in nature, broad in scope, and deep in intensity. Third, treating the whole child, his culture, and his family with dignity and respect are tantamount to long-lasting effectiveness of educational achievement. Fourth, Black and brown children who are confronted with greater life challenges than are their White, middle-class counterparts need and are entitled to compensatory educational intervention. Fifth, intervention must be on-going if social, emotional, educational, and health benefits are to be permanent. Sixth, balancing values of equity, excellence, opportunity, and outcome is difficult but necessary. Educational reform in the post-*Brown* Civil Rights Era has failed to acknowledge and work effectively toward achieving this balance. The off-kilter, imbalance of these values becomes more evident as the literature on more recent educational trends is examined.

Concluding Remarks

> The so-called modern education, with all its defects, however, does others so much more good than it does the Negro, because it has been worked out in conformity to the needs of those who have enslaved and oppressed weaker people. (Woodson, 1993, p. xii)

This review was guided by two foreshadowing questions: what assumptions are historically endemic to the history of educational reform, and how have these assumptions intentionally or unintentionally affected racial inequality of opportunity and achievement in

America's public schools? I began reading the literature on the history of education and

educational reform in America expecting to tell one story. It took less than an hour for me to

realize how naïve I was. It became clear to me that there is not one American story,

certainly at least not between 1780 and 1930, for during these years, Blacks and Whites

lived in two separate worlds. At first I felt disheartened, but soon grew to feel empowered.

I realized that, by learning about his/her/their story, I would better understand my/our story.

Despair turned into excitement as I realized that, through critical intellectual inquiry, I may

serve as an agent for change. I began the research with great enthusiasm.

I began by trying to identify values and beliefs of leadership and the growing

American populace about education and schooling from the Early National Period through

the Progressive Era and to examine how those precepts defined educational reform and

contributed to the preponderance of racism and racial inequality of educational opportunity.

Indeed, I was able to recognize prevalent values and beliefs that defined American ideology

and shaped the nature of education and schooling in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries,

but more importantly, I denoted a pervasive and consistent pattern in how these beliefs and

values were translated into behaviors and attitudes that perpetuated racism and promoted

inequality of opportunity, particularly where African Americans were concerned.

The initial review of literature on educational reform from 1780 to 1930 revealed an

American mental model of education founded on what Kaestle (1983) called the Native

Anglo Protestant ideology. This ideology translated into a series of misguided propositions

that require constant justification and rationalization as well as deliberate hegemonic actions.

To review, some of the more prominent assumptions included: a republic government

depends upon individual character; poverty is the consequence of individual character flaws;

Christianity is supreme; Christian principles are synonymous with democracy; education should promote Christian morals; the accumulation of private property spurs incentive, progress, and prosperity; and proper environment is central to education and social reform. I would add to these assumptions: persistent faith in education as a panacea for society's ills; growing endearment for capitalism as the cure for economic stagnation; and enduring belief in the inferiority of the Negro.

Respected American leaders have adopted and encouraged an anti-intellectual posture aimed at exploiting the evangelical spirit of the epoch and the age-old Puritan commitment to a rather gilded morality in order to draw an inextricable relation between Christianity, capitalism, democracy, power, and racial exclusion as a right of the majoritarian culture. They only hold their own if Americans are molded into one national identify, hence the job of schools has been less concerned with uplifting the masses and more committed to Americanizing and homogenizing the nation. I theorize that Whites formed a bond that transcended ethnic differences, religious diversity, and language barriers. That bond was based on not being Black. I assert that these suppositions, when taken to task, lose credence if subjected to critical, intellectual inquiry.

If in fact, the presumption of Anglo superiority was to be maintained, opposition and threats from the Other, the outside, essentially, from the public, had to be squelched. Politics had to be removed from the school. I believe the slogan "taking the politics out of the schools" was just a ruse to cover up the controlling propensity of the Anglo ideology. Amidst all the talk about America being the land of opportunity, the nation was certain to struggle down the road with the hypocrisy of the enslavement of Blacks, the mistreatment of non-Anglo immigrants, the destruction of the American Indian, and other injustices to

women and the disabled. If the native propositions were to be upheld, schools were left with no choice but to try to change the child, instead of the system. It was deemed safer to bleach diversity than embrace it. Being safe was more important than being brave.

In a land whose people sing national anthem that boasts of living "in the land of the free and the home of the brave," I believe White Americans were fearful. The literature suggested to me that Whites were afraid that the hypocrisy of their existence might be exposed. I think that fear of losing control of what the country never rightfully earned and, effectively stole from others, led to a pattern of hegemony, marginalization, and systematic racism, where African Americans were concerned. These theories emerged from my review of what constitutes a review of the first 150 years after the Revolutionary War. I thought that, after reviewing the next 40 years of educational reform, I would see some of my assumptions change. That was not the case. Indeed, as the title of Payne's (2008) book stated: there has been "*So Much Reform, So Little Change.*"

From the first common schools of the 19th century to the integrated (or still segregated) public schools in the late 1960s, I found that still dominant were the Native Anglo Protestant values of old. Racism and White privilege, evident in the Jim Crow South and the staunch opposition to *Brown,* had morphed into a new image. In fact, racism has proven to be quite a tricky phenomenon. Whites in the South, where most Blacks lived prior to the Great Black Migration to the North, agreed to marginally educate Blacks but much of their motivation stemmed from the benefit White children would gain. The education provided Blacks was largely perfunctory, a token education, aimed at keeping Blacks in their place. Derrick Bells' (1995) interest-convergence theory makes much more sense to me now. History suggests that Dr. Bell's premises have merit.

I saw in the literature, however, another recurrent factor that may weigh in on the motivation behind educational reform after slavery—fear. Webber (1978) and Williams (2005) wrote about the power associated with literacy, a power Whites did not want slaves to acquire. Literacy for Blacks was a threat to White power. I suggested, earlier, a fear among White Americans that the national hypocrisy might be revealed. We see in the literature how Americans so feared the reproach of a world encouraged to admire the American way, that the government has been inspired to right action. In 1947, in the wake of the World Wars, the Truman Commission admonished racial injustice and violence as un-American. The Cold War proved to be a catalyst for the *Brown* decision as the world stood in awe of Americans taking a stand against segregation. Yet, history has demonstrated, thus far, that fear only brought superficial change in formal educational policy, but no deep change in the structural design of an educational system designed to provide less than equal opportunity and outcomes for Black children. For the first 10 years after *Brown,* the literature affirmed that, except for the jurisprudence of punishing individual perpetrators of racial discrimination and injustice, educational initiatives aimed at equity reform, such as Title I and Head Start, were color-blind programs that targeted children of poverty, a presumably equal opportunity affliction from which a great many White families suffered. I would argue that these programs survived largely because they were not race conscious reforms and did not challenge systemic racist policies and practices endemic to American schools and society. Inarguably, the literature reflected that despite the promise of the Great Society and the war on poverty, White America continued to make excuses for short-changing Black Americans. Was it a dilemma or a choice that confronted the country? Myrdal (1944) may have had a point about the American moral dilemma, as there certainly seems to be a pattern

of moral indignation on the part of some and denial and avoidance on the part of others. On the other hand, Aptheker (1946) thought it a matter of choice, a conscious choice to disenfranchise Blacks from equal opportunity and outcomes. One certainty is that racism and the color line remained pervasive American problems.

The literature suggested that racism endured two transformations and was moving toward a third by the end of the Johnson era. Initially, conventional wisdom held that Blacks were simply biologically inferior to Whites. Racism was overt, accepted, and the racial caste system was a way of life. Blacks, by virtue of their inferiority, were deemed unworthy of schooling and other basic rights. When theories of biological inferiority no longer made sense and it became obvious that Blacks could and would learn, racism adopted a more clandestine demeanor: socioeconomic and cultural deprivation theories were used to explain the position of Blacks in society and the lagging achievement of Black children. The pathology of Blackness was the culprit. The switch from the biological racism (Goldberg, 2002) to historical racism was indicative of a metamorphosis: racism in new clothes.

An interesting pattern emerged. As the current reasoning of racism began to make less sense and perhaps, moral consciousness was aroused, racism acquired a new identity. During such periods, Blacks tended to gain ground in education and society. Each new phase of racism and period of growth for Blacks was met with some measure of gain for Whites as well, as evidenced in the common school in the South in the post-bellum era and the equity reforms of the Great Society. Periods of mutual gain were followed by a seemingly inevitable White backlash as seen in the rise of Jim Crow after Reconstruction and the conservative economic backlash after the Great Society. Amidst the changing face of racism, one constant has endured. Blacks were blamed for their circumstances on the

basis of either biological or historical reasons. After *Brown* and especially after the Civil

Rights Era, it seemed that another backlash might be looming on the horizon and a new

conscience-easing, national paradigm beginning to unfold: the ideology of color-blindness.

Rather than face our fears, engage in the tough conversations, and take the boldest of

actions, why not discount race as a critical issue in school and society? Could the

significance of race actually be declining? Color-blindness may very well be the greatest

metamorphosis racism has undergone—the greatest camouflage, or the biggest self-

deception yet.

Chapter II: The Pathology of Color-blindness

> Everyone really knows how long the Blacks have been here. Everyone knows on what level Blacks are involved with the American people and in American life. These are not secrets. It is not a question even of the ignorance of White people. It is a question of the fears of White people. . . . So that's what makes it all so hysterical, so unwieldy, and so completely irretrievable. Reason cannot reach it. It is as though some great, great wound is in the whole body, and no one dares to operate: to close it, to examine it, to stitch it. (Baldwin as cited in Mead & Baldwin, 1971, p. 1)

> Color-blindness is not simply a new strategy in this fight, enabling the ongoing theft of Black gifts in the name of antiracism. It operates as an unconscious defense device that allows White people to avoid recognizing themselves as non-White people often see them: as "sheer malevolence." (Sullivan, 2006, p. 127)

> The eagerness with which contemporary society does away with racism, replacing this recognition with evocations of pluralism and diversity that further mask reality is a response to the terror [of Whiteness]. It has also become a way to perpetuate the terror by providing a cover, a hiding place. (hooks, 1998, p. 51)

Nowadays, it is politically incorrect and socially unacceptable to espouse openly racist views. Such behavior and attitudes are reserved for extremists who, for the most part, command the respect of only a few Americans. Most Whites view racism as a thing of the past and many blame remnants of the race problem on Black opportunists who eagerly play the race card in an effort to excuse their personal failures and gain unearned sympathy from vulnerable Whites or preferential treatment from the system. In the wake of the historic election of President Barak Obama, many Whites cannot fathom how Blacks could claim that race or racism adversely affects their life chances. If they could, Americans, Black and White, would will away race, racism, and the proverbial problem of the color line. This is precisely what the ideology of color-blindness tries to do.

My aim in this chapter is to demystify the ideology of color-blindness and examine its impact on racial inequality in education. I take a critical view of the way race is used to

disadvantage some and privilege others. My work draws from the bodies of work often identified as critical race theory (CRT) (Bell, 1995; Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Brown et al., 2003; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Essed, 1991; Goldberg, 2002, 2009; Hill Collins, 2000; Leonardo, 2009; Marable, 1992; Omi & Winant, 1994; Solarzano & Yosso, 2002; Sullivan, 2006) and, also, as race critical theory (RCT). Essed and Goldberg (2002) made a distinction between CRT and RCT, the details of which are not relevant to the purpose of this dissertation. I explore five ways that CRT and RCT can and should inform educational theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum, and policy:

1. The intercentricity of race and racism,
2. the challenge to dominant pedagogy,
3. the commitment to social justice,
4. the centrality of experiential knowledge, and
5. the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches. (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002)

To clarify, the term *intercentricity* refers to the intersection of race with other forms of subordination such as class or gender. I take the position, however, that "when examining the experiences of students of color, a class-based theory or even a class-gender theory is insufficient" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 31). I place race and racism at the center of the research and discussion. Throughout the discourse, I underscore the significance of historical analysis, ideological critique, critical pedagogy, and transformative intellectualism. My views are supported by the work of Dewey (1935), Foucault (1995, 2005), Freire (2007), Giroux (1988, 2005), Gramsci (2008), McLaren (2007), Orfield and Eaton (1996), Torres (2005), and others. My understanding of color-blind ideology is drawn from Wilson (1978) and the work of advocates of color-blind ideology, referred to as racial realists (D'Souza, 1995; Jacoby, 1998; McWhorter, 2001; Michaels, 2006; Sleeper, 1997; Steele, 2007; Thernstrom & Thernstrom 1997, 2003).

Although the problem of race and racism in America is not dichotomous, I focus on the Black/White binary because the conservative consensus on race is primarily structured around relationships between Blacks and Whites (Brown et al., 2003). "Being White in America is a measure of one's social distance from Blackness" (Guiner & Torres as cited in Brown et al., 2003, p. x). Hence, Whiteness in America has been constructed to mean "not Black." Furthermore, as new racial or ethnic groups enter the U.S., they have been historically integrated into American society with some assurance that "they will not be treated like Blacks" (Brown et al., 2003, p. xi). The relationship of Blacks and Whites is central to any meaningful understanding of race, racism, and color-blind ideology. I might add also, that my aim is neither to vilify nor vindicate any racial group. The matter at hand is far too grave to engage in sensational tales of false angels and demons. We are all a part of the problem.

The chapter is divided into three parts. In part 1, "Critical Understandings," I define key terms, clarify important concepts related to race and racism, and trace the history of racial formation in the U.S. In part 2, "Power and Hegemony in Education," I review the interrelation of power and hegemony, and the role schools play in this relationship. In part 3, "The Threat of Color-blind Neoliberalism," I present the basic tenets of color-blind ideology and critically analyze the relation of colorblindness and neoliberalism educational reform particularly in communities of color.

Critical Understandings

What is race? Prior to the turn of the century, biological explanations of race and racial inferiority and superiority prevailed. It took 100 years for scholars to replace these perceptions with an approach which regards race as a social concept (Omi & Winant, 1994).

Most scholars now concur that there is no solid biological foundation for race and that race is a social construction. Omi and Winant (1994) proposed "race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies" (p. 55). They contended that we should think of race "as an element of social structure rather than as an irregularity within it; we should see race as a dimension of human representation rather than an illusion" (p. 55). Essed (1991) theorized:

> Racism must be understood as ideology, structure, and process in which inequalities inherent in the wider social structure are related, in a deterministic way, to biological and cultural factors attributed to those who are seen as a different "race" or "ethnic" group. (p. 43)

In her view, "race is an ideological construction, not just a social construction because the idea of race is never outside of a framework of group interest" (p. 43). Goldberg (2002) defined race as "a social or cultural significance assigned too or assumed in physical or biological markers of human beings, including the presumed physical or physiognomic markers of cultural attributes, habits, or behaviors" (p. 118). What all of these definitions have in common is an understanding of race as a human-made construct predicated on social, cultural, and ideological beliefs aimed at ordering, categorizing, defining, and determining the place of certain others in society. Racism, different from race, is the deployment of the ideological and social construct of race—the race-based institutionalization and structuration of the power over others (e.g., the privileging of some and the depriving of others).

The traditional paradigm for racism in the U.S. has most often been limited to a Black-White experience. Manning Marable (1992) positioned racism within a broader context and defined racism as "a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians, and

other people on the basis of ethnicity, culture, mannerisms, and color" (p. 5). Lorde (1992) emphasized the relation between power (e.g., feelings of superiority and dominance) and racism. She defined racism as "the belief in the inherent superiority or dominance of one race—in particular, Whites—over others" (p. 496). Fredricksen (2002), in *Racism: A Short History*, alleged that a defining characteristic of racism is the assumption on the part of a superior group of the inferiority of others who are deemed to manifest some immutable difference. Embedded in these definitions are three important points that will be important in this research:

1. racism involves the belief of the dominant group that they are superior

2. racism involves the enactment of power

3. racism affects a wide range of racial and ethnic groups.

These definitions suggest "racism is about institutional power, a form of power that people of color—that is, non-Whites, in the United States have never possessed" (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yossi, 2000, p. 61).

Goldberg (2009) argued, however, that racism is more than the presumption of inferiority or superiority. It "is more broadly that racial difference warrants exclusion of those so characterized from elevation into the realm of protection, privilege, property, or profit" (p. 5). It should be noted that overtly racist acts in American society today are rare. Blacks and other people of color are much more likely to experience what Philomena Essed (1991) referred to as "everyday racism" (p. 52). Everyday racism is:

> A process in which (a) socialized racist notions are integrated into meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable, (b) practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive, and (c) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices in everyday situations. (p. 52)

This more obscure kind of racism is no less injurious than the in your face bigotry of old. In fact, Kennedy (1989) found that "although overt forms of racial domination described thus far were enormously destructive, *covert* color bars have been, in a certain sense, even more insidious" (Kennedy, 1989, p. 1752). Racism becomes institutionalized, structured, and reproduced in what Goldberg (2002) called the racial state.

Goldberg (2002) theorized that the processes by which privilege and deprivation, freedom and unfreedom, liberty and oppression, and opportunity and denial are structure become normalized in the racial state. He explained:

> States are racial more deeply because of the structural position they occupy in producing and reproducing, constituting and effecting racially shaped spaces and places, groups and events, life worlds, and possibilities, accesses and restrictions, inclusions and exclusions, conceptions and modes of representation. They are *racial* by virtue of their modes of population definition, determination, and structuration. And they are racist to the extent such definition, determination, and structuration operate to exclude or privilege in or on racial terms, and in so far as they circulate in and reproduce a world whose meanings and effects are racist. This is a world we might provocatively identify as a *racist* world order. (p. 104)

According to Goldberg (2002), there are five ways in which racial states manage a variety of institutional, definitive, and disciplinary practices. First, "they are engaged in definition, regulation, governance, management, and mediation of racial matters they at once help to fashion and facilitate" (p. 110). "Racial states *define* populations into racially identifiable groups" (p. 110). The example Goldberg used is the practice of census taking, law, and policy in various bureaucracies and administrative procedures (p. 110). Second, "racial states *regulate* social, political, economic, legal, and cultural relations between those racially defined, invariably between White citizens and those identified as neither White nor citizen, and most usually as Black" (p. 110). The consequences are complex and often aggravate racial tension within and between racial groups who must compete for the

advantages that Whites enjoy. Third, "racial states *govern* populations identified in explicitly racial terms" (p. 110). In simple terms, what this means is that in the racial state those groups regarded as either naturally substandard or historically underdeveloped are managed, controlled, and watched. Fourth, "racial states *manage* economic life, shape the contours of racially conceived labor relations, and structure the opportunities or possibilities of economic access and closure" (p. 110). Segregated educational practices in the U.S. are one example. "Finally, racial states not only regulate but also claim to *mediate* relations between those (self)-identified as 'White' or 'European' and those declared 'non-White' or 'Native'" (p. 111). Despite claims of neutrality, the racial state historically reproduces a system of entitlement for Whites.

In an interview with Susan Giroux (2006), Goldberg spoke at length about the racial state and "contemporary commitments to state racelessness" (p. 14). Racial states, explained Goldberg, function according to their own logic. He elaborated:

> The state has the power by definition to assert itself or to control those (things) within the state . . . [and] the power to exclude from state protection. In these senses, the modern state has readily lent itself conceptually to, as it has readily been defined by, racial (and gendered) formation. For central to the sorts of racial constitution that have centrally defined modernity is the power to exclude and by extension include in racially ordered terms, to dominate through the power to categorize differently and hierarchically, to set aside by setting part . . . . [These are] processes aided integrally by . . . the law and policy-making, by bureaucratic apparatuses and governmental technologies like census categories, by invented histories and traditions, histories and traditions, ceremonies and cultural imaginings. (p. 12)

In short, the racial state is driven to control others by perpetuating their subjugation through racial categorization and structuration. "Race appears in this scheme of things as a mode of crisis management and containment, as a mode mediating that tension, of managing manufactured threats and of curtailing while alienating the challenge of the unknown"

(p. 13). Goldberg believed that racial states exist to restrict heterogeneity. Racism is a means of "securing political, cultural, and racial homogeneity" (p. 13).

I sense, in his analysis, the phenomenon of fear, a persistently powerful and historically familiar impetus for oppression of others. The present commitments to state racelessness (e.g., colorblindness, the death of race, and the end of racism) insist "race is a politically irrelevant category yet make appeals to universal values and interests allied with Whiteness" (Giroux, 2006, p. 14). Consequently, we see attempts to eradicate difference through assimilation (e.g., turning difference into sameness). Color-blindness, so-called multiculturalism, and the implication of race-transcendence are depicted in the form of universals that are equated with Whiteness. According to Goldberg, this notion of colorblindness and racial homogeneity is closely aligned to contemporary neoliberal economics, a topic that will be addressed a bit later in the discussion. What I want to stress right now is the prevalence of the underlying and recurrent phenomenon of fear, one we have witnessed throughout history which is not simply fear of the other as in some theories about racism, but a more systemic fear about loss of control which translates into securing race privilege.

The persistence of this fear of instability, unpredictability, and loss of control in racial states and the subsequent modes of subjugation and hegemony it imposes suggests a degree of permanence to the phenomenon of racism. Goldberg (2002) wrote "the deep historical implication of race in state structure, its relative penetration of state definition, organization, and determination that delimits its resistant potential even as it renders strategic racial invocation essential" (p. 113). He opined that race can only be moved to anti-racist actions on a short-term or contingent basis. Goldberg is not the only scholar of

history and race to see the permanence of racism. Bell (1992), Crenshaw et al. (1995), Brown et al. (2003), and other crucial race scholars also avow that racism is an inevitable part of the fiber of this nation. Racism is the preservation of racially defined privilege, in this case, White privilege.

Indeed, the primary concern in a racial state is the preservation of White privilege; consequently, when threatened by loss of White privilege, the racial state will ultimately choose economically detrimental policies and practices in order to maintain White supremacy. "White privilege is a system of benefits, advantages, and opportunities experienced by White persons in our society simply because of their skin color" (Donnelly, Cook, Van Ausdale, & Foley, 2005, p. 6). Frankenberg (1993) theorized that Whites in America are privileged in three primary ways. First, they enjoy a structural advantage in the form of racial privilege because most institutions are founded by and for White people. Second, they benefit from a standpoint advantage that allows them view themselves more favorably than they view non-Whites. Third, they benefit from a cultural advantage. White culture is regarded as the norm and the standard by which other cultures are measured.

While most Whites are taught about prejudice, discrimination, and racism, they are often oblivious to Whiteness and White privilege because, "unlike discrimination, which is a conscious act against another person, White privilege requires that no decisions be made, no premeditated actions taken" (Donnelly et al., 2005, p. 7). It is so pervasive and commonplace that it becomes an unconscious habit for many Whites (Sullivan, 2006). To the uncritical eye, the consequences of White privilege seem obvious: Whites benefit and Blacks suffer from White privilege. But, close scrutiny reveals a much more complex dilemma. White privilege creates an insidious problem of deception for all of society. No

one benefits: Whites develop a false sense of solipsism (e.g., a belief in self as the only important reality) and Blacks internalize erroneous messages about their alleged insignificance and inferiority. The phenomenon of White privilege perpetuates the permanence of racism and is central to understanding racial paradigms in American history.

Omi and Winant (1994) identified three historical racial paradigms that have dominated the formation of racial theory in America since the turn of the century: ethnicity, class, and nation. The ethnicity model, which has enjoyed theoretical primacy for the last 50 years, has experienced three major stages:

> A pre-1930s stage in which the ethnic group view was an insurgent approach, challenging the biologistic (and at least implicitly racist) view of race which was dominant at the time; a 1930s to 1965 stage, during which the paradigm operated as the progressive/liberal "common sense" approach to race, and during which two recurrent themes—assimilationism and cultural pluralism –were defined; and a post-1965 phase, in which the paradigm has taken on the defense of conservative (or "neoconservative") egalitarianism against what is perceived as the radical assault of group rights. (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 14)

I focus most of my attention on the ethnicity paradigm.

Although the ethnicity perspective began gaining ground in the early 1900s, the life of Jim Crow had not yet ended nor had the general sentiment, even if unpopular, that race was a function of biological inequalities. Gunnar Myrdal's (1944) *An American Dilemma* "marked the ascent of the ethnicity paradigm" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 16). Myrdal (1944) theorized that America had absorbed the European immigrant by assimilation and despite the pathological aspects of Black culture to which he frequently alluded, he presented the Americans with a moral dilemma: "America is free to choose whether the Negro shall remain her liability or become her opportunity" (Myrdal, 1944, p. 1022). Based upon Myrdal's work, the ethnicity theory found its purpose in the political mandates befitting of the post-war America, namely:

> To condemn in the liberal terms of the war years the phenomenon of racial inequality, which smacked of the kinds of despotism the U.S. was fighting; to modernize and mobilize American society in preparation for its postwar role of world leadership; and to distribute the seemingly limitless resources deriving from U.S. hegemony—resources which were not only economic, but also political and cultural—to all at home, even as they were to be offered to the vanquished as well as American allies abroad. The ethnicity–based theoretical tradition, derived from the experiences of European immigrants, was extended in the conclusions of *An American Dilemma* so that it might be apply as well to nonWhites, especially Blacks. (Omi & Winant, 1994, pp. 17-18)

I have already pointed out that the political imperative to condemn discrimination, segregation, and racial inequality was evident in the 1947 Civil Rights Commission Report ordered by President Truman which stated, in no uncertain terms, the moral wrongs of racism and called for a revival of the American Way. Less than 10 years later, the 1954 *Brown* decision signaled to the world that the U.S. was, indeed, trying to right the previous wrongs of racism. The upsurges that followed proved quite challenging on the Americans on the home front.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was initially organized within the ethnicity paradigm by "racial moderates" who wanted to abolish "race-thinking" and assure "equality" to each individual (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 96). Ethnicity theorists formed two camps: those who saw a solution to the racial problem in assimilation and those who favored preservation of distinct cultural identity. Heavily influenced by the work of Daniel P. Moynihan and Nathan Glazer, the theory of assimilation came to be viewed "as the most logical and natural response to the dilemma imposed by racism" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 17). Nathan Glazer (1983), in *Ethnic Dilemmas*, surmised that, in fighting for their civil rights, Blacks were "trying to create for Blacks the same conditions that White ethnics had found: opportunity and relative equality (i.e., the absence of formal discriminatory barriers however much attitudinal prejudice may have existed)" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 19). The

dominant assumption was that legal remedies for segregation in the South had effectively

solved the problem and Blacks in the North already had their freedom. What more could

Black people want? Ethnicity theorists reasoned that:

> Once equal opportunity legislation along with its judicial and administrative
> enforcement were accomplished facts, it fell to Blacks to follow in their
> "predecessor's" footsteps. Through hard work, patience, delayed gratification, etc.,
> Blacks could carve out their own rightful place in American society. . . Race
> relations would continue in what Nathan Glazer was later to call the "American
> ethnic pattern. (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 19)

Glazer, Moynihan, and other advocates of the ethnicity theory supported antidiscrimination

civil rights legislation in the 1970s. Legislating equality was difficult and frustrating.

Hopelessly committed to the perpetrator's perspective, legislating formal equality only

penalizes individual perpetrators; it does not address the systemic, institutionalized

structuration of a racial and racist state and the burden of proof falls to the victim. Progress

did not come fast enough for Blacks.

Many African Americans began to reject ethnic identity in favor of a more radical

racial identity. The Civil Rights Movement shifted to a strategy of more direct action. As

Black identity became more politicized and radical, the diffusion of racially based

movement activity spread beyond Blacks to other groups. According to Omi and Winant

(1994), this transformation became "an anathema to moderate advocates of civil rights

operating within the ethnicity paradigm of race" (p. 98). Growing Black demands

threatened the sanctity of White privilege prompting a White backlash and an eclipse of the

ethnicity theory. For a short time, the class and nation paradigms competed for hegemony in

social thought.

Inequality in the class paradigm is based on the distribution of social resources and

viewed in terms of "advantage and disadvantage, winners and losers, and the origins and

structure of discrimination" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 48). Class theory diminishes the significance of race as a causal factor and places market imperfections, political power structures, and inefficient labor control mechanism at the root of racial inequality. Nation-based theory, on the other hand, analyzes race within a terrain that is "territorial, geographical, in a particularly epochal sense" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 49). It hypothesizes that European powers originally divided the world into a colonial power structure in which power and privilege were granted to the North and misery and exploitation were assigned to the South. In this paradigm, "*national* oppression and liberation, or (at a minimum) cultural autonomy and the right to self-determination" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 49) are the real issues. Race is perceived as a symptom of deeper national conflicts. According to Omi and Winant (1994), both theories failed to achieve ideological hegemony because they overly reduced the significance of race. "This created the political space for the resurgence of the ethnicity paradigm in the 1980s" (p. 97).

The revitalized ethnicity theory that emerged in the 1980s did not emerge overnight. Despite the appearance of a relatively quiescent decade in the 1970s, a radical conservative movement, fueled by the threat of race and loss of White privilege, was gaining momentum. Disenchanted with the lackluster results of the Great Society and the seemingly unappreciative, even violent response, of Blacks, liberals and politically moderate Whites who had supported the Civil Rights Movement and Johnson's agenda were growing increasingly fed up. "It was time," conservatives argued with increasing popular support, to stop "throwing away good money after bad" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 116). The hegemony of liberalism began to lose ground to a neo-conservative political and ideological agenda.

Conservatives launched a tax revolt based on the premise that taxes only expanded the welfare state. They charged that the state through affirmative action, a "reckless intervention," (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 116) was committing reverse discrimination. "*Whites* were now the victims of racial discrimination in education and the job market" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 116). The changes that occurred in the 1970s were perceived to be racially motivated. The preeminence of race in the consciousness of Americans generated a series of racial projects aimed at rejuvenating a rightward shift in U.S. politics. Omi and Winant (1994) explained:

> The far right, the new right, and neoconservatism reopened the 1960s debates about racial identity and racial inequality, and questioned once more the role of racial issues in the democratic political process. The effectiveness of a right-wing challenge to ideals promoted by the racial minority movement of the 1960s hinged on its ability to rearticulate the meaning of race in contemporary American society. (p. 116)

Ironically, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, aimed at challenge traditional verities about race and equality, provided the impetus for a realignment of conservative ideals. Neoconservatives spent most of the 1970s reacting to and assessing the social and political changes that occurred during the 1960s. As far as they were concerned, the state had gone too far in eliminating racial discrimination. Whites were now the victims of a new brand of injustice. Motivated by the threat of race and the loss of White privilege, the new conservatives embarked on a mission to create a new vision of equality. By the 1980s, a neoconservative strategy was in the making.

Neoconservatives needed to redefine the traditional goals of equality, group and individual rights, and the legitimate scope and role of state intervention in these matters. There was no doubt that racial equality was essential to the reform rhetoric; the challenge would be to find a way to define it on new terms. By the 1980s, the new conservatives,

except for those on the extreme right, had reached a consensus on the definition of racial equality. Racial equality would be framed around the ideology of color-blindness. The new vision was a "color-blind society where racial considerations were never entertained in the selection of leaders, in hiring decisions, and in the distribution of goods and services in general" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 117). Compared to Jim Crow racism, the ideology of color blindness seems like "racism lite" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 3). It is a "colorblind racism, a racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 3). This new vision of equality resulted in what Goldberg (2009) called "born-again racism" (p. 23). Born again racism is "racism without race, racism gone private, racism without the categories to name it as such" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 23). It is "an unrecognized racism for which there are no terms by which it could be recognized; no precedent, no intent, no pattern, no institutional explication. That at least is the vision" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 23). The problem is that the vision is blind sighted by fear and deception. Racism, on any terms, imposes deleterious consequences on all Americans.

What can we do? What might be the socially responsible and just courses of action if, in fact, we are to become an anti-racist society? Mobilization for anti-racist actions, based on purely racialized perception (seeing others in terms of their racial identity) will only lead to racial essentializing and the eventual exacerbation of racism. Perhaps, as Angela Davis (1998) and Philomena Essed (1996) suggested, the efforts to mobilize the efforts of educators, leaders, and change agents for social justice should be based on common political interests, as opposed to "preexisting or prefashioned common identities" (Goldberg, 2002, p. 115). Joyce King (1991) suggested that the solution may lie in education, not just in schoolhouses but in higher education and teacher training programs.

She advocated using a liberatory pedagogical approach in teacher education that encourages teachers to take a more critical perspective of the social order and challenges them to examine their worldviews. King believed educators must be given opportunities to "recognize and evaluate the ideological influences that shape their thinking about schooling, society, themselves, and diverse others" (p. 143). If education is truly the agent for social change and uplifting that Dewey imagined it to be then uncomfortable issues of power and privilege should and must be confronted. What we need is nation of citizens critically aware of cultural politics and the "specific cultural rationality of social inequity in modern American society" (p. 143). Ignoring critical issues of power and privilege related to race and racism in American culture and society and feigning color-blindness will not make us color-blind or lead to anti-racist policies and practices. I posit that color-blind ideology opens the floodgates for the reproduction of racist practices throughout all sectors of society, especially in schools. This brings me to the primary concern of how racial inequality is produced and reproduced in schools.

Part 2: Power and Hegemony in Education

In this section, I first draw upon the work of Foucault and Gramsci, both of whom offer valuable analyses of the relationship between power and hegemony, truth and knowledge, and how these relationships are revealed in schools. Their theses, like Omi and Winant (1994) and Goldberg's (2002, 2009) are thick and technical, and will not be fully exhausted in this discussion. My intent rather is to summarize the tenets most apropos to the central question of how race-less, colorblind educational reform agendas have affected racial inequality in our schools. I, then, show the relation of Foucault and Gramsci's work to that of Freire (2007), Dewey (1929), and Giroux (1988, 2005).

In a series of lectures captured in the seminal work, "Society Must be Defended," Michel Foucault (1997) challenged the social contract schema and its focus on the "economism theory of power" (p. 13) and argued that the relation of humankind and society is a function of power and should be analyzed within the discourse of a politico-historical war-repression schema. He wrote:

> Rather than orienting our research into power toward the juridical edifice of sovereignty, state apparatuses, and the ideologies that accompany them, I think we should orient our analysis of power toward material operations, forms of subjugation, and the corrections among and uses made of the local systems of subjugation , on the one hand, and apparatuses of knowledge on the other. (p. 33)

 Foucault's work hinged on what he viewed as the "triangular" (p. 25) relationship between power, right, and truth.

According to Foucault (1997), in order to defend society, we are obliged and condemned to produce and admit to a truth that is produced and constrained by the power that mandates it. Herein lies the triangular relationship. "Power constantly asks questions and questions us; it constantly investigates and records; it institutionalizes the search for the truth, professionalizes it, and rewards it" (p. 25). Hence, we are subject to the relation of power and knowledge in two ways: discourses of truth communicate and drive power-effects, and truth-effects empower rules of right and mechanisms of disciplinary power (Foucault, 1995, 1997).

Disciplinary power is evidenced in the structure of government and social institutions associated with health, education, and the production of goods. It controls people by imposing codes of continuous surveillance and reduces their potential collective power by treating them as individual units so that they become "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1995, p. 135) subject to control by the disciplinary powers orchestrated in the political anatomy of

society. The "regime of disciplinary power compares, differentiates, hierachalizes, homogenizes, and excludes" (Foucault, 1995, p. 182). "In short, it *normalizes*" (Foucault, 1995, p. 183). These goals inscribe on society the political rational for racism, marginalization, and subjugation of certain peoples (Foucault, 1995). Foucault (1972) rightly argued that schools are not neutral sites for the transference of information but rather that schooling is a political phenomenon engulfed in epistemological battle over how knowledge and reality are qualified, reproduced, and resisted. He wrote:

> Education may well be, as of right, the instrument whereby every individual, in a society like our own, can gain access to any kind of discourse. But we all know that in its distribution, in what it permits and what it prevents, it follows the well-trodden battle lines of social conflict. Every education system is a political means of maintaining or modifying the appropriation of discourse. (p. 226)

Racism becomes a way for the state to manage the lives of others. Unfortunately, few educators think of what they do each day as managing anybody's life. Little do they know that their unawareness of the relation of power, right, knowledge makes them all the more likely to contribute to the hegemony of the racial state.

Hegemony, like power, is often used negatively when, in actuality, both are inevitable and necessary consequences of our human existence. Antonio Gramsci studied the ways in which people within a society are controlled and manipulated. A leading Italian Marxist, intellectual, and journalist, Gramsci spent the last 11 years of his life in one of Mussolini's prisons where he wrote a series of profound prison notebooks. In 1971, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* was finally translated into English. Gramsci devised a new Marxist theory, one that could be applied to the conditions of advanced capitalism. "He became the first Marxist theorist to work with the problems of revolutionary change in 20th century Western European society and the first to identify the importance of the struggle

against *bourgeois values*, e.g., an ideological-cultural struggle" (Burke, 2005, p. 2). Gramsci is most important to this discussion for his elucidation of three ways in which informal education and critical awareness pose transformational possibilities for a more just society.

First, he explained the concept of hegemony. Gramsci (2008) conceived of hegemony as the saturation of a complete system of values, attitudes, ethics, and morality within a society for the purpose of supporting and maintaining the dominance of one class or group over another. Hegemony then functions as an organizing principle that is reinforced by coercion and ideology. It is the latter with which I am most concerned. Ideological hegemony, the permeation of the extant powers of the status quo, achieves the consent of the repressed by manufacturing and promoting the common sense paradigm and value system, to such a degree that it is permeated throughout society. To review, Gramsci's (2008) notion of common sense refers to the uncritical and largely unconscious way of perceiving and understanding the world (p. 323). Gramsci asked that we ponder the following choice:

> That is to say, one proceeds to the question—is it better to "think," without having a critical awareness, in a disjointed and episodic way? In other words, is it better to take part in conception of the world mechanically imposed by the external environment, i.e., by one of the world mechanically imposed by the many social groups in which everyone is automatically involved from the moment of his entry into the world. . . . Or, on the other hand, is it better to work out consciously and critically one's own conception of the world and thus, in connection with the labours of one's own brain, choose one's own brain, choose one's own sphere of activity, take an active part in the creation of the history of the world, be one's own guide, refusing to accept passively and supinely from outside the moulding of one's personality? (pp. 323-324)

Schools frequently function as vessels for the indoctrination of such common sense and hegemony in both coercive and ideological ways. Compulsory education, national standards, and curriculum, for instance, are examples of coercive hegemony while the promotion of hidden curriculum such as the promotion and inculcation of capitalism,

materialism, and Anglo middle-class values are examples of consensual or ideological hegemony. Both coercive and ideological hegemony are necessary to achieve total hegemony, but, ideological hegemony, because it acquires the consent of the less powerful, is critical in sustaining the status quo in power relations. Just as schools may contribute to the inculcation of hegemony, Gramsci saw, in informal education, the potential for transformative possibilities that displace the dominance of the status quo. Hopeful possibility lies within the intellectual (Burke, 2005; Gramsci, 2008).

A second significant conception introduced by Gramsci relative to schooling and the transformative power of education is that of the intellectual. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Gramsci theorized that "all men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals" (Gramsci, 2008, p. 9). Notwithstanding the gender-exclusive language indicative, no doubt, of the common sense of Gramsci's epoch, we see that Gramsci espoused unique ideas about intellectuals, intellectualism, and their role in schools and society. He argued that there are two kinds of intellectuals: traditional and organic. In the former case, traditional intellectuals (such as clergy, professors, philosophers, and the like) view themselves as independent of the dominant population and establish an appearance of "historical continuity" (Gramsci, 2008, p. 7). Yet, Gramsci hypothesized that they are "the dominant group's deputies exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political power" (Gramsci, 2008, p. 12). In the latter instance, organic intellectuals, produced by the education system, grow almost exponentially and organically with the dominant group. They are the means by which the dominant group maintains its hegemony. According to Gramsci (2008), "school is the instrument through which intellectuals of various levels are elaborated" (p. 10). It is through the schools that

critical awareness and consciousness can create organic intellectuals and counter-hegemony may evolve.

> Gramsci (2008) explained:
>
> The problem of creating a new stratum of intellectuals consists therefore in critical elaboration of the intellectual activity that exists in everyone at a certain degree of development. . . . One of the most important characteristics of any group that is developing towards dominance is the struggle to conquer "ideologically" the traditional intellectuals, but this assimilation and conquest is made quicker and more efficacious the more the group in question succeeds in simultaneously elaborating it own organic intellectuals. (pp. 9-10)

The main thought here is that the development of a critically aware organic intellectual may produce a more civil society. Hence, "the mode of being the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence. . . but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, 'permanent persuader' and not just orator " (Gramsci, 2008, p. 10). The promise of the organic intellectual is that she would "bridge the gap between academic institutions and the specific issues and workings of everyday life. That is, such intellectuals could provide the moral and political skills necessary to fund institutions of popular education and alternative cultures and beliefs" (Giroux, 1988, p. 159).

A third concept in Gramsci's theory is that education should provide a setting for a "radical, counter-hegemonic education" (Entwhistle, 1979, p. 177) and promote the relationship between practice and theory. Hence, we see in Gramsci's socialist theory connections with Dewey, Freire, and the language of possibility located in radical and critical pedagogy and Giroux. In the formation of critically conscious organic intellectuals, Gramsci foresaw a radical pedagogy that is both historical and dialectical. His is a theory that emphasizes potential for effecting intellectual transformation through opposition. Gramsci did not insist, however, that one hegemony be replaced by another one but rather

that students be given the opportunity to create new understandings by critically evaluating

what is true or untrue, just or unjust about the existing hegemony. Upon close examination,

we see in Gramsci's socialist theory philosophical connections to Freire, Dewey, and the

language of possibility located in radical and critical pedagogy and the work of Henry

Giroux.

Freire, like Gramsci, argued that, despite social or economic status, all men and

women are intellectuals by continuously making sense of the world and actively

participating in a particular conception of that world. He believed the oppressed, in

particular, need to develop their own organic and transformative intellectuals. The

development of the organic intellectual, however, involves a difficult process that Freire

(2007) referred to as the pedagogy of the oppressed. He theorized:

> The pedagogy of the oppressed, as a humanist and libertarian pedagogy, has two
> distinct stages. In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through
> the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the
> reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to
> the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent
> liberation. In both stages, it is always through action in depth that the culture of
> domination is culturally confronted. In the first stage this confrontation occurs
> through the change in the way the oppressed perceive the world of oppression; in the
> second stage, through the expulsion of the myths created and developed in the old
> order, which like specters haunt the new structure from the revolutionary
> transformation. (p. 54)

This process is hampered initially by what Freire called "oppressed and oppressor

consciousness" (p. 55). The deterrent to progress is a familiar one: fear. The oppressed and

oppressors are afraid of liberation. This fear is often evidenced in two ways.

First, fearing freedom, the oppressed often become sub-oppressors (Freire, 2007,

p. 45) and look for opportunities to oppress others. A clear example is evidenced in schools

that are subject to changing demographics. If Blacks are the first, let us imagine, threaten

the status quo, Whites act to oppress the new minority. When another Other enters the picture, Blacks are sometimes anxious to become oppressors and they, in turn, oppress the new minority. Unfortunately, the cycle often continues. Why? The cycle continues, in part, because schools function as dehumanizing, objectifying institutions that do not encourage critical consciousness or reflective praxis (e.g., the performance or practical application of theory) (Freire, 2007). Education often does not strive to arouse conscientization or the political awareness needed to bring about social, political, and economic changes in society. Instead, domination is expressed in the collaboration of power, technology, and ideology to produce knowledge, structure social relations, and other cultural forms that indirectly silence people.

The second consequence of fear within the pedagogy of oppression is the internalization of oppression so much so that the oppressed actually participate in their oppression. Ironically, liberating forms of knowledge are frequently resisted and rejected by those who stand to benefit the most form acquiring such knowledge. Counter-knowledge becomes feared and viewed by the oppressed as a threat, in a sense, to their worldview. They resist affirming their own possibilities (Freire, 2007; Giroux, 1988). What then are the school conditions that contribute to an active refusal to know and learn from the acquisition of critical awareness that challenge the very nature of domination?

Freire (2007) recast teachers as transformative intellectuals who conceptualize democracy and education as being both radical and emancipatory. Education as the "practice of freedom—as opposed to the practice of domination—denies that man [sic] is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people" (p. 81). Freire asserted that teachers who strive to give

students a deepened consciousness of their situation enable young people to understand their

situation as a historical reality capable of being transformed. Through inquiry, critical

reflection, open dialogue, and the humanization of teaching and learning, education becomes

authentic.

> Authentic education is not carried on by "A" for "B" or by "A" *about* "B," but rather
> by "A" *with* "B," mediated by the world—a world that impresses and challenges both
> parties, giving rise to views or opinions about it. (p. 93)

In reality, children are rarely afforded the opportunity to critically reflect. So much

emphasis is placed upon compliance, conformity, and acquisition of facts there is very little

time to challenge theory or explore the relation of theory and practice.

In *The Later Works: 1925-1953*, Dewey (1929) expressed similar concerns about the

nature of schooling in American education and the role of schools in society. He recognized

the persistence of African American illiteracy as the consequence of a racist system that

seeks to maintain White supremacy.

> Unless there was a general Negro question, social, economic, and political, there
> would be no such excess of Negro illiterates as now exists. Racial prejudice, fear of
> racial equality, dread lest education would render the Black population "upstarts"
> who would clamor for the use of the vote, and make them less tractable as cheap
> labor, are definite factors in maintaining a large illiteracy in our Black population.
> (Dewey as cited in Rogers & Oakes, 2005, pp. 2191-2192)

Dewey's growing disenchantment with evolutionary social change prompted him to call for

"more intelligence and a revitalized public" (Rogers & Oakes, 2005, p. 2192) committed to

the practice of radical democracy. In his view, "democracy means not only the ends . . .

[but] the security for individuals and opportunity for their development as personalities"

(Dewey, 1929, p. 298). Of critical concern are the means by which the ends are achieved.

He explained:

> The means to which it is devoted are the voluntary activities of individuals in opposition to violence; they are the force of intelligent organization versus that of organization imposed from outside and above. *The fundamental principle of democracy is that the ends of freedom and individuality for all can be attained only by means that accords with those ends. . . . The end of democracy is a radical end. For it is an end that has not been adequately realized in any country at any time.* (Dewey, 1937a, p. 299)

Dewey clearly believed in the "power of voluntary action based upon public collective intelligence" (p. 299). Schools, the educative institutions in American society play a crucial role in the production of social change. In his view, educators are confronted with three choices.

According to Dewey (1937b), one choice is to continue the "present confusion" (p. 410) and possibly exacerbate it. The confusion to which Dewey referred is the debate of the epoch over whether schools should give direction to social change or maintain the standard order of society by relying on "strenuous disciplinary methods" (p. 410). A second option is to become "intelligently conservative" and have the schools maintain the "old order against the impact of new forces" (p. 411). Dewey posited that the third and best choice is to select the newer scientific, technological, and cultural forces that are producing change in the old order; estimate the direction in which they are moving and their outcome; and see what can be done to make the schools their ally. He cautioned:

> The problem will be to develop the insight and understanding that will enable the youth who go forth from the schools to take part in the great work of construction and organization that will have to be done, and to equip them with the attitudes and habits of action that will make their understanding and insight practically effective. (p. 411)

This kind of education and the social change it may inspire cannot be achieved through "systematic indoctrination and single-minded inculcation in a single direction" (p. 415). Amazingly prescient in his assessment, Dewey emphasized that those who uphold

indoctrination in schools, that is, "the systematic use of every possible means to impress

upon the minds of pupils a particular set of political and economic views to the exclusion of

every other" (p. 415), aim to inculcate "narrow nationalism under the name of patriotism"

and the "dominant economic regime" (p. 415). Education that indoctrinates neither inspires

social change or true democracy. True democracy in education, posited Dewey (1937b),

teases out "the meaning of democracy in its total range of concrete applications; economic,

domestic, international, religious, cultural, *and* political" (p. 416). He elaborated:

> Democracy also means voluntary choice, based on intelligence that is the outcome of
> free association and communication with others. It means a way of living together in
> which mutual and free consultation rule instead of force, and in which cooperation
> instead of brutal competition is the law of life; a social order in which all the forces
> that make for friendship, beauty, and knowledge are cherished in order that each
> individual may become what he, and he alone, is capable of becoming. [sic] (p. 417)

Dewey's perspective on the questions confronting education more than 75 years ago

reflects the same questions facing educators today. Do we aim to develop public collective

intelligence or do we educate to indoctrinate? Is democracy our frame of reference or

capitalism? What honor and dignity do we give to the sanctity of each individual and her

flourishing? I think that Giroux's accurately depicted where we stand today in fulfilling

"democracy's promise and education's challenge" (Giroux, 2005, p. ixx) as he proffered a

hopeful and radical move toward erecting a critical pedagogy of learning.

In *Schooling and the Struggle for Public Life,* Giroux (2005) accurately historicized

the legacy of a critical theory of citizenship. He used this analysis to argue for a

revitalization of democracy and rebirth of critical pedagogy in schools. Giroux reviewed the

social reconstructivist movement prevalent in the two decades that preceded the Second

World War. A small group of progressive educators led by Dewey, Counts, and other

progressives, advanced the notion that "democratic public life required an ongoing attempt

to reconstitute schools on the basis of democratic" (p. 8). They recognized that schools are not value-free and politically detached, but rather they are value-laden and very much involved with political ideology. "The reconstructionists viewed schools as deeply implicated in producing those aspects of dominant culture that served to reproduce an unjust and unequal society" (p. 8) and, yet, they also recognized the potential for schools to be much more than "bastions of domination" (p. 8). Giroux further explained the aims of social reconstructivists:

> Schools were also seen as contradictory sites, torn between the ideological imperatives of liberal democracy and the dominating values and practices of monopoly capitalism. Inherent in these contradictory ideologies were opportunities for political intervention and struggle. One of the central aims of the social reconstructionists focused on usurping pedagogical opportunities in schools for learning about the relationship between democracy and empowerment. For the social reconstructionist, schools were not viewed as the only sphere for educational work, but, at the same time, public schools were seen as a crucial sphere around which to fight for the development of a particular kind of democratic citizen. (p. 9)

Consider the relation Giroux is making between recognizing what is and the hopeful possibility of what might be, the relation between what schools are and what schools may become.

According to Giroux (2005), since the 1950s, the Cold War, the Sputnik crisis, and "the increasing power of the cultural industry to shape public opinion," (p. 11), the heritage of social reconstructivism in education has been replaced by the ethics of consumerism and economic gain and an overwhelming concern for the standardization and routinization of knowledge and information. Missing is the commitment to address deep-seated issues of inequality such as racism, sexism, homophobism, and other ugly isms. The current language speaks to the cherished value of rugged individualism prevalent in colonial days, not collective struggle. It is becoming increasingly conservative and nationalistic as it

encourages resignation and emphasizes conformity to the inevitable status quo while

discouraging hopeful possibilities or radical, emancipatory democracy and education.

Barbara Finkelstein (1984) summarized the contemporary situation:

> Reformers seem to imagine public schools as economic rather than political
> instrumentalities. They forge no new visions of new political and social possibilities.
> Instead, they call public schools to industrial and cultural service exclusively. . . .
> Reformers have disjoined their calls for educational reform from calls for a
> redistribution of power and authority, and the cultivation of cultural forms
> celebrating pluralism and diversity. As if they have had enough of political
> democracy, Americans, for the first time in a 150-year history, seem ready to do
> ideological surgery on their schools—cutting them away from the fate of social
> justice and political democracy completely and grafting them instead onto elite
> corporate, industrial, military, and cultural interests. (p. 280)

Giroux did not succumb to the pessimism of modern times. Instead, he introduced a

language of hope, remembrance, liberation, and democracy by advocating for radical and

critical pedagogy in the nation's schools.

It is important to qualify how Giroux defined critical pedagogy and how it will be

used throughout this discussion. The central question in critical pedagogy is:

> Whose future, story, and interests does the school represent? Critical pedagogy
> argues that school practices need to be informed by a public philosophy that
> addresses how to construct ideological ad institutional conditions in which the lived
> experience of empowerment for the vast majority of students becomes the defining
> feature of schooling. (Giroux, 1999, p.1)

It strives to:

1. Create new forms of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking down
   disciplines and creating interdisciplinary knowledge.
2. Raise questions about the relationships between the margins and centers of power
   in schools and is concerned about how to provide a way of reading history as part
   of a larger project of reclaiming power and identity, particularly as these are
   shaped around the categories of race, gender, class, and ethnicity.
3. Reject the distinction between high and popular culture so as to make curriculum
   knowledge that constitutes peoples' lived histories differently.
4. Illuminate the primacy of the ethical in defining the language that teachers and
   others use to produce particular cultural practices. (Giroux, 1999, p. 1)

Critical pedagogy calls for alternative theories of schooling and curriculum.

Central to critical pedagogy is the notion that schools are not only sites for instruction; "social sites constituted by a complex of dominant *and* subordinate cultures, each characterized by the power they have to define and legitimate a specific view of reality" (Giroux, 1988, p. 7). Critical pedagogy recognizes how the dominant culture operates at all levels of schooling to "disconfirm the cultural experiences of the excluded majorities" (Giroux, 1988, p. 7). For teachers, this means examining their own cultural beliefs and figuring out how their assumptions and cultural capital help or hinder, benefit or victimize students. All those involved in the educative process are challenged to view knowledge differently.

Unlike the concept of knowledge in traditional curriculum and schooling in which knowledge is predefined, fixed, and neutral, critical pedagogy views knowledge as a subjective social construction. Critical pedagogy links knowledge with issues of power, which requires that a different set of questions be asked about the very nature of knowledge. Traditional schooling, on the other hand, asks how the school can achieve a predefined goal but rarely questions why the goal is worthwhile or whom it benefits. The primary concern is getting students "to master someone else's meaning, thus depoliticizing both the notion of school culture and the notion of classroom pedagogy" (Giroux, 1988, p. 6). Critical pedagogy, on the other hand, correlates knowledge with issues of power, which questions truth claims as well as the interest that certain knowledge sets serve. Giroux (1988) suggested:

> Teachers and others interested in education must come to understand how the dominant culture functions at all levels of schooling to disconfirm the cultural experiences of the "excluded majorities." It also means that teachers, parents, and others should fight against the powerlessness of students by affirming their own

cultural experiences and histories. For teachers, this means examining their own cultural capital and examining the way in which it either benefits or victimizes students. Thus, the central questions for building a critical pedagogy are the questions of how we help students, particularly from the oppressed classes, recognize that the dominant school culture is not neutral and does not generally serve their needs. At the same time, we need to ask how it is that the dominant culture functions to make them, as students, feel powerless. The answer to this lies, in part, in revealing myths, lies, and injustices at the heart of the dominant school culture and building a critical mode of dialogue and critique that unmasks the dominant school culture's attempt to escape from history and that interrogates the assumptions and practices that inform the lived experiences of day-to-day schooling. (p. 7)

Hence, the value of knowledge is very much related to power it possess as a "mode of critique and social transformation" (p. 8). It seems to me then that the praxis of educators must necessarily be rooted in the principles of phronesis or the "dispositions to act truly and rightfully" (McLaren, 2007, p. 210). Teachers often forget the importance of hopeful possibility in the learning process. I posit that the self-perceptions children formulate about who they are, what they are worth, what they are capable of accomplishing, and what their future holds are largely based upon their lived experiences in school. When educators view knowledge critically and engage students in critiquing the

Naturalness [of] dominant ways of seeing, saying, and doing by provoking a consideration of why things are, how they got to be that way, in what ways might change be desirable, and what it would take for things to change, then children begin to experience a liberating education. (Simon, 1992, p. 60)

What is critical is the nature of our critique: the questions we pose as educators and the questions we encourage children to ask. We should be questioning the kind of knowledge they construct about women, poor people, Blacks, Latinos, and White males, and White middle-class Americans. Beyond the espoused curriculum, we should be examining the messages we relay through the hidden curriculum—the tacit ways in which knowledge, culture, and behavior are constructed, accepted, or rejected. Logically, then, Giroux (1988) suggested that the question students should be encouraged to ask is not "how can I

accommodate the status quo," but "what is it that this society has made of me that I no longer want to be?" (p. 8). How might we create a more just world? Critical pedagogy offers the hopeful possibility that schools could conceivably become sites for counter-hegemonic discourse and race-critical awareness.

The transformation of schools from active agents for the continued domination of the extant powers and uncritical common sense to bastions for democracy and the language of possibility will require teachers to become more critically aware of their own philosophical positions about the purpose of education and the opportunities that liberation and transformative teaching offers. Teachers must engage in conscious reflection about what school knowledge really is and begin to recognize hidden social interests in the curriculum. They must begin to adopt critical perspectives that challenge traditional world views and problematize complacent or oppressive values, beliefs, and ideologies. Unfortunately, this kind of educational pedagogy faces tough opposition from contemporary commitments to neoliberalism and color-blind ideology.

Part 3: The Threat of Neoliberal Color-blindness

> Ideologies are about "meaning in the service of power." They are expressions at the symbolic level of the fact of dominance. As such, the ideologies of the powerful are central in the production and reinforcement of the status quo. They comfort rulers and charm the ruled much like an Indian snake handler. Whereas rulers receive solace by believing they are not involved in the terrible ordeal of creating and maintaining inequality, the ruled are charmed by the almost magical qualities of a hegemonic ideology. (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, pp. 25-26)

> The most dominant contemporary version of fatalism is neoliberalism. . . . From the standpoint of such an ideology, only one road is open as far as educative practice is concerned: adapt the student to what is inevitable, to what cannot be changed. In this view, what is essential is technical training so that the student can adapt and therefore survive. (Freire, 1998, p. 27)

Dominant ideologies experience occasional mutations in an attempt to meet the changing needs of the dominant group. These changes (actually more like adjustments) are often subtle and slight, but meaningful, nonetheless. Malleability is necessary in order to recruit and retain ideological hegemony. Dominant ideologies must have the capacity to expand and contract, advance and retreat as needed. The ideologies of neoliberalism and color-blindness are no different.

At the core of classic liberal ideology are the values of "individualism, universalism, egalitarianism, and meleorism (the idea that people and institutions can improve)" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 26). These values were placed at the forefront of emerging nation-states by the bourgeoisies of early modern capitalism. Capitalism supports individual rights, privatization of ownership, and a market economy. Its ideological foundation is based on an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned and operated for profit. Investment decisions, distribution of income, production and pricing of goods and services, management and resolution of supply and demand issues are determined through the operation of a free market regulated and balanced by a theoretical construct called the "invisible hand" (Smith as cited in Gabbard, 2008, p. 36). According to Adam Smith, in the midst of individual pursuit of self-interest, the "invisible hand" of the market economy, unintentionally produces a collective good for the whole of society (as cited in Gabbard, 2008, p. 36). David Hursch, in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, defined neoliberalism as:

> A theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. (2008, p. 36)

Neoliberalism and capitalism represent the present-day version of decolonized imperialism and classic liberalism/capitalism. To put it another way, the traditional

ideologies of classic liberalism are reborn in the current push for globalization and neoliberalism. Contrary to what its name implies, there is really nothing new about neoliberalism. Since the beginning of the 17th century, liberalism has continued to exert a commanding influence on philosophical, political, and economic theory. Rather than extending the precepts of previous democratic liberal practices, neoliberalism expands on classic liberalism's belief in the individual as a rational chooser within the free market. The tenets of classic liberalism have always been plagued by paradox.

The principles of liberalism provided the foundation for the American Revolution and the U.S. Constitution. They also informed the practice of colonialism, imperialism, slavery, Jim Crow, *Brown,* and the Civil Rights Act. During the Civil Rights Era of the 1960s and into the 1970s, liberalism was expanded to include race-based policies such as court-ordered busing and affirmative action as well as compensatory programs like Head Start and Title I. During the Civil rights Era, contemporary advocates of color-blindness contend liberalism embraced the ideology of color-blindness. Yet, paradoxically, government and social policies in the 1960s and early 1970s grew increasingly clearly race-conscious. Dissatisfied with the changing trajectory of liberalism, neo (the new) conservatives in the 1980s emerged to reclaim conservative values. By the 1990s, neo (new) liberals began insisting on a reaffirmation of the classic liberalism and color-blind ideology. "Neoliberalism has become ingrained as the rationale for social and economic policies and, as such, is rarely challenged" (2008, p. 41). This influence is clear not only in matters of race and gender inequality, but also in recent policies that produce and reproduce particular discourses and techniques that have enabled neoliberal practices and neoconservative values to shape educational policy, practice, research, and reform.

As I see it, there is very little difference between the positions of neoliberals and neoconservatives when it comes to racial ideology and clearly, the contemporary versions of liberalism and color-blindness have achieved ideological hegemony. They work in concert to shape social, political, economic, and educational policy. The convergence of neoliberalism and neoconservatism has allowed color-blindness to achieve ideological hegemony in contemporary America. The most important questions appear to be then: What are the major tenets within color-blind ideology? What is its appeal? How might educational reforms that do not take race into account affect racial inequality? These are the questions that I aim to answer.

The ensuing discussion is divided into two parts. I first explain the major beliefs within the ideology of color-blindness. Next, I analyze those frames within the context of CRT and discuss the impact neo-liberal, color-blind ideology has on educational reform and racial inequality in America's public schools.

The ideology of color-blindness. Proponents of contemporary color-blind ideology and racial realists advance four arguments: (a) liberalism has lost and must rearticulate its mission, (b) race is no longer a primary determinant in the life chances of Blacks, (c) racial problems are caused by Blacks, not White racism, and (d) multiculturalism promotes racism. Each is reviewed in the discussion below.

Recovering Liberalism. Racial realists assert that current liberal race-conscious policies dishonor the dreams of Martin Luther King and the original civil rights activists who fought for integration and a color-blind society (D'Souza, 1995; Jacoby, 1998; Sleeper, 1997; Thernstrom & Thernstorm, 1997). To clarify, throughout this discussion, I use and support the terms race-conscious and race-critical. Through the lens of critical race theory

and race critical theory, both terms suggest a critically conscious awareness of the role that

race and racism play in establishing political, social, and economic policies and practices,

and furthermore, the impact that those practices have on the well-being of people of color.

The term race-critical, however, introduces an added dimension of critique beyond the race

consciousness. The term racialized, on the other hand, involves a structuration of

stereotyped or race-based practices that create or support racial inequalities. D'Souza

(1995), a conservative, pledged "to restore a basis for liberal hope and enable the crusade

against racism to recover the moral high ground it has lost" (p. ix). Sleeper (1997), a liberal,

alleged that contemporary liberalism has forsaken "the fight to help America rise above

color" (p. 2). Abigail and Stephen Thernstrom (1997), both conservatives, theorized that

current-day race-conscious policies exacerbate racial conflict and thwart realization of a

united nation. Jacoby (1998), a conservative, alleged that Black and White Americans have

contributed to the demise of integration concept, he used synonymously with inclusion. He

asked that the "integrationist ideal be revived and reshaped to make sense in the racially

jaded 1990s and beyond" (pp. 11-12). Liberalism, they cried, must reclaim its voice.

D'Souza's (1995) purpose in *The End of Racism* was to restore the hope of liberalism

and help Americans "recover the moral high ground it has lost" (p. ix). He argued that

White liberals and Black leaders have moved away from the ideal of color-blindness that

was prevalent in the 1950s and 1960s and that instead of working toward color-blind

equality, Blacks and White liberals have become preoccupied with the illusion that America

is racist. D'Souza challenged the modern liberal meaning of racism and the paradigm that

views racism as theory and discrimination as practice. In his view, the liberal concept of

equal opportunity has been tainted by race-based policies like affirmative action that unfairly

favor unqualified, undeserving Blacks and discriminate against more qualified, deserving

Whites. He theorized that Whites have rights too, one of which is the right to participate in

what he calls "rational discrimination" (p. 286). Rational discrimination, he claimed, is

erroneously identified as racism. D' Souza explained:

> Such an identification is wrong, because rational discrimination is based on group
> conduct, not biology. Rational discrimination is not premised upon assumptions of
> biological inferiority. Its existence compels us to revise the liberal paradigm which
> holds that racism is the theory and discrimination is the practice. It is possible to be a
> racist and not discriminate. . . . So, too, it is possible to discriminate and not be a
> racist: this would constitute rational discrimination. Rational discrimination
> explodes the myth that differential group judgments are always based on erroneous
> prejudices and stereotypes and forces us to accept the reality of group differences
> which are real. (p. 286)

D'Souza's reinterpretation of the liberal understanding of equal rights justifies rational

discrimination when that discrimination is based on real differences between groups.

Rational discrimination is different from racism because, unlike racism, it does not ascribe

the differences between groups to biological factors. In the case of Blacks and Whites, he

acknowledged that there are both moral and legal questions that emerge around the issue of

rational discrimination, but concluded that Whites have the right, as a group, to practice

rational discrimination against Blacks as long as the negative conduct of Blacks continues

"to form the basis for statistically valid group distinctions" (p. 287). One might ask, what

about the rights of Blacks? D'Souza answers, "Whites are making a rational appeal to group

rights, whereas Blacks are making an ethical appeal to personal rights" (p. 287). The end

result is a toxic combination of White backlash and Black rage. The more abstract concept of

equal rights, on D'Souza's terms, includes the right of Whites to discriminate and excludes

the right of government to use force to achieve social policy, as in the case of equal

opportunity and affirmative action.

Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997) agreed with D' Souza (1995) that race-conscious

practices have done little more than fuel Black rage and White backlash. They agree that

affirmative action, in particular, goes too far and actually deprives Whites of their rights.

The White backlash and anger within the Black community created by affirmative action has

given rise, they say, to "undue pessimism" (p. 53) about racism and racial inequality in

America. In *America in Black and White,* Thernstrom and Thernstrom concluded:

> Giving space in competitive educational programs to minority students with
> academic records notably weaker than those of Whites who were turned away has
> inevitably provoked controversy. The practice has been hard to square with the
> moral code of the civil rights movement—that of judging people on the basis of
> their individual merits rather than group characteristics. And this has been hard to
> square with the crowning achievement of that movement: the Civil Rights Act of
> 1964, which barred discrimination on the basis of race, religion, or national origin.
> In addition, racial preferences seemed to violate the equal-protection promise of the
> Fourteenth Amendment (p. 412)

The historical context of equal opportunity in the 1950s and 1960s and its relationship to the

weight of Black oppression in the United States appear to have little bearing on their

interpretation of racial equality, equal rights and opportunities, or issues of equity and

equality of outcomes in the 1990s.

Sleeper (1997) took a different approach. He criticized conservatives and liberals

alike for subverting the mission of classic liberalism by fixating on race. In *Liberal Racism*

he alleged "liberals have lost touch with the basic principles of classical liberalism" (p. 13).

According to Sleeper, classic liberalism includes a firm belief in America's destiny and

responsibility show the rest of the world how to live peacefully and morally without racial

conflict. Contemporary liberalism, he theorized, is overly preoccupied with identity politics,

multiculturalism, and race-based polity. He explained:

> No movement for social justice can make headway in a pluralist society without
> keeping classical liberal commitments to rational analysis—to the primacy of often

provisional and evolving public truths over the mythic, communal ones that are enshrouded in racial narratives. Nor is justice possible without commitment to individual over group rights in a context of civil and moral obligation to other individuals across race lines—the right, for example, to dissent from or to leave one's own subculture without fear. Without a working faith in such principles, movements and societies sink into a tribalism whose brutality is all too well known. (p. 13)

Sleeper opined that contemporary liberals, unlike the liberal leadership of the Civil Rights Movement, have forsaken the values of civic universalism and Americanism. He charged that liberal racists do not have the courage of their predecessors and Black leaders in the current liberal racist establishment "play a game [that] involves finding racism in very leaf that falls while relying on the reservoirs of White racial guilt" (p. 19).

But, Sleeper (1997) criticized conservatives as well. He accused the conservative right of hypocrisy: professing to want a civil society while defending market forces that eat away at traditional American systems designed to promote sharing and trust. He even questioned the commitment to color-blindness and cautions against rushing into color-blindness as a solution. Of conservative hypocrisy, Sleeper wrote, "for all their celebrations of color-blindness and their testimony of free-market society the only important color is green" (p. 11). He warned that the nation should proceed slowly into color-blindness and come to grips, first, with the challenge of Black identity and what it means. It seems, at times, that Sleeper's argument is inconsistent. I would argue, however, that the inconsistencies reflect the ambiguity and complexity of the race problem. The bottom line from Sleeper's perspective remained clear—the problems of racial inequality and racism will not be solved by fixating on race and focusing on our differences. The answer will come from Blacks and Whites creating a new and universal culture together.

Jacoby (1998) also argued that Americans have become sidetracked by diversity. "What ever happened to integration?" he asked (p. 1). In *Somebody Else's House,* Jacoby asserted that over the course of the last 35 years, liberals and the nation have lost sight of the goal of integration. He argued that when we have striven for integration, we have gone about it in the wrong way. According to Jacoby, "wholesale engineering, color-coded double standards, [and] forced interaction between people who are not social or economic equals; one after the other, the old stratagems have proved bankrupt or worse" (p. 8). Integration failed, he theorized, because we lost sight of Martin Luther King's dream of a common humanity. Just as Whites began to embrace the idea of integration, Blacks began to turn toward what he calls "a modern-day variant of separatism" (p. 4). This insular attitude has been endorsed by Whites, thus disabling the fulfillment of the original civil rights vision. Jacoby explained:

> Even under the best circumstances, nationalism of the kind coursing through the Black community would be difficult for Americans to accommodate—hard to square with our universalist values and our sense of a nation based not on blood but on political principle. But, whatever the benefits of the new separatism in promoting pride and self-esteem, the overlay of anger and alienation that comes with it is poisoning our lives, both Black and White. (p. 5)

Our challenge as a nation, in his view, is to recommit ourselves to the liberal values of freedom, democracy, and equal opportunity—our common culture.

The diminishing importance of race. Racial realists, as defined by Brown et al. (2003) and race-conscious (e.g., race-critical) scholars, generally agree that race is a conceptual chimera. Where they disagree is on the meaning of race and its significance. Since Brown, the Civil Rights Era, and the rise of the Black middle class, many racial realists believe that race is no longer a significant determinant of the life chances of Blacks or other people of color. Racial realists downplay the legacy of slavery and the history of

racism and suggest that the racial problems that remain are caused by Blacks. "Because the

realist analysis of racial inequality assumes that racism is produced exclusively by the

intentions and choices of individuals, intermediate institutions that play a crucial part on

generating and maintain racial inequality are rarely analyzed" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 19).

They expend more effort blaming Blacks and indicting Black culture than analyzing the

structural and institutional factors that have historically contributed to the problems of

racism and racial inequality. For this reason, I decided to present their numerous allegations

of the pathology of Black culture a bit later. At the present, my attention is given to the

work of William Julius Wilson (1978) and William Benn Michaels (2006). Wilson analyzed

Black economic development and class structure over time and juxtaposes that development

against what he sees as the declining significance of race. He concluded that class is more of

a factor than race in determining life chances for Blacks in America. Michaels examined

what he saw as the obsession of Americans with diversity and the impact of that obsession

on racial inequality. According to Michaels, Americans use diversity to justify inequality

instead of confronting the real problem of economic inequality. Both contend that race and

racism are not the primary cause of racial inequality in America.

Wilson (1978), in *The Declining Significance of Race*, theorized that "race relations

in America have undergone fundamental changes in recent years, so much so that now the

life chances of individual Blacks have more to do with their economic class position than

with their day-to-day encounters with Whites" (p. 1). His basic thesis was as follows:

> American society has experienced three major stages of Black-White contact and that
> each stage embodies a different form of racial stratification structured by the
> particular arrangement of both the economy and the polity. Stage one coincides with
> antebellum slavery and the early post-bellum era and may be designated the
> period of *plantation economy and racial-caste oppression.* Stage two begins in the
> last quarter of the nineteenth century and ends at roughly the New Deal era and may

be identified as the period of *industrial expansion, class conflict, and racial oppression.* Finally, stage three is associated with the modern, industrial, post-World War II era, which really began to crystallize during the 1960s and 1970s, and may be characterized as the period of *progressive transition from racial inequalities to class inequalities.* (pp. 2-3)

Although he emphasized the economic foundation of racial inequality, he also demonstrated how the political entities of government have interacted with the economy to structure racial hierarchy and grouping and manage race relations. Central to his argument is the belief that:

Different systems of production and/or different arrangements of the polity have imposed different constraints on the way in which racial groups have interacted in the United States, constraint that have structured the relations between racial groups and that have produced dissimilar constraints not only for the manifestation of racial antagonism but also for racial group access to rewards and privileges. (p. 3)

Wilson (1978) tested his hypotheses by tracing the development of Black class structure in the United States. According to Wilson, it was not until after World War II, the modern industrial era, that "Black economic class structure began to take on characteristics of the White class structure" (p. 150). It was during this period that class became more important than race in determining the life chances of Blacks. By 1970, there was indeed a rising Black middle class. An unanticipated effect of the rapid industrial and corporate expansion was a segmented labor market and the creation of serious economic class divisions between Blacks. As the Black middle class grew, so did the Black underclass. His point, however, was that during the modern industrial period in American history, race ceased to be as significant of a factor in the life chances of Blacks. "Racial conflict and competition in the economic sector—the most important factors in the historical subjugation of Blacks have been substantially reduced" (p. 152).

An often ignored aspect of Wilson's (1978) work is his concern for the deteriorating Black and White underclass. He explained:

The situation of marginality and redundancy created by the modern industrial society deleteriously affects all the poor, regardless of race. Underclass Whites, Hispano-Americans, and native Americans all are victims, to a greater or lesser degree, of class subordination under advanced capitalism. . . . In the final analysis therefore, the challenge of economic dislocation in modern industrial society calls for public policy programs to attack inequality on a broad class front, policy programs, in other words, that go beyond the limits of ethnic and racial discrimination by directly confronting the pervasive and destructive features of class subordination. (p. 154)

Even though Wilson conceded that poor Whites and poor Blacks bear the brunt of racial strife in the United States, he surmised that the main problems confronting society today have more to do with racial competition for public schools, local government, and housing than employment. "The traditional racial struggles for power and privilege have shifted away from the economic sector and are now concentrated in the sociopolitical order" (p. 152). His contention that the significance of race has diminished to the extent that race is no longer a stand-alone factor in the determination of life opportunities and outcomes for Blacks is a viewpoint shared by many scholars of history and sociology.

Walter Benn Michaels (2006), author of *The Trouble with Diversity: How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality,* argued that the real problem in this country is economic inequality, not race. Obsessed with racial, ethnic, and identity, Michaels asserted that Americans:

Love thinking that the differences that divide us are not the differences between those of us who have money and those who don't but are instead the differences between those of us who are Black and those who are White or Asian or Latino or whatever. (p. 6)

Critical of the current focus on racism and cultural diversity, he argued that our attention should center on poverty and economic inequality.

According to Michaels (2006), Americans have come to embrace diversity because it, in concert with the affinity for identity, promotes the notion of difference without

inequality and ignores systemic economic inequality. He posited that cultural diversity has the distinct advantage of promoting differences we can "love, like those between Asian Americans and Caucasians rather than differences (like the ones between smart people and stupid people or, more to the point, rich people and poor people) that are not so obviously appealing" (p. 84). Michaels alleged that our obsession with diversity has caused antiracism to serve the same purpose that racism used to serve. In fact, Michaels contended that today's debate is essentially a contest between two kinds of antiracism: those on the left who ignore Americanism and emphasize multiculturalism and those on the right who can only appreciate one American identity. Either way, economic inequality goes untouched. Michaels took his contempt for the rhetoric of antiracism a bit further and suggested that there really is no need for antiracism in America today. He argued that "even the much more virulent presence of anti-Black racism no longer has any public or political purchase" (p. 71). "Racism," he alleged, "has been pushed to the fringes of public life . . . because racism has been privatized, converted from a political position into a personal failing" (pp. 82-83). Michaels contended that the reason for the preoccupation with racism and racial inequality, as opposed to economic inequality, is "that antiracism activates a certain nostalgia" (p. 73) for the racial identity that grew out of the Civil Rights Movement, Jim Crow, and darker periods in American history. In other words, Black folk and White folk, fell in love, so to speak, with the notion of cultural identity, at the expense of dealing with economic inequality.

Michaels (2006) and Wilson (1978) shared the view that race is no longer the catalyst for racial inequality nor the primary determination of life chances for African Americans. The fact that their work was written twenty years apart is significant. Michaels' work is

indicative of more contemporary concerns that have arisen since the waning of the Civil

Rights Era. He is obviously concerned with issues of significantly lesser importance to

Wilson or anyone else in 1978. Almost all Americans, Black and White, in 2006, are

concerned with how to manage diversity and multiculturalism in school and the workplace.

Wilson, on the other hand, produced his work during the heyday of the rise of the Black

middle class and, as he said, he had no reason to believe the progress he saw would be short-

lived. Even though Wilson did not use the term color-blind, his work signaled the beginning

of an emerging trend away from regarding race and racism as the primary cause of racial in

equality and more directly, the life chances for Blacks. Contemporary proponents of color-

blindness not only remove the primary responsibility for the persistence of racial inequality

from White racism, they place the blame squarely on the shoulders of Black people.

Racism and Black responsibility. Many racial realists maintain that if there are

instances of racial inequality of opportunity or outcomes, White racism is not to blame.

They contend that the primary responsibility for racial inequality in America resides with

Black people. Two meta-propositions support their argument. First, Black culture is

diseased and pathologically dysfunctional, and second, Blacks exploit race to their own

advantage. I refer to these propositions as meta-propositions because each involves a subset

of related assumptions.

The first meta-proposition (i.e., Black culture is diseased and pathologically

dysfunctional) is founded on the following assumptions:

- America is a meritocratic state and meritocracy is fair.

- Blacks really do have equal opportunity. They just do not have the work ethic,

  ability, or desire to take full advantage of the chances they are given.

- Black morals have declined and far too many Black children grow up in single-parent homes with absent fathers and unwed mothers.

- Inherent differences between racial groups may explain the racial achievement gap and the ineffectiveness of expensive compensatory education programs

- Blacks do not value or prioritize educational success.

- Black crime is responsible for the low social-economic status of Blacks.

The belief that America is the land of opportunity is shared by most Americans. European immigrants who came to this country by choice, as well as former Black slaves brought here by force attest to the fact that good things comes to those who work hard and demonstrate perseverance. White and Black Americans, fortunate to be living the American Dream, often find fault with the millions of poor Americans who have not found the same success. In the eyes of many Americans, poverty is associated with personal flaws, poor choices, or outright lack of intelligence.

D'Souza (1995) tackled the matter of Black intelligence. He believed there may be merit in the most recent work of Herrnstein and Murray (1996), who asserted in *The Bell Curve*, that "racial groups differ in average intelligence, that these differences may be hereditary, and that IQ gaps largely account for ethnic variations in educational and economic performance" (as cited in D'Souza, 1995, p. 431). Opposition has been fierce within liberal circles to Herrnstein and Murray's work, but D'Souza (1995) attributed the protests to misguided liberals who have historically rejected research that suggests that differences in educational and economic achievement may be due to innate group differences (Herrnstein, 1971; Jensen, 1969; Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985). D'Souza (1995) explained:

Clearly something very interesting is going on here. The reaction to *The Bell Curve,* as to its predecessors, becomes a revealing snapshot of a pained and apoplectic liberalism. Surely this venom and fury could not be explained by psychologist Robert Sternberg's contention that Herrnstein and Murray's book regurgitates "old stuff," or Stephen Ceci's assurance that scholars have said the same thing "for the past 15 years." Never has old news proved to be so inflammatory. Nor can the outrage be explained on the grounds that *The Bell Curve* contravenes the Declaration of Independence, that "it goes against our entire history," as the *Boston Globe* asserted. Surely, as history bears out, the Declaration and the Constitution are not premised on the notion that all persons are equal in their intellectual potential, only that they are equal in their possession of certain basic rights. . . . What makes Herrstein and Murray and their predecessors controversial is not that they claim individuals differ in intelligence—this is obvious and uncontested—but that *groups* do. This is threatening because it challenges the liberal assumptions that racial differences are, as Stephen Jay Gould puts it merely "skin deep." Thus the fear is that Herrnstein and Murray will restore the concept of group hierarchy and make racism respectable once again. . . . Herrstein and Murray are reviled because they are questioning the foundation of 20th century liberalism: the denial of natural differences and premise of the inherent equality of groups. (p. 434)

D'Souza attributed the liberal attacks on theories of inherent racial differences to the buy-in of liberals to "Boasian relativism" (p. 434). Boasian relativism is a theory developed by Frank Boaz (as cited in D'Souza, 1995) that advances a worldview of historical particularity and cultural relativism which proposes that individuals' human beliefs and activities should be understood in terms of their own culture. Advocates of Boasian theory reject the idea of intrinsic differences between groups and attribute difference in educational and economic performance to a variety of environmental and cultural factors. "In the liberal mind, there are no rational grounds for believing in natural group differences, which is why all discussion of racial differences inevitably become discussions about racism" (D'Souza, 1995, p. 435). The consensus of researchers, however, appears to be shifting. "Within the community of social scientists, there is now a virtual consensus about the existence of substantial IQ differences between Asians, Whites, Hispanics, and Blacks" (D'Souza, 1995, p. 441). His position is that no matter how unpopular the findings may be, if biological

differences do exist, scholars need to take the claims very seriously. D'Souza argued that the problem of racial inequality *might be* due to biological differences, but is much more likely to be caused by pathologies of Black culture.

Many sociologists, race scholars, and laypeople agree that the culture within the Black community bears much of the responsibility for the problem of racial inequality and the persistence of the achievement gap between Black and White students (Cosby & Pouissant, 2007; Gates & West, 1996; McWhorter, 2001; Sleeper, 1997; Steele, 2007; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997). McWhorter (2001), in *Losing the Race: Self-sabotage in Black America*, concurred that much of the problem with Black is Blacks. McWhorter alleged that Blacks have cultivated a value system wrought in three self-defeating cults: the cult of victimology, the cult of separatism, and the cult of anti-intellectualism. According to McWhorter, the cult of victimology has created a culture that "condones weakness and failure" (p. 43), "hampers performance" (p. 45), and is an "affront to civil rights heroes" (p. 47). The cult of separatism has resulted in "the Ghettoization of academic work" (p. 54) (e.g., Afrocentric History), negative portrayals of Blacks in the Hollywood and the media, the perpetuation of the "dumb Black myth" (p. 76), and an unhealthy inclination on the part of Blacks to justify everything Blacks do wrong. He likened the cult of anti-intellectualism to a "Cultural Disconnect" (p. 162) from learning for its own sake in Black American culture. While acknowledging the legacy of history and racism, as well as the larger problem of anti-intellectualism in American society as a whole, McWhorter suggested "the main reason Black students lag behind all others learning in kindergarten and continuing through postgraduate school is that a wariness of books and learning for learning's sake as 'White' has been ingrained in Black American culture" (p. 125).

Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997) alleged that the decline of the Black two-parent family is the main cause of poverty in the Black community, not White racism. Hence, Blacks jeopardize their own educational achievement by choosing lifestyles that make them more susceptible to poverty. They pointed to the choice Blacks make to break the law and commit violent crimes also afflict Black culture and the Black community. Thernstrom and Thernstrom predicted "if the African American crime rate suddenly dropped to the current level of the White crime rate, we would eliminate a major force that is driving Blacks and Whites apart and is destroying the fabric of Black urban life" (p. 285). To those who argue that racism in the forms of resegregation of schools and inadequate funding are the causes of the racial achievement gap, the Thernstroms cry "enough already!" (p. 343). These are little more than out-dated claims that hold little bearing on contemporary society. They pointed out that it is not just Whites who have left urban schools but Blacks as well; consequently, racism and White flight are not responsible for the decay of urban schools. According to Thernstrom and Thernstrom, court-ordered busing and other school reform plans to achieve racial balance have angered Black and White parents, causing many to take their children out of public schools in larger urban areas. Contrary to the research of Jonathan Kozol (1991) in *Savage Inequalities* and others, they insisted that "the schools to which Black children go are not generally financially starved" (p. 350). D'Souza (1995) and Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997) theorized that what is more likely the problem, especially with respect to educational achievement, is the exploitation of race by Blacks, White liberals, and "race merchants" (D'Souza, 1995, p. 261) from both races determined to keep racism alive. This leads to the second meta proposition: Blacks exploit race for their own advantage. The following assumptions underlie this proposition:

- As with the first proposition, this proposition is based on the belief that America is a meritocracy and that racism and White superiority are no longer the primary causes of racial inequality.

- Blacks use race and racism as a excuse for their own personal failures (e.g., playing the victim).

- Race-based reforms are racist (e.g., affirmative action, Afrocentric/Africentric education).

- Multicultural education and diversity programs undermine the goal of "one nation, indivisible" (Thernstrom and Thernstrom, 1997, p. 530).

Each of these assumptions helps build the case for contemporary color-blind ideology.

In an essay entitled "The Perception of Racism Has Eclipsed Actual Racism" excerpted from the article "Does Racism Matter?," Shelby Steele (2007) argued that in today's society "although racism continues to exist, it no longer stunts the lives of Blacks" (p. 76). White supremacy, he insisted, died at the hands of those who suffered from it and lives only as an idea (p. 76). Steele acknowledged that White oppression created much of the underdevelopment of Blacks, but asserts that Blacks and White liberals of the 1960s turned race into a faith that destroyed the ability of Americans to know the reality of racism in America. According to Steele, "the great mistake after Americans made after the victories of the 1960s was to allow race to become a government-approved means to power" (p. 27). In his view, the power of the liberal left resided in its ability to portray Blacks as victims. Blacks, he posited, have grown accustomed to a victimization mentality in which race is used as an excuse for issues that only Blacks can solve. Steele called upon Black and White Americans to restore their faith in one another, not in racism. He argued: "Today we live in

a terrible ignorance that will no doubt last until we take race out of every aspect of public life—until we learn, as we did with religion, to separate it from the state" (p. 77). To put it simply, Blacks (and Whites) must stop using race as crutch.

A common claim among racial realists is that, all too often, Blacks use race to excuse their performance on standardized tests and in school in general. They allege that instead of considering the possibility of innate inequality of intelligence between the races, an idea D'Souza (1995) entertained, or admitting that Blacks might just need to work a great deal harder and be pushed to excel the same as their White counterparts, as Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997) suggested, "race-merchants" (D'Souza, 1995, p. 201) concoct all sorts of race-based excuses for Black failure. Steele (1997) opined that fear of Black failure has resulted in a phenomenon he refers to as "racial vulnerability" (Steele as cited in Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997, p. 348). He posited "the vulnerability of Whites is to the charge of racism, that of Blacks is to the claim of inferiority" (p. 348). This fear of vulnerability causes Whites to ensure the success of Black students by expecting less of them and enables Blacks to excuse failure by playing the victim and crying "racism." Advocates of color-blind policies argue that the exploitation of race has led to over-compensation for Black failure, unfair race-based policies, and reverse discrimination.

Racial realists contend that race-based policies have little merit, especially in education. The most assailed race-based program is affirmative action. In *America in Black and White,* Thernstorm and Thernstrom (1997) argued that affirmative action promotes unfair double standards in admissions that disadvantaged White students and set up poorly schooled and ill-prepared Black students for failure. D'Souza (1995) agreed. He alleged that affirmative action and other race-preferential policies create an unfair racial bias, and a

"new discrimination" (p. 291) that targets Whites. "The new discrimination is legal, just like the old one used to be" (p. 291). D'Souza explained:

> What differentiates the new discrimination is that it targets Whites, especially White males, and sometimes Asians. Another novel feature of this discrimination is that it is clad not in the robes of a racism that dares not speak its name, but in the full regalia of moral indignation and social justice. The new discrimination is justified as an indispensable instrument for *fighting* racism. (p. 291)

Jacoby (1998) opposed affirmative action as well, but for different reasons. He viewed affirmative action as a "Band-Aid on the cancer of Black underdevelopment" (p. 541). Opposed to color-coded remedies, Jacoby insisted that whether society is color-blind may not be as important as making sure that the law is color-neutral and that the ideals of meritocracy and individualism are preserved. He explained:

> Under the law and as people make their way up the ladders of school and career, they must operate as individuals, not members of a group. Society need not be color-blind or colorless, but the law cannot work unless it is color-neutral, and the government should not be in the business of abetting or paying for the cultivation of group identity. Nothing in the history of the past three decades suggest that America should stop requiring people to find a way of reconciling their ethnicity and their citizenship. (p.541)

In short, Jacoby and other opponents of affirmative action, Black and White, believed that the much-needed advancement of Blacks need not be undertaken by the government. My purpose is not to debate the merit of affirmative action, but to suggest that the strong controversy and opposition it draws is indicative of the fact that race does matter, especially when Whites perceive that their rights are being compromised. History indicates that when Whites feel that their advantage is in jeopardy or Blacks (or any minority) are being unfairly advantaged, a White backlash is eminent. D'Souza (1995) and Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997) have already said as much. The backlash may explain the animosity of Whites toward multicultural education and respect for diversity in schools and in society.

Racial realists blame the current emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity for much of the nation's race problem. Consistent with his commitment to integration, Jacoby (1998) argued that if we have learned anything from the last 35 years, we should know that integration will not work without acculturation. He alleged that our current preoccupation with identity politics, multiculturalism and diversity is only causing more friction and conflict. Sleeper (1997) suggested, "the time is approaching when Americans of all colors will have to give their racial banners decent burials and kiss even their hyphens goodbye" (p. 117). Simply put, Americans just need to be American. This theme resounds throughout the racial realists' argument. It is no wonder that the realists find the concept of Afrocentricity especially irksome. The allegations against Afrocentrism, especially in education, are numerous:

- "Afrocentrism is not a recognized field of knowledge with established scholarly traditions, and it has more than its share of hustlers who have talked their way into positions of responsibility for which they have no qualifications" (Thernstorm & Thernstrom, 1997, p. 369).

- "Many of them (Afrocentrists) are American Black nationalists from the 1960s who have given themselves new names and African accents in order to promulgate what they consider to be a distinctive African worldview" (D'Souza, 1995, p. 364).

- "Afrocentrism is a historiography of decay like the mythic epic of the (lost, antebellum) South. The tragedy is that Black people fail to see their 'Americanization' as one of the greatest human triumphs of the past 500 years" (Early, 1995, p. 39).

- "It is no surprise that Afrocentric, multicultural, and other self-esteem programs in the schools have chosen to boost the egos of young African Americans through the device of ethnic chauvinism, through delusions of historic grandeur. Black racism replaces self-doubt by projecting that doubt onto other racial groups" (D'Souza, 1995, p. 421).

- "Afrocentricity is an abuse of history, and a misuse of education. Black children do not need therapeutic strategies. They need cognitive skills" (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997, p. 373).

- The focus on Afrocentricity has led to the misconception that Black children need Black teachers. Due to the lack of high quality of Black teachers, Black children are suffering (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997, p. 377).

- "Afrocentrism is, thus, both pathetic and formidable: pathetic because it offers young Blacks nothing in the way of knowledge and skills that are required by the modern environment; formidable, because it offers them racial dynamite instead—a fortified chauvinism, a hardened conspiratorial mindset, and a robotic dedication to ideologies of Blackness" (D'Souza, 1995, p. 381).

For some, contempt for Afrocentrism extends to a disassociation from any meaningful relationship between American Blacks and Africa. Stanley Crouch (1995), in *The All-American Skin Game,* even questions the point in American Blacks claiming a connection to Africa at all. Of himself, Crouch wrote:

> African kingdoms, real or invented, make no impression on how I see myself primarily because Africa had absolutely nothing to do with the conception of the ideas that eventually led to the end of slavery and were so essential to the recent history in which people the world over became more and more involved in breaking down the reign of South African apartheid. The international recognition and support of Nelson Mandela were born of the evangelical humanism at the center of

modern democracy, which has no precedents at the center of modern democracy. (as cited in Sleeper, 1997, p. 115)

The vehement disparagement of Afrocentrism is indicative of the complexity of race and racial ideology in America. There is nothing simple about any of this.

Earlier in the chapter, I presented the work of Michaels (2006) who argued against the current emphasis on diversity, identity politics, and multiculturalism. I want to revisit his work because he asks important questions that, on the surface, appear contradictory to other views he expresses. My point in doing is twofold, I want to show how the ambiguity of intellectual inquiry and also encourage readers to give consideration to Michaels' provocative questions. He raised interesting questions about the motives of neoliberal and antiracist rhetoric and the sincerity of Americans to create a truly egalitarian society. Michaels alleged that the focus on antiracism serves the ideology of neoliberalism quite well. His explanation bears quoting:

> The dream of a world free of prejudice, the dream of a world where identities (whether American or hyphenated American) are not discriminated against, is as foundational to the right as it is to the left. And this dream is completely compatible with (is, actually, essential to) the dream of a truly free and efficient market. Here's where the concept of neoliberalism—the idea of the free market as the essential mechanism of social justice—is genuinely clarifying. A society free not only of racism but of sexism and of heterosexism is a neoliberal utopia where all the irrelevant grounds for inequality (your identity) have been eliminated and whatever inequalities are left are therefore legitimated. Thus, when it comes to antiracism, the left is more like a police force for, than an alternative to, the right. Its commitment to rooting out of the residual prejudices that too many of us no doubt harbor deep inside is a tacit commitment to the efficiency of the market. And its commitment to the ideas that the victims of social injustice today are the victims of racism, sexism, and heterosexism (the victims of discrimination rather than exploitation, of intolerance rather than oppression, or of oppression in the form of intolerance) is a commitment to the essential justice of the market. The preferred crimes of neoliberals are always hate crimes; when our favorite victims are the victims of prejudice, we are all neoliberals. (pp. 75-76)

In essence, Michaels suggested that the antiracist rhetoric both camouflages and reinforces the neoliberalist agenda. The antiracist rhetoric is slowly being replaced by America's

growing preoccupation with cultural diversity and affinity for identity, both of which

obscure and justify economic inequality. For these reasons, he questioned the seriousness of

our commitment to equal opportunity.

Michaels (2006) reasoned that, if Americans were wholeheartedly committed to an

egalitarian society:

> The quality of local schools [would not] be dependent on local real estate taxes. . . If
> the schools are better where rich people live, the unearned advantage their children
> have starts at pre-K. . . . If we are committed to equality of opportunity, we should be
> funding all school districts equally and abolishing private schools, thus removing the
> temptation for rich parents to buy their children an unfair advantage. (pp. 135-136)

Equality, he suggested, is a demanding standard that may also be the weakest form of

egalitarianism. "The strongest form (of egalitarianism) would be equality of outcome"

(p.134). Here, Michaels raised salient questions and issues that many Americans do not

want to confront. If America is not committed to equality and the formation of an

egalitarian society, to what are we committed? Good question. The answer to this question

cannot be answered from an ahistorical perspective. Yet, that is exactly what color-blind

ideology attempts to do.

"Color-blindness would have us forget history (both in the sense of a past and its

continuity with the present), psychologize racism without the benefit of a sociological

understanding, and displace racial stratification with competing explanations, such as class

analysis" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 134). Color-blind ideology diminishes the significance of

race, downplays the legacy of slavery, and has little interest in analyzing organizational or

racialized practices that either intentionally or unintentionally create or support racial

inequalities. The discourse of color-blindness upstages the rise of the Black middle class to

chastise the Black underclass for creating their own demise. It privatizes and individualizes

racism and conceives of racism as random and isolated. Within the framework of color-blindness, persistent inequality is perceived as natural and inevitable partially because of inherent individual (and perhaps group differences) differences and, more directly, because Blacks are thought to be "the architects of their own disadvantage" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 11). Because formal equality is guaranteed by law, advocates of color-blindness perceive that the problem of racism is over. Violations of the prescribed interventions are viewed from the perpetrator's perspective—the burden of proof is on the victim. But, color-blindness is much more than a legal standard, it is an entire social order in which racial identity and racial history are deemed irrelevant. Racial realists believe they can "uncouple individual behavior from group identification, allowing the inclusion of all people" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 8). They contend that if this were allowed to happen, individuals who fail to conform to the codified norms of society (White norms) would be stigmatized singularly as individuals, not as a group. For racial realists, honoring Martin Luther King's dream of brotherhood is synonymous with eliminating race and racism (and multiculturalism) from the U.S. political lexicon. I will argue that this position is both deceptive and harmful.

Indeed, the ideology of color-blindness deceives the perpetrators and victims of racism in a number of ways (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Brown et al., 2003; Crenshaw et al., 1995; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Goldberg, 2002, 2009; Leonardo, 2009). First of all, the term is misleading. People who profess to be color-blind frequently make statements like "I do not even see color (e.g., race), all I see is the human being" or "I do not have a racist bone in my body." Contrary to what many people think, color-blindness has nothing to do with not seeing race or skin color. Leonardo (2009) explained,

> Color-blindness if not actually "the inability to see race" and is an imperfect term. In the USA, color-blind people cannot fail to see race, but they can choose to see it in a

> particular way. In asserting that race should not matter in either social policy or transactions, color-blind people—especially Whites—experience what psychologists call cognitive dissonance. Color-blindness prevents them from dealing with the racial conditioning of their behavior, which is considered as incidental rather than causal. Racial consequences may then be dismissed as unintentional or the common refrain that actions or words have been "taken out of context." (p. 188)

The practical meaning of the term refers more to race and color-avoidance rather than color-blindness. Avoiding the problem of racism will hardly make it go away.

Secondly, the ideology of color-blindness deceptively claims to stand on high moral ground. In fact, racial realists assert that the moral dilemma of which Myrdal (1944) wrote no longer exists (Therntrom & Thernstrom, 1997). The rhetoric of color-blind ideology supports the belief that all Americans should be treated fairly and equally. Who would argue with that? The problem lies in the meaning of fair and equal. Color-blind ideology argues that fair means not taking into account race or its legacies. "Race should not be seen, talked about, and race-talk should not be heard with too attentive of an ear because it is tantamount to victimology: see no race, speak no race, hear no race" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 131). The meaning of equal is even more tricky. Color-blind ideology defines equal (equality) as meaning all human beings are created equal, but, at the same time, allows for and justifies inequality, particularly as it is related to outcomes. Despite all of the rhetoric about equality, and "one America, indivisible" (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997, p. 530), color-blind ideology is not committed to creating an egalitarian society, which, as Michaels (2006) pointed out, would constitute the highest form of equality and, by necessity, be committed to equality of outcomes. As I have stated previously, the ideology of color-blindness only ensures a formal guarantee of equality before the law. It does not ensure that racial differences in income or status will disappear. In fact, the attention given to individualism and the belief that "people will rise and fall according to their own abilities," rationalizes the

inevitability of inequality (Brown et al., 2003). Color-blind ideology would have us believe that while, theoretically, all men are created equal, there exists inherent inequalities between and within racial groups that make inequity and inequality of outcomes unavoidable. If that sounds like double-talk, that is because it is! America has not overcome its moral dilemma. We cannot accomplish a goal of true color-blindness until we meet "ethical imperative of doing the right thing" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 36).

The ideology of color-blindness is deceptive in a third way. Color-blindness implies that race does not matter and color is meaningless when in reality it fuels White privilege and assumptions of White superiority. The ideology of color-blindness is associated with a presumption of racelessness, yet Whiteness continues to matter and those who possess the property of Whiteness are afforded taken-for-granted privileges. Whiteness is the standard bearer for acceptable behavior, appearance, and interaction in society. Everything that is not White is deviant. Sullivan (2006) explained:

> Whiteness and its concomitant privileges tend to operate as invisible, and since Whiteness is the standard to which all should aspire, then people of color too should aspire to give up their race and become race-free (= White). The color-blindness that results in turn fuels habits of White privilege by creating a social, political, and psychological atmosphere of racial invisibility in which White privilege can thrive. It is as if, with their style of hidden invisibility, habits of White privilege provide readymade grooves for colorblindness to slide into, and those grooves in turn are deepened as colorblind-ness grows. (p. 191)

According to Sullivan, non-Whites pose a threat to Whiteness that Whites would like to eliminate. Color-blindness provides a discreet way of doing just that. People of color, especially Blacks, become as irrelevant as their race. By refusing to acknowledge race, color-blindness refuses to recognize Black people and other minorities for the specific people they are.

The non-White person must become a mere person, while the White person's ontology-and all the privileges it confers—goes unchallenged because Whiteness is not considered a visible race in the first place. The freedom from race offered by colorblindness is a freedom to be secure in a space of pure Whiteness without even mentioning the word "race" at all. (p. 191)

Color-blind ideology is misleading in a fourth way. Racial realists would have us believe that color-blindness is a revitalization of traditional liberalism (D'Souza, 1995; Jacoby, 1998; Sleeper, 1997; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997). But this is a fallacy.

According to Bonilla-Silva (2003), color-blindness does not so much revive the tenets of classical liberalism as it rearticulates those principles into a racial ideology designed to rationalize racially unfair situations. He defined racial ideology as "the racially based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify (dominant race) or challenge (subordinate race or races) the racial status quo" (p. 9). Bonilla-Silva posited that the racial ideology of color-blindness is bundled into four frames that work conterminously as a color-blind racism or racism without racists. A description of each frame is provided below:

1. Abstract liberalism involves using ideas associated with political liberalism (e.g., "equal opportunity," the idea that force should not be used to achieve social policy) and economic liberalism (e.g., choice, individualism) in an *abstract* manner to explain racial matters. Examples include: framing race-related issues in the language of liberalism to oppose affirmative action, claim moral high ground, sanction individual choices that oppress or disadvantage others, and justifying the right to segregated education.
2. Naturalization is a frame that allows Whites to explain away racial phenomena by suggesting they are natural occurrences. For example, denying *any* relationship between segregation and racism by claiming that it is natural for people to "gravitate toward likeness."
3. Cultural racism is a frame that relies on culturally based arguments such as "Mexicans do not put much emphasis on education" or "Blacks have too many babies" to explain the standing of minorities in society.
4. Minimization of racism is a frame that suggests discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting minorities' life chances ("It's better now than in the past" or "There is discrimination but there are plenty of jobs out there"). This frame allows Whites to accuse minorities of being "hyper sensitive," of using race as an "excuse," or of "playing the race card." (pp. 28-29)

Based upon the arguments presented previously in this chapter, it should be clear the ideology is informed by these frames. Bonilla-Silva argued that these frames work subtly and collaboratively to reinforce one another: when one frame falters, another one picks up the slack. "Together they form an impregnable yet elastic wall that barricades Whites from the United States racial reality" (p. 47). By bundling these frames, Whites can get away with saying things like "I am all for equal opportunity, that's why I oppose affirmative action" or "I support integration, but I do not believe in forcing people to do anything they do not want to do."

In short, the ideology of color-blindness "explains contemporary racial inequality as the outcome of non-racial dynamics" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 2). The deception lies in an under-the-radar racism without racists: a color-blind, born-again racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Goldberg, 2009). I turn my attention now to some of the deleterious ramifications that the ideology of color-blindness imposes on education and educational reform and how these complicating results are magnified by neoliberalism.

I choose to briefly address, first, the matter of affirmative action, because, while it is related to the controversy surrounding color-blindness and educational policy, it is not a major topic in this dissertation. My focus centers on K-12 education, and in my case study, specifically secondary education. I would be remiss, however, to completely neglect the affirmative action and the issues surrounding it. I have substantiated that the ideology of color-blindness opposes racial preferences that would unfairly advantage one racial group over another and, for this reason; affirmative action is vehemently criticized for being oppressive to White Americans. The logic behind color-blindness asserts that the last 40 years of civil rights legislation have all erased the effects of 250 years of slavery and an

additional 100 years of Jim Crow (Sullivan, 2006, p. 132). The color-blind racism frames of abstract liberalism (equal opportunity) and minimalization of race work collaboratively to justify the attacks on affirmative action. In reality, there is little empirical evidence to support the claim of White oppression. In fact, some of the research shows that White women benefitted more from affirmative action than Black men and women (Marable, 1996; Tatum, 1997). I am not going to debate what racial group benefitted the most from affirmative action. The greater issues are why affirmative action was needed in the first place and the refusal of colorblindness to acknowledge the far-reaching effects of history and the legacy of racism. Herein lies the crux of the problem. In my view, affirmative action, in recognizing the legacy of racism, attempts to rectify previous wrongs while also advocating for fairness and social justice now and in the future.

> Given the historically and consistently inadequate and segregated education experienced by African Americans, why should anyone expect (White) American society to suddenly reverse its priorities and provide quality educational opportunity, particularly because any reasonably effective reform will be exceedingly expensive? (Brown et al., 2003, p. 112)

The problem, as I see it is that, in order for Blacks to be given equal opportunity, Whites must give up a bit of their White privilege. I think we are a long way away from that happening without legal intervention.

I now turn my attention to color-blind reform and its impact on K-12 education. One of the most damaging consequences of color-blindness is the resegregation of the nation's schools. In spite of all the very much warranted and substantial debate about the benefits and repercussions of desegregation (Anderson, 1988; Bell, 1992; Dempsey & Noblitt, 1993; Franklin, 1990; Irvine & Irvine, 1983; Morris, 1999; Siddle Walker, 1993, 1996, 2000) the fact that remains that we, as a nation, have not yet "learned how to make separate institutions

truly equal in a racially divided and extremely unequal society" (Orfield & Eaton, 1996, p.

22). That integration failed to rid the nation of racism is inarguable and there is evidence to

suggest that as a result of integration, Black communities lost positive Black institutions of

learning with the closing of Black schools; Black teachers lost jobs; *creaming* or choosing

the smartest Black students to integrate White schools negatively impacted Black schools,

and a host of other negative consequences make integration arguably controversial. All of

these factors, however, do not alter the fact that to return to "apartheid schooling" as the

subtitle of Kozol's (2005) book *Shame of the Nation* suggests is a huge gamble. As Orfield

and Eaton (1996) so aptly put it:

> A return to "separate but equal" is a bet that some unknown solution will be
> discovered and successfully implemented, and that local politics will now be
> sufficiently responsive to the interests of African American and Latino students that
> they can safely forego the protection of the courts before ever experiencing equal
> education. (p. 22)

The trajectory of legal precedents since *Brown* and the end of the Civil Rights Era

suggests a White backlash toward Black progress that is reminiscent of the counterattack on

strides made by African Americans after the Reconstruction. The *Brown* decision

Americans love to celebrate is being ever so quietly reversed (Orfield & Eaton, 1996).

According to Orfield and Eaton (1996), "the first 'giant step backward,' as Justice Thurgood

Marshall described it, came with the Supreme Court's 1974 decision, *Milliken v. Bradley*"

(p. 29). The decision in *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) (*Milliken I*) ruled against a school

desegregation remedy that would have combined the predominantly Black Detroit school

system with the predominantly White suburban school district and effectively reinstated the

constitutionality of the separate portion of the old separate but equal precedent set in the

infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision. Three years later, *Milliken II* (1977)

reinstated the equal part of the separate but equal standard by ordering special compensatory programs to offset the unequal educational circumstances caused by the segregated education. I do not believe that it is sheer coincidence that the White backlash and reversal of *Brown* began in the wake of affirmative action and other race-conscious interventions that were designed to bring about racial equality of opportunity and, hopefully outcomes, for African Americans.

The White backlash of the 1980s was fueled by many of the same racial fears and resentments that existed 100 years earlier and a few new ones. In *Diversity: Gender, Color, and Culture*, Essed (1996) posited that the White American backlash of the 19th century occurred during the heyday of biological racism. Biological racism refers to an open and unapologetic belief in the inherent inequality of the "Other" (Goldberg, 2002, p. 15) often manifested as what Essed (1996) called "paternalistic racism" (p. 14). Racism in the 1980s may have been a combination of the old paternalistic or biological racism and what Essed identified as "competitive racism" (p. 14). Competitive racism, different from biological or paternalistic racism, is caused more by White fears of Blacks demanding their right to compete in the labor market and, in effect, representing a viable competitive force. Another complicating factor and crucial difference about the latter backlash was that racist and racism had become dirty words. It was no longer acceptable to be racist and there was resentment about having to fear the accusation of racism. It is probably safe to say that many Americans, Black and White, had grown weary of wrestling with race and racism. Perhaps, a conscious or unconscious effort was made to erase race and racism from the political and public vernacular. Intentionality may be difficult to prove but, gradually, race and racism were removed from the political and public vernacular. With race off the table,

so to speak, the discourse around social, economic, political, and educational conditions became raceless, thus making color-blind school reform a logical course of action.

The most talked about color-blind educational reform movement is the current federally mandated school educational reform, No Child Left Behind (NCLB). NCLB was foreshadowed by "A Nation at Risk," a report commissioned by President Reagan in the early 1980s that marked the advent of a rededication to nationalism, Americanism, and the *rearticulation* of the liberal value of color-blindness. "Educational neoliberal reforms are based on an *economic model of educational policy*" [emphasis added] (Torres, 2005, p. 1). A variety of free-market principles undergird the neoliberal model of educational reform:

> Rationalization and cost-cutting, declining investments, a limited selection of curricular options, privatization, the specter of school choice—the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation in the United States is the best example—and a general assault on teachers in relation to effectiveness and efficiency levels. (Lund & Carr, 2008, p. 9)

The current school reform agenda openly adheres to the following script—because schools bear much of the responsibility for the economic decline in American, they must do a better job of aligning their policies and practices with the goals and objectives of the postindustrial labor market and the new global economy. As the demand for jobs that require lower skills decreases, almost all jobs in the current era of restructured globalization will require a new kind of knowledge—a set of minimum competencies that schools must provide. Curricula needs, then, to be focused on productivity, entrepreneurism, multi-skilling, and mastering the right knowledge. Standardized tests provide the best means for measuring progress, maintaining accountability, and making sure school curricula are aligned with the needs of the global economy. Furthermore, competition from charter and private schools and punishment in the form of failing report cards, withdrawal of federal

funds, and the threat of parent vouchers and school closings are believed to be the best medicine for ailing public schools. The current NCLB legislation promises the public the 100% success of children in U.S. schools by 2014 (notwithstanding the schools forced out of business) just like color-blindness promises the end of racism. Like the ideology of colorblindness, NCLB and the whole idea of race-less educational reform, diminishes the significance of race and denies the existence of racism as primary determinants of life chances and racial equality. Americans are willing to ascribe to colorblindness and the promises of NCLB because it makes us feel as though we have finally overcome the race problem. As Cose (1993) explained, "Americans like success stories. We also prefer to believe that our country—give or take a David Duke or two—is well on the road to being color-blind" (p. 37).

Race-critical scholars argue, on the other hand, that color-blind reform, as evidenced in NCLB, has led to a callous no-excuses attitude within the general public and among educators. They allege that we are seeing an increase in academic tracking, over-identification of minorities in special education classes, and higher drop-put rates in our public schools, especially those identified as failing (Meier, Kohn, Darling-Hammond, Sizer, & Wood as cited in Meier & Kohn, 2004; Orfield & Kornbacher, 2001). I am particularly concerned about the over preoccupation with teaching to the test, the growing anti-intellectualism of teachers in urban (a term now synonymous with Black) schools, the resignation of both teachers and students in predominantly Black schools, and the adoption of zero tolerance policies that criminalize student behavior and further exacerbate the problem of a disproportionate number of Black male incarcerations. These matters will be

further investigated in the research. My immediate focus is to show the ideological relationship between color-blindness, NCLB, and racial inequality.

Leonardo (2009) argued that the NCLB originated "from within the historical condition of color-blindness" (p. 134). Although the reform rhetoric professes to erase the color line in education by no longer refusing to account for the achievement of children from all racial, ethnic, and economic subgroups as well as special education students, what it really does is redraw the color line (Freeman, 2005). While ostensibly giving all schools an equal opportunity (e.g., the language of abstract liberalism) to meet the government-prescribed standards, NCLB gives Whiteness the exclusive right to label schools and students of color as failing. Leonardo (2009) contended that, because NCLB is informed by an ideology of Whiteness, it thrives on perpetuating racial differences as part of a natural difference, rather outcome. With little or no regard for structural, societal, or historical causes for inequalities in school performance, NCLB invokes the naturalization and cultural frames of color-blind racism as it thrives on perpetuating the notion that the achievement gap is the result of natural and/or cultural differences, rather than social outcomes. Race is both minimized and maximized. It is minimized because the historical and structural accumulations of advantage and/or disadvantage caused by race and racism are not considered to be factors that affect teaching or learning. All students are expected to meet the same expectations at the same time regardless of their point of origin. Race is maximized because racial groups are clearly delineated as determinants in how a school is evaluated. Because poor students, non-White students, and special education students historically do not test as well as middle class Whites, schools with high populations of these students are disproportionately rated as failing. Schools that want high ratings are, thus,

encouraged to be as White as possible. The threat of race and diversity is heightened

causing a zero tolerance for dress, behavior, language, and almost anything that is deemed

deviant (non-White). In the name of excellence, color-blind educational reform and the

neoliberalism work collaboratively to impose "new standards on old inequalities" (Darling-

Hammond, 2004, p. 3).

The attempt to whitewash race and diversity is yet another detrimental consequence

of color-blindness as Brown et al. (2003) asserted in *White-washing race: the Myth of a*

Color-blind Society, the whole issue of multiculturalism is one of the most complex

deceptions within the framework of CRT in education. I did not mention this deception

earlier because it is significantly less obvious in the overall rhetoric of color-blind ideology.

Racial realists are generally quite candid about their disdain for focusing on diversity. The

official position of educational reform on topics of multiculturalism and diversity is not as

transparent or consistent. The multicultural paradigm in education was originally intended

to bring about change in the "school and other educational institutions so that students from

diverse racial, ethnic, and other social-class groups will experience educational equality"

(J. Banks, 1993, p. 3). It later began to embrace issues of gender, ability, and sexual

orientation, African American studies, and other ethnic studies. The ideological hegemony

of color-blindness has resulted in a watered-down hodge-podge of trivial examples of

cultural diversity featuring foods, attire, and entertainment. Ladson-Billings and Tate (as

cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006) asserted "that the ever-expanding multi-cultural

paradigm follows the traditions of liberalism—allowing a proliferation of difference" that

has led to an uncritical "unity of difference" (Torres-Medina, 1994, p. 25) rather than critical

new understandings. Ladson-Billings and Tate (as cited in Dixson & Rousseau, 2006)

elaborated:

> We argue that the current multicultural paradigm functions in a similar to civil rights law. Instead of creating radically new paradigms which ensure justice, multicultural reforms are routinely "sucked back into the system;" and just as traditional civil rights law is based on a foundation of human rights, the current multicultural paradigm is mired in liberal ideology that offers no radical change in the current order. (p. 25)

Efforts, particularly of African Americans, to seriously implement education

especially geared toward African Americans and their history have come under ferocious

attack as I have already indicated. I posit that the vehement opposition to the Afrocentric

education stems from a fear of and resistance to alternative knowledge claims, meaning the

threat of race and culture (Goldberg, 2009).

Hill Collins (2000) addressed resistance to the legitimacy of knowledge claims that

emerge from Black feminist thought. In *Black Feminist Thought* (2000), she wrote "despite

continued acceptance among many African Americans of Afrocentrism as a term referencing

traditions of Black consciousness and racial solidarity, academic and media pundits

maligned the term in the 1980s and 1990s" (p. 21). Afrocentric feminist thought is

"dedicated to fostering Black women's empowerment and broader social justice" (p. xiii). I

would argue that Afrocentric education shares a similar commitment. Herein lies the rub:

the exposure of previously unknown or subjugated knowledge claims imperils the long-held

hegemony of the male-centered, Eurocentric worldview.

This represents a problem rooted in racism that, when viewed from the color-blind

perspective, has nothing to do with race. Different from the cultural frame as defined by

Bonilla-Silva (2003), it coincides more with "cultural imperialism" or "the universalization

of one group's experience and culture and its establishment as the norm" (Young, 1992,

p. 192). McLaren (2007) suggested "victims of cultural imperialism live their oppression by viewing themselves from the perspective of the way others view them" (p. 43). Young (1992) elaborated that "the dominant culture's stereotyped, marked, and inferiorized images of the group must be internalized by group members at least to the degree that they are forced to react to behaviors of others that express or are influenced by those images" (p. 192). Woodson (1993) alluded to the same phenomenon in *The Mis-education of the Negro* in which he asserted "Negroes are taught to admire the Hebrew, the Greek, the Latin, and the Teuton, and to despise the African" (p. 1). Du Bois (1924) argued in *The Gift of Black Folk* that the recognition of Black gifts to America subtly attacks Whiteness as property and the object of privilege. The fact that color-blindness would prohibit and discredit the teaching of Afrocentric education should be alarming.

Based on information obtained in a packet mailed from Dr. Theodore Thompson III, a 30-year-old African American principal of the Columbus Africentric Early College (2010) in Columbus, Ohio, African centered education is described as follows:

- African centeredness is the placement of African American people and students at the center of human process. This is based on the belief that all humans have their physical, social, and intellectual origins in Africa.

- African centered education places the African American student center of the educational experience as a subject rather than an object.

- With African centered education, the African American child is culturally placed at the center of the learning process.

- African centered education is holistic meaning that the student will be involved in cross discipline learning, meeting state core curriculum goals and guidelines,

> critical and creative thinking, self-concept development, character development, and moral education.

Africentrism attempts to do for African American children what traditional Eurocentric education has always done for White Anglo-Saxon children, that is, offer children an educational orientation and frame of reference that is culturally relevant and offers an opportunity to see themselves as architects on the right side of history. Although I support African American children learning about their African heritage and see the merit of an African American epistemology, I am not fully convinced that most Africentric curriculum places enough emphasis on changing the consciousness of children to the extent that they realize the power they have to effect social change. My intent in this discussion, however, is not to speak for or against Africentric education, but to argue that efforts of those who advocate for color-blind educational reform to debase multicultural education, in general and, African centered education, in particular, are indicative of the pervasiveness of White superiority and habits of White privilege. Sullivan (2006) argued further:

> Since the erasure of positive conceptions of Blackness occurs in American culture even without colorblindness, the last thing needed in struggles against racism in Du Bois' day or today is a strategy that reinforces this erasure. White Americans generally have failed to acknowledge the ample gifts that Black Americans have made to American culture. (p. 123)

By diminishing the significance of race, none of this matters anyway to the dominant White race. Color-blind racism has free reign and where racism exists, it becomes like defacto segregation, a "laissez-faire," (Brown et al., 2003, p. 12), defacto racism.

The free reign of color-blind racism opens the floodgate for related racial diseases. I call attention to dysconscious racism and internalized racism, in particular, for two reasons: (a) both negatively impact teaching and learning, and (b) there is little hope of eradicating

either of them as long as the racial ideology of color-blindness prevails. I briefly referred to

dysconscious racism in a previous discussion. To review, "dysconscious racism is a form of

racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges" (King, 1991, p. 135). To

meaningfully discuss the concept, however, it is necessary to define dysconsiousness. King

(1991) defined dysconsiousness as "an uncritical habit of mind (including perceptions,

attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs) that justifies inequity and exploitation by accepting the

existing order of things as given" (p. 135). It is the opposite of critical consciousness,

which, Heaney (as cited in King, 1991) suggested "involves an ethical judgement [sic] about

the social order" (p. 135). King explained:

> Dysconsious racism is not the *absence* of consciousness (that is, not
> unconsciousness) but an *impaired* consciousness or distorted way of thinking about
> race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness. Uncritical ways of thinking
> about racial inequity accept certain culturally sanctioned assumptions, myths, and
> beliefs that justify the social and economic advantages White people have as a result
> of subordinating diverse others (Wellman, 1977). Any serious challenge to the status
> quo that calls this racial privilege into question challenges the self-identity of White
> people who have internalized these ideological justifications. (p. 135)

Dysconscious racism, like the habit of White privilege, is the "hallmark of racism"

(Wellman as cited in King, 1991, p. 135). When combined with a racial ideology of color-

blindness, teachers whose conscious understanding is based on the faulty and uncritical

thinking of dysconscious racism will continue to act in ways that stigmatize and oppress

children who are not White. Loury (2002) wrote about the impact of racial stigma upon

Blacks.

In *The "Anatomy of Racial Inequality"* Loury (2002) identified three axioms that

bear responsibility for racial inequality in the U.S.:

> Axiom 1 (Constructivism): Race is a socially constructed mode of human
> categorization. That people use marks on the bodies of others to divide the field of

human subjects into the subgroups we call "races" is a social construction for which no deeper justification in biological taxonomy is to be had.

   Axiom 2 (Anti-essentialism): The enduring and pronounced social disadvantage of African Americans is not the result of any purportedly unequal innate human capacities of the "races. Rather, this disparity is a social artifact—a product of the peculiar history, culture, and political economy of American society.

   Axiom 3 (Ingrained Racial Stigma): An awareness of the racial "otherness" of Blacks is embedded in the social consciousness of the American nation owing to the historical fact of slavery and its aftermath. This inherited stigma even today exerts an inhibiting effect on the extent to which African Americans can realize their human potential. (p. 5)

I posit that the phenomenon of ingrained racial stigma, as it relates to Blacks, is closely related to, if not synonymous with, internalized racism.

A number of Black co-counselors and participants in Black caucuses and Black workshops devoted to re-evaluation counseling have undertaken the study of internalized racism and its effects on African Americans. The consensus of these groups was that internalized racism is the primary means by which Blacks have been forced to perpetuate and participate in their own oppression. They alleged that "patterns of internalized oppression severely limit the effectiveness of every existing Black group" and, furthermore, that "no Black person in this society is spared" (Lipsky, 2009, p. 1). As part of their liberation work, they identified what they call *chronic distress patterns* that describe the ways in which internalized racism operates within the Black culture. Below is a description of how these patterns are manifested. The wording of each pattern has not been altered, therefore, the descriptions are in first person (i.e., I, we, us). The group is essentially "naming their voice"—and "naming own reality" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006, p. 20) as Black people fighting for the liberation of their people. Lipsky (2009) wrote:

> What are some of the ways patterns of internalized racism operate among us?
> - Individual relations—patterns of internalized feelings of rage, fear, indignation, frustration, and powerlessness are directed at each other—at other Black people—often those closest to us.

- Our children—we invalidate our children with fierce criticism and fault-finding, intending to "straighten them out," but in the process, destroying their self-confidence.
- Group effort—patterns of internalized racism cause us adults [sic] to find fault, criticize, and invalidate each other. This invariably happens when we come together in a group to address some important problem or undertake some liberation project. What follows is divisiveness and disunity leading to despair and abandonment of the effort.
- Leadership—patterns of internalized oppression cause us to attack, criticize, or have unrealistic expectations of any one of us who has the courage to step forward and take on leadership responsibilities.
- Isolation from other Blacks—patterns of internalized racism have caused us to be deeply hurt by our brothers and sisters. We often develop defensive patterns of fear, mistrust, withdrawal, and isolation from other Blacks. The isolation which results from internalized racism can become so severe that a Black person may feel safer with and more trustful of White people than of Blacks.
- Internalized stereotypes—patterns of internalized racism have caused us to accept many of the stereotypes of Blacks created by the oppressive majority society. We have been taught to be angry at, ashamed of, anything that differs too much from a mythical ideal of the middle class of the majority culture—skin that is "too dark," hair that is "too kinky," dress, talk, and music that is "too loud."
- Narrowing of Black culture—internalized oppression leads us to accept a narrow and limiting view of what is "authentic" Black culture and behavior. Blacks have been ridiculed, humiliated, attacked, and isolated because they excelled in school; because they did or did not talk in a particular way.
- Mistrusting our thinking—institutionalized racism and the internalize racism which results from it have given rise to patterns which cause us to mistrust our own thinking.
- Needing to feel good right now—the patterns of powerlessness and despair that result from this "impossible" situation give rise to still another pattern common among us, which I will call the "feel good now" pattern. Drugs, alcohol, and other; addictions; compulsive and hurtful sexual behaviors; flashy consumerism; irrational use of money; all kinds of elaborate street rituals, games, posturing and pretenses that waste our energies—these are all related to patterns of internalized and racism and oppression.
- Survival—internalized oppression is a major factor in the perpetuation of so-called "getting by" or "survival behaviors." Learning to silently withstand humiliation by practicing on one another is an example—e.g., playing "the dozens." In order to survive we have learned also not to show our feelings ("cool" patterns) or to disguise them ("tough" patterns)—particularly feelings of tenderness, love, and zest. (pp. 2-4)

Based on my experiences and observations as a Black woman, I propose that, in the tradition

of CRT, these interpretations represent the experiential knowledge of many other Black

voices. At first glance, some of these phenomena appear to mirror the claims of Whites who blame racial inequality on the pathology of Black culture; however, I argue that there is one major difference. Moynihan (1965) and others who have written about the diseased Black culture make the same mistake that racial realists make. They neglect the history of racism and its impact on Black Americans. Until the root of racism is revealed and confronted, the consequences of racism will never be fully understood or eradicated. Just as White educators can benefit from striving to be aware of dysconscious racism, Black educators can educators can benefit from recognizing internalized racism in themselves and their students. Black and White educators need to begin examining how their individual and collective practices contribute to dysconscious and internalized racisms.

Bonilla-Silva (2003) investigated the extent to which Blacks internalize the ideology of color-blindness. He found that many Blacks buy into the cultural frame. Indeed, some African American scholars of race, history, and sociology blame contemporary Black culture for the extant racial inequality in schools and society and minimize the structural origins of oppression (Cosby & Pouissant, 2007; McWhorter, 2001; Steele, 2007). Am I suggesting, as others might (Omi & Winant, 1994), that these Blacks are racist? Absolutely not! In my view, racism is, as Bonilla-Silva posited, "a sociopolitical concept that refers exclusively to racial ideology that glues a particular racial order" (p. 173). In that sense, color-blind racism is the "new racism"—a racism without racists. Bonilla-Silva suggested that Blacks may be prejudiced but not racist. He argued that Blacks cannot be racist because they do not possess the power to create a pro-Black racial state nor do they have the numbers needed to launch a revolution. The meaning of racism is well-debated in academia and many scholars would challenge the notion that racism is a function of prejudice plus power or prejudice plus

power plus strength in number. I posit that racism is, by nature, the preservation of privilege and the enactment of power to suppress, control, and deprive others. Andrew Hacker (2003) argued:

> If we care about racism, it is because it scars people's lives. Individuals who do not have power may hold racist views, but they seldom cause much harm. (No one cares if homeless people believe the earth is flat.) The significance of racism lies in the way it consigns certain human beings to the margins of society, if not to painful lives and earthly deaths. In the United States, racism takes it toll on Blacks. No White person can claim to have suffered in such ways because of ideas that may be held about them by some Black citizens. (p. 39)

I contend that there may be little benefit to labeling individual human beings as racist. What is more useful is to identify and fight against actions, thoughts, discourses, and policies that are racist.

I also want to emphasize another very important point. Let me be clear—I acknowledge the need for a reevaluation of values in the Black community. My contention is that finding the solution to racial inequality in education will require us to take action that goes much deeper than simply telling Black boys to pull up their pants and Black girls to stop having babies out of wedlock, as some critics suggest. Finding a solution will necessitate a good measure of honesty and race-critical consciousness. Cornell West (1993) explained:

> While Black people have never been simply victims, wallowing in self-pity and begging for White giveaways, they have been—and are—*victimized*. Therefore to call on Black people to be agents makes sense only if we also examine the dynamics of this victimization against which their agency will, in part, be exercised. What is particularly naïve and vicious about the conservative behavioral outlook is that it tends to deny the lingering effect of Black history—a history inseparable from though not reducible to victimization. In this way, crucial and indispensable themes of self-help and personal responsibility are wrenched out of historical context and contemporary circumstances—as if it is all a matter of will. (p. 14)

The critical questions, in my view, are what causes the oppositional/resistant behavior of

Black youth that we see in schools today? How might we redirect and transform that

behavior into productive resistance and counter-hegemony of social justice? For example,

Leonardo (2009) pointed out that the alleged "Black" attire and speech are not even Black-

specific anymore as Asians, Latino/a, and some Whites now dress and talk Black because of

the rising popularity of the hip-hop culture. Yet, Whites are not perceived as negatively as

Blacks. Leonardo theorized that Black opposition is the result of an effort to resist

Whiteness. He draws interesting parallels between the resistance of Black youth and

contemporary zero tolerance policies in schools. The limitations of this discussion do not

allow for a full examination of the concept of resistance, an important topic in its own right,

but I think Leonardo's comments on the relationship between Black youth and resistance to

Whiteness are worth repeating in their entirety:

> To the extent that urban youth of color promote their style as a form of resistance to Whiteness (Dyson, 2005; see also Rose, 1994), they represent what Gramsci (1971) calls "good sense." These acts, while not necessarily counter-hegemonic, recognize the urban space as a place of struggle. To the extent that they dress against Whiteness, Black youth are cognizant of the racial strife that they did not create but live with on a daily basis. If educators listen, they discover that youth of color, while ensnared in their own contradictions, penetrate the racial and class formation, and are able to exert their own will on these processes rather than being merely reproduced by them. Instead, the common school reactions to these urban dynamics include: metal detectors, more police on campus, emptying of backpacks, random searches of lockers and bags, no hats (to avoid gang affiliation). Since most, if not all, educators believe that creating a learning culture is part of raising achievement, we must conclude that these incarcerating policies re-create prison conditions where little learning is likely to take place. (p. 162)

I posit, as did Freire (2007), that learning requires love, caring, and critical

awareness, not an insensitive color-blind educational reform agenda, "high on threats and

low on assistance" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 163) that strives to discipline and punish. It is only

through critical elaboration and self-examination that teachers can assume the role of

transformative intellectuals committed to bringing about racial equality and social justice.

Race and racism are not dead and pretending they are will solve nothing. These are tough

issues. They exemplify America's primary moral challenge. Defeating racism and racial

inequality in our nation's public schools will require educators to open their eyes and hearts.

The prescient words of Frederick Douglass remind us that there is no easy way out:

> If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, or it may be moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. (Douglass as cited in Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 177)

As long as the social-political construction of race exists, there will be racism. We

are not a color-blind society in the ideal sense of people truly not using race to oppress or

privilege. Until we are, Blacks, in particular, cannot afford to pretend that race does not

matter. This does not mean that I am pessimist about the prospect of building a more just

world. I think I can and do make a difference. I can start by exposing the truth about "color-

blind racism" in contemporary color-blind educational reform.

In the chapters that follow, I present a race-critical historical case study of an all-

Black high school in a community of color—my hometown of Gary, Indiana. The story that

unfolds will not just be my story or their story—the story I tell will be America's story.

Chapter III: Gary, Indiana—A Microcosm of American History

Gary, Indiana
What a wonderful name,
Named for Elbert Gary of judiciary fame.
Gary, Indiana, as a Shakespeare would say,
Trips along softly on the tongue this way—
Gary, Indiana, Gary Indiana, Gary, Indiana,
Let me say it once again.
Gary, Indiana, Gary, Indiana, Gary, Indiana,
That's the town that "knew me when."
If you'd like to have a logical explanation
How I happened on this elegant syncopation,
I will say without a moment of hesitation
There is just one place
That can light my face.
Gary, Indiana,
Gary Indiana,
Not Louisiana, Paris, France, New York, or Rome, but—
Gary, Indiana,
Gary, Indiana,
Gary Indiana,
My home sweet home. (Gary, Indiana, n.d., lyrics)

I have not spent more than a few weeks at any one time in Gary since I graduated

from college more than 30 years ago. That is, until now. Until my concern for racial

inequality of got the best of me and I became consumed with trying to understand the history

of educational reform in America and, more specifically, the impact of contemporary color-

blind educational reform, I think I had rather effectively pushed Gary to the recesses of my

mind. Gary was just home, a place of endearment simply because it was home. As my

frustration mounted with the pervasive racism, inequity, subjugation, failure, and

hopelessness I saw in public education elsewhere, I became consumed with the magnitude of

these phenomena in the relatively small town of Gary and the particular change I saw in

Gary's symbol of what is best and bright—Theodore Roosevelt High School. My hometown

was changing for the worse. I even heard talk of deeply revered Roosevelt possibly closing.

I thought, what is going on? I became determined to try to find out what has transpired,

particularly in teaching and learning at Roosevelt, in the last 40 years and why. What's race

got to do with it? How has color-blind reform in the post-Civil Rights Era affected racial

inequality in the all-Black Gary Roosevelt High School? I realized that before I could begin

to deal with Roosevelt, I would have to understand the history of Gary. What I found

exposes a history of systematic racism, insidious inequality, and forsaken opportunity.

Gary's story symbolizes our American legacy of race hatred and offers lessons for reducing

that hatred.

"Every town has its unique stories, its personalities, and local politics . . . [and] it is

through these local particularities that social systems get constructed" (Gordon, 1999,

p. 209). With a keen and race-critical eye on the quality of life for African Americans in

Gary, my objective in this chapter is to elucidate the social history of Gary and to analyze

the impact of that history on the development of racial relations and public education. The

chapter is divided into three parts. In the first part, I give a brief account of Gary's earliest

growth and development and a city and educational center. Next, I illuminate the history of

education in Gary. Third, I focus on the confounding effect of political and economic

factors on racial inequality in Gary schools and society.

City of Dreams

> Behind the stacks billowing forth multi-colored smoke on the southern shore of Lake
> Michigan stands the United States Steel Corporation and its offspring, the wonder of
> the century, Gary, Indiana. (Meister, 1967, p. 1)

Founded in 1906 in the wake of the largest steel merger in all of history, Gary

became the enviable site of the newest plant of the United States Steel Corporation.

Sometimes referred to as "the magic city," "miracle city," and "city of the century," Gary

was expected to become an "industrial utopia" (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 11). The decision

to build a "steel city," (perhaps a more befitting nickname) on the sandy Lake Michigan land

that became known as Gary climaxed a long change process in the steel business and

American industry. As former Garyite and professor of history at Roosevelt University,

Elizabeth Balanoff (1974), explained:

> The decision to build a city on this particular spot was the culmination of a period of consolidation within the steel industry, with numerous smaller companies combining to form fewer larger ones, thereby reducing competition. This consolidation was also part of another historic change in the organization of American industry: vertical integration—that process whereby all phases of production of crude and finished steel products were brought under one central control. (p. 1)

From the merging of:

> Carnegie Steel Company, Federal Steel Company, and National Steel Company and several secondary steel companies such as American Bridge Company, American Sheet and Steel Company, American Steel Hoop Company, American Steel and Wire Company, American Tin Plate Company, National Tube Company, Consolidated Iron Mines and Bessemer Steamship Company was born the U.S. Steel Corporation. (Balanoff, 1974, p. 1)

Elbert Gary, the lawyer who brokered the earlier 1898 merger that created the Federal Steel

Company and for whom the city of Gary is named, became president of U.S. Steel. Critical

was the determination of a suitable location for the new mill.

Gary seemed like the perfect location for the modern new plants. Located just 30

miles east of the booming metropolis of Chicago on the sandy dunes of Lake Michigan, the

land was inexpensive, "especially because the corporation quietly secured large tracts before

publicly revealing its intentions" (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 12). Because the area was

undeveloped, there was an abundant amount of space available for additional mills and

plants. Lake Michigan, a beautiful natural resource, made water transportation to and from

nearby plants easily accessible and was deep enough to serve as a viable harbor for ore

freighters. In conjunction with the Calumet River, industrial plants would not have to worry about exhausting the water supply. The extant railways contributed to Gary's value as the trunk lines of five major railroads crossed the area securing access to coal and steel markets. Not to be overlooked, the vast labor market in Chicago was another important asset. From a business standpoint, the Gary site was ideal for the new U.S. Steel mill. There were few civic incentives at play in the decision to erect Gary. In his later years, when asked about the choice of Gary for the new mill, then Judge Gary responded:

> Why did the steel corporation build a plant on a sandy desert along the southern shores of Lake Michigan? Because of a love for Indiana? Oh no, none of us have any particular interest in that state. It was purely a business proposition. (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 13)

Indeed, the city planning, or lack of, that followed the opening of the mill illustrated great concern for capitalistic and business interests and very little love or regard for the well-being of the commoners whose labor would make the mills profitable. In fact, U.S. Steel corporate heads were determined to avoid establishing a paternalistic relationship with their workers. Fresh in their memory was the disastrous situation in Pullman, Illinois where the steel mill corporation practically owned the entire town's housing and retail business. Steel mill owners imposed a social order and value system upon workers while simultaneously exploiting them by charging exorbitantly high rent and utility charges in the corporate owned residences. The consequence of the abuse was the violent Pullman strike of 1894. The Gary Steel Corporation wanted no part of any situation remotely similar to the Pullman scenario. Hence, the responsibility for planning U.S. Steel's urban experiment—a model city—was delegated to the Gary Land Corporation (Mohl & Betten, 1986).

The model city planning never came to fruition. The land company's original intent was to sell vacant lots owned by U.S. Steel to city residents, but these efforts failed because

only corporate heads and the middle class could afford the lots. Lackluster lot sales forced

the land company to construct homes on the vacant lots in the hopes of renting them to Gary

residents. Gary historian James B. Lane (2006) reported "the barriers separating mill

officials, town leaders, and workers [were] symbolically seen in the first housing

arrangements" (p. 17). Hence, U.S. Steel and the Gary Land Company created the

beginning of a social system rife with perverse inequality in the making. History reveals that

these early barriers planted the seeds of racism and a legacy of racial inequality that would

come to define Gary, even more than did the steel industry. U.S. Steel officials were clearly

more concerned with building a profit-making steel industry than creating a model

community.

> According to Lane (2006):
>
> Five hundred units were rented out to occupants, including 260 on the West Side to middle-class families, 190 in the East Side suitably priced for unskilled workers, and 50 units for unskilled workers on the far Northeast—in apartments nicknamed "double dry goods boxes." (p. 19)

The latter project was a fiasco. Rent was so high and housing so scarce that original tenants

in the dry-good box areas, nicknamed Hungary Row and Hunkyville, often turned the

already small, often substandard, living quarters into boarding houses where as many as 20

people lived in cramped and unsanitary conditions. The dry-goods box area, however, was

short-lived, for by 1909 all of the tenants of the dry-goods box area were evicted by the land

company, but the poverty and the company it kept took up residence in an area on Gary's

south side called "The Patch" (Balanoff, 1974; Halstead & Phillips, 1937; Lane, 2006; Mohl

& Betten, 1986; Potts, 1937). For "poverty is never alone; rather it often comes packaged

with depression anger, poor nutrition and housekeeping, lack of education and medical care,

leaving children alone, exposing children to improper influences" (Gordon, 1999, p. 309).

All of these phenomena moved into and thrived in The Patch.

The Patch, an area south of the Wabash tracks, housed most of Gary's unskilled

workers and their families. It became home to Gary's growing population of Black and

White foreigners who were both essential and outcast—White and Black immigrants down

on their luck and in need of jobs and displaced squatters forced out of their homes by the

city. These foreigners were essential because U.S. Steel needed their labor; they were

outcasts because of their race and poor social class. For a few years, they lived side by side

with little conflict. The Patch was their shared community. Balanoff (1974) described

living conditions in The Patch:

> In the beginning, people in the Patch often lived in tents. Later most of them built tar
> paper covered shacks out of scrap lumber, begged, borrowed, or stolen. In a few
> years the early arrivals began building cheap wooden barracks-type housing to rent to
> those who came later. (p. 11)

In spite of the deplorable living conditions in the Patch, the word circulating around the

nation about Gary suggested otherwise.

> Never before in the history of the material development of the American continent,
> or its people has an industrial enterprise of such gigantic proportions been conceived
> and put into execution, and carried out, as the marvelous enterprise now building at
> Gary, Indiana. (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 14)

On November 25, 1907, Governor J. Frank Hanley predicted:

> I see for Gary a future of rare commercial power and signal industrial greatness. I
> see a city rise as if by magic, in proportions vast and splendid, with a hundred busy
> marts of traffic and of trade, with palatial homes unnumbered and seats of learning
> multiplied. (Lane, 2006, p. 15)

Optimistic proclamations such as these coupled with the promise of employment with the

newly founded U.S. Steel Corporation and, to be sure, the American gospel of meritocracy,

enticed immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, Blacks from the American South,

and eventually peasants from Mexico to brave a new and unfamiliar world in Gary, Indiana.

They came by the droves. Poles, Czechs, Russians, Lithuanians, Hungarians, Croatians,

Serbians, Slovaks, Turks, Greeks, and Italians arrived in search of jobs and a new beginning.

Conditions in the South contributed to the Negro Hegira to Gary. Blacks from Alabama,

Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee, Georgia, as well as the East and Midwest flocked to Gary.

"So fired were many Negroes with an overwhelming desire to leave the South that they get

on a train for the North with less than a dollar in their pockets after having bought a though

ticket" (Potts, 1937, p. 6). The push of all too familiar despairs and dried up prospects in a

bleak homeland coupled with the pull of jobs, progress, and a wellspring of opportunity for a

bright future fulfilled an irresistible penchant among the less fortunate for a fresh beginning

with U.S. Steel in Gary.

According to the 1910 Gary Census, Gary's population had swelled to over 16,000

residents. Just a few hundred of the earliest permanent residents were Black. Ten years

later, the city had over 55,000 residents, just over 5,000 of whom were Black. By 1930, the

city could boast of more than 100,000 residents, almost 20% of whom were Black. By all

accounts, however, the quality of life in society and schooling for Black immigrants differed

from that of Whites. Mohl and Betten (1986) explained:

> Like Gary's White immigrants, the Black newcomers arrived in the steel city hoping
> to fulfill economic aspirations and to achieve a new and better life for themselves and
> their children. Like the immigrants, the Blacks were building a community by
> establishing churches, businesses, benevolent and fraternal groups, and other
> neighborhood and community institutions. But because they were
> Black, they faced persistent problems of discrimination and segregation with which
> White immigrants did not have to contend. The nativism that confronted European
> immigrants in the United States was not a permanent condition carried across
> successive generations. White racism was not so easily eliminated. (pp. 49-50)

Blacks were not only openly discriminated against in housing, but also in job opportunities

within the mill, as reflected by lower job mobility than Whites enjoyed, access to

recreational facilities, hospitals, and social services. According to Balanoff (1974), Blacks

also incurred discrimination and ambivalence from law enforcement. "White criminals in

Gary took advantage of racial hostility aroused by the press in order to disguise themselves.

Several robberies and an attempted assault were reported to involve White men who had

Blackened their faces" (p. 108). The exacerbation of racist attitudes by the White press is

echoed by others.

Historians agree, in fact, that racism and racial segregation in Gary did not evolve

coincidentally from housing patterns or competition for jobs (Balanoff, 1974; Cohen, 2002;

Lane, 2006; Mohl & Betten, 1986). "Rather, discrimination and segregation in education,

housing, employment public services, and recreation was established and carried out by the

city's White elite—businessmen, bankers, realtor, educators, steel company officials, and

local government leaders" (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 50). Balanoff (1974) reported "long

before there were evidences of racial antipathy on the part of the foreign-born, community

leaders were sowing seeds of White supremacy" (p. 127). Indeed, the Gary experience

confirms the findings of several sociological research studies that suggest part of the

Americanization process for White immigrants is the development of racist, anti-Black

attitudes. In *An American Dilemma*, Myrdal (1944) observed:

> Recent immigrants apparently feel an interest in solidarity with Negroes or, at any
> rate, lack the intense of superiority feeling of the native Americans educated in race
> prejudice. But the development of prejudice against Negroes is usually one of their
> first lessons in Americanization. (p. 603)

In a study of race relations in Chicago, sociologists St. Claire Drake and Horace Cayton

noted in a study entitled *Black Metropolis* (1945) that, among the first things foreigners learn

upon coming to America is how to "cuss, count, and say nigger" (p. 57). Before any of the

aforementioned studies were conducted, Blacks in Gary had pondered the nature of racism.

No doubt, Blacks then, as now, must have struggled to grasp the dual meaning of race as race "was continually understood in a double and contradictory manner, referring to those who were alien and to the whole 'human race'" (Gordon, 1999, p. 198).

As early as 1927, the influential Black newspaper, *The Gary Sun,* featured excerpts from an article written by Black scholar Kelly Miller that was published in the *Journal of Applied Sociology* entitled, "Is Race Prejudice Innate or Acquired?" Miller (1927) wrote:

> Is race prejudice a natural antipathy, parallel with other instincts, which cannot be importantly affected by any means at human command, or is it merely a stimulated animosity, the outgrowth of circumstances and conditions which may be modified, mollified, or removed with provoking conditions? This query is not merely an idle intellectual curiosity stimulating abstract mental gymnastics.
> Upon its answer depend all of our programs of race relationship. The significance of the outcomes cannot be overestimated, mankind are [sic] instinctively antipathetic, we must revise all of our received religious and ethical teachings. The claims of Christianity would become absurd, democracy impossible, and the brotherhood of man unthinkable. . . . What basis would there be for the optimistic prophecy of peace on earth good will toward men? [sic] Every advance in knowledge and achievement would hasten universal holocaust. (p.1)

Miller concluded that race prejudice is acquired, but not before sharing some provocative thoughts on the phenomenon of race prejudice and the underlying cause of racial antipathy. Ironically, in his effort to discount the innate nature of race prejudice, he spoke to the natural consequences of socially constructed inequality. He wrote:

> It is often asserted that the Negro longs to lose his identity and become one with the White race. Whatever truth there might be in this allegation tends strongly to upset the theory that race prejudice is an instinctive antipathy. The inferior always pays homage to the superior. The White man occupies the higher stations in our social scheme; the Negro desires to be like him for the advantage which such likeness confers. If the conditions were reversed, there would be a reversal of racial attitudes. Ignorance takes on intelligence, poverty craves wealth, coarseness would acquire culture, impotence strives to increase in power. There is never a tendency in the opposite direction. But these are acquired, not inherited characteristics. (p. 8)

I draw attention to these comments because they speak to underlying issues related to race and racism across America and in Gary, then and now. If, indeed, race is a social

construction as most scholars have argued, so, too, is racial inequality. Miller suggested that race prejudice might be reversed if social conditions were different. The primary determinant of prejudice, he implied, is the social construction of racial inequality—one race being superior to the other. Would Blacks treat Whites the same way that Whites treat Blacks if the Black race was deemed the superior race? Foucault might think the answer yes. My point is that no matter whether race and racial inequality (the determination of superiority and inferiority between races) are social constructions or not, the effects and consequences of those constructions are very real. I think it is also interesting that Miller wrote of prejudice, not racism, per se. I can only conjecture that prejudice, unlike the often nebulous root evil of racism, stood out as more of a problem because of its high visibility.

Ironically, the Miller (1927) article shared top billing in the same October 1927 issue of *The Sun* with an article about the infamous Mississippi court case in which a Native-born Chinese student was barred from attending an all-White school. According to *The Sun*:

> The court ruling in the case of W. F. Bond, state superintendent of education, against Joe Rif Fung, an adult, and Joe Tin Lun, a minor, said that friction, disorder, and general unhappiness would be occasionable [sic] if efforts were made to associate the Caucasian race with the colored race in Mississippi schools. The court defined as colored any race other than Caucasian and held that it would be necessary for Joe Tin Lun to enroll in a Negro School. (Chinese barred from Mississippi White school, 1927, p. 1)

This ruling signified a national trend in which "all social difference was becoming racial in America" (Gordon, 1999, p. 197).

Simply put, what gradually became most important to White Americans across the nation and in Gary was not being Black. European immigrants, no matter their origin of birth, discovered the property value of Whiteness, the benefits of White privilege, and the necessity of White racism. Bound by a commitment to the preservation of Whiteness,

European immigrants and the native-born White elites perpetuated a racialized social system complete with racial fences that like an iron curtain effectively kept Blacks in their place as second-class citizens. The public educational system served as a primary means of reinforcing the iron curtain.

Progressive Oppression

> Pause you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day. (Dickens, 1860, p. 1)

It is impossible to critically review the history of Gary without studying its educational background. Gary was founded at the pinnacle of the Progressive Era, a period in the nation's history wrought with innovation, ambiguity, and paradox. As mentioned in chapter 1, public education during the Progressive Era reflected two schools of thought each of which served different, and often contradictory, purposes. On the one hand, social progressives, highly influenced by the teaching of John Dewey, aimed to reform the schools so that children would learn about life in its totality by making schools more creative, democratic, and child-centered. Administrative progressives, on the other hand, drawing on the work of Frederick Taylor's theory of scientific management, sought to bring efficiency and economy to the process of educating youngsters. Despite conflicts about how to best educate the nation's youth and where the primary emphasis should be placed in schools, social and administrative progressives promoted traditional native-born American ideals. Progressives generally believed in the superiority of American Protestant culture, republican polity, individualism and personal industry, the sanctity of property rights, poverty as a weakness or character flaw, and the capability of schools to educate, save, and Americanize

youngsters as well as cure the ills of society. Cubberly (as cited in Mohl & Betten, 1986)

expressed the goals of Americanizers:

> Our task is to break up these groups or settlements, to assimilate and amalgamate
> these people as a part of our American race, and to implant in their children, so far as
> can de done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and
> popular government, and to awaken in them a reverence for our democratic
> institutions and for those things in our national life which we as a people hold to be
> of abiding worth. (p. 130)

"Fearful of the social consequences of mass immigration, most native-born Americans

viewed the school as a homogenizing agent, one that would break down immigrant cultures

and traditions and secure adherence to more acceptable American habits dispositions,

beliefs, and values" (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 130). The heightened influx of immigrants

brought on by increased industrialization and opportunities for employment made the job of

schools in fast-growing cities quite a challenge. Gary was no exception.

The situation in Gary was further complicated by the fact that the city faced three

challenges: (a) to become established as a city, (b) to build a thriving mill, and (c) to devise a

means of educating a population of foreigners, both European immigrants, Blacks from the

South, and later immigrants from Mexico. Because of the traditional value Americans

placed on education and the belief that schools would serve as the primary vehicle for

Americanization and social progress, Gary's founders wasted no time in planning a school

system. By 1907, even before Gary had permanent buildings or organizations, it had a

school board. "Its three members held their first meeting in mid-September, when they hired

one teacher to manage their city's 67 children of school age" (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 13).

One month later, William A. Wirt was hired as the first superintendent of the Gary public

schools. Ronald D. Cohen (2002), in *Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary,*

Indiana, 1906-1960, wrote of Wirt:

Wirt epitomized the new breed of urban superintendents—White, male, Protestant, Republican, small town—who believed in individual and civic virtue. He and many others were lured to the city where there they found decent pay, power, prestige, and a challenge. They were also influenced by the new science of school administration, pioneered by Wirt's contemporaries, particularly Ellwood P. Cubberly at Stanford, George Strayer at Teacher's College, Columbia University, Charles Judd at the University of Chicago, and Paul Hanus at Harvard. Here, Wirt's background somewhat diverged from the norm, for he had only fleeting contact with the University of Chicago; otherwise, he fit the mold. And he was more creative than most. (p. 5)

Once an admiring student of John Dewey at the University of Chicago, Wirt tried to implement in the Gary schools Dewey's idea of education "as an embryonic community life, active with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society and permeated throughout with the spirit of art, history, and science" (Cremin, 1961, p. 155). In Gary, Wirt had the unique opportunity to build a school system from the bottom up. The system he devised, referred to as the Gary Plan, drew national and international acclaim as a model of progressive education.

The Gary Plan offered something for everyone as it "incorporated numerous school reforms advocated by educators with vastly differing philosophies" (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 5). Social progressives were pleased because:

Wirt's notion was not only to afford each child vastly extended educational opportunity—in playgrounds, gardens, libraries, gymnasiums and swimming pools, art, and music rooms, science laboratories, machine shops, and assembly halls—but to make the school the true center of the artistic and intellectual life of the neighborhood. (Cremin, 1961, p. 155)

Administrative progressives were pleased with the Gary Plan because of Wirt's focus on economic and spatial efficiency; getting the maximum use of the school plant. Open all day, 12 months a year, to all groups, the Gary Plan aimed toward a goal of community improvement, "the most important lever of social progress" (Cremin, 1961, p. 155). The

structural organization led to its popular nicknames of the platoon system or the work-study-play design.

Wirt devised a plan whereby students were divided into two platoons, referred to as X and Y (Cohen & Mohl, 1979) or Alpha and Beta (Lane, 2006). "Instead of following the usual plan of assigning each child to a permanent desk, 40 desks to a classroom, Wirt conceived of a ship, laboratory, playground, and auditorium as fully used parts of any school. If half the children at any time could be using these facilities, then only half as many regular classrooms would be needed for a given number of children" (Cremin, 1961, p. 155). Hence, children were separated into platoons that were in school at the same time, but never simultaneously in the same classroom. Much like in the steel mills, the school day and the children were organized into shifts, except that all of the children reported at the same time for an eight and half hour school day. For a portion of each school day, children in one platoon were assigned to classrooms where they received instruction in traditional academic subjects that followed the Indiana course of study. Meanwhile, the students assigned to the other platoon were divided up into smaller groups that rotated between a succession of organized activities that utilized the remaining facilities, such as the gymnasium, swimming pools, and athletic fields. These students took classes in art, music, dancing, or drama; studied in libraries or science laboratories; went on excursions into the community; or, perhaps, attended special lectures and programs for children. Later in the day, the platoons exchanged places so as to give every child exposure to a total educational experience. The unit schools went from kindergarten through the 12th grade and equal emphasis, at least in theory, was placed on work, study, and play. Students learned by doing. They published their own school newspaper and yearbook, helped prepare food in

the school cafeteria, and cared for animals kept on the school grounds. Wirt held that "schools should forget the distinction between the cultural and the utilitarian" (Lane, 2006, p. 43). The objective was "to make every working man a scholar and every scholar a working man." In an effort to eliminate waste, an academic tracking system was in place. "Each student was classified as a rapid, normal, or slow learner, the differentiation applying not so much to curriculum as to length of time it took to graduate" (Lane, 2006, p. 43). Open all day, 12 months a year, and to all age groups, the Wirt system relished the opportunity to bring about social progress and the all-important Americanization of immigrant youth.

In a Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) (2001) documentary entitled, *School: The Story of American Public Education 1900-1950*, several immigrants recollected their early educational experiences in the platoon system. Former Gary student and teacher, Marie Edwards remembered "Emerson School had at least two city blocks for territory, large athletic field, beautiful playground area, and one little thing that I remember there was visiting their zoo. I can remember bears but nothing any bigger than that" (PBS, 2001). She added "Horace Mann, where I went to school, in front of our campus, we had a beautiful lagoon in front with swans swimming." The schools even taught animal husbandry. Life skills, heath, and hygiene were taught as well as manners. Edwards (PBS, 2001) told of the vice-principal at her school, Horace Mann, hosting teas to teach proper manners. Hylda Burton, another former student and teacher, happily recalled Emerson School. "The school was marvelous. As a matter of fact, I had never been in a school where they had a great big swimming pool." According to historian Ronald D. Cohen (2002), the swimming pools were recreational, but also served as a means of providing opportunities for students with no

indoor plumbing to bathe. The Gary schools aimed to offer immigrant students everything their parents did not. Nothing but appreciation was expressed in Burton or Edwards' comments. Their appreciation was not uncommon as many immigrants were often as eager to become American as the native-born Americans were to Americanize them (Cohen & Mohl, 1979). Perhaps Burton's (PBS, 2001) comments captured the sentiments of many Gary immigrants, "it was really lovely to go to school. We enjoyed it." For the record, there are no Black faces or narrators in the documentary. The picture for Blacks in Gary was not quite as rosy.

In 1909, Black children were forced out of the White Jefferson School and mandated to attend a segregated school started for Blacks only. Hardly palatial, progressive, or child-centered, the school for Black children was located in rented facilities in the basement of Baptist church. If child-saving sentiments prevailed for White children, they appeared to be of significantly less importance for Black children, as the school Blacks had to attend was located next door to the infamous Dave Johnson's saloon. In defense of his decision to segregate the schools, Wirt offered the following statement to the *Gary Daily Tribune*:

> We believe that it is only in justice to the negro children that they be segregated. There is naturally a feeling between negroes and Whites in the lower grades and we are sure the colored children will be better cared for in schools of their own and they will take pride in their work and also consequently get better grades. (Cohen, 2002, p. 8)

Drawing on the alleged position of Booker T. Washington, the *Gary Daily Tribune* (as cited in Cohen, 2002) argued that Blacks would benefit from having Black teachers and stated further that "it is certain that as soon as they become accustomed to the situation the [Black] school children will become friendly rivals of the other children in their school work" (Cohen, 2002, p. 8). The anticipated friendly relationship never really materialized and the

platoon system eventually died out as did the lofty goals of U.S. Steel, but segregated education thrived and lives on, even to this day in Gary. Blacks were the most conspicuously segregated lot, eventually being crowded into the first Negro school, the Twelfth Avenue School, but, quiet as it was kept, there was a fair amount of segregation among the schools for Whites as well.

The constant influx of European immigrants necessitated the opening of a new school, Froebel, in 1912. Froebel, located on the city's shabby south side, was to become the unofficial school for second generation Americans, "an indispensable agency for immigrant assimilation" (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 89). The demographics of Froebel's immigrant population were markedly different, however, from those of the original Gary schools, Jefferson and Emerson. By 1916, 87% of Froebel's population was immigrant, mostly from Eastern and Southeastern Europe, considered "culturally backward" by native-born Americans (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 89). In contrast, the immigrant populations at Jefferson, Emerson, and Horace Mann schools, were much lower and came from more respected areas of northern and western Europe. Jefferson, Emerson, and Horace Mann were also located in better neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the Black migration to the North brought more and more African Americans to Gary. Blacks continued to be crammed in the Twelfth Avenue School. Their two Black teachers had begun expanding the curriculum to include plays, musicals, drills, concerts, and even Saturday school. Lacking adequate equipment, some of the students were allowed to use the facilities at Emerson for one hour a day. According to Cohen (2002):

> The impending opening of Froebel school in the same neighborhood caused a shift in thinking among school officials. While the Gary school authorities wish to give the colored children every educational advantage that other children have, reported *The Gary Daily Tribune*, the segregation arrangement must be kept up. The children

cannot be left in the portable buildings when other children are accommodated in fine new buildings and unless some arrangements are made to place them in new buildings, the construction of a small building would be necessary and even in this the children would not have the advantage of a large school. (p. 36)

In a conciliatory move, Wirt decided to allow Black students to attend Froebel, but restrict them to two segregated classrooms. They were not allowed to use the swimming pool, but could use the manual-training rooms, the gymnasium, and the playground. Only a few Blacks were initially transferred to Froebel; the majority remained in the overcrowded portables for another full year. Finally, in July of 1913, the remaining portables were dismantled at the Twelfth Avenue School and all of the Black students transferred to Froebel, but segregation continued. "While sharing some of the facilities, the Black students were deemed unfit to benefit fully from the system" (Cohen, 2002, p. 36). Whites justified the unequal treatment of Blacks. Most likely, being White and enjoying the privileges of not being Black deterred Whites at Froebel from realizing that they, too, were victims of discrimination.

School reports and surveys suggest that the Eastern and Southern European immigrant population at Froebel did not receive an education equal to that of native-born American Whites or European immigrants from Northern and Western Europe who attended Horace Mann, Jefferson, or Emerson Schools. Cohen and Mohl (1979) reported:

The Froebel pattern clearly suggests that immigrant children were educationally short-changed in Gary. Their educational difficulties, especially language and culture, were handled insensitively, and their teachers often treated them and their traditions with contempt. They had fewer academic opportunities, and the system pushed them into manual training and household arts at an early age. Not surprisingly, these students scored poorly in achievement tests, attended school irregularly, and dropped out of school at the legal age in large numbers. The Gary schools under William Wirt simply were not receptive to cultural differences. Rather, they systematically sought to socialize ethnic children according to standard American values and beliefs. Americanization, in short, formed the heart of the schools' mission in Gary. (p. 94)

This mission, however, did not include Negroes. For, in Gary as across the nation, "Whites who controlled systems of public education excluded, segregated, or cheated Black pupils. . . . Negroes learned that the educational system that was to homogenize other Americans was not meant for them" (Tyack, 1974, p. 110). Wirt's rhetoric of progressive education for all carried a different meaning for Blacks. The so-called integration at Froebel was hardly the beginning of the end of segregated education in Gary.

During the Great War, the number of Blacks migrating to Gary increased significantly and so did segregated education between 1914 and 1919. Due to World War I, the White work force in the Gary steel mills sharply declined. Greatly disrupted was the influx of European immigrants and many White male Gary residents went to fight in the War; hence, Black labor was in high demand. By 1920, almost 5,000 Blacks resided in Gary, as opposed to only 383 in 1910 (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 111). Additional housing and segregated schooling became immediately necessary. In fact, a dual pattern of segregation was being established: separate buildings or separate classes in an integrated facility. At the urging of Superintendent Wirt, in 1915, two classes of Blacks were transferred out of Froebel and sent to new portables set up for Blacks at the new 21st Avenue School. Froebel was located on the south side of town; the 21st Avenue School on the east. Interestingly, it seemed that Gary was geographically, racially, and ethnically divided into the right and wrong side of the tracks, so to speak. The supposedly culturally backward Eastern and Southern Europeans were contained in the south and east sections of town with the presumed worst of the whole lot—the Negroes, while the middle and upper class native born Whites and Northern and Western Europeans lived and went to school in the northern and western sections of town.

To continue, the move of Blacks to the new 21st Avenue School was justified because, according to Wirt, the Gary schools "have been segregated from the very beginning" (Wirt as cited in Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 113). "It is a settled policy in this community to continue this segregation" (Wirt as cited in Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 113). Predictably, the separate facilities were unequal. Assistant Superintendent G. S. Schwartz (1918) expressed dismay over the conditions at the new 21st Avenue School in a letter to Wirt and asserted his belief that "teachers want to have a good school at 21st Ave. They rightfully feel that in some respects they are neglected" (Schwartz as cited in Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 116). It was clear that "in the case of the 21st Avenue School . . . the school board was not going to provide all of the equipment deemed essential" (p. 116). To further complicate matters, as more and more Blacks migrated to Gary, adequate housing and schooling for Blacks became crucial issues. In 1919, a portable Virginia Street School was built for Blacks only and, in 1920, Gary had almost 5,000 Black residents. In response to the rapidly growing Black population, the Gary Land Company saw fit to erect a Black housing subdivision on the east side that would become Gary's first Black neighborhood. As the Black community developed, racial tensions mounted at Froebel and throughout the city.

A series of racial incidents shaped the future of the Gary schools. Within the Froebel School, where segregation and integration coexisted, Blacks were remanded to an inferior position. In 1918, 43 White teachers from Froebel approached Superintendent Wirt about removing the Black students from Wirt. They claimed that the Blacks behaved "like a pack of wild animals" and that "the promiscuous association of the White and colored students is a terrible thing" (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 57). "It should not be allowed," one teacher

protested, "particularly in a school with the large number of foreign pupils. They will soon lose sight of the color line" (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 57). The teachers did not get their wish and racial discord festered. In 1924, the issue of segregation publicly resurfaced. Black civil rights attorney, W. C. Hueston (as cited in Cohen & Mohl, 1979), complained to Wirt about the severe overcrowding at the all-Black east-side Virginia Street School—the principal of the nearby all-White Pulaski School contended that "her school was for the Polish and the Virginia Street School was for Negroes" (p. 119). In his complaint, Hueston expressed the sentiments of the Black community—while most Blacks might chose to attend the Virginia Street School, it was wrong in principle to mandate segregated schooling. Segregation, he asserted, instilled racism in White immigrants (Cohen & Mohl, 1979). Wirt defended the segregated situation, claiming that Gary had one separate school for Whites, two for Blacks, and 15 for both. This was, of course, a bit of stretch of the truth because de facto segregation ensured that, in reality, only Froebel was integrated. Nevertheless, in 1928, the old Virginia School portables moved a few blocks and became known as East Pulaski, a school for coloreds. The original Pulaski was referred to as West Pulaski, for Whites only. The Black/White divide deepened. Fear of blurring the color line, no doubt, precipitated the infamous strike of 1927.

In September 1927, as a temporary solution to extreme overcrowding in the all-Black Virginia/East Pulaski Street School, Wirt transferred 24 Black students to Emerson School, the all-White school in the northern area of town where middle and upper class, native-born Americans lived. In spite of the fact that the school board had indicated the action was only temporary, Whites erupted in vehement protest. Six hundred White students stormed out of Emerson School on September 26, 1927 carrying signs that promised, "We won't go back

until Emerson's all White" (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 58). On the second day of the strike,

the number of students striking had grown to 800; by day three, nearly half of Emerson's

student body, some 2,800 students had joined the strike. The strike ended on the fourth day

with a compromise:

> All but three of the three of Emerson's Black students were withdrawn and either
> sent to Froebel or the Virginia Street School; hastily erected portable classrooms
> would accommodate the overflow from the over-crowded Black schools on the south
> side; three Black graduating seniors were permitted to remain at Emerson to take
> college preparatory classes they could get in no other Gary school; and the city
> council, with three Black councilmen opposed, appropriated funds for the new Black
> portables and for the construction of the new all-Black Roosevelt High School on the
> south side. (Mohl & Betten, 1986, p. 58)

The provision for Roosevelt High School, according to Henry Hay, vice-president of the

Gary school board, was in keeping with the right of taxpayers "to put an end to the present

practice of educating the White and colored of the city in mixed schools" (Hay as cited in

Balanoff, 1974, p. 280). Hay (as cited in Balanoff, 1974) continued:

> Under the law the board of education has the right to segregate pupils, but before that
> right can be exercised the school government must provide a school center for
> colored pupils in every way equal in equipment and training to the schools in which
> White children are educated. (p. 280)

And so it was. Roosevelt High School would become the separate-but-equal school, Pulaski

would maintain the racial/ethnic/class demarcation in segregated buildings on one campus,

other Gary schools would remain largely segregated with few exceptions, and Froebel would

remain the segregated, but integrated school within a school until well into the late 1940s

and early 1950s.

Integration at Froebel epitomized the pathology of racism and left an indelible

impression on many of its Black graduates. Although ostensibly integrated, as school

officials loved to boast, Black students were subjected to cruel segregation and often

ostracized by White teachers and students. Even when Blacks were allowed to take the same

class as Whites, the social boundaries were clearly drawn along racial lines. In a speech

given at the 60th joint class reunion of Black Froebel and Roosevelt graduates, by Dr.

Clarence W. Boone, a 1949 graduate of Froebel, wrote:

> The White students had structured organizations for every grade from 9th through
> 12th, whereas the "colored students" from the Freshman Class, were all grouped
> together in the Junior-Senior Club. Yes, all the students attended classes together,
> but for some reason, we couldn't socialize together. This separatism or "racism" had
> been long standing [sic], and it was ardently supported by White Eastern European
> parents, as well as some racially biased teachers. It was also strictly maintained by
> the School Board of Gary, and it was vigorously enforced by Mr. Lutz, the then
> Superintendent of Schools. (Boone, 2009, p. 3)

Classes were programmed differently for Blacks as well. It was assumed that Black girls

would become housewives. Some were:

> Chosen for technical training, e.g., secretarial and office procedures, this would
> prepare them for a better class of employment in later life. [Black males, on the
> hand,] were almost always scheduled for some type of manual training, i.e., foundry,
> woodshop, welding or mechanical drawing. We were prepared for the future labor of
> U.S. Steel and similar industries. (Boone, 2009, p. 6)

It was not that Whites did not also take these classes; the difference was that their attendance

was voluntary while Black enrollment was programmed. While Boone (2009) recollected a

myriad of pleasant and unpleasant times, one memory seems a bit more pronounced than the

others. He wrote:

> The class of 1949 was the first freshman class after the end of World War II. I will
> never forget the beautiful morning of September 18, 1945, when Froebel School was
> unusually empty as the eight o'five [sic] bell rang to start the school day. It didn't
> take long to realize that the only students in attendance were the "colored Students."
> At first, I thought it was another one of those "White ethnic" holidays, but after about
> 30 minutes, a White parent came storming down the hallway, shouting in broken
> English at his son and later telling the study hall teacher to call him, if his son left
> school again to rejoin the other White students in the great "racial strike" against the
> colored Students. Yes, the *"status of separatism"* had finally become *"overt
> racism!"* (p. 9)

Indeed, the strike of 1945 was Gary's second major school strike. It came on the heels of several keystone events in Gary's educational history.

A couple of years before the strike, two major investigations were conducted on the quality of education in the Gary Schools. In one 1941 report of an investigation conducted by the Purdue Survey Committee for the Gary Board of Education, researchers found that students at the high schools with higher immigrant populations graduated significantly fewer students than the schools with greater nativist populations (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 90). Results of a 1944 study of the Gary Schools conducted by the National Urban League revealed startling facts about racial inequality in schools and society in the Gary area. They reported a disproportionate number of Black boys assigned to special education classes at Froebel. Roosevelt High School remained exceptionally overcrowded, "at present to have 500 more students in attendance than capacity and to operate at 122.5%" (National Urban League, 1944, p. 24). With respect to the East and West Pulaski Schools, "because of the way it must be done, the colored [kindergarten] teacher had an average of 33 children while the White teacher had an average of 15 children" (National Urban League, 1944, p. 24). Researchers found also that Negro and White children must travel out of their way to maintain the segregated status quo, with the "Negro child to have as much as a mile and a half one way" in some cases (National Urban League, 1944, p. 25). Swimming pools at Froebel remained bones of contention as historically, when finally allowed to swim in the pool, Blacks could only swim in the pool after Whites on the night before the pool was to be cleaned. Use of parks and supervised recreational facilities were in dire need in the Black community. Even the beaches at Lake Michigan were largely off limits to Black citizens. Generally speaking, the Urban League Report concluded that Blacks experienced limited

opportunities for housing, employment, or advancement. Some Whites in the Froebel area

believed, however, that Blacks were gaining too much power and feared they might overrun

the school.

Whites in the Froebel area were fed up with what some called the "racial

experimentation" (Lane, 2006, p. 170). The Froebel strike of 1945 was initiated to put an

end to integration. The strike made national news and cast an unfavorable light on Gary.

An organization called the Anselm Form, a local intercultural group, brought singer Frank

Sinatra to Gary to ease the tensions. Sinatra cancelled a $10,000 engagement to come to

Gary. On November 1, 1945 he performed at Gary's Memorial Hall and openly chastised

the White strike sympathizers. Lane (2006) wrote "he labeled the strike as 'the most

shameful incident in the history of American education' and suggested that the adults who

fomented the trouble be run out of town" (p. 172). The strike officially ended on November

12, 1945, but "it was almost three months before the strike was fully stamped out" (Cohen &

Mohl, 1979, p. 59). As a consequence of the strike and highly critical 1944 study by the

National Urban League, the Gary school board and some people in the community began to

reevaluate their position on segregated education.

Joseph Chapman, head of the Gary chapter of the Urban League, "worked diligently

to for a satisfactory resolution" (Cohen, 2002, p. 183). His efforts paid off. On March 2,

1946, the *Post Tribune* reported that "White and colored students at Froebel today issued a

joint statement declaring a permanent truce between racial groups and pledging themselves

to follow the American way of living together" (Cohen, 2002, pp. 183-184). Later that same

year, the school board adopted an integration plan and initiated action along with the local

urban league to end the racial strife at Froebel. Even the *Gary American,* the Black weekly

newspaper, proclaimed "the spectre [sic] of race hate, suspicion, and mutual distrust between

Negro and White students has been dissolved" (p. 184). By late spring of 1947, the school

board set up an intercultural scholarship foundation that would pay for Gary teachers to

attend professional development workshops aimed at increasing intercultural relations. On

August 27, 1947, the school board passed a resolution to adopt an integration policy that

prohibited discrimination against any child based on race, color, or religion. Many of Gary's

elite recognized the need for change but racist sentiments, particularly in the Emerson area,

the second oldest school in Gary located on a predominantly middle class all-White north

side neighborhood, did not die easily.

When school opened in September of 1947 and 38 Black students dared to enter

Emerson's threshold, history repeated itself. Just like 20 years earlier, Whites erupted in

protest at the arrival of Black students, only this time the controversy was not over the

admission of high school students, but elementary age (7th grade) students. The strike made

national news. An article in *Time* (1947) magazine entitled "Education: No Gain" portrayed

Gary and U.S. schools in an unsavory light:

> In the ugly steel-mill town of Gary, Ind. one day last week, hundreds of pupils
> clustered excitedly outside Emerson school, a little uncertain what to do next. They
> were on strike. In a locked room inside, School Superintendent Charles D. Lutz
> pleaded with the members of the Emerson "Golden Tornado" football team. He
> figured that they could end the strike if anyone could: like most U.S. schools,
> Emerson was full of boys whose chief interest in life is football, and girls whose
> chief interest in boys who play football.
> In Gary's crucible of steel and humanity, there are 5,000 Negro students; a
> recent school board ordinance, designed to end segregation in Gary once and for all,
> had shifted about 35 Negro boys and girls into the lower grades of Emerson. When
> school opened last week, about 1,000 of Emerson's 1,750 pupils stayed home in
> protest. Next day, 100 more stayed home; the third day, 1,300 students were out.
> (paras. 1-2)

An article in the *Journal of Education* entitled, "Pupil Strike Traced to Hate Spreader" (1947) reported the arrest of alleged strike ringleader, Joel Eddy, a middle-aged store operator. According to the anonymous Gary author, Eddy, "accused of encouraging the mass truancy of Emerson School students here, was arrested on charges of acting to violate Indiana's new anti-hate law" (p. 239). Gary seemed unable to unshackle the chains of racism. Little had been learned from similar situations in the Gary's past. Superintendent Lutz was unsuccessful in his plea to the football players. One football player, unfettered by Lutz' appeal, responded "we'll go back to school if you transfer the Negroes" (*Time*, 1947, para. 2). Determined to prove that he meant business, Lutz ended up suspending all of the striking students that were over age 16. Suspended students could return to school only by arguing their cases individually along with their parents. According to *Time* (1947):

> All activities- including football—were suspended for the year. Unchastened, 1,300 pupils were still out the next day. That night 1,000 of them—and 500 of their parents—held a rally in front of the school, chanting over & over: "We won't go back. (para. 2)

Records from the 1947 Northern Indiana Conference Football Standings and Results confirmed "Emerson had to cancel games with Froebel, Wallace, Tolleston, and Horace Mann due to the student strike at Emerson" (Northern Indiana Conference Football Standings and Results, 1947). Missing from the schedule was Roosevelt. White schools were reluctant to schedule games with Roosevelt. Balanoff (1974) explained, "Roosevelt was finally admitted to the IHSA in 1943 but was not allowed to join the North West Indiana Conference until 1961" (p. 309). In total, approximately 600 Emerson students were expelled, and upon readmission were barred from extracurricular activities for the rest of the school year (Cohen, 2002, p. 190). Lutz and others believed the animus of the strike came from parents, not children. Fed up with the situation, the established White community,

steelworkers, Gary Chamber of Commerce, civil rights organizations, and local clergy

"closed ranks to defeat the strikers" (Cohen, 2002, p. 191). Finally, after 10 days, the strike

ended. Desegregating Gary's schools seemed imminent. Coincidentally, 1947 was also the

year that the Truman Commission on Human Rights released its report confirming the

existence of racism in America and the need to live up to the ideals for which America is

supposed to stand. But, change did not happen fast enough. In fact, the situation in Gary

deteriorated.

> Sociology professor, Max Wolff (1963) explained:
>
> By 1951, 85% of the schools were segregated, and 83% of the 8,406 Black children were attending all-Black schools. Ten years later, 90% of the schools were highly segregated, and 97% of the 23,055 Black pupils were in 18 predominantly or exclusively Black schools, with primarily Black teaches and administrators. The ever-worsening problem of school overcrowding was particularly galling. All five schools in the Black district were over capacity: by 1949, the Roosevelt school was bulging at the seams with 3,800 students in a building built to hold no more than 2,711. Half-day classes, rented facilities, and overflowing classrooms soon became common at Roosevelt and many other schools. Gary entered the 1950s as one of the most segregated cities in the north. (p. 253)

Wolff studied patterns of containment of the Negro in the Gary schools despite a 174 percent

increase in the Black population. He found a consistent pattern of practice although it rarely

appeared in writing. The pattern was as follows:

1. To build new schools within the segregated secondary school zones—an equal number of White and Negro schools at any one time.
2. To keep the secondary school zone lines intact, no matter what zone changes were made for elementary schools.
3. To change school organization as needed to relieve pressure or maintain existing secondary school zones.
4. To keep one secondary school as a transition school—permitting White children to leave through a liberal transfer policy and the establishment of "optional attendance zones." (p. 254)

The transition school concept was practiced during and after legal segregation. After the

decision was made that Roosevelt would serve only Blacks in 1938, Froebel became the

transition school. By 1951, Froebel was 56% Black and a special transfer program was adopted for Whites to transfer out of the school "for better social adjustment" (p. 251). In 1961, Froebel was 95% Black, although the neighborhood it served was only 65% Black. The Pulaski school, now 100% African American, was a good example of how school zones were manipulated.

> Until a few years ago, Pulaski was a K-6 school. Some of its children went to the White Emerson school for their 7th -12th grades. When the number of children in this category increased, Pulaski was changed to a 3rd to 9th grade school, retaining the Negro children an additional three years. (p. 256)

Wolff (1963) reported an unusual neighborhood school plan, in effect, a plan of racially clustered schools, and saw no evidence of it changing in the near future. Furthermore, Wolff found that the overcrowding and poor facilities in Black schools lowered the quality of education in these schools. Temporary structures remained in use for more than 20 years. Part-time education plagued the Black schools more than the White schools and class sizes were "considerably larger" (p. 257) in the all-Black schools. With respect to the senior high schools, Wolff reported that "the Gary high schools proved a meager program of study to all their students, but here again, the Negro children get the lesser share" (p. 259). Simply put, because Gary's leaders were more concerned with maintaining a dual school system and containing Blacks in segregated schooling, the whole school system suffered, especially the African American students.

The Public Administration Service conducted an investigation of the public school system of Gary in 1955 that corroborated Wolff's findings on the quality of education in the district. Investigators reported "the problem of low scholastic achievement in the Gary schools is not new" (Public Administration Service, 1955, p. 15). Achievement test results reviewed in the report covered a span of nine years and showed "there was no indication of a

trend toward improvement" (p. 15). Referring to 1919 study conducted by the General

Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation of academic achievement in the Gary

Schools in which a rather bleak assessment of classroom teaching and student progress was

given, the 1955 study concluded that "36 years later, there is little to indicate that the

situation prevailing in 1919 has changed significantly" (p. 15). Of great concern to

researchers was the poor "holding power" (p. 15) of the Gary schools. Drop-out rates were

highest in the Froebel and Roosevelt areas, but were high across the city as "the 1954

graduating class in Gary had experienced a drop-out rate since the ninth grade of 38.2%"

(p. 16). Additionally, the report advised that the platoon system, where it still existed, be

completely dismantled because "it offers virtually no advantages in the learning process"

(p. 21). While the content of the scathing report may be arguable for a number of reasons,

what is not arguable are the eerily familiar excuses given for the lackluster school

achievement and the lack of action being taken to address the problem. They bear great

similarity to the excuses educators give today when students do not do well in school.

According to the report:

> Time and time again teachers and administrators have been heard to say that there is little to be done about the situation. "It's the kind of students we get is far too common a answer whenever a question is raised. There is little evidence of the use of test results as basis for remedial action. Test results, if properly evaluated, may indicate poor instruction by particular teachers, inadequate supervision of subject matter fields, inadequate instructional supplies and facilities, lack of classroom discipline, and poor teaching methods. They may indicate overcrowding and inadequate time spent in the classroom in relation to other school-day activities. Indeed, other aspects of the survey indicate that all these items are present in the Gary system. However, the only effective use being made of test results in Gary is in connection with the individual performance of those students who have adjustment problems and require the attention of child welfare and guidance counselors. (Public Administration Service, 1955, p. 16)

In the report, the "grade standard theory of regulating student progress" and the "theory of continuous progress" (p. 50) theory were debated as potential remedies. The former, more popular in the 1950s than the latter, was based on the assumption that students must fulfill certain requirements in order to be promoted to the next grade.

> If one believes that it is a desirable policy to concentrate on educational efforts on a select, homogeneous group of the educationally elite, he will support the strict enforcement of minimum grade standards. If he believes that it is the obligation of the school to provide for each child a curriculum from which he can profit for a specified number of years, if he believe every child should have an opportunity for the fullest possible development of his powers through education, he will look for another method of regulating student progress. (Public Administration Service, 1955, p. 50)

The report alleged that the theory of continuous progress measured children on individual progress and "assures every child who fully employs his talents an orderly progress through the school program" (p. 51). The teacher was held responsible for modifying schoolwork to accommodate the needs of the student. "While it does not eliminate failure as an element in the experience of the child," the report stated, "it provides a situation in which failure is used as a reason for a new approach to learning that avoids the causes of original failure" (p. 51). These findings revealed a fatalistic attitude among Gary teachers and administers about the capabilities of students that was most likely aggravated by strong desires to preserve segregated education and the status quo. Race and racial tensions created a hornet's nest in Gary schools and society.

Preoccupation of Gary's educational leaders with the racial containment and dual educational system noted by Wolff (1963) was evident in a number of *Gary Post Tribune* articles featured in August and September of 1957. Also evident was the financial strain that segregated education cost the district. An August 21, 1957, *Gary Post Tribune* headline read "Cost More than $3 Million . . . New Schools, Classrooms Ready for Use This Year" (p. 26).

Upon closer examination, it is clear that in addition to five new schools (all in the same cluster), several classrooms in the traditionally predominantly White Horace Mann School were remodeled while "because of the overcrowding, portables will continue to be used and classroom space will have to be rented at several locations" at other schools unnamed in the article (p. 1). In another article, "School Bell Rings . . . Enrollment May Hit 37,000, Many Buildings to Overflow" (Todd, 1957, p. 1), the grave situation at Froebel was mentioned specifically: "at Froebel School, more students will initiate classrooms in the so-called frame buildings." In yet another *Gary Post Tribune* article, "Students to Find Schools About the Same—Crowded," reporter Louis Cassels, a correspondent from the United Press, lamented the shortage of teachers and classroom space in schools across the country (Cassels, 1957, p. A2). To make matters worse, "the defeat of the federal aid to education bill in the current session of Congress," he reported, "snuffed out the only hope of building enough schools in a reasonable period of time" (Cassels, 1957, p. A2). It was predicted in a different article that as many as "42,000 students might enroll in the Gary schools and that it would be necessary to offer part-time sessions for some 3,000 elementary students" (School doors open for 42,000 in Gary, 1957, p. 1). A White Gary citizen made a plea to the citizens of Gary to "love ye one another" in the "Voice of the People" section. Speaking in favor of segregated brotherly love, he wrote:

> Note the wide-eyed question in the young Negro boy's eye, then the "Oh Well" attitude when he is turned away by the glaring rock-jawed White boy. . . . The White brothers must realize we have educated the Negro to believe in the freedom of this great country and that they are entitled to its privileges, which they want to enjoy too. They must be given schools on par with us and their voting rights for we know this country represents this meaning. . . The colored brothers must be just that and not use their children to carry hate between the races, but insure [sic]
> their happiness in schools of their own where they will not be resented and experience this terrible hate that is here and can case untold suffering when our nation's burden is already heavy. (Fisher, 1957, p. C6)

No doubt, these sentiments were shared by many Whites. It almost seems that the habits of White privilege, even when acknowledged as being wrong, could not be overcome. The solution, at least in this person's opinion, was to give Negroes their just due, but to keep them in their place. The trouble then as now is that such an arrangement is not possible. Myrdal's (1944) dilemma would not be so easily resolved as Gary residents and Americans everywhere soon found out in the late 1950s and through the tumultuous 1960s.

In the wake of the ongoing racism that stunted Gary's potential and the growth of its Black and White citizens, the 1950s brought new challenges to the schools. The *Gary Post Tribune* reported that the U.S. needed to "catch up to the Russians before is too late" (Snyder, 1957, p. C8). H. B. Snyder (1957), then editor-publisher of the *Gary Post Tribune,* wrote:

> The percentage of students in high school science and mathematics courses has been dropping. Here in Gary, the percentages differ slightly from the national ones. We are somewhat better in chemistry and geometry, close to the national average in physics, below in Algebra, and in overall only 20% as against 25% nationally. (p. C8)

No source is given in the article, but it appears that some of these data may have come from the 1955 Public Administration Service report. In response to the frenzy created by the Sputnik crisis, Superintendent Alan H. Blankenship announced that the Gary schools would require high-schoolers to earn two additional units to graduate from high school. The *Gary Post Tribune* reported "elective subjects available to Gary high schools include foreign languages, higher mathematics, and advanced science" (Gary schools to require 2 more units, 1957, p. A1, A8). Students would also be allowed to "elect an extra unit in English, Social Studies, or two or more extra years in mathematics or science" (p. A1). How much

attention was actually given to the curricular changes is unclear because yet another major race-based community uprising was brewing.

Elizabeth Balanoff, a Froebel parent whose doctoral research is cited elsewhere in this dissertation, wrote a personal memoir of "The Gary School Crisis of the 1950s" (1987). In the memoir, Balanoff shared her view of crisis in the Gary schools. She wrote:

> What "really happened" in the late 1950s in Gary was a grassroots parents' protest throughout the Black area, led by local parent-teacher associations, over school crowding and the school board's failure to exert sufficient initiative in resolving the problem. A significant part of that struggle was a vigorous campaign by the Froebel PTA to force the school administration to build the first
> school in years in a border area, Norton Park, which was the boundary between a primarily Black neighborhood and a mainly White area. (p. 66)

According to Balanoff, Froebel had become so crowded that the first four grades attended school in half-day shifts:

> I recall my second grader was in a class with 45 students, and the middle-class areas rental property was being used to maintain full-day classes with much lower class sizes, in one case as low as 20 students per class. None of the Froebel children were allowed to take their books home because the books, too, were used by two sets of children. (pp. 67-68)

Balanoff's story is one of Black and White parents uniting to form a cohesive protest to better their children's education. They petitioned the school board and, even the mayor, to create a school that, for once, was not in a racialized zone. They won the protest. Their victory was the beginning of a gradual shift in Gary school board policy.

One could argue that the basis for the White parents joining Black parents in protest is an example of Bell's interest-convergence theory because White children certainly benefited from the opening of the Norton School. One might also point out that White parents did not protest alongside Black parents in other situations that did not directly affect White children. Both points are probably valid. Whatever the motives, Balanoff (1987) was

accurate in her assessment of education in Gary during this era—"the school city had had continuously and systematically built schools in such a way as to create a segregated system" (p. 74). Black parents, with the help of a revitalized NAACP, were forced to go to court to prove this rather obvious truth. Whites continued to resist integration.

Hope and Despair

"The main problem of Negro will not be segregation but self-knowledge and self-respect" (Du Bois, 1935, p. 329). "Let us dare to make a new beginning. Let us shatter the walls of the ghetto for all time. Let us build a new city and a new man to inhabit it" (Hatcher Inauguration Speech as cited in Lane, 2006, p. 201).

The 1960s were a time of unprecedented change and unrest—Americans, White and Black, across the U.S. awaited the outcome of the debate on Capitol Hill over the Civil Rights Bill. Reeling from the assassination of President Kennedy and swift transition of power to then vice-president Lyndon Johnson, the nation was bracing itself for a great change. The Truman Committee on Civil Rights (1947) had implored Americans to renew their commitment to human rights and the American Way and put an end to racism and unfair acts of racial discrimination toward Blacks. The nation and the world had witnessed appalling incidents of immoral and unethical maltreatment of Blacks in the South on television. The U.S., the self-professed standard bearer of freedom and democracy for the world, appeared to some to be living a lie. President Johnson was determined to get the Civil Rights Bill passed and launch a campaign aimed at building a Great Society, free of poverty and ignorance. But, the habits of ingrained racism still enslaved much of the nation. Such was the case in Gary.

Years of systemic racism had crippled Gary's spirit. The *Gary Post Tribune,* a major player in abetting a racialized society, ran an ad on August 27, 1964 condemning the impending Civil Rights Bill. The ad, entitled "$100 Billion Dollar Blackjack: The Civil Rights Bill," was actually written by the Fundamental Committee for American Freedoms, an organization out of Washington, D.C. The Civil Rights Bill, according to the ad, "is not a moderate bill and it has not been watered down. It constitutes the greatest grasp for executive power conceived in the 20th century" ($100 billion dollar blackjack civil rights bill, 1964, p. 27). Referring to the Civil Rights Bill as the "socialists' omnibus bill of 1963" (p. 27), the ad warns Gary citizens that the Civil Rights legislation would render the President of the U.S. "omnipotent," turn the office of the U.S. Attorney General into a "dictatorship," and lead to "total federal control" (p. 27). The ad further alleged that discrimination would become a "mystery word" (p. 27) and that federal inspectors would dictate hiring and firing practices. Schools and colleges would be told how to handle pupils, hire staff, determine the occupancy of dormitories, and use their facilities. In short, Garyites were duly warned:

> The American people are being set up for a blow that would destroy their right to determine for themselves how they will live. What is being piously presented as a human effort to redress past wrongs—the "Civil Rights" Bill—is, in fact, a cynical design to make even the least of us, Black and White alike, subject to the whim and caprice of government bureaucrats. Unless American workers, farmers, business professional men, teachers, homeowners, every citizen awakens *now*, harsh Federal controls will reach into our homes, jobs, businesses, and schools, into our local and state elections, and into our municipal and state governments. (p. 27)

Although it is not possible to determine the impact such propaganda had on Gary citizens, the fact that this kind of material was printed in the newspaper is an indication of the concerns some people had about the Civil Rights Bill. Was it really big government they feared or a loss of White privilege as a consequence of African Americans acquiring equal

rights? At any rate, not much had changed in the Gary Schools by 1964. Segregated education remained the order of the day.

What was changing were the demographics of the city and its politics and power structure, all of which affected the schools. The city was losing its White population to what has been commonly referred to as White flight. According to government census reports obtained from the Indiana University Northwest Calumet Regional Archives (Hoock, 1960), CRA #10, in 1960, the White population in Gary was 108,980; there were 69,123 Black, and 217 other. By 1970, there were 81,854 Whites living in Gary and 92,695 Blacks, giving Blacks 52.8% majority. A. Martin Katz took office as mayor of Gary in January of 1964. In keeping with a campaign pledge, Katz, the first Jewish mayor of Gary, established a 26-member Advisory Council on Human Relations. Relative newcomer Richard Gordon Hatcher, elected president of the Advisory Council, warned council members "Gary Negroes will go into the streets and take the law into their own hands if they do not receive redress from their elected officials" (Lane, 2006, p. 213). Following contentious discussions, the council managed to come up with an omnibus civil rights bill with provisions to discrimination in housing, and education, and employment. In September of 1964, the omnibus Civil Rights Bill passed the first reading by a slim 5 to 4 margin, but support for the bill waned in the coming weeks. As a compromise, Mayor Katz proposed an amendment that diminished the power of the commission to investigate allegations of discrimination and other violations. The bill passed with the Mayor's proposed amendment angering Blacks. The Black press despairingly called the day it passed, "Black Friday" (Lane, 2006, p. 213); however, following a 25,000 strong Freedom Day school boycott earlier in 1964 by Black students, the Black community did manage to win a small victory with the transfer of Black

seventh graders to Horace Mann School in the fall of 1964. The following school year,

about 100 of the "better" Black students now living on the west side of Gary were bused

from overcrowded Black schools to Emerson. Similar transfers occurred as the "better" east

side Blacks students were transferred to all-White Bailly Junior High School in Gary's Glen

Park area. The integration of the schools led to a massive White flight and thwarted efforts

to integrate the schools.

After the passage of the Civil Rights Bill and the release of federal funds for the

many social and educational reform initiatives that accompanied Johnson's War on Poverty,

the Gary school board decided to apply for some of the anti-poverty federal assistance. The

Gary Post Tribune reported on April 14, 1965 that the school board approved applications

for nearly $1 million in federal aid funds for "a newly unveiled 'Project Headstart,'" the

paper stated, "a summer pilot program for preschoolers in the areas served by four

elementary schools" (Joachim, 1965, p. A2). Joachim (1965) explained:

> The program is tailored for parents, too, so there's a pretty good chance Mom will be
> there if she doesn't work or isn't babysitting for other Headstart mothers. He'll
> work as a volunteer, helping conduct the program. . . . Actually, there are many more
> children from low income families and substandard housing in Gary than the 500 to
> be enrolled. The schools estimate 3,000. But, if the summer project proves itself, the
> schools plan to expand the program next summer to a number of schools. (p. A2)

Only one of the four sites initially chosen for the pilot summer program was located on the

historically Black side of town. Despite the fact that Whites had begun their exodus from

Gary, the city was still predominantly White in 1965. Many Gary residents welcomed the

federal funds and new education program and other initiatives, particularly those aimed at

providing much needed employment for the city's youth.

But, Gary politics was in flux during the mid-1960s. Gary had a long and undisputed

history of government corruption and much to the chagrin of Northwest Indiana Crime

Commission, Mayor Katz "winked at vice and gambling" (Lane, 2006, p. 217). Katz tried,

unsuccessfully, to keep politics out of the schools and parks. Blacks were growing

increasingly disenchanted with White politics and Attorney Hatcher emerged as a symbol of

Black leadership. Lane (2006) explained:

> The struggle for Black urban political empowerment was a bi-product of ethnic succession, anti-machine insurgency, and the crusading spirit of the civil rights movement. Prior to 197, Black residents had been the most loyal but last rewarded component o Gary's corrupt Democratic machine. That organization had been weakened when popular Greek-born, mayor George Chakaris, pleaded guilty in 1962 to charges of ax evasion, opening up the possibility of grassroots challenge to the status quo. (p. 220)

Hatcher announced his candidacy for mayor of Gary on the third anniversary of Black

Friday. His campaign theme was "Let's Get Ourselves Together" and the colors were

Roosevelt black and gold. The mayoral race was predictably dirty and hotly contested. The

night before the election, the Board of Registrars was forced by a circuit judge to add 5,286

residents to the list of eligible voters from Gary's Central District, where most of the Blacks

lived, and remove over 1,000 mysterious ghost names from White areas. "In a close and

honest election by local standards, Hatcher won by 1,865 votes out of 77,759 cast, receiving

96% of the Black vote and a mere 12% of the White vote" (p. 221). It was a magical time

for Blacks in Gary and the nation as cries of "Black Power" and sincere efforts to gain

political agency for African Americans gripped the nation. But, tough times lay ahead for

Hatcher and Gary.

By the end of Hatcher's first term in office, Gary's White population had dwindled

drastically, Merrillville (the all-White area) had incorporated to sever ties with Gary, and

U.S. Steel had reduced its operations leaving 20,000 Garyites unemployed. Critics say that

it was the public's perception that Hatcher was too strong of a Black Power advocate that

caused Whites and their businesses to leave Gary. Hatcher saw things differently. He acknowledged that the "bitter nature of the contest did precipitate a number of Whites leaving the city," but asserted that "the White flight really began in 1955" (R. G. Hatcher, personal communication, November 10, 2009). He contended that "A. Martin Katz was elected in 1963. White flight was already in full force. Katz was Jewish. People could feel a change. People identified White flight with Black advancement." Hatcher alleged that Katz ordered a special census in 1965, but never made the results public. According to Hatcher, had the results of the secret census been revealed, they would have shown that between 1960 and 1965 Gary's total population had decreased to 160,000 residents, three years before his election. Whatever the cause, no one can refute the steady loss of revenue and business after 1968. A series of devastating events hurt the city between 1968 and 1972.

According to the former mayor, just one year after he took office, following a buyout by a German Company, the Budd Plant left Gary. This cost thousands of people their jobs. In 1971, U.S. Steel announced that it would be significantly scaling back the Gary operation due to a new technology—the basic oxygen furnace. U.S. Steel could not compete with the Japanese market and the company had not reinvested in the Gary plants causing them to become outdated and dilapidated. Numerous attempts to persuade the steel executives not to leave Gary failed. Hatcher alleges that, in the end, U.S. Steel executives expressed little concern for the city of Gary or its people. According to Hatcher, when told of the devastating impact the loss of U.S. Steel would have on the city, steel executives replied, "that's not our problem, that's your problem" (R. G. Hatcher, personal communication November 10, 2009). Indeed, it was Gary's problem, and a big one. Twenty thousand people were left without jobs. Following the departure of U.S. Steel, Sears Roebuck and

Company, the downtown retail anchor, began talking about leaving downtown Gary in 1973.

Within a year, the Sears store closed its doors soon to be followed by all of the other major

retail stores in Gary's downtown area. When asked by Mayor Hatcher why they were

leaving, Sears' executives intimated that, contrary to common perception, the reason for the

move out of Gary had little or nothing to do with loss of revenue due to shoplifting, but

rather, the decision had everything to do with plans for a new mall south of Gary, near

Merrillville—the Southlake Mall (R. G. Hatcher, personal communication, November 10,

2009). Like a deck of cards, Gary's material assets seemed to be falling one by one. Almost

$300 million poured into the city, including Model Cities money earmarked for urban

redevelopment, but Hatcher contended that Gary was forced to use the federal funds just to

keep the city afloat. Because he took office on the tail end of the generous Great Society

era, the new Republican regime in Washington and at the state level in Indiana, were not so

generous. One of the most long lasting accomplishments of Mayor Hatcher's five-term

tenure was the building of the Genesis Center in 1975. Built totally with federal funds, as no

local, state, or private entities would financially support Gary's effort, the Genesis Center

remains a vital resource today.

While Hatcher struggled to keep Gary afloat, Whites fled the city in mass and many

Blacks left as well, tired of being in what Hatcher referred to as the "Midtown straitjacket"

(R. G. Hatcher, personal communication, November 10, 2009). The city's turmoil took its

toll on the public schools and the integration plan. Even the White-owned *Gary Post*

Tribune began detaching itself from Gary and became known as the *Post Tribune,* serving

Northwest Indiana with separate editions for the various communities in the region. During

the late 1960s and early 1970s, racial tensions peaked as Blacks charged that school board

was gerrymandering school boundaries to continue segregation. Many Black parents

resented the new school boundaries imposed by then Superintendent Gordon McAndrew.

Indicative of the desire of many Black parents to get out of the "Midtown straitjacket" (R. G.

Hatcher, personal communication, November 10, 2010), some parents vehemently protested

having to send their children to Froebel, in particular. According to *Post Tribune,* one

parent, Phyllis Senegal, told school officials at a 1971 town meeting "we're now in the

middle class. You're not going to tell us to go back where we came from" (Parents on west

side hit plan for Froebel transfer, 1971, p. A1). Another parent, Joan Ramirez, protested

saying that to send a child to Froebel would be "contributing to the delinquent of a minor . . .

you might as we send him to the firing squad" (p. A1). In spite of the ongoing racial strife,

innovative ideas were still pursued in the Gary schools.

One such innovation was performance contracting. "In September of 1970, in an

effort to improve student achievement, the School City of Gary entered into a contract with a

private educational service company to manage the Banneker Elementary School on a

money-making guaranteed performance basis" (Porter, 1971, p. 233). The contract

empowered the Behavioral Research Laboratories (BRL) of Palo Alto, California to act as a

consultant to the Gary School City and to assume all managerial responsibilities for

Banneker Elementary School, an inner-city school in Gary of about 850 students

(Mecklenberger & Wilson, 1971, p. 406). In effect, BRL proposed the following:

> Let us manage all aspects of Banneker Elementary School. Pay us $800 for each of
> the 800 students enrolled, which is the current annual cost of educating a Gary pupil.
> If you do this, we'll use the lessons we've learned in developing individualized
> instruction to bring the achievement scores of these students up to or above national
> grade levels in basic curriculum areas. At the end of three years, we'll refund the fee
> paid for any child who hasn't achieved this goal—and we'll let an independent
> evaluator make this determination. (American School Board Journal, 1971, p. 19)

Dr. Alphonso Holliday, then president of the Gary School Board, expressed satisfaction with Banneker's initial signs of success and commented in an article that appeared in *The American School Board Journal* (1971) that, besides instilling pride in and enthusiasm in teachers, the program has "also has a 'spin-off effect" (p. 20). "Teachers and principals in other schools in our district," reported Holliday, "are getting together to change the curriculum in their schools to do what the contractor is doing—without the contractor" (p. 20). Performance contracting turned out to be a good deal for the children at Banneker, the population of which by this time, was predominantly Black by de facto segregation. The school remains the highest achieving elementary school in the Gary district. It did not have, however, the long-term spin-off effect that Dr. Holliday anticipated. The performance contracting idea is important because it was an educational initiative that was actually more concerned with improving student achievement than manipulating children and communities to maintain the status quo and segregated education. The performance contracted school also may represent a precursor to the modern day charter school, a concept that will be discussed in detail later.

Education in the Gary schools, by most accounts, has not fared well in the recent years. Neither has the economic climate in Gary. Since Mayor Hatcher left office, Gary has had three mayors. His immediate successor, Thomas Barnes held the office of mayor for two terms, from 1988-1996. Hoping to generate new revenue for the city, Barnes worked arduously to bring land-based casinos to the Gary. After citizen debate and backroom political maneuvering, the Indiana state legislature finally determined that Gary would receive two riverboats. For a number of reasons, however, Gary has not reaped the monetary benefit it anticipated from the boats. Barnes was also plagued by an increase of

violent crime in Gary. Crime was nothing new to Gary as the city has struggled with graft

and corruption since its inception. The crimes committed in the 1990s, however, were of a

different kind. Gangs spread fear among the city's residents. The city was dubbed

"America's murder capital" (Lane, 2006, p. 231) in 1993 according to national news reports.

The *Post Tribune,* a frequent bearer of negative news, reported in 1995, "Gary was at rock

bottom. Crime was at a record high, economic development was nonexistent, and there were

almost as many crack houses as there were storefront preachers" (Lane, 2006, p. 253).

Meanwhile, the schools attempted to provide an encouraging learning environment in spite

of major distractions and discouraging scores on the newly mandated state achievement

tests. Barnes, who had vowed to serve two terms, did not run for a third term. Scott King, a

White man, succeeded Barnes as mayor of Gary in 1996. Making Gary a safer place was a

priority for Mayor King (Lane, 2006, p. 253). King, who served as mayor from 1996 to

2006, solicited the help of the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration and the FBI to get

a handle on the drug trafficking and drug-related crime. He called upon state, local, and

county law officials to work together to disrupt street level drug trafficking. The Gary

Response Investigative Team (GRIT) was formed (Lane, 2006, p. 254). Some progress was

made. King then set out to breathe life into Gary through sports with the initiation of semi-

professional basketball and minor league baseball teams and the construction of a brand new

baseball field. He also started the tradition of an annual air show to Gary, an excellent

opportunity for families to have fun and demonstrate that Gary was indeed, a safe place to

live (Lane, 2006, pp. 267-268). King, however, took many citizens by surprise when he

resigned as mayor of Gary in the middle of his third term. The current mayor, Rudolph

Clay, is nearing completion of his first term. The task of revitalizing Gary is proving to be exceedingly difficult.

The city faces many challenges. Some people say the city suffers from *brain drain,* or a dearth of educated and committed expertise. They assert that Gary's best and brightest, so to speak, tend to go to college and never come back, except to visit, and the city has a difficult time attracting quality people with a vested interest in Gary's future. While there may be some truth to these assertions, others believe Gary holds great promise. From their perspective, Gary is far from dead. They frequently describe the city as a diamond in the rough. Dr. Steve Simpson shares this optimistic vision. Simpson, a 1965 graduate of Roosevelt, remained in Gary to serve the community as pediatrician. Always thinking of a better Gary and working to improve the quality of life for the people of Gary, Simpson expressed his belief in Gary's future. "I think Gary has a bright future, it's just that those of us who are here don't realize how bright the future is" (S. Simpson, personal communication, January 23, 2009).

I draw upon the work of Albert O. Hirschman (1970) to shed some insight into what has occurred in Gary over the years. Hirschman, in *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*, laid out a theory to explain how public and private organizations survive or not. I focus on applying his theory to education and public goods. As I read his work, I thought of Gary and the persistence of racial inequality of educational opportunities and outcomes in the Gary schools. According to Hirschman, people have three choices when confronted with the decline of an organization. They may exit or leave the organization, resist the decline by exercising their voice in protest and

concern, or show loyalty by refusing to exit. Sometimes loyalty is exercised by exit, a form of protest from outside the organization. All three are manifested in Gary's history.

Whites who fled Gary in the late 1960s and through the 1970s chose flight over fight. I do not think they left in protest so much as disgust. They no longer cared about the welfare of Gary or its citizenry, especially since, as Whites moved out, Gary was becoming increasingly Black. Some Blacks moved out of the city for the same reasons. Those who left Gary had one thing in common, the social and economic mobility to exit. Yet, not everyone who chose to exit did so because they no longer cared; some used exit as their voice, hoping that their exit would effect a positive change. Those who did not leave remained in Gary because either they did not have the capability to move, or they, as in the case of my parents and many of their friends, had a fierce loyalty based upon a belief that things could change and they could make a difference. To some, such loyalty was somewhat irrational, but irrational loyalty, according to Hirschman, is the most powerful kind. It holds exit "at bay" (Hirschman, 1970, p. 80).

Gary needs more people with loyalty, vision, and a willingness to exercise their voice. Loyalty prevents deterioration from becoming cumulative. Vision provides direction and hope. Voice empowers. The community of Gary needs formal leadership that knows how to unify, harness, empower, and channel the intelligent, forward-thinking, loyal voices in the city in such a manner that the informal "leadership in place" (Wergin, 2007, p. 1) waiting to be called to serve the community is encouraged and supported in their desire to effect positive growth and change in Gary. It is only in this manner that the quality of life for Gary citizens will begin to improve.

The history of Gary demonstrates that the city suffers from cumulative disadvantage or as Brown et al. (2003) called it, cumulative racial inequality—an overall disaccumulation of advantage (p. 22). This "durable racial inequality" (p. 12) prohibited Gary from seizing opportunities for unity and advancement in the past and continues to stifle the city's growth today. One would think that the situation in Gary would have been ripe for the actualization of a positive Black Power Movement during the Civil Rights Era, especially after electing an African American mayor. Hirschman (1970) described the novel potential of the American Black Power Movement.

> The novelty of the Black Power Movement on the American scene consists in the rejection of this traditional pattern of upward social mobility as unworkable and undesirable for the most depressed group in our society. Significantly, it combines scorn for individual penetration of a few selected Blacks into White a society with a strong commitment to "collective stimulation" of Blacks as a group and to the improvement of the back ghetto as a place to live. (p. 109)

Hatcher's campaign theme of "Let's get ourselves together!" demonstrated a desire for collective advancement, but I believe the forces of racism and the effects of accumulated racial inequality made it extremely difficult for Blacks to "get it together." The selective, pseudo, one-way integration of the Gary schools did not help matters locally and reflected a larger trend of token integration that did more to divide the Black community than improve Black-White relations. As Hirschman explained:

> Integration, particularly in the token way in which it has been practiced up to now . . . elevates individual members of a group, but paradoxically, in plucking many of the most promising members of a group while failing to alter the lot of the group as a whole, weakens the collective thrust which the group might otherwise muster. (p. 109)

"Racism is not simply a matter of legal segregation, it is also policies that favor Whites" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 25). For years, Whites in America and in Gary have accumulated advantages in housing, education, employment, and social mobility. Blacks everywhere are

still reeling from the persistence of old inequalities and the institutionalization of new

inequalities. The story of Gary Roosevelt reveals this pattern of racial inequality even in the

midst of an alleged color-blind era.

Chapter IV: Theodore Roosevelt High School—Dearly Loved

Mid-sand dunes and purple hued skies,
A temple of knowledge there lies,
Enhanced by nature and soft dove cries,
Roosevelt Dearly Loved,
It gives us the faith which we need,
For life's noblest lessons to heed,
And courage being our daily creed,
Roosevelt Dearly Loved.
(Slaughter, n.d.)

"Dear Old Roosevelt"
Dear old Roosevelt, we have faith and hope within thee,
Cheer old Roosevelt, we will fight to victory,
Rah, Rah, Rah
Fight on Roosevelt, fight until the game is over,
Fight on, that's the way; will win this game! (Hart, n.d., lyrics; Bigelow, n.d., music)

Ever since I can remember, I have revered Roosevelt High School. It seemed that everybody I knew loved Roosevelt. Known for its academic and athletic prowess, Roosevelt was a symbol of excellence and pride in not only the Black community of Gary and Northwest Indiana but in the entire state. For many years, Roosevelt reigned supreme in sports and graduated some of Gary's finest. Envied by many, its marching band wooed cheering crowds and outperformed many a competitor. As a child, I had the distinct impression that all of the Black community loved, even if they had not attended, the school. Fierce and unwavering, the allegiance to Roosevelt ran deep. Even the White folks knew there was something special about Roosevelt. Yes, the Mighty Velt was dearly loved.

Today, Roosevelt is struggling to survive in the midst of great change and challenge. After a massive reorganization within the district, it is one of four secondary schools in the city. In August, 2009, Roosevelt opened its doors to a 7-12 grade configuration for the first time in more than 40 years, acquired a new principal, and embarked on a redesign initiative aimed at eventually transforming the comprehensive high school to a career and technical

academy. Although not yet functioning as such, the school is now called the Theodore Roosevelt Career and Technical Academy and because of the magnet focus, the Roosevelt faculty has been combined with teachers from two other schools (Dunbar-Pulaski and Wirt) that were recently closed. In addition, students are now being bused to Roosevelt in large numbers from outside the central (midtown) district. Roosevelt's enrollment, which had dropped to below 1,000 in recent years, is now over 1,500 with seventh and eighth graders attending the school. Gary's other high schools face similar challenges, but Roosevelt occupies an especially precarious position. "Because school officials closed or changed the makeup of most of those schools [middle and high schools], only Roosevelt is subject to a public hearing and scrutiny by a technical assistance team . . . faces takeover by state" (Lazerus, 2009b, p. A3) if students' test scores do not improve. In spite of all the change and adversity, many in the Gary community remain loyal and committed to reclaiming the school's legacy. Roosevelt is still dearly loved.

In this chapter, I elucidate a history of the school between 1908 and 1970 that will explain the emotional and psychological significance that Gary Roosevelt holds within the Black community of Gary, as well as the importance of leadership and educational philosophy in building strong schools and school-community relations. I begin by focusing on the historical events that preceded and immediately followed the founding of the school. Next, I focus on the first 30 years of Roosevelt's history under the leadership of Principal H. Theo Tatum. I then shift my attention to the next 30 years in Roosevelt's history with Principal Warren M. Anderson. Finally, I draw conclusions about the interrelation of nostalgia, history, and segregated education for Blacks at Gary Roosevelt before 1970. Next is a historical timeline of the school's development.

Historical Timeline of Theodore Roosevelt High School (1908-1970)

- 1908—A one-room frame structure, the Twelfth Avenue and Massachusetts Street School, opened for Black children.

- 1912—The Fourteenth Avenue and Connecticut Street School opened for Black children. (Students from both schools were sent to the new Froebel.)

- 1915—The overflow of Blacks at Froebel, essentially Elizabeth Lytle and a group of primary students, were transferred to the all-Black Twenty-first Avenue School.

- 1921—The Twenty-first Avenue School was relocated to Roosevelt's present-day site at Twenty-fifth and Harrison Street. Mr. A.T. Lenoir was principal. The school was called the Roosevelt Annex. (Already on this site was a Roosevelt school for White children. The White children were housed in portables and Mr. Standley was the principal. Blacks and Whites were taught separately.)

- 1923—Lenoir resigned as principal of the all-Black Twenty-first Avenue School; Mr. Standley became principal of the White and Black schools. The east building was built for Blacks (the East Roosevelt Annex). Mr. Everett D. Simpson, the first Black teacher in Gary, was appointed assistant principal to Standley, in charge of the East Roosevelt Annex.

- 1925—The first year of high school was added to the East Annex, with an enrollment of 19 students.

- 1926—The west building was constructed for Whites and was named Longfellow.

- 1927—Frederick C. McFarlane became assistant principal of the Roosevelt Annex.

- 1929—McFarlane was appointed principal of the Roosevelt Annex.

- 1930—The Roosevelt Annex was officially named Roosevelt School and commissioned by the state of Indiana. The new Roosevelt High School granted its first diploma in June of 1930.

- 1931—The main building of the new Roosevelt was completed in January. Roosevelt was admitted to the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges.

- 1933—McFarlane resigned as principal of Roosevelt. H. Theo Tatum, the former Principal of the Virginia Street and East Pulaski schools, became Principal of Roosevelt.

- 1946—The west wing of the main building was completed with funds from a federal grant.

- 1958—Formerly a unit school that served grades from kindergarten through 12th grade, Roosevelt was designated as a school for secondary students only.

- 1961—After 28 years, Mr. Tatum retired. Warren M. Anderson became Principal of Roosevelt.

- 1960-1970—Anderson served as principal of Roosevelt until he retired in June of 1970.

The Holy Grail of Segregated Schooling

Whereas, there is an emergency existing for the immediate erection and construction of an adequate school building with proper high school facilities to serve the residents of Gary, Indiana; and,

Whereas, the School City of Gary, Indiana has heretofore acquired a school site at Twenty-fifth Avenue and Georgia Street to said city; and

Whereas, such facilities are necessary in this vicinity; of Gary request the School City of Gary, Indiana to immediately prepare plans and specifications for the erection and construction of an adequate school building with high school facilities at Twenty-fifth Avenue and Georgia Street in order that said building may be commenced immediately after the next tax levying period.

Common council of the City of Gary does hereby pledge its support to the said School City and that it will recommend a ten cent increase in the next school levy, to be used for the erection and construction of the aforementioned building. (Gary City Council Resolution 459 as cited in Balanoff, 1974, p. 283)

This resolution, passed on September 27, 1927, marked the beginning of a process that led to the establishment of Gary's first and only historically Black high school—Theodore Roosevelt. The emergency that led to the passage of this resolution was the Emerson High School strike. On September 26, 1927, 800 White Emerson students went on strike in protest of the transfer of 18 Black students to predominantly White Emerson High School. It is difficult to say, for certain, why the transfer of these Blacks triggered such a vehement reaction from Whites students and their parents because, according to Balanoff (1974):

There were six [Blacks] already enrolled in Emerson that year and their presence seemed to have been no cause for special concern. A glance at Emerson High School Year Books [sic] show one Negro graduate in 1924, another in 1925 and 1926 and several in 1927. They were nearly all children of professional men and women were light enough [sic] in color to pass for White if they had chosen. (p. 278)

It is illogical to think that the reason for the upheaval was pure race hatred because a few Negroes already attending the school had warranted no recorded objections. Was it fear of an eventual Black takeover (e.g., too many "flies in the buttermilk"), compromised academic standards, or racial miscegenation? It is difficult to say for sure. Whatever the reason, White students launched a three-day strike in protest of additional Black pupils at Emerson.

Reactions to the strike and its resolution were mixed and widespread. Some

attributed the situation at Emerson to Whites not squelching perceptions of equality of the

races sooner and Blacks thoughtlessly demanding separate schools without considering the

ramifications of their demands. In an article published in a September, 1927, issue of *School*

and Society, Victor Cools wrote about the Gary strike:

> The whole country has been stirred one way or other [sic] by the strike recently
> staged by the whir pupils of the Emerson High School of Gary. One who has
> watched the trend in educational affairs, as they affect the Black people in northern
> communities, is forced to ask, why all the fuss? Indeed, why all these noisy
> sputterings at this late date? Why didn't the Thinking White public give vent to its
> righteous indignation when White workers first went on strike in protest against the
> employment of Black workers, under the same roof with them,
> as their equals in craftsmanship? If they had there would not have been a Gary
> situation get hysterical over. One is reminded of the farmer who bolted the stable
> door after the horse had escaped. (p. 685)

Cools' suggestion is that Blacks had been given too much leeway and that, if Whites had

done a better job of keeping Blacks in their place, the whole racial dilemma and subsequent

strike would never have come to pass. Alleging that Blacks in Gary, like those in

Indianapolis, had thoughtlessly and selfishly demanded segregated schooling, he continued:

> Since the invasion of the north by the Blacks, in large numbers, there has been a
> persistent demand for Negro schools in metropolitan communities. This demand
> comes from the Southern Blacks who want teaching jobs for their sons and
> daughters. As the result, a number of northern communities have given them
> "colored" schools. . . . The Black man's mental process is a difficult thing to
> understand. He readily submerges everything—principle, decency, race pride, and
> altruism—into mud in order to satisfy his stomach, and then the result of his short-
> sighted, crass action threatens to overwhelm him, he runs out and becomes
> hysterical. The Gary situation is the direct result of the demand for and acceptance
> of segregated schools by the southern Blacks. They are reaping with bitterness what
> they so thoughtlessly sowed. (p. 685)

Racialized tones aside, much can be learned from Cools' commentary.

Cools' (1927) interpretation, while grossly insensitive to the history of racism,

illuminates the collective impact of racism and racist practices on Black and White

consciousness. His primary concern, as was the most important issue for many Whites in the late 1920s, was preserving the purity of the White race and the privileges that being White afforded. The Emerson strike occurred at a point in time when many Whites still believed Blacks were biologically inferior. On the one hand, it seemed foolish, a form of self-sabotage, to Whites who shared Cools' views for Blacks to want their own schools. But, as Cools pointed out, "surely they [Blacks] didn't expect White citizens . . . 100%, Nordies, further to tolerate the presence of Black youngsters in schools that are attended by their [Whites'] children" (p. 686). Cools was correct in saying that Blacks requested separate schools, as was the case for instance with the Virginia Street school, but, his assessment lacks sensitivity and an understanding of why Blacks sought and accepted segregated schooling.

The legacy of racism and Jim Crow presented a complicated dilemma for Blacks. Blacks on the East Side of Gary requested separate schools, not because they wanted segregated schooling, but because they lived in segregated quarters and wanted a school closer to where they lived so that their children would have a shorter distance to walk to school. At the same time, the Black community in Gary was philosophically torn between segregated and integrated schooling. Many Blacks, on the one hand, accepted segregated schooling and, to the degree, that separate schools seemed imminent, encouraged hiring the best Black teachers they possibly could find to work in their schools. Indeed, "the large number of Black teachers—16 by 1922 and 77 by 1930—served as a source of pride in the Black community" (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 117). Some Black parents and Civil Rights activists, on the other hand, disliked the principle behind segregated schooling and protested the continuation of segregated education. The racial climate in Gary, particularly as it

related to education and schooling, was confounded by the lack of a common language and understanding around which education in Gary could be properly framed and productively discussed. Blacks and Whites often publicly asserted that segregation in Gary was voluntary (Balanoff, 1974; Cohen & Mohl, 1979). In a sense, the schools were voluntarily segregated, but the school boundaries enforced by the Gary school board and segregated living quarters made segregated schooling almost inevitable. To put it another way, "the existence of segregated schools in Gary resulted from de facto and de jure conditions, as well as voluntary choices by both Black and White parents" (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 118).

After Gary's city council passed the resolution to build a temporary school for Blacks, Black leaders in the community, along with the broad based support of the NAACP, spoke out in clear protest of the plan. A committee of concerned Black citizens, headed by Dr. Robert M. Hedrick, James Garrett, and Atty. E. Bacon, petitioned the mayor and alderman of Gary to "reconsider and expunge" Resolution 459 (Petition to city council turned down, 1927, p. 1). On Saturday, October 8, 1927, the Black newspaper, *The Gary Sun,* printed the contents of the petition (Petition to city council turned down, 1927, p. 1). The petition requested that the council revoke the resolution on the grounds that it arose out of Emerson strike and that the appropriation of funds to erect a segregated school was "discriminatory, un-American, prejudicial, unfair and unjust, and violated the Constitution of Indiana and the United States" (Petition to city council turned down, 1927, p. 1). The final point cited in the petition emphasized:

> Gary has boasted, and has had a just right to boast of the greatest school system in America, and we hope that no action will be taken, now or in the future, which will blight the noble work that has heretofore been done and bring about the irreparable injury to this school system as well as inculcate a spirit of mob violence in the youth. (Petition to city council turned down, 1927, p. 1)

Blacks in the community also protested the suggested site of the proposed temporary school because it was located near a city dump. It was later ruled that the council had exceeded its authority in appropriating the $15,000 for a separate, temporary school building and it is rumored that the council was required to pay for the legal fees incurred by the NAACP (Balanoff, 1974). Even though the temporary school for Blacks was never erected at the Georgia Street location, the plans to perpetuate segregated schooling were not forsaken. In reality, the Emerson students may have worried needlessly as there was never any indication that Wirt and the school board intended to allow the mixing of the races at Emerson to be anything but a temporary arrangement.

On the evening of September 27, 1927, one day after the initial walk-out of Emerson students, Superintendent Wirt and the school board met with White students and their parents to explain the situation and assure them that the Black pupils would be transferred out of Emerson as soon as provisions were made for a separate-but-equal school for Blacks. The situation was, as Wirt explained, that Emerson was the only high school in the northeast district, which included Emerson, Pulaski, and Virginia Street Schools. "Therefore, Emerson must take those Negro students from that area who wanted to attend high school" (Balanoff, 1974, p. 280). Emerson parents offered to take some of Froebel's White students in exchange for the Black students, but this request was denied because it would violate school boundaries. It became clear that if segregated education was to prevail in the Gary Schools, a new and separate Black educational center would have to be constructed. Three years later that Black educational center was opened as Theodore Roosevelt School—the first all-Black K-12 school in Gary. Roosevelt's history, however, does not begin with the Emerson strike.

Never completely objective, history is almost always told from the perspective of the storyteller. People who have lived in Gary for a number of years cannot help but recall a history rooted in racial conflict. The racial climate in Gary during the 1920s and 1930s strained the city's social fabric:

> By 1925, the White supremacist Ku Klux Klan had risen to the zenith of its power in Indiana under the charismatic leadership of D. C. Stephenson. . . Floyd E. Williams was elected mayor [of Gary] and, along with five City Council members enjoyed Klan backing. . . . In contrast, the Marcus Garvey movement in America was at its apogee in the Black community. Espousing Black separatism and independence in commerce, a chapter of Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association was active in Gary. (Conn, 1992, p. B2)

According to Cohen and Mohl (1979), the new Twenty-fifth Avenue location "epitomized segregated schooling" and was founded as a trade school (an observation only they make) in "an attempt to provide somewhat equal facilities and opportunities for Black children" (p. 118).

In one unpublished account of the general background and history of Roosevelt provided by the school board president, Mary Patterson (1937), the story of "the Roosevelt School for colored children" commenced "with a very few students who daily collected in a one-room frame structure erected in 1908 at Twelfth Avenue and Massachusetts Street" (p. 1). According to Patterson's account:

> Mr. E. D. Simpson was the first Negro teacher employed. At that time there was a White school at 14th Avenue and Connecticut. In 1912, the two were moved into the then new Froebel School at 15th Avenue and Madison Street. As in all parts of Gary the number of people increased rapidly—so with the colored population. To meet the demands a primary school for colored children was opened at 21st Avenue and Adams Street in 1915. To this center, Mrs. Elizabeth Lytle and her primary children were transferred from Froebel which was growing rapidly. In1921, this school (at 21st and Adams) was moved. Mr. Z. D. Lenior was the first Negro principal. There was a school, the Roosevelt, attended by White children on the same site at the time. . . . The two schools were entirely independent of each other. (pp. 1-2)

John D. Smith (n.d.), a 1919 graduate of Froebel High School and former teacher and coach

at Roosevelt for more than 30 years, added more detail to the early development of

Roosevelt in a historical tribute, *Distinguished Gary Rooseveltians in Profile, 1932-1999*:

> The Twenty-First [sic] Avenue School, with Mr. Z. T. Lenior as its head, moved to the new site fronting Twenty-Fifth [sic] Avenue (now Gary Roosevelt). There was already a school for White children on this site, Longfellow. Mr. J. W. Standley was the principal of Longfellow School. The two schools, however, were independent of each other. The Negro school had its Negro faculty and principal and the White school had teachers of its own race. In 1923, Mr. Lenoir resigned as principal. Mr. Standley became principal of both schools, which continued to be racially segregated. (p. 1)

"Late in 1923, an east brick building was built for the Negro section of the school [and] three

years later this building was followed by a west building on Harrison Street" (p. 1). He

wrote of Roosevelt's first band founded in 1927 by Mr. J. V. Reese and Miss Evelyn

Baptiste, among the first Negroes to graduate from the new Roosevelt High School, class of

1930. Smith also wrote about the ongoing racism in the Gary community. "The school was

excluded from excluded from many interscholastic, extra-curricular activities, particularly

athletics, and other city and state-wide competitions" (p. 1). Indeed, racial disparity was a

fact of life in Gary. According to Balanoff (1974), the new school for Blacks cost $84,000,

while $98,000 was spent on the new school for Whites (p. 296). In the Jubilee Edition of the

Post Tribune, H. Theo Tatum (1956), the second principal of Roosevelt, rendered this

account:

> Simpson [the first Black employed at the Annex] became assistant in charge of the Roosevelt Annex. Finding the available space inadequate, in 1923, the east building was finished at a cost of approximately $84,000. Three years thereafter, 1926, the west building was erected on Harrison Street at a cost of $98,000.
> During this year in February, 1925, the first year of high school was planned with an enrollment of 19 under the direction of Standley. In 1930, the front portables which housed the White children were removed and the children who had previously occupied those structures were moved to the West building which was named Longfellow School. (p. B3)

According to Cohen and Mohl (1979), the new Twenty-fifth Avenue location "epitomized segregated schooling" and was founded as a trade school (an observation only they make) in "an attempt to provide somewhat equal facilities and opportunities for Black children" (p. 118). But, Smith (n.d.) may have expressed the most prevalent sentiment within the African American community about Roosevelt during earlier times:

> The most important fact is that Gary Roosevelt has survived, throughout all the upheaval, and emerged as the most productive Gary Public School in the city. Naturally, the school had always been demeaned by Whites, because it symbolized segregation to the fullest extent. Nevertheless, in spite of that negative influence, the school became a beacon for higher learning and thoroughly prepared its students for productive lives. (p. 3).

It is evident from copies of the Roosevelt Annex Annuals that the culture and tradition for which Roosevelt High School came to be renowned took root in the Annex. The Roosevelt Annex quickly began earning the respect and support of the Black community. In I927, the Annex received a new assistant principal, F. C. McFarlane. Born in the Virgin Islands, McFarlane was educated in Denmark and obtained a bachelor's degree from Columbia University (Balanoff, 1974, p. 297). "He was one of the strongest proponents of 'racial pride' in Gary during the late 20s and early 30s" (Balanoff, 1974, p. 297). McFarlane was promoted to head principal in 1929, making him the first principal of the K-12 Theodore Roosevelt School. "At Roosevelt," McFarlane pledged, "we will try to teach the Negro to value his own background with its African overtones" (Conn, 1992, p. B2). In many ways, McFarlane was the perfect choice for Superintendent Wirt. Wirt, a proponent of segregated education, "needed someone who would fit into his philosophy of a 'separate but equal' school, one who would accept a partial unequal theory and, one who believed in the separation of races" (Smith, n.d., p. 4). In 1930, the new school was commissioned by the Indiana State Department of Public Instruction and, a year later,

Roosevelt was admitted to the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and

Colleges. In 1931, the main building, which was to house the high school portion of the

building, was completed. The new high school building was reported to have cost $686,000

and the total cost of all of the Roosevelt buildings was estimated at a million dollars

(Balanoff, 1974; Sullivan, 2002). The Black community, however, remained in turmoil over

the whether the new high school portion of the building should be all-Black.

> As the primary and junior high school accommodations had been divided on a racial basis prior to the building of the new school, the question of whether Roosevelt High School be all-negro, as Emerson was becoming all-White, or a mixed school like Froebel, tore the Black community into conflicting factions. (Balanoff, 1974, p. 298)

> As it turned out, the final decision was not theirs to make. In August 1930, the

school board made its position very clear. Theodore Roosevelt would be a K-12 segregated

school for Blacks only. This decision placed Roosevelt in a unique position because it was

the only school high school in Gary designated for Blacks only. Balanoff (1974) explained:

> Some Negro students would still be allowed to go to Froebel or Emerson. Roosevelt, Froebel, and Emerson schools would each offer some subjects that the other schools did not have, and a desire to take one of these subjects would be considered grounds for transfer to a different school. Negro students living north of the Pennsylvania railroad tracks would be expected to go to Froebel unless they specifically requested a transfer to Roosevelt. Froebel was to be preserved as a kind of melting pot school. (p. 300)

By the time Roosevelt was formally dedicated in 1931, the rift in the Black community had

subsided. Even though some Blacks disliked the principle of a separate school for Blacks,

most held high hopes that Roosevelt could and would be equal to the White schools. Others

acquiesced to the decision that the high school would be segregated because it would

provide jobs for Negro teachers (Proud school rooted in conflict, *Post Tribune,* 1992, p. B4).

Principal McFarlane, a segregationist, was pleased with the decision to make Roosevelt an

all-Black school. He believed that, unlike in integrated schools where Negro children

"inevitably developed an inferiority complex," Negro children in segregated schools, "could develop dignity, pride, and self-respect" (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 120). As far as McFarlane was concerned, the building of Roosevelt as an all-Black K-12 learning institution that provided Blacks with the opportunity to educate their own children and advance the Black race.

As principal of the Roosevelt Annex, McFarlane demonstrated his commitment to building the self-esteem of Blacks. He wanted Black students to understand the need for Black self-sufficiency and service to the Black community. McFarlane's views were evident in the annex annuals. In the October edition of *The Annex News* (1927), an article reported the "unveiling of the busts of Toiusissant L'Overture, the great Negro liberator, statesman, and martyr of Hayti [sic], and of Henry Ossawa Tanner, the greatest artist the Negro race has produced, and one of the greatest masters of today" (Busts of two great Negroes presented, 1927, p. 3) at a the Lake County Children's Home at a ceremony intend to evolve into a "Casa Negra or cultural center for members of the race in Gary" (Busts of two great Negroes presented, 1927, p. 3). A year later, in another issue of *The Annex News*, renamed *The Black and Gold* for the school colors, student Christopher Hibbler, described an inspiring message delivered to students by Professor A. C. Payne of the Indiana State Teachers' College. He wrote:

> A full house listened to the inspiring story and came away feeling convinced that something good, as one of our correspondents said in an article last year, yet cometh of Negro Nazareth. "Here in our dooryard, so to speak," said the professor in his introduction, "another racial drama of compelling interest has played." And in of this, he quoted statistics that kept the audience applauding enthusiastically. Here are some of them: In 1966 Negroes maintained 12,000 homes; in 1926, 700,000. In the former year, the Race operated 20,000 farms; in the latter, one million farms. In 1866, Negroes were worth $20,000,000; 50 years later, their aggregate wealth reached the figure of $2,000,000,000. (Hibbler, 1929, p. 1)

After the dedication of the new Roosevelt, McFarlane presented his vision for the school to

the public at a program hosted by the YMCA entitled "Know Your City" (Balanoff, 1974,

p. 301).

> A race must have pride in itself in order to win the respect of other races. The Negro
> has done itself a terrible harm. In some subtle way it has learned to despise itself. At
> Roosevelt, we will try to teach the Negro youth to value his own background with its
> African overtones.
> The Negro is done with apology. Ralph Waldo Emerson emancipated
> America from Great Britain culturally 61 years after the signing of the Declaration of
> Independence. By the oddest coincidence, a Negro author, Hughes [referring to
> Langston Hughes], has emancipated the Black race from the White culturally 61
> years after Lincoln's emancipation.
> Hughes wrote in substance that the Negro is proud of himself and that he has
> no cause to be ashamed, that he knows he is beautiful, that he has no apology to offer
> for himself, that he will stand on his own feet, "build his own fortress as best as he
> knows" that he is glad if others are pleased and if they are not it makes no difference.
> (McFarlane as cited in Balanoff, 1974, p. 301)

Roosevelt continued to grow as an epicenter for excellence in the Black community, but

McFarlane's days were numbered. In spite of a strong following, McFarlane was viewed by

many as being too radical. Both the White and Black newspapers criticized him for what

they thought were his extreme ideas. After two years as principal of Roosevelt, McFarlane

left Gary to become the principal of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Dayton, Ohio.

He was succeeded in 1933 by H. Theo Tatum.

The Tatum Years: 1933-1961

> For 65 years we have had a constantly widening battle for existence, economic
> welfare, industrial maintenance, and political and civic entity. Quite truly it has been
> said:
> They set the slave free, striking
> off his bonds
> But he was just as much a slave as
> ever;
> He was still bound by ignorance and
> poverty
> He was still held by fear and
> Superstition;

His slavery was not in his chains,
but in himself—
They can only set free men free
And there's no need for that—
Freemen set themselves free. . . .

      We have no reason to sing out plaintive songs of sorrow—the colored people of Gary have $1, 500,000 in real estate; $475,000 in business enterprise; 3,000 children in school taught, in part, by 61 teachers of the race.

      May this exposition of facts and figures stimulate you to sing the joys of life; inspire you to envision magnificent enterprises; help you to utilize your contacts and think in terms of master achievements. (Tatum as cited in Cohen & Mohl, 1979, pp. 1, 4)

The year 1933 brought many changes to Roosevelt and the citizens of Gary. East Pulaski School was united with Roosevelt and Mr. Tatum, former principal of East Pulaski (originally the Virginia Street School) since 1925, became the new principal of Roosevelt. Unlike his predecessor, Tatum was "an integrationist and a believer in working closely with the White power structure in the city" (Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 120). Prior to being appointed principal of Roosevelt, Tatum had already established a venerable reputation as a school administrator during his tenure as principal of the Virginia Street School, later known as Pulaski.

Tatum's philosophy and approach to education and school administration were well respected by many. In a 1927 school report for the Virginia School, Tatum clarified his philosophy of education:

I accepted the thesis that it is the chief duty of a school to establish itself as a community asset through its contribution in enabling that community to realize on its investments in terms of citizenship, character, and social efficiency. (Tatum as cited in Cohen & Mohl, 1979, p. 121)

He was praised by *The Sun,* the weekly Black newspaper, in November of 1927 for being an "efficient principal" and credited for the "phenomenal growth and development" (Efficient principal, 1927, p. 1) achieved at the Virginia Street School. The concern for efficiency,

prevalent during the Progressive Era, is obvious in Tatum's language as well as in the

newspaper. Tatum was applauded for his work and credentials:

> More than anyone else, this phenomenal growth may be attributed to Principal
> Theodore H. Tatum [sic]. Every inch a scholar, Mr. Tatum is a graduate of
> Columbia University and has been honored by that institution with degrees of B.A.
> and M.A. along with professional diploma in primary and secondary school
> administration.[sic] A first grade superintendent and principal license was granted to
> Mr. Tatum by the state of Indiana. (Efficient principal, 1927, p. 1)

It should be noted that the paper is slightly inaccurate. Mr. Tatum's undergraduate degree

was obtained from Wiley College; he received a Master of Arts degree from Columbia

(Sullivan, 2002, p. 91). Nevertheless, it is evident that it was very important to the Black

community that school administrators have strong academic credentials and Tatum was a

proponent of classical education, much like the New England College of which Du Bois

(1994) spoke in *The Souls of Black Folk.* He respected academic prowess and sought to

bring the very best educators he could find to teach the children at Roosevelt. Tatum

proudly stated in a 1978 interview:

> Our teachers had degrees from top universities all over the country. They had a
> definite purpose and they knew their stuff. We wanted out students to understand
> why they could succeed. We opened every assembly with "Lift Every Voice and
> Sing." We brought in leaders from all over to speak to our students so they could
> hear first hand from Blacks who had made their way. (Bell as cited in Sullivan, 2002,
> p. 91)

He brought many prominent Blacks to Roosevelt to inspire students to do well and build a

legacy of excellence. Among some of the distinguished visitors, were James Weldon

Johnson, poet; Mordecai W. Johnson, President of Howard University; Oscar de Priest,

political leader; and Willis J. King, Methodist Bishop of Liberia (Balanoff, 1974, p. 310).

Tatum strove for personal excellence and discipline and expected the same of his

faculty and students. Former students and teachers attest to the fact that Mr. Tatum ruled the

students and staff at Roosevelt with great authority. Mary Young, a 1940 graduate of

Roosevelt and former school nurse from 1955 through 1989, described Mr. Tatum's

administrative style:

> Mr. Tatum was a strict disciplinarian. He had a kind of Napoleonic way of speaking. He was seldom crossed. He had such respect that whatever he said, that was it. The teachers had very little say so, so far as challenging him. If an issue came up, in all probability he would have the last word. One reason for that was there were no teacher's unions. Mr. Tatum just ruled the roost. He had very high standards. Very high expectations. As I understand it, he interviewed all the personnel, the teachers that were hired on the faculty there, and he had the last word in determining whether or not they would be hired to work at Roosevelt. There were no discipline problems, so there should have been considerable learning going on. The teachers, however, were not intimidated necessarily because they all seemed to be enthusiastic . . . and eager for the young people to learn and get ahead. (M. Young, personal communication, January 11, 2009)

In retrospect, Marion Williams, a 1959 graduate of Roosevelt and former principal of both

Pulaski and Roosevelt Schools, described Tatum's leadership style as idealistic and

autocratic. Williams, who attended Roosevelt for grades 7-12 from 1953 to 1959,

commented, "you did what he asked you to do. I'll change that, you did what he told you to

do, and there was not a lot of resistance" (M. Williams, personal communication, January 9,

2010). He intimated that there were:

> Some instances where I did see some teachers who did not appear to be happy with his approach. However, as a student you didn't know the inside of what was really going on but just from the observation, it appeared as though there was some conflict. (M. Williams, personal communication, January 9, 2010)

> Indeed, there was resistance to Tatum from some teachers and parents. According to

Balanoff (1974):

> In 1938, Tatum brought William Lane, a popular coach in the school, up on charges of insubordination to be tired by the School Board. This was not the first conflict between Tatum and a teacher. (p. 305)

The *Gary American* (1938), the Black newspaper at the time, reported that seven other teachers had resigned from or been forced out of their positions at Pulaski and Roosevelt schools under Tatum's helm. The newspaper and a parent organization called the *Mothers Club* sympathized with the teachers. The *Mother's Club* blamed Tatum for whatever discipline issues the school, alleging that Tatum's "verbal chastising of teachers in the presence of students" (Balanoff, 1974, p. 306) diminished the respect students had for their teachers. Their discontentment with Tatum was aggravated by his political affiliation with the Republican Party. The complaints were heard by the Superintendent and school board, but Superintendent Wirt and most of the school board had the utmost confidence in Tatum's. Additionally, Tatum garnered support from a number of Gary's prominent Black citizens who formed a group called the Educator's Club. They acknowledged certain inadequacies in the school, but insisted that Tatum was not solely to blame. When the school board failed to take action against Tatum, the *Mother's Club* began calling itself the *Mother's Union* and presented their charges against Tatum to the community (Balanoff, 1974, p. 307). The allegations against Tatum expanded to include incidences of "perversion and immorality" (Balanoff, 1974, p. 306) committed by a few teachers at Roosevelt and later, in May of 1939, Tatum was accused of trying to unreasonably control the PTA and faculty. In the end, the disgruntled mothers were told that Tatum was protected by tenure and the unrest eventually ended.

There were also reports that Mr. Tatum may have overly compromised with the school board about books and supplies for Roosevelt students. Mayor Hatcher recalled "stories about Mr. Tatum silently agreeing with the superintendent of schools at the time, privately agreeing with him to accept used books for Roosevelt after the other schools had

finished with them" (R. G. Hatcher, personal communication, January 11, 2010). Young

elaborated:

> One thing I do recall through my years at Roosevelt as a student, I never did see a
> new book. Any books we received had Horace Mann stamped in them, showing that
> we got second hand books. For some reason, I don't know why it was important,
> that this was a budget item, and I guess Mr. Tatum wanted to keep our
> budget lower. I never understood that. But the books were always in good
> condition. The pages were never torn, or frayed, or folded, or crumpled in any way.
> But I never will forget that. (M, Young, personal communication, January 11, 2010)

Complaints about Mr. Tatum appear to be greatly, if not completely, overshadowed by

Tatum's assets and Roosevelt's accomplishments. Mayor Hatcher reiterated, "People were

in awe of him. And let me tell you, Roosevelt had this great reputation for having a strong

tradition, almost like a college or a university. . . . It was revered" (R. G. Hatcher, personal

communication, January 11, 2010).

Roosevelt flourished as a learning institution. Pauline (Walton) Bennett, salutatorian

of the first graduating class of 1931, spoke of the benefits of attending Roosevelt. "I was

taught at Roosevelt you were supposed to accomplish something yourself. Somehow we felt

the doors were open, and now the world was open to us and we had to make the most of it"

(Conn, 1992, p. B2). Student, teacher, and the administration did just that. During Mr.

Tatum's tenure, a west wing was added to the main building in 1946. A treasured art

collection was amassed consisting of nine paintings, valued at $1,000. A vibrant Parent-

Teacher Association was founded for the primary, intermediate, and high school grades.

The largest high school ROTC in the city of Gary was established at Roosevelt. Its concert

and junior band stood proud with a combined membership of 150 students. Its athletes and

scholars excelled, in spite of racial discrimination. In 1951, Roosevelt's track team became

the first all-Black team in the state of Indiana to win the state title, a major accomplishment

considering the fact that when Roosevelt first opened in 1930, the school was barred from

participation in athletic events on the grounds that "sportsmanship might be strained"

(Balanoff, 1974, p. 309). Eventually, the overt racial ban was lifted but discrimination and

prejudice continued. In 1958, the unit school grade configuration was abandoned and

Roosevelt began serving only secondary students. In spite of all the adversity, Roosevelt

thrived and acquired a cherished position as a pillar of strength in the Black community.

Much of that strength was cultivated by the quality of school life many Roosevelt

pupils experienced. Students thought a lot of their teachers and, to this day, credit those

educators with a large portion of their success in life. Young explained:

> We had the most wonderful dedicated teachers you'd ever want to experience. They
> believed in the schools. They wanted to have students feel that they were people of
> worth. [That] they were somebody. To hold their heads high, and they must always
> strive to be better than the White person in order to even get a position. . . . They
> taught us more than academic background. They stressed how important it was, and
> how you must learn to live in the community with people. They discussed matters
> concerning civic interests, social interests, cultural interests, whether it was in that
> particular class curriculum or not. (M. Young, personal communication, January 11,
> 2010)

Williams agreed that teachers at Roosevelt were very competent. "They [teachers] knew

the need for persons to be highly motivated in order to advance their condition" (M.

Williams, personal communication, January 9, 2010). He added:

> I think in a segregated setting they would say things that they normally would not say
> if it were an integrated setting. . . . Ida B. King talked about race relationships and
> how there was a need for people to improve their status. Even in our physical
> education classes and auditorium I do recall instances where people would often talk
> about expanding experiences so that you could be much more successful, kind of in a
> general way, and trying to expose a person to some of the culture and especially I
> think, I learned a lot from the auditorium experience: social skills, getting on the
> stage and being able to talk. (personal communication, January 9, 2010)

The auditorium classes were meaningful to M. Young as well. According to Young:

> That was one of the best classes that they had in the school because it helped to prepare you for life. It didn't teach math, and English, and history, but it taught you how to live in the community as a citizen. How to feel responsibility, and how to conduct yourself, and what was the proper way things should be done. It was also good in developing your theatrical skills. Some are very good at speaking, and these kinds of talents were discovered, and developed, and encouraged to continue developing them. (personal communication, January 11, 2010)

At least a generation later, Verl Shaffer, who returned to teach at Roosevelt, also expressed

fond memories of Auditorium class:

> They don't have those anymore, but as a seventh grader, I went to Auditorium class. There you learned how to appreciate the performing arts. Our Auditorium class was conducted by Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Slaughter. We were taught the different instruments of the orchestra and how to recognize them by their sounds. We were taught the parts of the opera . . . how to understand the parts of a concerto, a ballet. Part of it was we did skits on stage so we could be familiar with what it was like to act in a play. We also had to give speeches on stage, and we were taught how to conduct ourselves as an audience and appreciate the performing arts. It was a great class. (V. Shaffer, personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Teachers understood the need to teach more than reading, writing, and arithmetic and did not

mind going the struggle mile to teach students lessons about life and how to achieve success,

particularly as Black people.

John Potts, a Roosevelt teacher, praised the school in his 1937 Masters thesis, "A

History of the Growth of the Negro Population of Gary, Indiana." He contended that

education was the area in which "the Negro in Gary has probably made the greatest

improvement" (Potts, 1937, p. 46). From his perspective, the educational opportunities

Blacks were offered in Gary superseded the education offered in their native South.

> Many of them came from places where schools were in session from four to six months a year, and the instruction was rather poor. The states from which some of them came were spending about five dollars a year on each Negro child, when the national yearly average was almost a hundred dollars a child. (Potts, 1937, p. 46)

In contrast, "the Negro children in Gary attend a million dollar school plant fully equipped

with gymnasia, shops, laboratories, air conditioned rooms, swimming pools, and an

elaborate auditorium set-up" (Potts, 1937, p. 46). Footnotes in his thesis indicate that the

school to which Potts (1937) was referring is Roosevelt. The assumptions he made about

education for Blacks in the South concur with the recollections of Williams.

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, Williams moved to Gary in the fourth grade. He

missed his old school in Birmingham and remembers some teachers underestimating his

academic ability because he was from the South. Williams recalled:

> When I came to Gary, persons just assumed that moving from a Southern
> environment to a northern environment that the kids there were inferior. That was
> the perception. And so we were somewhat teased by the fact that you know, you had
> come from a southern school district. (M. Williams, personal communication,
> January 9, 2009)

This misperception followed Williams to Roosevelt and added to the challenges he faced in

the transition from Pulaski to Roosevelt in the seventh grade. There were also other

misperceptions that Williams believes may have had a negative impact on pupils. According

to Williams, teachers and counselors made assumptions about what students were likely to

do or become after high school based on what their parents did for a living or where they

lived. He described his relationship with support staff:

> I don't remember one incident where a counselor or a social worker ever worked
> with me, and trying to transition from high school to post-secondary; most of my
> experiences came from my family, relatives, and friends. . . . I think much of that was
> because only certain people in my opinion were given those kinds of experiences.
> That, I thought, was a negative at Roosevelt. . . . It did not appear as though the
> masses were looked upon more than high school diploma [material] and there were
> few people who were expected to go to college. Those few people who were
> expected to go to college and athletes, that was it. (personal communication, January
> 9, 2010)

Williams perceived that the courses that emphasized a classical education were geared

toward the students identified by staff as being intellectually capable and college-bound.

Students deemed not to have strong intellectual skills were expected to work in the steel

mill. "There were classes for them in wood shop, physical education, a little art, and a little music" (M. Williams, personal communication, 2010). When asked about his recollection of school-community relations and extracurricular activities, Williams did not recall as many activities for students when he was in school as there were in later years and attributes this "to the fact that the place was just so overcrowded they just didn't have room to have a lot of extracurricular activities" (M. Williams, personal communication, 2010). In terms of supplemental support, his primary protective factor, outside of his family, was the church.

Although Williams' recollections of high school life as a student at Roosevelt in the 1950s differ in some respects from Mrs. Young's memories of her days in high school at Roosevelt several years earlier, both view the education they received at Roosevelt as a major contributor to their personal and professional success. Tatum (as cited in Sullivan, 2002) may have captured the essence of Roosevelt's legacy to its students and the community:

> Roosevelt School has taken a prominent part in accomplishing for its students the development of qualifications necessary to become well-educated and far-sighted members of the social and economic life of the community. . . 3,487 diplomas have been issued to as many graduates. Many have gone away to continue their education and many have returned as teachers in the home institution. (pp. 91-92)

Mary Young, Marion Williams, Verl Shaffer, Steve Simpson, and countless others chose to come back to Roosevelt, give back to the community that had uplifted them, and to serve young people. Many chose to send their children to Roosevelt and their children made the same choice for their children. Teaching and learning at Roosevelt during the Tatum years may not have been perfect, but Roosevelt served the Black community. Roosevelt belonged to the Black community. In return, the Black community protected and nourished it. The legacy of pride and excellence created during the Tatum years explains why Roosevelt is so dearly loved.

The Anderson Years: 1961-1970

> My dear Seniors,
>
> For you these are days of heightened anticipation and cherished fulfillment now that you are approaching graduation and departure from Roosevelt. I rejoice in your achievement and commend you for reaching this important objective in your lives.
>
> Unfortunately, the world that faces you is one of great uncertainty and continued anxiety. Despite this you must elect to live as well and usefully as possible, not abandoning yourselves to these large perplexities, but using those innate capacities that are yours.
>
> Yours is the capacity to feel and to be moved by your feelings to deeds and accomplishments that normally seem beyond your power. Do not lose it. Yours is the capacity to think, to question, and not to accept blindly. Stretch, expand, and develop this power through intensive care and forced cultivation if need be. And how about your spirit? Yours is the capacity to wonder and to be concerned about yourselves and your relationships with others.
>
> I urge you to develop these capacities to their fullest. Set for yourselves now and throughout life worthy goals and always be faithful to them.
>
> Sincerely yours,
>
> Warren M. Anderson (April 5, 1963)

This inspiring message from Principal Anderson to the graduating senior class, printed in the 1963 *Rooseveltian*, exemplifies the creed and culture of Roosevelt High School. Warren M. Anderson had been head principal for just two years when he composed this address. After serving as the assistant principal under H. Theo Tatum, Anderson became the head principal of Roosevelt in 1961 when Tatum retired. He was the principal of Roosevelt for from 1961 to 1970. Roosevelt continued to flourish during those nine years.

Like Mr. Tatum, he searched for the best African American teachers he could find. Mrs. Lucretia Tolliver, who taught at Roosevelt for 43 years, has never forgotten being recruited by Anderson in 1961.

> Well, it was in 1961 and I had made arrangements to leave within a month or so and Mr. Anderson, out of the clear blue sky, called me and told me that he was trying to recruit teachers for Gary and that he had seen my name on the employment list. He saw my name on the board at Howard [a historically Black university in Washington,

D.C.] and he called to see if he could talk with me. As a result, he talked me into coming to Gary. . . I had a major in English and a double minor in Spanish and Education. He needed a Spanish teacher and an English teacher so I agreed to come for one year. I told the Peace Corp that I would join them in one year, but that never happened. (L. Tolliver, personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Other faculty members were actively recruited to work at Roosevelt, if not directly by the

Roosevelt administration, then by the Gary school board. Joseph Winfrey came to Gary

from Fisk University in the summer of 1962. Winfrey fondly remembers being asked to

serve in Gary by Dr. Haron Battle, the first Black Assistant Superintendent of the Gary

Schools and a former teacher at Roosevelt. Winfrey recalled:

> I was a grad student at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, because I taught science at Brigg High School in Clarksville, Tennessee. And at that time, Russia had put up something called "Sputnik," and in this country we were trying to improve the teachers of math and science in many of our schools. That summer they had a team of persons recruiting teachers, and they were on campus at Fisk University in Nashville. They were looking for math, science, and special education teachers. And, of course, I was a science teacher. That fall, my assignment was at Gary Roosevelt to teach something called biophysical science. (J. Winfrey, personal communication, January 17, 2010)

Winfrey explained that, in the early 1960s, the prospect of teaching in Gary was enticing.

The school system was held in high regard nationally; the city appeared to be a growing

community full of potential for ambitious and capable young Black professionals; and Gary

teachers earned higher salaries than most school districts in the South, and some say, in the

nation. Blacks who moved to Gary from the South, however, were taken aback by the overt

racism and prejudice they found in the northern steel town. They found segregated living

patterns and schools that rivaled situations in the South. At Roosevelt, however, the new

teachers found support and camaraderie. Tolliver described fond memories of Mr. Anderson

being "almost like a father figure:"

> He found housing for me; he chauffeured me around to different places. He took me to the Service Building for the interview. He took me to Lew Wallace for the new

teacher training and he was like a mentor for me the first year. I didn't have my student teaching done so he arranged for me to do the student teaching at St. Joseph's in Hammond. (personal communication, January16, 2010)

Roosevelt exuded a family atmosphere promoted largely by Principal Anderson.

A gentle man by nature, Mr. Anderson was soft-spoken but powerful. Young described Anderson as "a quiet man, completely different [from Tatum]. Very reserved, but very easy to approach, and to discuss problems with [sic]" (M. Young, personal communication, January, 11, 2010).

> I think students were a little more trying with him because his personality was different [from Tatum's]. Members of the faculty felt less regimented under Mr. Anderson. . . . The school continued to flourish, though, and maintain a good record for itself. Roosevelt produced some very outstanding students, and they were always proud to say they attended Roosevelt School. Those who would come back would indicate how having attended Roosevelt had prepared them for college, and for life. (M. Young, personal communication, January 11, 2010).

Mr. Winfrey remembered that the students nicknamed Anderson "the hawk" because they knew that, in his unobtrusive way, he had his eye on them at all times. "He [Mr. Anderson] lived in the community and walked to school often. He lived one block from the school" (J. Winfrey, personal communication, January 17, 2010). Shaffer still enjoyed telling a story about the very human side of Mr. Anderson:

> I got into Latin because I thought I was going to be a physician, and I, in my mind, thought, well I need to know Latin and Greek. Instead of taking Spanish and French, I took Latin, and once I got into it, I realized it was kind of a dead language, but I was in that track. So I went through it and it wasn't very exciting. I was stuck. One day, Mr. Anderson came into our class for some reason. We were struggling with our drills and all of a sudden he started addressing us in Latin fluently, and with a smile on his face, which I had never seen before, and I was galvanized. I mean, not only did it open a window into something about Mr. Anderson that humanized him and made it really interesting to me, but he also gave me an inkling of what Latin should really sound like, and that's always been a memory I have of him. I remember him for that. (V. Shaffer, personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Students felt like they were family, a part of something good. As 1966 graduate, Dr. Rebera Foston put it, "If you didn't feel anything about yourself, you felt you were a part of

something as soon as you walked through the door" (Conn, 1992, p. B2). Mr. Anderson's

humanness and protective watchfulness was perceived and appreciated as a labor of love by

most staff and students.

The caring example of leadership set by Mr. Anderson permeated the building and

inspired many teachers to treat students and colleagues in the same way. Long before the

current push for professional learning communities, teachers at Roosevelt, during

Anderson's tenure, worked collegially and collaboratively. Mrs. Barbara Taliaferro, who

first came to Roosevelt in 1961 as a junior high school teacher, attests to receiving support

from Mr. Anderson and the teachers. She described the school atmosphere as "a very great,

wonderful atmosphere" (B. Taliaferro, personal communication, January 10, 2010). When

asked what made the atmosphere wonderful, B. Taliaferro replied:

> You know what? I met some wonderful people in the administration and faculty, and
> they were extremely helpful in helping me get through that neophyte year. There
> were teachers who helped me. They talked about classroom management. We had
> common planning periods, and so we would meet upstairs in the teacher's workroom,
> and there were just so many people who were willing to share. I'm very happy that I
> was willing to listen because it certainly made life a lot easier for me. (personal
> communication, January 10, 2010)

Mr. Winfrey attributed the close network at Roosevelt to the effectiveness and stability of

the staff during the sixties. He explained:

> In each department at that time, the department chairperson had an hour less student
> assignment, because it was their job to visit all persons in that department on a
> regular basis—to check with you, give you support, see if there were any needs that
> you might have in terms of serving your students better. Roosevelt's staff was very
> stable. There was not a lot of turnover. Persons didn't tend to leave Roosevelt once
> they got there. They seemed to want to stay there and work. (J. Winfrey, personal
> communication, January 17, 2010)

The cooperative culture contributed to the teachers' willingness to give of their free

time, without compensation, to mentor students, purposively serve as role models, and

sponsor numerous clubs and extracurricular activities. The idea was to instill pride. According to Dr. Steve Simpson, a 1965 graduate of Roosevelt and a pediatrician who still resides in Gary, the message students received from teachers during the school day and beyond was "you are my charge and you represent me" (S. Simpson, personal communication, January 23, 2009). The focus on student activities increased significantly during the 1960s. Some of the reason for the increase in student activities may have due to the completion of a new middle school, Beckman, completed in 1961. Beckman, which housed seventh, eighth, and initially ninth graders, helped relieve the overpopulated Roosevelt and teachers could then channel their energy more effectively into the needs of high school pupils (J. Winfrey, personal communication, January 17, 2010).

While the construction of Beckman was positive for the Black community and Roosevelt, it perpetuated de facto segregation in the Gary schools. Because of the already segregated housing patterns, the construction of Beckman ensured that Roosevelt and the Gary schools would remain largely segregated. J. Winfrey recalled that Roosevelt's "sister school, Bailly," (personal communication, January 17, 2010) was constructed in the then all-White Glen Park area at the same time that Beckman built in the Black mid-town area. In fact, when Roosevelt was constructed in 1930, Lew Wallace, the new all-White high school in the Glen Park area was being also under construction. Hence, the familiar patterns of planning to maintain educational segregation prevailed. It was not until the mid-1960s that the Gary schools sought to officially integrate the teaching staff and bus Black students to White schools. No one recalls any effort to bus White students to all-Black schools. In the mid-1960s, very few Blacks taught in White schools. B. Taliaferro recalled that she was only offered positions at Roosevelt or Pulaski. "There were very few [Black teachers] who

were offered positions in 1961 to buildings other than the predominantly Black schools. As time went on, it was determined that the teaching staff in Gary would be integrated" (personal communication, January 10, 2010). According to Taliaferro, supervisors from Central office tried to entice some of the Black teachers identified as being "superior teachers" into leaving Roosevelt to teach at the White schools. The segregated setting at Roosevelt, however, did not seem to bother most teachers or students. By all accounts, despite the school's population swelled beyond capacity to over 3,000, the vast majority of students enjoyed going to Roosevelt.

Segregated schooling was all most people had ever known and, although it had it had its inequities, there were important benefits. According to Simpson, teachers at Roosevelt took students under their wing and served as powerful role models. Indelibly etched in his memory are Coach James Dowdell and Elizabeth Williamson, both of whom treated him as a son and remained a vital part of his adult life (S. Simpson, personal communication, January 23, 2010). Simpson reported many teachers at Roosevelt had connections in higher academia and used those connections to open the doors of opportunity for students that might otherwise have remained closed or unknown. He recalled the efforts of two teachers, Mr. Robert Crow and Mrs. Ida. B. King:

> I can never forget Robert Crow who was one of the smartest teachers I've ever had. He was able to connect with Purdue. Because of him, some of us went down to Purdue for summer workshops. . . for the first three months of college I used my calculus notes from high school. . . . When I was getting ready to go to college, Mrs. King asked me, "where you goin' to school?" I said, "Well, I want to go to Howard. She said, "Come on and go with me." She went into the office, picked up the telephone, and called James Naber. He was the President of the school. She said, "James, I got this boy here at Roosevelt School. He needs a scholarship," and when she finished on the telephone, I had a scholarship. (personal communication, January 23, 2010)

In addition to the networking of staff on behalf of students, teachers made sure that the Roosevelt school experience was enriching and well-rounded. The wide variety of clubs and activities beyond the classroom helped make students feel a part of the school. While it may be an overstatement to say that Roosevelt offered something for everybody, there were certainly a myriad of activities available to the student body to make high school a fun and fulfilling place to be.

Rooseveltians from 1963, 1965, 1968, and 1969 illuminate many enriching clubs and extracurricular activities, both academic and non-academic. Included among the student activities in the 1963 *Rooseveltian* were the *Rooseveltian* Staff; Roosevelt Student Organization (RSO); Senior Hi-Y Club; Charm, Service, Culture Y-Teen Club; Future Teachers of America; Senior and Junior Honor Society; Future Business Leaders of America; Future Homemakers of America; French Club; Marching Band; Concert Orchestra; Majorette Corps; Girls' Glee Club; Boys' Glee Club; Mixed Chorus; Madrigal Singers; Junior Girls' Glee Club; Modern Dance Club; Hall Monitors Association; Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC); ROTC Drill Team; Rifle Team; Girls' Athletic Association Council; Athletic Booster Club; Lettermen's Club; Cheerleaders; Track Team; Football Team; Wrestling Team; Basketball Team; Swim Team; Baseball Team; Tennis Team; and Golf Team. Over 30 extracurricular opportunities existed at Roosevelt to enrich students' lives! Mr. Winfrey recalled that on any given day, there might be 500 students staying after school to participate in an activity (J. Winfrey, personal communication, January 17, 2010).

Students appreciated the significance of a well-rounded education. Prefacing the club and team photos in the 1965 *Rooseveltian*, these words were written:

> That all work and no play makes Jack and Jill dull boys and girls is a known fact. This being so prompted our teachers and administrators to provide for the inhabitants of "Our Temple of Knowledge" a varied and energetic program of activities. Although these activities are extra-curricular, they are so arranged that each has a special function with respect to the whole curriculum. These various activities shape our beings physically, morally, and mentally. (p. 51)

Indeed, the myriad of extracurricular learning opportunities offered at Roosevelt and the fame associated with their success were a source of pride not only for Roosevelt students, but the entire Black community of Gary. They also revered the importance of scholarship. In the same *Rooseveltian*, the theme of which was "Our Temple of Knowledge," scholastic priorities were reiterated in the following creed:

> I believe the knowledge I have received or may receive from teacher and book does not belong to me; That is committed to me only in trust; That it still belongs and always will belong to the humanity produced it through all generations.
>   I believe I have no right to administer this trust in any manner whatsoever that may result in injury to mankind, its beneficiary, on the contrary—
>   I believe it is my duty to administer it for the good of this beneficiary, to the end, that the world may become a kindlier, a happier, a better place in which to live. (Scholar's Creed, *Rooseveltian,* 1965, p. 3)

The tradition and culture fostered at Roosevelt promoted excellence and Black pride.

The 1960s, however, was a tumultuous decade—a combination of ups and downs. The Roosevelt community and the city of Gary, along with the nation, had much to celebrate and a great deal to mourn. Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert F. Kennedy were assassinated. The Civil Rights Bill passed, killing the egregious racial caste system in the South. Four little Black girls in Birmingham died in a racist-inspired church bombing. Mayor Hatcher was elected the first Black mayor of Gary and along with Carl Stokes, the first Black mayor of Cleveland, opened the door for a legitimate Black voice in the political infrastructure of major cities. Riots in nearby Chicago wrought fear, despair, and destruction to Black neighborhoods. The Democratic

Convention, under the auspices of Mayor Richard J. Daley, stirred protest and derision.

Hope for a great society ebbed and flowed. The beleaguered, but much admired Muhammad

Ali was stripped of his heavyweight boxing title of the world because of his refusal to be

drafted. The Vietnam War grew increasingly unpopular, taking the lives of, what many

thought, was a disproportionate number of young African Americans. Formal integration of

the teaching staff began in many Gary schools. The first group of Black pupils was bused

from Pulaski to all-White Bailly Junior High School and Tolleston to Emerson. Evidence of

White flight and economic travail threatened Gary's future. The Jackson Five were making

Gary proud (the family had grown up on coincidentally Jackson Street, just one block east of

Roosevelt). The federal government plan, Model Cities, was helping refurbish Gary and

numerous federal funds poured into the city for youth activities and social services. The

highlight of the 1960s for Roosevelt students, however, may have been winning the Indiana

State High School Basketball Championship.

Proudly touting the refrain—"The Velt Don't Melt"—Gary Roosevelt won the

Indiana state basketball title. This was quite a feat for any team, but it was a special victory

for Roosevelt. The win was particularly sweet given Roosevelt's history. In 1955,

Roosevelt had made it all the way to the state basketball finals and competed in a historical

game with another historically Black high school from Indianapolis, Crispus Attucks.

Roosevelt had a good team, but Crispus Attucks had Oscar Robertson, who went on to

become one the best players in the NBA. Roosevelt lost the 1955 contest, but it felt like a

victory for the fans because a Black high school was destined to win the state title for the

first time. In 1968, it was Roosevelt's turn. The city of Gary was overjoyed. The "hallowed

halls" of Roosevelt, to use the words of the 1968 Rooseveltian, were brimming with pride.

Winning the state tournament was extra special, but Roosevelt had already earned the esteem

of Garyites as a symbol of Black culture and success in academics and the arts. Mr.

Anderson and his assistants, Bernard C. Watson, and later, Mr. Robert E. Jones, worked

diligently to maintain the respect of the community. The 1960s, however, brought new tests

while familiar challenges lingered.

Traces of racial inequity continued. Shaffer explained:

School was great but, I used to get tired of looking in textbooks, kind of beat up textbooks, and seeing Edison, Lew Wallace, you know, other schools stamped in those and they were obviously used textbooks. The teachers had to sort of boost our pride from there because I can remember not too many occasions having brand spanking new textbooks. I remember a lot of the times hand-me-down textbooks, and I didn't like that at all. That's the only thing I didn't like about being at Roosevelt—the fact that I felt we were treated second hand by the larger district. (V. Shaffer, personal communication, January 16, 2010)

The social class caste system and academic tracking remained. The degree to which

students were affected by these factors varied. Simpson described his feelings:

If your parents were professional, there was a certain group. If your parents worked in the mills, there was a certain group. There were very few people on quote welfare. It was also where you lived. If you lived in the Projects, the teachers didn't treat you that way. It was the kids themselves who saw themselves as having to compete. . . . The social stratification came about as a result of the same thing E. Franklin Frasier talked about, the Black bourgeoisie. Complexion had a lot to do with too and quote good hair. . . and if Doctor so and so's daughter was making A's and B's, and if I made A's and B's, I would be in the same class. We were striving to do better. It was just a microcosm of a greater society in the Black community at the time. (S. Simpson, personal communication, January 23, 2010)

Shaffer added:

I did notice that there was this stratification and this caste system almost. It wasn't color-ism whereas, you know, light skin and dark skin, but it was basically socio-economic. Were your parents professional? Did you come from certain neighborhoods? Did you grow up in Means Manor as opposed to the Projects/ There were levels, you know. I never paid a lot of attention to it because I was in sort of in the middle, but there was definitely the strata, and teachers did seem sort of seem to favor the kids who were of a certain level. There were some students who felt resentful of the upper echelon type, and there were kids who looked down on the

kids who came from the lower unit. So that was that. (personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Martin Henrichs, one of the first White teachers to work at Roosevelt, remembers some strife between the classes as well.

> There was something that I noticed and that was sort of a class system, and it was based on how long people had lived in Gary. It was based on color, and it was also based on where people lived. And I saw there that there was going to be a problem because of the people living in the projects, public housing, were looked down upon, and I could see that that would lead to a formation of cliques and other things. . . . I didn't really know the living circumstances of people in Gary who were light-skinned, dark-skinned. I just knew from conversation how the two would quite often downgrade the other. There was a lot of animosity, I thought. Now, this was before the revolution, that Negro revolution that really developed a few years later, and so I was wondering how they were going to resolve this. Once the White race was not the bad guy, how were they going to deal with the feelings of racism within their own race? (M. Henrichs, personal communication, January 20, 2010)

When asked about challenges and changes in the 1960s, Barbara Banks, a Roosevelt graduate and former teacher and counselor, remembers witnessing "big changes" at Roosevelt in the late 1960s. Banks, who returned to Roosevelt in 1966 after an assignment elsewhere in the district, noticed a commented that:

> The school had flipped on every aspect as far as when I was in school. . . . Mr. Anderson had become ill. Young people, remember now, this is 1969, times of Vietnam, protests, times of social upheaval, times where everyone was demanding rights. (B. Banks, personal communication, January 26, 2010)

Banks, a former teacher and counselor at Roosevelt, recalled the girls protesting the "no pants" rule for female students:

> They marched out of the building demanding to be able to wear pants and, of course, they won, and seemingly this new found freedom permeated the building. People began to pretty much do what they wanted. . . . Mr. Anderson retired after that first year. (personal communication, January 26, 2010)

Young also observed the beginning of attitudinal changes in staff and students. She began to sense a feeling of everybody "doing their own thing" (M. Young, personal communication, January 11, 2010). Perhaps a harbinger of the future, Young remembered that the school

began to see more gang activity. "There began to be more problems in the homes," she

added, "which affected students attendance, and their school interest" (M. Young, personal

communication, January 11, 2010). Teacher attitudes began to change as well. According

to Young, most teachers were committed to getting students to learn but others displayed an

attitude with students that "I got my education, and if you don't, it's your fault." She recalled

the integration of the faculty: "some of the students resented the presence of White teachers,

but they soon found out they had to respect them or else they would be the ones who would

be the losers" (M. Young, personal communication, January 11, 2010). Young summarized

the changing tide:

> It was just a general change in society itself, in ways of thinking, and showing independence. . . the fight for civil rights and that sort of thing. Saying we did own thing, which was good. We began to lose something. Some of the things that we held as part of a cultural aspect. We began to slip away from it a bit. We became rigid. Through the year, I could see just a break down in some of the cultural thinking, and structure, and even the value system of the students changed. (personal communication, January 11, 2010)

Henrichs sensed the climate of the school changing as well. When he first arrived in 1961,

he was impressed by the discipline within the school and the deep school pride.

> When I arrived there, the student body—almost 3300 students were very disciplined. We'd have a fire drill. I have never seen anything like it. A fire drill, and these students would come out of their rooms with their hands on their chests, line up, and file quietly out of the school. That was discipline I'd never seen before, and it made me very proud to be there. The front lawn was always mowed beautifully, and if there was something that would break, it would be fixed. The maintenance crew at Roosevelt was excellent. And one of the things I wanted to tap into was the obvious pride that existed. Now, maybe there was too much talking about the past already then by the older teachers. (M. Henrichs, personal communication, January 20, 2010)

In his estimation, as time went on things began to fall apart. Henrichs' perception was that

the administration "did not quite grasp what needed to be done" and "was living in the past"

(M. Henrichs, personal communication, January 20, 2010).

By the end of the decade, the inspiring addresses to seniors from the principal were missing from the *Rooseveltian*. Gone were the auditorium classes. Evidence of social and intellectual stratification lingered, but so did an overwhelming school pride in the Roosevelt tradition of academic excellence, athletic prowess, and brilliance in the arts. Roosevelt was dearly loved. Simpson explained:

> Roosevelt, to me, was a growing time. We had teachers who really wanted to teach. They enjoyed teaching, and they were some of the best around. The faculty was staunch Roosevelt. They were proud to have been hired to come to Roosevelt. Roosevelt was the jewel of the Midtown community. (S. Simpson, personal communication, January 23, 2010)

I began this chapter hoping to not only provide an understanding of Roosevelt's history but also, to explain why it was and is, for many in the Black community, so dearly loved. Gary Roosevelt's story is a tale of racism, racial pride, segregation, and triumph. Born out of racial conflict and the doctrine of separate but equal, Roosevelt became the heart of the Black community. It had quality teachers who accepted the call to serve as leaders and role models. In the initial years, teachers at Roosevelt made sure the students felt special, competent, and part of something bigger than they were. The school could also boast of successful graduates who assumed leadership roles in the community. The legacy was real as many graduates returned to the school as teachers and generation after generation attended Roosevelt. To understand the present and plan for the future, it is important to view the past in a critical perspective.

Increasingly, since *Brown,* the merits of desegregation have been debated and a great deal of research has focused on the strengths of the segregated all-Black school. In contrast to the traditional paradigm of the deprived segregated school, researchers have begun to reevaluate the characteristics of the good segregated school. From the 19th century through

the 1950s, Black educators in conjunction with ministers and lawyers provided leadership in the African American community. These groups served as an intelligentsia for the African American community. Because of their training and integrity, Blacks trusted and respected them to provide important cultural meanings, values, ideals, and objectives for Blacks in America (Franklin, 1990; Franklin & Moss, 1994; Kelly, 2010; Marable, 1985; Siddle Walker, 1993). Educators were the largest group of professionals to provide such guidance (Franklin, 1990, p. 40). African Americans who were fortunate enough to receive an education felt an obligation to pass that knowledge on to other Blacks. They cultivated an "ethos of service" toward the Black community (Franklin, 1990, p. 40). Black educators in the era of segregation recognized that their destiny was inextricably tied to advancement of the entire race. Consequently, schools were not only committed to instrumental and academic ends, but also moral and communal bonds that hinged on a caring, familial school environment (Dempsey & Noblit, 1993, p. 47). Schools were "embedded in communities in such ways that they were seen as moral agents of communities; schools cared about students and community, and vice versa" (Dempsey & Noblit, 1993, p. 47). The culture of caring and service in segregated Black schools, like Roosevelt, was unique in another significant way: it offered African American students a counterhegemony—a counter ideology to the dominant ideology of Black intellectual and cultural inferiority. The effort was deliberate and purposeful. It was a form of resistance.

During the pre-Civil Rights, pre-*Brown* era, educational opportunities for Blacks were limited and unequal. The explicit assumption held by Whites about Blacks was they were intellectually and culturally inferior. Belief in the superiority of the White race was the basis for racism in America (Sizemore, 2008, p. 92). Black teachers in segregated, all-Black

schools executed a deliberate response to the reality of racism. Theresa Perry, Claude

Steele, and Asa Hilliard III (2003) explained in *Young, Gifted, and Black*:

> In response to these realities, most if not all of the historically Black segregated schools that African-American children attended were intentionally organized in opposition to the ideology of Black intellectual inferiority. In other words, in addition to being sites of learning, they also instituted practices and expected behaviors and outcomes that not only promoted education—an act of insurgency in its own right—but also were also designed to counter the ideology of African Americans' intellectual inferiority and ideologies that saw African Americans as not quite equal and as less than human. Everything about these institutions was supposed to affirm Black humanity, Black intelligence, and achievement. (p. 88)

Roosevelt thrived on Black pride and Black excellence. In fact, the administration and

teachers at Roosevelt were able to create what Perry et al. (2003) referred to as a "figured

universe"—a "figured counterhegemonic community" (p. 93 rooted in positive cultural

identity. Holland et al. (as cited in Perry et al., 2003) defined the notion of a figured world:

> By "figured world" we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. These collective "as-if" worlds are sociohistoric, contrived interpretations or imaginations that mediate behavior and so, from the perspective of heuristic development, inform participants' outlooks. (p. 93)

Roosevelt's success and other good historically all-Black schools institutionalized the

traditional African American philosophy of schooling: "education for freedom, racial uplift,

citizenship, and freedom" (p. 93). This philosophy became the "central meaning system"

(p. 93) that defined the life and culture in school. Good segregated schools were predicated

on caring interrelationships, the valuing of students, high expectations, a homelike, familial

school environment and a sense of trust and confidence between school and community

(Foster, 1990; Hilliard, 2003; Siddle Walker, 1993, 1996, 2000). Based upon these

measures, Roosevelt was indeed a good segregated school.

In the chapters that follow, I examine how the parameters by which goodness is measured have changed in the post-Brown era and analyze the impact of national educational reform policy in the alleged color-blind era on teaching, learning, racial inequality, and ultimately, the educational opportunities and outcomes of Black students across the country and, specifically, at Theodore Roosevelt High School.

Chapter V: The Seventies—A Quiet Storm

People movin' out
People movin' in
Why, because of the color of their skin
Run, run, run, but you sho' can't hide
An eye for an eye
A tooth for a tooth
Vote for me, and I'll set you free
Rap on brother, rap on
Well, the only person talkin'
But love is the preacher
And it seems,
Nobody is interested in learnin'
But the teacher
Segregation, determination, demonstration,
Integration, aggravation,
Humiliation, obligation to our nation,
Ball of confusion
That's what the world is today. (Temptations, 2007, lyrics)

The question at the heart of this research is how have allegedly race-less, color-blind

reform agendas in the post-*Brown* era intentionally or unintentionally affected racial

inequality of educational opportunities and outcomes in America's public schools? What's

race got to do with it? Heretofore, I have taken a race-critical view of the history of

education and educational reform that has focused on racial inequality during the years prior

to 1970. I have established that during the pre-Brown era, racism and racial inequality in

American public schools was an uncontested truth. I have argued that such racism and racial

inequality was systemically and deliberately deployed to preserve White privilege, the

consequence of which has been the oppression of African Americans. In the next four

chapters, I trace the evolution of alleged race-neutral, color-blind educational reform policies

and practices and the impact of those reforms on Black children and the racial achievement

gap. The scope of my investigation is the past 40 years, 1970 to 2010.

Each of the next four chapters is divided into two parts. Using the lens of critical race theory, the first part of each chapter is a historical macro-analysis of the impact of educational reform policies on students of color, essentially African American children. The second portion focuses on a historical micro-level case study of Roosevelt High School. The two stories, so to speak, are juxtaposed to ascertain what race has to do with the impact of color-blind reform on Black achievement and opportunities. This chapter focuses on the 1970s. I will show how the 1970s were a time of racial retrenchment and progress, economic growth and increased poverty, and mounting concern about the quality of education in American public schools. The 1970s were a quiet storm.

The New Revolution

> The goal of this administration is a free and open society. In saying this, I use the words "free" and "open" quite precisely.
>
> Freedom has two essential elements: the right to choose, and the ability to choose. The right to move out of a mid-city slum, for example, means little without the means of doing so. The right to apply for a job means little without access to the skills that make it attainable. By the same token, those skills are of little use if arbitrary policies exclude the person who has them because of race or other distinction.
>
> Similarly, an "open" society is one of open choices—and one in which the individual has the mobility to take advantage of those choices.
>
> In speaking of "desegregation" or "integration," we often lose sight of what these mean within the context of a free, open, pluralistic society. We cannot be free, and at the same time be required to fit our lives into prescribed places on a racial grid—whether segregated or integrated, and whether by some mathematical formula or by an automatic assignment. Neither can we be free, and at the same time be denied—because of race—the right to associate with our fellow citizens on a basis of human equality.
>
> An open society does not have to be homogeneous, or even fully integrated. There is room within it for many communities. Especially in a nation like America, it is natural that people with a common heritage have certain ties; it is natural and right that we have Italian or Irish or Negro or Norwegian neighborhoods; it is natural members of those communities feel a sense of group identity and group pride. In terms of an open society, what matters is mobility: the right and ability of each person to decide for himself where and how he wants to live, whether as part of the ethnic enclave or as part of the larger society—or as many do, share the life of both.
>
> We are richer for our cultural diversity; mobility is what allows us to enjoy it.

Economic, educational, and social mobility—all these, too, are essential elements of the open society. When we speak of equal opportunity, we mean just that; that each person should have an equal chance to go just as high and as far as his talents energies will take him. (Price, 1977, pp. 204-205)

The opening epigraph is taken from the white paper on school desegregation policies prepared by Raymond Price and issued by President Nixon on March 24, 1970. The concepts of openness, freedom, mobility, pluralism, equal opportunity, and group identity appealed to the conservative American spirit and catapulted the political revolution of the 1970s. The 1960s had been a tumultuous decade characterized by great social change, high expectations, and big government spending the likes of which the nation had not seen since the days of FDR. By 1970, Johnson's great society seemed like a pipedream and, to make matters worse, the country was losing two wars: the War on Poverty and the Vietnam War. Public sentiment reflected a transformation of the hopes and ambitions of *Brown* that, in a very real sense, led to the present era of color-blind educational reform. The change was subtle and gradual but powerful, nonetheless. A major reason for the change in attitude was brought on by educational and social research conducted in the aftermath of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Now that the desegregation of the nation's schools was a federal law and financial entitlements were tied to its enforcement, the opportunity and demand for empirical field research on the effects of desegregation on the Negro increased. Educators and social scientists, along with the Federal government, clamored for evidence that would either refute or substantiate three critical assumptions that underpinned the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as well as other initiatives tied to Lyndon Johnson's dream of a great society.

One assumption was that if segregation was inherently injurious to the well being of Negro children, as Justice Warren stated in the rendering of the majority decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), then desegregating the schools should enhance the cognitive and affective development of Negro children. A second assumption was that the nation's schools were largely racially segregated and that withholding federal dollars from schools that continued to practice discriminatory practices, as mandated by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, would rid the nation of discrimination in school and society based on race, color, and national origin. The third assumption was that increased spending of federal dollars for compensatory programs under the provisions of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act would remedy the paramount ills of society. But, where was the empirical evidence to support or refute these claims?

Two major research projects were commissioned to investigate these claims. The results of these studies altered educational policy and public sentiment about racial inequality in educational opportunities and outcomes in America. The Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey (EEOS) (1966), Coleman et al. report (1966), and the Westinghouse-Ohio report (1969) cast serious doubt on the merit of expensive compensatory educational programs and the ability of schools to close the racial achievement gap in the nation's schools. The Coleman et al. report, commissioned by President Johnson, found:

1. American public education remains largely unequal in most regions of the country, including all those where Negroes form any significant proportion of the population. (p. 3)
2. Nationally, Negro pupils have fewer of some of the facilities that seem most related to academic achievement. (p. 9)
3. Whatever may be the combination of nonschool factors—poverty, community attitudes, low educational level of parents—which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and nonverbal skills when they enter the first grade, the fact is the schools have not overcome it. (p. 21)

4. 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. (p. 316)

Although the design of the EEOS was grounded in quantitative data, Coleman et al. maintained a social science perspective throughout the narrative report that was sensitive to the many qualitative human elements of education and educational research. He cautioned his audience that numbers and statistical data provide only a fragment what there is to know and learn about the equality of educational opportunity in America's public schools. Coleman et al. also reminded readers of the importance of considering the dichotomy in the quality of lived experiences: "the shack and the showcase, the tyrant and the tramp" (p. 8), as he put it. Coleman et al. explained:

> One must also be aware of the relative importance of a certain kind of person. Just as a loaf of bread means more to a starving man than to a sated one, so one very fine textbook or, better, one very able teacher, may mean far more to a deprived child than to one who already has several of both. (p. 8)

He also cautioned that standardized tests are almost always culturally biased and can only measure tangible evidence of achievement. Coleman et al. noted that, in fact, school characteristics did differ in their relationship to the various racial and ethnic populations. The EEOS data showed that the achievement of minority students were much more dependent upon school characteristics, particularly teacher quality, namely verbal ability of teachers, than was the achievement of White students. In other words, Whites were less likely to be affected, positively or negatively, by school and teacher characteristics than were Negro children and other minorities. Hence, Coleman et al. concluded that "it is for majority Whites that the variations make the least difference; for minorities, they make somewhat more difference" (p. 22) and "teacher quality", in particular, "seems more important to

minority achievement than to that of the majority" (p. 22). These observations were largely

downplayed, if not ignored. Sizemore (2008) contended:

> This basic refusal to study why African Americans react to certain phenomena
> differently than Whites is a paradox of school reform research. . . . In the name of
> equity, many options have been chosen to solve the problem. Each has failed
> miserably because there is no close fit between the finding and the reality. (p. 95)

The powerbrokers in education and politics paid little heed to Coleman et al.'s (1966)

warning about the caveats of standardized testing for although he pointed out the limitations

of objective testing, he justified the use of such tests to measure achievement outcomes on

the grounds they provided a fairly accurate and widely accepted assessment of achievement

in intellectual and cognitive skills that are considered essential to obtaining employment,

improving one's station in life, and participating in an increasingly technological world.

Thus, the understanding gleaned by most legislators and educators from the Coleman et al.

report was that "Blacks achieved less than Whites; academic achievement seemed more

related to family background than school factors; and the school factor that seemed to matter

most was the racial composition of the school" (Cremin, 1988, p. 265). Another study, the

Westinghouse-Ohio Report, commissioned at the urging of President Nixon, created

skepticism about the effectiveness of equity-based reform and compensatory interventions in

education.

In June of 1969, the Office of Economic Opportunity Evaluation Division awarded a

contract to the Westinghouse Learning Corporation in cooperation with Ohio University to

evaluate the impact of Head Start. Exactly two months earlier, Nixon had issued a statement

to Congress calling for:

> A national commitment to providing all American children an opportunity for
> healthful and stimulating development during the first five years of life. Such a
> commitment and the reaffirmation of the importance of continuing the search for

successful preschool programs represent the next steps we must take in order to make meaningful the principle of an equal start in life for all. Such new directions are very much in keeping with the recommendations of this study and we will be pleased if our efforts contribute to such program renewal and refinement. (Ciracelli, 1969, p. x)

Although Nixon reiterated the nation's commitment to equality of educational opportunity for all of America's children, he also implied something more in this Economic Opportunity Message specifically about compensatory education and specifically, Head Start. He indicated "the long term effect on Head Start appears to be extremely weak" (Williams & Evans as cited in Datta, 1983, p. 276). The Westinghouse-Ohio Report, later viewed by many as an egregious piece of research because of its faulty design and likely, spurious results, dealt a serious blow to the credibility of Head Start and the belief that taxpayers' dollars should be used to fund compensatory education programs. In short, the Westinghouse-Ohio Report (Ciracelli, 1969) concluded:

1. Summer programs were ineffective in producing any persistent gains in cognitive or affective development as measured by test administered in grades 1, 2, and 3.
2. Full-year programs were marginally effective in producing some gains detectable in grades 1, 2, and 3, but were in effective in lasting gains in affective development.
3. Head Start children, in summer or full-year programs, scored below national norms for the standardized test of language development and scholastic achievement.
4. Head Start produced positive effects on parents of Head Start attendees as indicated by their strong approval rating of the program and its influence on their children. (pp. 243-245)

"The most significant conclusions reached on the basis of this study are that summer programs are ineffective and that full-year programs appear to be marginally effective" (Ciracelli, 1969, p. 245). These conclusions, prematurely reported in draft to the Office of Economic Opportunity and referenced in Nixon's 1969 Equal Opportunity Message, were

released to the national press. The report was assumed by many to be an indictment of the

Head Start program.

Additionally, the Moynihan report (1965), *The Negro Family: The Case for National

Action*, highly influenced President Nixon and the nation. Moynihan's report fueled what

remains a persistent explanation for racial inequality between opportunities and outcomes

for Black and Whites, the pathological Black family. Moynihan alleged that there was a

strong relationship between the demise of the Black family and rising Black unemployment.

This reinforced the already prevalent American ideology that poverty is a character flaw, the

result of poor decisions, lack of morals and values, and cultural pathology. Excerpts from an

interview with Moynihan published by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) revealed

Moynihan's position. Moynihan explained:

> Well, I was—to make it short—I was able to show a striking correlation between the
> rise and fall of unemployment and the rise and fall of things like married
> woman/husband absent—a number of new welfare cases, as would come to call
> them. When you have higher unemployment, you will get broken. . . .
>
> And the absolutely essential point to be made about *The Negro Family: The
> Case for National Action,* [is that] a year earlier, I could have confidently told you an
> showed you that [if] you got unemployment down, this problem went down.
> Suddenly, unemployment is going down, and this problem's going up. The lines
> crossed. (First Measured Century, n.d., pp. 2-3)

Many conservatives and liberals, disenchanted with the failed promises of Lyndon Johnson's

Great Society, concluded that the generous give-a-ways of social policies in the 1960s had

done little to solve racial inequality and, in fact, the real problem lay within the Black

culture. The work of Arthur Jensen (1969) cast further doubt that the larger society was

responsible for the preponderance of racial inequality. Although Jensen's work was

vehemently and perhaps, unfairly, criticized as being racist, it implied that intelligence might

be inherited. Many interpreted this to mean that racial inequality in school achievement was

a function of genetic differences in intelligence, thus reviving the age-old belief in biological inferiority of the Black race. Additionally, as I have alluded to earlier, many Whites were baffled by the anger and violence within the Black community, especially in light of the Civil Rights Act. Moynihan, for one, expressed confusion and dismay:

> In the summer of 1965, we had had some wonderful things in Washington as regards race by that time. In 1964, the great Civil Rights Act was passed. In 1965, the great Voting Rights Act was passed. Then, without any notice or warnings or heads up, the rioting broke out in Watts, in Los Angeles. And it was fierce. And nothing that intense had ever occurred in our modern time. (First Measured Century, n.d., p. 3)

Moynihan intimated that press secretary Bill Moyers, in response to questions from reporters about what was going on, handed reporters the Moynihan report "as if [there was] somehow a causal relationship between [the two]" (First Measured Century, n.d., p. 4). According to Moynihan, the report was regarded as "anti-Black or whatever" (p. 4). The "whatever" is significant because, when revisited, during Nixon's administration, no matter how unpopular the findings may have been in some circles, the perception that low Black achievement is largely attributable to the pathology of Black culture is a widely accepted belief. The fact that Moynihan was admittedly caught so off-guard by the riots and anger within the Black community demonstrates the naïve attitude of many White Americans. I am not a proponent of violence or rioting as means of bringing about social change, but how many years had it been since the Emancipation Proclamation, not to mention the writing of the U.S. Constitution? Furthermore, the passage of legislation, while inarguably a step in the right direction, did not eradicate years of racism and racist practices overnight. How long could marginalized Blacks be expected to wait for the privileges Whites took for granted? Like a pot of scalding milk, when too much pressure builds up, the milk will boil over, out of the pot, onto the stove and even the kitchen counter—hot and sticky to the touch. One has to

touch it in order to clean it up, otherwise the stove, burner, and counter are ruined. America, notorious for trying to will away the difficult issue of race, began to turn a blind eye to the historical reasons for and implications of the violence.

As racial tensions mounted, Moynihan (as cited in Dewitt, 2005) counseled Nixon to adopt a position of "benign neglect" (p. 2). According to historian, author, and scholar, Larry Dewitt (2005), in an unpublished essay entitled "Moynihan, Welfare Reform, and the Myth of Benign Neglect," Moynihan wrote the following words to Nixon in an internal memo:

> The time may have come when the issue of race could benefit from a period of benign neglect. The subject has been too much talked about. The forum has been too much taken over to hysterics, paranoids, and boodlers on all sides. We may need a period in which Negro progress continues and racial rhetoric fades. The Administration can help bring this about by paying close attention to such progress—as we are doing—while seeking to avoid situations in which extremists of either race are given opportunities for martyrdom, heroics, histrionics, or whatever.
> Greater attention to Indians, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans would be useful. A tendency to ignore provocations from groups such as the Black Panthers might also be helpful. The Panthers were almost apparently almost defunct until the Chicago police raided one of their headquarters and transformed them into culture heroes for the White—and Black-middle class. You perhaps did not note on the society page of yesterday's *Times* that Mrs. Leonard Bernstein gave a cocktail party on Wednesday to raise money for the Panthers.
> Mrs. W. Vincent Astor was among the guests. Mrs. Peter Duchin, the rich blonde wife of the orchestra leader was thrilled. "I've never met a Panther," she said, "This is a first for me." (p. 2)

The concept of benign neglect ignited strong protests from liberals and, for a bit, Moynihan was demonized in the press as a racist. Despite the controversy, two ideas appear to have weathered the storm: the first is that race is talked about too much, and the second is that racial rhetoric will fade with time if we just focus on Black progress.

People were weary of all the talk about race and racism, yet, the issue of school desegregation persisted. Many urban school systems such as Indianapolis, Dayton, and

Cleveland, to name just a few in the Midwest, enforced contentious desegregation plans that frequently displeased both Black and White parents. Meanwhile, the economy in these cities increasingly worsened causing uncertainty, anger, and frustration. Conflicting interests made life for many Americans rather unsettling. One disconcerting development was the growing practice of affirmative action. Focusing on education and jobs, affirmative action was first introduced in 1961 by President Kennedy and enforced for the first time during the Johnson administration. It was intended to redress the discrimination that persisted in spite of civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees. In keeping with his disdain for discrimination, pragmatic nature, and keen political instincts, Nixon was the first President to impose employment quotas with the approval of the Philadelphia Plan, an affirmative action effort designed to open construction work to competitive labor. Although he flip-flopped on the overall issue of affirmative action by 1972, his apparent support for employment quotas gave license to policies of affirmative action in other arenas, namely, higher education. This helped to rekindle competitive racism as not only Blacks, but other previously disenfranchised groups were also seen as a threat to historical White privilege in employment, housing, and college admission. Reverse discrimination became an issue epitomized in the landmark *Bakke* (1978) case. Alan Bakke, a White male, had been denied admission to a medical school that had accepted allegedly less qualified minority applicants. Bakke charged that he was the victim of discrimination because of a separate admission policy that reserved 16 out of every 100 places for minority students. The Supreme Court ruled against the inflexible quotas, but upheld the legality of affirmative action, per se. The ruling placated some and outraged others, further complicating matters. The emergence of the Black middle class appeared to be somewhat of a double-edged sword. While more

Blacks than ever before enjoyed greater social and economic mobility, others remained in poverty, causing a rift within the Black community. Many Blacks who had achieved middle-class status experienced deep disappointment and even rage when they discovered that despite their success, race still mattered (Cose, 1993). Everybody was concerned about the overall quality of public education as schools and society were confronted with growing demands from previously silenced minorities. Blacks were not the only people demanding a piece of the American dream. Other ethnic groups, women, gays and lesbians, and the handicapped also began to demand and secure rights. It is probably safe to say that the threat of race, loss of White and male privilege, and economic decline invigorated old strains of biological racism, exacerbated inclinations toward historical, paternalistic, and competitive racism among White Americans. Yet, the fervor of the 1970s, unlike the raucous sixties, was more akin to a quiet, smoldering storm.

In the midst of the quiet storm, Nixon fashioned himself as the arbiter of desegregation. When he took office 15 years after *Brown,* only 5.2% of Black children in the 11 Southern states specifically targeted in *Brown I* attended schools defined by the courts as unitary systems (Price, 1977). Within less than two years, 90% of Black pupils in the South were no longer part of dual school system. Unlike his predecessors, Nixon did not avoid the issue of school desegregation. In *With Nixon*, Raymond Price (1977), a speechwriter for Nixon, contended that Nixon "was antisegregation, but he was also antibusing, as the term came rather loosely to be used" (p. 203). Bitterly opposed to de jure segregation, he found little fault with de facto desegregation. Nixon (as cited in Price, 1977) explained his position in the white paper on desegregation:

> Racial imbalance in a school system may be partly *de jure* in origin, and partly *de facto*. In such a case, it is appropriate to insist on remedy for the *de jure* portion which is unlawful, without insisting on a remedy for the lawful *de facto* portion.
>
>   *De facto* racial separation, resulting genuinely from housing patterns, exists in the South as well as the North, in neither area should this condition by itself be cause for federal government enforcement actions. *De jure* segregation brought about by deliberate school-board gerrymandering exists in the North as well as in the South; in both areas this must be remedied. In all respects, the law should be applied equally, North, South, East, and West. (p. 212)

Nixon's message was not if desegregation would occur but how, but in doing so, he was determined to hold true to his conviction that "the essence of a free society is to restrict the range of what must be done, and broaden the range of what may be done" (p. 205). Throughout the 1968 campaign, Nixon emphasized his conviction that the Supreme Court had gone overboard in free-wheeling judicial activism and called for a strict construction of the Constitution. A proponent of the concept of negative freedom (freedom from restraint), Nixon supported the formality of legal remedies of racial discrimination from a perpetrator's perspective (punishing violators of legal policies). The philosophical crux of Nixon's New Revolution was revenue sharing, the objective of which was to trim down the role of the federal government by giving more power to the states and local governments. Opposed to the proliferation of categorical grants for which the Johnson administration was known, Nixon favored block grants and decentralization. He wanted to revive in the American people a respect for "basic social values, . . . [a] sense of community, . . . [and a belief in] individual efficacy" (p. 198). Nixon also believed very strongly that the South had been mistreated long enough for its Civil War transgressions.

    As far as Nixon was concerned, the South had been "discriminated against" long enough and it was time the southern states were treated as a "full-fledged member of the union" (Price, 1977, p. 200). Nixon set out to engage the South by employing what came to be known as a Southern strategy. First, he devised an informal Cabinet Committee on

Education whose primary responsibility was to enlist Southern cooperation in a desegregation plan. Second, he appointed a conservative Southerner to the Supreme Court. Although widely criticized for his alleged racist Southern strategy, the record shows that between 1968 and 1973, the Supreme Court successfully articulated and extended desegregation rights (Orfield & Eaton, 1996, p. xiv). On the surface, it appeared that *Brown's* goals were being met. By 1974, however, the tide turned and the Court began slowly dismantling desegregation. From a race-critical perspective, the important question here is not whether Nixon was a racist or not, but whether or not the decisions of the Supreme Court protected and furthered White privilege, thus, depriving and disadvantaging Blacks. In other words, the crucial issue is whether or not the precedents set forth by the Supreme Court led to the retrenchment of desegregated public education.

I hasten to emphasize, however, in the aftermath of *Brown* and its unanticipated consequences, some White and Black Americans, remain unconvinced that desegregation was a good idea and do not see the harm in the gradual resegregation of schools. Unfortunately, people either do not understand or have forgotten the real reasons why segregated schooling is inherently unequal. As Orfield and Eaton (1996) explained,

> Segregated schools are unequal not because of anything inherent in race but because they reflect the long-term corrosive impact on neighborhoods and families from a long history of racial discrimination on many aspects of life. If those inequalities and the stereotypes associated with them did not exist, desegregation would have little consequence. The fact that they do exist means that desegregation has far more significance than those who think of it merely as "race-mixing" could understand. (p. 57)

History has proven that segregated education is inherently unequal, not because of any inherent inferiority or superiority within a given race, but because racism precludes the equal distribution of resources and opportunities to non-White children. It is because of racism

that segregated schooling is a dangerous practice in our public schools. Denying the

existence of racism and the role that race plays in the educational decision-making (as the

pathology of color-blindness would have us do) will only exacerbate the problem. The turn

toward resegregation in the nation's schools and neo-conservative ideology became evident

in the mid-1970s.

Two important Supreme Court rulings exhumed the basic assumptions of *Plessy v.*

Ferguson (1969) and set the wheels in motion for the gradual return of separate but unequal

schools:

> *Milliken v. Bradley*, 418 U.S. 717 (1974). In this decision, the Supreme Court
> blocked efforts for interdistrict, city-suburban desegregation remedies as a means to
> integrate racially isolated city schools. The Court prohibited such remedies unless
> plaintiffs could demonstrate that the suburbs or the state took actions that contributed
> to segregation in the city. Because proving suburban and state liability is often
> difficult, Milliken effectively shut off the option of drawing from heavily White
> suburbs in order to integrate city districts with very large minority populations.
> 　*Milliken v. Bradley II*, 433, U.S. 267 (1977). In this case, the Supreme Court
> faced the challenge of providing a remedy for the Detroit schools, where *Milliken I*
> made long-term integration impossible. The Supreme Court ruled that a court could
> order a state to pay for educational programs to repair the harm caused by
> segregation. (Orfield & Eaton, 1996, pp. xxii-xxiii)

Milliken I (1974) reinstated the constitutionality of segregated education and *Milliken II*

(1977) further sanctioned the concept of separate but equal by agreeing to financially

compensate segregated education rather than support integration of schools. *Milliken II*

implied that, with additional funding, separate education could be equal. The historical

parallels between *Brown I* and *II* and *Milliken I* and *II* are uncanny as both, in very different

ways, altered the course of education and race relations in the nation. Increasingly, the

prospects for integration decreased as Whites began exiting the cities where poverty and

worsening economic troubles magnified racial tension. Simply put, "there were few Whites

left in cities to integrate" (Reese, 2005, p. 248). The widely heralded reports that indicated

expensive compensatory educational interventions had produced only minimal, short-term academic improvement and suggested that the Black family and culture were largely to blame for the racial achievement gap and racial inequality made it easier for Americans to deny any public responsibility for racial inequality in the past or present. The rise of the Black middle class suggested to some that race was a diminishing factor in the determination of one's life chances and supported the traditional belief in a meritocratic America. Wilson's (1978) book, *The Declining Significance of Race*, resonated with a public tired of talking about the ubiquitous problem of race.

In an attempt to subtly maintain integration without mentioning race, magnet school reform was instituted in many urban areas in the late 1970s. The success of magnet reform was limited, that is, if success was measured by the degree to which integrated cities and schools were sustained. As Reese (2005) explained:

> These schools emphasized the performing arts, math or science, or other curricular themes or approaches in an attempt to attract students voluntarily, without coercion from school boards or court edicts. Sometimes officials paired schools from different neighborhoods and bused children in ways that guaranteed a more diverse racial mix. But the public mood and federal power had shifted decisively away from the heady years of the Great Society. (p. 248)

The challenge confronting the schools was how to satisfy both the middle and lower classes. This was nothing new as educators in Horace Mann's day were similarly challenged. The same problem was just situated within a different context. Throughout America's history, as the schools became more inclusive and democratic, traditionally privileged Americans rushed to the assumption that "more equality meant more mediocrity" (p. 219). The unpleasant reality is that those who were able to leave the cities for the suburbs generally upheld the ideal of equality of opportunity, but only "if that meant superior schools for their own children" (p. 219). To think that race and racism had nothing to do with such

assumptions is absurd. Not surprisingly, the magnet school concept, while successful in some instances, could not stop the mass exit of Whites from the cities or the steady resegregation of urban schools and the inequality that followed. Americans, particularly the White and the middle-class, were growing increasingly afraid and moved to flee the city and its problems by the threat of race and culture. I would argue that many Whites could have tolerated a few Blacks, meaning integration to some safe degree. Integration became intolerable when Whites began to fear the loss of privilege and the takeover of Blacks and other minorities. To make matters worse, rising inflation, negative attitudes toward government, Nixon's abuse of power and eventual resignation from office ignited public concern about the fate of the nation. Historically, when Americans feel threatened economically, they look to public education for the answers. During the 1970s, high schools became the target of widespread angst over the quality of public education.

Ever since the end of World War II, high schools had been a source of growing attention and ongoing criticism. The American high school, in particular, experienced a period of rapid expansion. As more and more people began going to high school, the demands on secondary education increased. Following the wars, the country was heavily influenced by James Conant's *Education in a Divided World* (1948) and *The American High School Today* (1959). A staunch advocate of free public schooling, Conant (1948, 1959) did not believe that equality of opportunity meant the same education for everybody. Thus, he called large comprehensive high schools and academic tracking with the provision of some common learning experiences for all students. Many of the nation's high schools were modeled in this fashion. In communities across America, "the local high school, or at least successful sports teams, shaped community identity and sustained local pride. But the belief

that the high school was mostly a troubled institution was ubiquitous in the postwar decades"
(Reese, 2005, p. 287).

By the 1970s, criticism from parents, politicians, the media and pundits were
relentless about the state of the American high school. Reese (2005) drew attention to the
provocative work of novelist Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. In 1970, Vonnegut wrote an article in
Esquire magazine that may have revealed important truths about high school. "High school
is closer to the core of the American experience than anything else I can think" (Vonnegut as
cited in Reese, 2005, p. 286). "We have all been there. While there, we saw nearly every
sign of justice and injustice, kindness and meanness, intelligence and stupidity, which we are
likely to encounter in life [sic]" (Vonnegut as cited in Reese, 2005, p. 287). Vonnegut's
description of the high school experience helps explain the significance of high school and
the nostalgia and sometimes, romanticism, associated with it. But, he also revealed another
truth: there should be more to high school than "football stars, prom queens, future
warmongers and establishment figures, since virtually all types were represented there"
(Vonnegut as cited in Reese, 2005, p. 287). The greatest achievement of high school should
be to fulfill the "old republican promise that America was a land of opportunity where merit
alone conferred distinction in a fluid social order" (Vonnegut as cited in Reese, 2005, p.
287). By 1970, Americans were questioning if high schools were living up to these
expectations. People feared that the democratization of the high school had created
mediocrity—low standards, soft curriculum, social promotion, and lack of discipline. Many
parents and educators turned to standardized testing in determining promotion and
graduation and a back-to-basics curriculum as ways to document equity in educational
opportunity and raise standards.

In 1969, the National Educational Assessment Progress (NAEP) was founded to periodically test student achievement in reading and mathematics. Later referred to as the Nation's Report Card, the NAEP met little opposition from educators because it provided no information on the performance of specific states or schools. The first data, collected in the mid-1970s, were incomplete and preliminary but clearly reflected a racial achievement gap between Blacks and Whites. Kenneth Clark, the civil rights activist whose controversial research undergirded the *Brown* decision, and other Democrats and professed liberals, dismayed by the low scores of urban youth, came out in support of testing, evaluation, and accountability (Reese, 2005). The dismay was bipartisan. There were a few counterculturals who argued in favor of reforms such as "schools without walls, open classrooms, and more learning pods, electives, and student freedom" (Reese, 2005, p. 309), but by the mid-1970s these ideas were replaced with calls for back-to-basics curricula, increased accountability, and a myriad of reform plans, such as performance contract learning, behavioral objectives, and other schemes.

Aside from the issue of race, educators set out to fix the "broken" parts of schools. Educators focused on the individual pieces of reform, like better math and science curricula and then tried to plug them into schools. A large part of the effort was spent on fixing the people as the thinking at the time was that poor student performance was caused by the "poor quality of the workers and . . . the inadequacy of their tools," (Murphy, 1990, p. 23). According to Fullan (2007), "large-scale reform went underground as the field focused on effective school and innovative schools, which turned out to be sporadically placed" (p. 9). Improvements were few and inconsistent. In an effort to boost academic achievement in secondary schools, for instance, many states introduced minimum competency testing.

Oregon was among the first states to institute such testing in 1973. The testing trend caught

on like wildfire. "Six years later, 33 states had some form of minimum competency testing;

18 of them required students to pass tests in order to graduate" (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 13).

Many of the tests were quite rigorous. When it became apparent that too many students

would not be able to pass the tests, states ended up making the tests easier, which of course,

defeated the original purpose of the minimum competency testing and many states ended up

making the tests easier when it became apparent that many students would fail. As the

nation debated what to do to improve education, the National Education Association (NEA)

took a more active role in American national politics, especially after the election of Jimmy

Carter (Vinovskis, 2009).

Jimmy Carter became the nation's 39th president on January 12, 1977. Two years

into his one-term presidency, Carter proposed to Congress the establishment of the

Department of Education. Many legislators expressed serious reservations about the wisdom

of creating a cabinet-level education office. Some of general public was skeptical as well.

Sensitive to the decline in public confidence in the quality of education caused by high drop-

put rates and low skills levels of too many high school graduates, Carter saw a need for the

increased national attention that a separate Cabinet department would bring to education

issues. In a speech to Congress on February 13, 1979, Carter proposed the creation of a

Department of Education. He listed five reasons for the request:

1. A separate department would create a cabinet-level advocate for education with direct access to the President, Congress, and the public.
2. It would provide federal education programs the high-level leadership and management they require.
3. A Department of Education would increase accountability.
4. It would provide better and more support to states, localities, and public as well as private institutions.

5. The new department would be able to better coordinate education programs with related federal initiatives, such as employment programs and research. (Carter, 1979, p. 1)

The 96th Congress narrowly passed the legislation that established the Department of Education (Vinovskis, 2009).

In spite of the pressure put on schools to raise rest scores, low reading levels of minorities and the poor who had become the majority population in city schools persisted. Educational researchers (Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds, 1974; Edmonds & Frederiksen, 1978; Lezotte, 1977; Weber, 1971) sought to identify the components of effective schools. In the meantime, poor and minority students increasingly found themselves labeled as slow learners and placed in special education increased, especially after the President Gerald Ford signed into law the 1975 Public Law 94-142 which gave the handicapped greater access to a free and public quality education. Disparities between the quality of education offered in cities and suburbs increased as urban schools decayed form lack of funding and suburban schools flourished. Urban dropout rates and school vandalism were on the rise. Safety and security in the schools was a major concern. At the same time, many thought the answer to increasing demands may lie in vocational education reform. But the unfortunate truth was that vocational education and special education bore disturbing similarities. Both offered low-status curricula and tended to serve lower ability students. Attempts in the 1970s to recast vocational education as career prep failed to mask an ugly reality that Conant (1959) had earlier exposed, namely, "since vocationalism was always for 'other people's children,' suburban parents made sure their schools focused on academics" (Reese, 2005, p. 313). Lest we forget, let us not lose sight of the factor race played. Mostly

White middle-class Americans lived in the suburbs. Where did that leave Blacks and other poor minorities in the urban schools?

Quest for the Best: Counting on Black Pride

> This is a proud school, with a long tradition of excellence.
> And we have some illustrious graduates.
> But we can do better in academics.
> If only we could motivate the youngsters
> The way they're motivated to athletics.
> The intellectual potential is high.
> We are confronted with the challenge. (Robert E. Jones, Principal, Roosevelt High School, 1970)

> Took a whole lotta trying'
> Just to get up that hill,
> Now we're up in the big leagues.
> Getting' our turn at bat,
> As long as live, it's you and me baby,
> There ain't nothing wrong with that! (Movin' on Up, n.d., lyrics)

While some Americans called for restraint and others encouraged intervention, the Black community grew more conflicted. Desegregation was still a heated issue, the merits of which were hotly debated. The rise of the Black middle class was viewed by many as proof that race was no longer the primary factor in determining one's life chances. The impact of William Julius Wilson's (1978) book, *The Declining Significance of Race*, certainly advanced the notion that race was no longer the barrier in the 1970s than it was in previous years. Wilson's intent, however, was not simply to suggest the insignificance of race, but to draw attention to the unequal economic system in America. His message about economic disparity was minimized in much the same way as were Coleman et al.'s (1966) statements about the importance of school factors for Black children. The widely broadcast interpretation of Wilson's work was that race was overplayed as a major contributor to racial inequalities of opportunities and outcomes just as the primary learning gleaned from the

Coleman et al. report was that home and family factors were more important factors in determining school success than actual factors within the school environment. The emphasis placed on the insignificance of race made it appreciably easier to ignore the well-worn dilemma of race and place the blame for Black underachievement on Blacks. Many African Americans hoped to put the matter of race behind them as well. Blacks who could afford to move up and out of the ghetto did just that, gleefully and perhaps, rightfully proclaiming— like the song lyrics that made the popular television show "The Jefferson's" reiterated, "ain't nothing wrong with that" (n.d.). In a very literal sense, middle-class Blacks who remained in Gary gradually began moving to the west side and Whites were rapidly fleeing the city altogether in such numbers that integration in Gary was becoming almost a moot point. Table 5.1 depicts the declining Gary population and racial shift between 1960 and 1980.

Table 5.1

Gary's Population Data

Year	Number of Residents	White	Black	Other
*1960	178,320	108,980	69,123	217
*1970	175,249	81,854	92,695	700
*1980	151,953	38,564	107,539	5,850

Note. Indiana University Northwest Calumet Regional Archives (1992).

"Dramatic shifts in population in the city" (School Changes? Tells Population Shifts, 1970, p. A1) were reported by V. R. Charlson, director of the Gary Public Schools Special Services Division. Charlson noted that a major factor to be taken into consideration was the "development of large-scale housing projects at various locations in the city" (School Changes? Tells Population Shifts, 1970, p. A1). The *Post Tribune* reported "the elementary

schools east of Grant are experiencing a decline in enrollment while an increase is taking place in the schools on the west" (School Changes? Tells Population Shifts, 1970, p. A4). Judging from Roosevelt's large enrollment, over 2,000 students, the population shift had little immediate impact on Roosevelt's school population and, of course, because Roosevelt was a historically Black institution, it experienced no effective change in racial composition. Roosevelt was not immune, however, to the changes occurring within the city of Gary or the economic and political disadvantages that accompany living in a segregated, non-White environment. Let me be clear. The economic and political disadvantages of which I speak are not inherent to Blackness or Black culture, but rather to the oppressive forces of systematic racism and sustained White privilege. When cities or schools become predominantly Black or populated with minorities, history has proven that the quality of life, education, and resources diminishes because those people with power and influence do not invest their energy or money in people and places where non-Whites will reap the benefit. In other words, the desire to maintain White privilege supersedes the desire to uplift the less fortunate and, in this nation, people of color are historically the less fortunate. As I have already pointed out, many Americans believe Black underachievement should be attributed to genetic inferiority, cultural deprivation, or deficient, pathological home environments. Why invest in a hopeless situation? Hence, as Gary grew Blacker and poorer, the climate of Gary changed. Roosevelt was confronted with the challenge of carrying on the legacy of excellence in changing times.

In September 1970, Robert E. Jones became the fourth principal of Theodore Roosevelt High School in the school's 40-year history. Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, Jones graduated from Ball State University with both Bachelor's of Arts and Master's degrees in

education. Jones pursued the fields of mathematics, science, and counseling. In 1954, he

came to Gary as a mathematics teacher at Roosevelt High School (Jones, 1974). Except for

a brief assignment as a guidance counselor Beckman Middle School, Jones spent his entire

career at Roosevelt. He became a school counselor at Roosevelt in 1959 and served as an

assistant principal under Warren Anderson for four years until he was named head principal

in 1970. Jones served as the principal of Roosevelt for 20 years.

When Jones took over the reins at Roosevelt, the school had an enrollment of 2,460

pupils (700 over the building capacity) in grades 10, 11, and 12, and a staff of 120 teachers.

Fifteen percent of the teaching staff was White; the student body was "99.9% Black"

(Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5). Roosevelt's high status and venerable reputation in the

community were unmatched. There was no question about Roosevelt's athletic prowess as

evidenced by more than 300 trophies displayed in the school's trophy cases for

championships in track, basketball, and football, but Jones had a gnawing desire to see

improvement in academic achievement. Whether the public was fully aware or not, Robert

Jones was cognizant of the need to raise the level of academic achievement at the school.

He cited academic achievement "as the No. 1 problem before him and the school's teachers"

(Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5). Jones planned to rely on Black pride to perpetuate standards of

excellence.

In the same 1970 interview with Ernie Hernandez of the *Gary Post Tribune,* Jones

shared his hopes for Roosevelt:

> This is a proud school with a long tradition of excellence. . . . And we have some
> illustrious graduates. But we can do better in academics. If only we could motivate
> the youngsters the way they're motivated to athletics. [sic] The intellectual potential
> is high. We are confronted with the challenge. (Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5)

He ascribed some of the responsibility for the lackluster academic achievement to perceptions of failure and lack of confidence within the Black community. Jones stated "many Negroes have a great sense of failure" (Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5). He believed that students were affected by this sense of failure in a variety of ways. "Their ridicule sarcasm, annoyance, rejection, anger, distrust, discouragement and impatience are expressed through aggression, failure, indifference, fear, tension, hostility withdrawal, guilt, and submissiveness" (Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5). He also alluded to the influence of poverty, noting that 18.45% of the students were indigent. "It's a miracle that some of the children even come to school" (Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5). Jones elaborated:

> Some kids don't know, from day to day, whether they'll eat supper. About 45% come from broken homes. The impoverished children, unhappy at home, tempted by gangs that are probably in every ghetto, somehow manage to become involved in school activities. Discipline problems are minimal because of student involvement. (Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5)

Although proud of Roosevelt's Black heritage, Jones expressed reservation about the merits of segregated education. While encouraging and counting on Black pride, Jones stated that the "comfortable all-Black feeling should be discarded, that it's not realistic. It bothers me—the school should be much like the world, and the world's integrated" (Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5). On the surface, Jones' feelings seem contradictory, but if there is a contradiction, it is one with which many Blacks wrestled. It is a contradiction caused by the racism and the hypocrisy of our nation.

I prefer to use the term *conflicted*. The conflict Jones expressed was one shared by many Blacks during and after the days of Jim Crow. Some Blacks in Gary, for instance, were torn between wanting Roosevelt to be as good as any White school and resenting the fact that the high school would be designated as an all-Black school because of alleged racial

inferiority. In time, great pride grew out of that Blackness. Some of the best and brightest

Blacks came to Gary to teach, people who might have gone into other fields, had other

career opportunities existed for Blacks in their day. They cultivated a counterculture of

Black excellence at Roosevelt and fostered a determination to be the best that developed into

a legacy known as the Roosevelt tradition. Jones planned to combat the conflicts and

challenges with a strategy grounded in these philosophical beliefs:

> School exists for one reason—to serve the youngsters, one must constantly
> experiment and seek new methods of teaching, one must carefully evaluate what one
> is trying, and there must always be order and discipline, but it must be democratic; it
> must be self-discipline. (Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5)

Jones also contended:

> Acceptance will bring success; love will cause creativity; concern will manifest itself
> in interest; empathy will bring cooperation; encouragement will generate enthusiasm;
> sensitivity will bring a sense of belonging; understanding
> causes achievement. (Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5)

Although it is doubtful that he used the technical term, Jones appeared to understand the

need to instill in Black students a counterhegemonic counternarrative, one that would refute

the dominant presumption of Black intellectual inferiority. He hoped, by building upon

Black pride and the Roosevelt tradition, to construct a collective identity of Blacks as an

achieving people. The task would not be easy. Many roadblocks laid ahead.

Plagued by racial and economic turmoil, the city of Gary was struggling and so was

the school system. Just prior to the start of the 1970-71 school year, the Greater Chamber of

Commerce sharply criticized then Superintendent of the Gary Schools, Gordon McAndrew,

and the school board, for the deficit spending and an upcoming $52.8 million budget plan.

The *Post Tribune* reported:

> McAndrew would not recommend any of the cuts, which he had asked his staff to
> submit. He said that to recommend such reductions would be tantamount to

operating a non-school system, and he said he's not about to do that. (Hernandez, 1971, p. B1)

At the same time, McAndrew was pushing for increased accountability within the district for academic achievement. In an October 30, 1970 Superintendent's Newsletter, McAndrew wrote:

> What happens to too many of our young people is summed up in a letter to the parents of one Gary boy who quit high school last year and joined the navy. "I think I quit because I just wasn't learning anything. All they do in the schools now when a guy doesn't do good is stick him in a special English or general math class. And you know who most of the guys are or you have heard of them. So after a lot of pushing around and certainly not learning, you ditch a lot and finally quit. (School City of Gary, 1970, p. 1)

Indeed, pressure was mounting for more accountability in both elementary and secondary education. The situation was complicated by an in-house investigation of the Gary schools that revealed an upward trend in the dropout rate. The report exposed startling statistics about who was dropping out of school and revealed even more telling information about the attitudes of school authorities about Gary's increasingly Black and poor school population. The following statistical data for the 1969-1970 school year were published in the *Post Tribune* in December of 1970:

- A large number (34.68% of the boys and 34.57% of the girls) are classified as "dull-normal" with IQ scores ranging between 80 and 89. These boys and girls find it "extremely difficult" to complete normal high school without a great deal of encouragement from parents and teachers.
- A similarly high number (24.84% of the boys and 21.08% of the girls) were in the 50-79 IQ range, as "mentally retarded" or "seriously educationally handicapped."
  "Home situation" was the major cause for dropout "among the boys (45.80%) and the girls (31.55%). Every high school has at least a drop-out rate of 2.36% (Wirt). But the highest rates are in the more economically deprived areas. (Hernandez, 1970b, p. C3)

Roosevelt had the second highest dropout rate with 5.81%, second only to West Side high

school with 6.69%. Aaron A. Bromley, Coordinator of Pupil Personnel, offered this

observation:

> A review of individual school records of dropouts reveals in most cases that school-
> leaving is not a spontaneous thing. Many children begin the process of school-
> leaving during their early elementary school years. (Hernandez, 1970b, p. C3)

Noting that some dropouts occurred in "even in affluent areas," Bromley detailed several

strategies the district was employing to increase Gary's "holding power" (Hernandez, 1970b,

p. C3) including "the selection of high-quality teaching staff, , the "best facilities, supplies,

and school buildings, reduction of class sizes, meeting individual needs of children, use of

federal funds totaling $2 million for an assortment of programs to make learning interesting

and desirable" (Hernandez, 1970b, p. C3). Bromley added that the district had implemented

a work-study program, increased special education services, and opened the Technical

Vocational School (Hernandez, 1970b, p. C3). Reminiscent of the prevalent notion that

school factors are secondary to home and family variables, the report clearly suggested

"cultural and economic disadvantages continue to be highly significant factors" (Hernandez,

1970b, p. C3). "Many children come from homes in which, though there is employment,

fathers are either underemployed or income is marginal" (Hernandez, 1970b, p. C3).

Bromley added, however, that school officials were "demonstrating a sensitivity and concern

about the dilemma of the culturally and economically disadvantaged" (Hernandez, 1970b,

p. C3). The inclination of school administration to blame homes and families for student

low achievement is certainly cause for concern, but the high percentages of children

identified as "dull-normal" and "retarded" within the dropout population is equally

troubling.

Historically, Blacks have been and continue to be "overrepresented in lower ability and special education classes while they are underrepresented in higher-ability and gifted classrooms" (O'Connor, Horvat, & Lewis as cited in Horvat & O'Connor, 2006, p. 3). In the post-Brown era, belief in the intellectual inferiority of African Americans remains a taken-for-granted notion in the larger society. Authors Perry et al. (2003) in their book, *Young, Gifted, and Black*, pointed out that the idea of Black intellectual inferiority (e.g., White intellectual supremacy) prevails irrespective of political orientation. I assert that it exists irrespective of race as well. Blacks often subscribe to low perceptions of their own intellectual capability. Principal Jones alluded to this when he referred to the sense of failure some Black children experience.

In November of 1971, the *Post Tribune* posted the racial breakdown of Gary teachers and where they taught as well as the racial breakdown of students and where they attended school:

> Seven Gary Public Schools have all-Black enrollment, and one has an all-White pupil population, according to this listing prepared by the Gary public Schools. It shows an enrollment total of 45,332 as of September 17, a drop of 2,455 from September, 1970. The proportions are American Indian, 0.22%; African American, 67.49%; Asian American 0.10%; Caucasian, 23.63%. (Racial breakdown, 1971, p. B8)

If more than 67% of Gary's school population was Black and, according to Principal Jones (as cited in Hernandez, 1970a, p. A5), Roosevelt was 99.9% Black. Given the inclination to mislabel children of color, I question the quality of education that many African American students received. What percentage of Roosevelt's students was identified as "dull-normal"? What measures were used to ascertain the IQ of students and were the measures valid and reliable? If the percentages of slow learners were as high as the data suggest and children with such low abilities found it "extremely difficult" to complete high school, how did so

many of the children manage to graduate? What were the dull-normal children learning?

What were they able to do after graduation? What new classroom strategies and

professional development were offered to teachers? The young man discussed earlier who

wrote the letter Superintendent McAndrew explaining why he joined the navy in lieu of

finishing high school makes a great deal more sense in light of these data and considerations.

One has to wonder about the fate of students erroneously labeled and victimized by an

academic tracking system.

An official North Central Association evaluation of Roosevelt School provided

insight into some of these concerns and their specific relationship to teaching and learning at

Roosevelt. From April 20th through April 23rd, 1971, evaluators from the North Central

Association (NCA), a high school accreditation organization, visited Roosevelt High School

where they observed classrooms and social settings, assessed the school philosophy,

curriculum, school climate, and leadership and interviewed teachers, parents, and support

staff. The report indicated that the school had "just begun to develop a special program for

handicapped children" (North Central Association, 1971, p. 44). Thirty educable mentally

retarded children were enrolled in the program. The report identified the educable mentally

retarded as those students "having IQs between 50 and 79, and generally capable of

achieving at a third to sixth grade level" (North Central Association, 1971, p. 44). The

special education staff received accolades for effort and compassion, but evaluators found

"the special education program as it now exists does not lead to a high school diploma and

results in school dropouts" (North Central Association, 1971, p. 45). Evaluators found that

the "psychological test data in the cumulative records is not prescriptive in nature and tends

to be vague and not helpful to the special education teachers" (North Central Association,

1971, p. 45). The report also indicated that many students who qualified for special

education were not being served. Missing was any reference to the "dull-normal" category

of students which may suggest that these students were assigned to regular classrooms and

more than likely placed in the lowest academic track.

A somewhat fluid but defined academic tracking system was in place at Roosevelt.

When asked about the degree of rigor at the school, Carmen Williams, a 1972 graduate,

remembered thinking that the challenge to excel was "across the board originally," but

recalled that it changed as students progressed through high school.

> As you moved from the freshman and sophomore years into your upper level grades,
> it [tracking] became more focused on those whom the instructors or teachers believed
> were more academically able.
>   Unless the teacher saw that you were doing well enough to move on, you
> stayed in the track you were put in. If a teacher was able to recognize academic
> talent, then they would do different but if they didn't, then you sat there.
> (C. Williams, personal communication, February, 25, 2010)

Barbara Taliaferro, who taught history, recalled that "the academic tracking occurred more

or less in a natural way" (B. Taliaferro, personal communication, January 10, 2010):

> Students were not identified by test scores as being high, medium, or low. It was
> really done through a natural process. If you were a very weak math student, you
> were in general math, and if you failed general math, then the counselor would not
> put you in an algebra class because you had simply not done well in the math class.
> You would then go on to an applied math class. Something where you would get
> stronger. If you became strong enough during that process, then you could go on to
> algebra or higher math. The same thing with the courses in science. If you were not
> really good in science, then you would naturally not go to chemistry or physics
> because you just did not demonstrate those skills in biology or general science.
> (personal communication, January 10, 2010)

Carmen Williams remembers working hard to prove that she was capable of being put in

what was known as the accelerated mathematics track:

> My first year, I was in a general math class which was too easy for me. Well, I had
> to go to the counselor and tell them that this stuff was not challenging to me and
> them, the following year, I was placed in, not the accelerated class but the math class

that was maybe one step below. And there was a mixture of students. There were some who were very smart and there were some that maybe just weren't good at math, and then there were some that just couldn't get it all in one try. My junior year, I was in the accelerated math class. (personal communication, February 25, 2010)

In their 1971 evaluation, the North Central Association assessed the tracking system, curriculum, and teaching styles at Roosevelt. Evaluators believed that teachers were too dominant in the classroom and suggested "there needs to be more involvement of students in the learning process" (North Central Association, 1971, p. 72). They also recommended more communication within departments in the planning of instruction. A few former teachers expressed similar concerns. History teacher, Martin Henrichs remembered feeling that some teachers "overly stressed discipline to the point where students just sat in class and did busywork; there was pressure to get an education, to get diploma, but not pressure to learn" (M. Henrichs, personal communication, January 20, 2010). NCA surmised that ability grouping was used in some areas and was working well, but they saw "a need for greater diversification of learning activities in the ability levels" (North Central Association Report, 1971, p. 3). The committee concluded "the curriculum is too traditional and academically oriented for an inner city school in which a large percentage of students do not attend college" (North Central Association, 1971, p. 72). For reasons unspecified in the report, evaluators determined that Roosevelt's curricular needs were unique. The committee wrote:

> Curriculum guides have been developed at the Service Center. Roosevelt High School has unique needs in curriculum. It is felt that course objectives developed within the school in the departments would be of more value to the faculty and students. The new Career Center has definitely helped the total curriculum. Those students attending this school have a wonderful opportunity to learn a particular skill. It would seem there needs to be a greater involvement of students in this area. (North Central Association, 1971, p. 4)

Based upon these recommendations, one could conclude that NCA favored greater differentiation between ability groups and questioned the appropriateness of an inner-city school focusing on a traditional, academic curriculum. Yet, a traditional academic focus was what Jones and the veteran Roosevelt staff had grown accustomed to offering. A protégé of first H. Theo Tatum and then, Warren Anderson, Jones was following the Roosevelt tradition. Targeting the academically talented had been one of Principal Tatum's goals. In 1958, H. Theo Tatum, had prepared a 35-point program for Roosevelt High School to the North Central Association, the purpose of which was to "identify, guide, and motivate superior and talented students to acquire a thorough college education" (In superior pupil test, 1958, p. A6). Based upon "class records, tests, and teacher judgments," selected students were to receive special instruction and guidance. Tatum and Roosevelt English teacher, Miss Bertha Jones, were awarded NCA scholarships to pursue the plan. Hence, the idea of promoting academic excellence and identifying the talented tenth was part of the Rooseveltian legacy.

Roosevelt graduated many fine scholars and Mr. Jones was the school's biggest cheerleader. He made sure that the positive achievements of Roosevelt students were publicized in the mainstream media as well as the Black community. He instituted senior luncheons every spring to honor the leadership and achievements of outstanding seniors. Ms. Williams remembered being one of the honorees at her senior banquet:

> Well, we had a senior luncheon and the principal was calling out awards for the different student things and it came time for the student leadership awards. He stood up and he said this last award is a very special award. He said—this young lady didn't come in at the beginning of the year. She came in the middle of the year because of some problems she had. He said but she had to work her way and to excel and she's provided much leadership to the students at Roosevelt. And he called my name and I received that award and believe me, that meant more to me than if I had graduated valedictorian because of the experience I had.

(C. Williams, personal communication, February 25, 2010)

Being a student at Roosevelt in the 1970s was an experience made special by another aspect

of the Roosevelt tradition—a culture of success, pride, history, and spirited student

involvement.

Students did not want to miss school. As B. Taliaferro explained:

Those students who did not do well academically always had something to look
forward to during the school day that would make them have a sense of importance
so that they could be proud of who they were. They could run track. They could get
involved in sports. You didn't have to be a good student to be in the Glee Club or to
be in the Madrigals. You didn't have to be an excellent student to take a sewing
class, or a home economics class because maybe these were things you felt you were
good at, and you could focus on those things. Yes, you were encouraged to get your
grades at the same time, but you didn't walk out feeling like a loser because you
couldn't make A's or B's in science or history, or even in your English class.
(personal communication, January 10, 2010)

Jones and his administrative team understood the importance of making students feel not

only like they were somebody, but that they were the best. In spite of feeling that academics

and discipline had begun to slip a bit, Assistant Principal David Williams wholeheartedly

believed Roosevelt could be the best. Like Jones, he knew there was a great deal of work to

be done. Williams remembered devising a plan to bring about improvement:

I can remember the first time I visited Roosevelt, after I had been appointed
[assistant principal]. Mr. Jones invited me over one day to meet the staff. He told
me that number one, the academics at Roosevelt were not at the level that they
should be and number two, discipline was not the level that it should be. We were
going to focus on improving the academic performance and the behavior of the
children. (personal communication, January 19, 2010)

According to Williams, Roosevelt had the "best and most dedicated staff in the city because

the people wanted to be there and they were well-prepared for their job" (personal

communication, January 19, 2010). The fact that many of the teachers had graduated from

the school or had relatives who were Roosevelt graduates was a big plus. For several years,

they saw improvement in academics, the number of honor graduates, and school spirit

soared. Jones and his staff credited much of their success to establishing working

relationships with the community, enforcing discipline, and creating a caring atmosphere.

They solicited the help of teachers and listened to students. Williams elaborated:

> We met with the staff and we let the staff know that we weren't Supermen, that you
> know, if we are going to improve the discipline, if we are going to improve the
> academics, everybody has to be doing what they're supposed to do. . . . We talked to
> the students about the things that we expected from them and what they should be
> aspiring to do and we allowed them to ask questions, and we responded to their
> questions. . . . So they bought into this, we came up with a motto—Isaiah Owens,
> who was an art teacher, recommended this. The motto was "the Best." That started
> in 1970 and we had that plastered all over school, the Best. We're not only going to
> be the best basketball team, we're going to be the best students, we're going to be the
> best behaved and everything. . . . Now, we didn't save every soul, but we saved a lot.
> (personal communication, January 19, 2010)

Based on the accounts of all the graduates, parents, and teachers interviewed, there was not a

large formal parent-teacher organization, but Williams recalled that parents sometimes came

to the school to alert the administration about potential trouble brewing in the nearby

neighborhood. "We wouldn't turn them away. They would come and we would sit down

and talk about it" (D. Williams, personal communication, January 19, 2010). Jones and his

staff sought to regain the counterhegemonic figured community that had preceded them.

They believed that Black pride and the Roosevelt tradition would carry them forward. A

great part of the "figured world" (Perry as cited in Perry et al., 2003, p. 93) that contributed

to Roosevelt's goodness had been orchestrated by the institutionalization of rituals and

school customs.

Old *Rooseveltians*, the school yearbooks, reflect some of these rituals and the effort

to keep the heritage of Roosevelt alive as the school moved into a new decade. Annual

school plays, honoring the accomplishments of former graduates and faculty, student talent

shows, and paying tribute to retirees were among the treasured traditions evident in the 1970 *Rooseveltian*. "A Cameo of Success," was the 1970 theme as the book took a panoramic view of the achievements of illustrious Roosevelt alumni while eagerly anticipating the completion of major renovations to the building that would be completed in 1971. Students were looking forward to additional classrooms, new course offerings, an enlarged cafeteria, and renovated home economics, business education, science, and physical education departments. "RHS will sport a NEW FACE!" (*Rooseveltian,* 1970, p. 17). Indeed, these improvements were part of the third phase of an ongoing four part expansion and remodeling effort for Roosevelt. Phase four, to be completed in 1972, would include "a swimming pool, gymnasium, stadium, football and tennis fields, tennis courts, wading pools, basketball goals, and paved lighting and fenced parking for 652 cars" (Approve new Roosevelt gym, stadium*,* 1970, p. A1). In the meantime, opportunities for an active school life flourished at the Velt. Aside from the normal athletic activities, there some 50 additional after-school clubs and organizations in which students could choose to participate. The annual play, "Native Son," captivated the audience as did the fun-filled faculty talent show. It also seemed that efforts to improve race relations were underway. Fifteen students from Hobart, an all-White high school, visited Roosevelt "in an exchange experience" (*Rooseveltian,* 1970, p. 13). The lesson learned was that "schools are very much alike the world over for sophomore, junior, and senior students" (*Rooseveltian,* 1970, p. 13).

In 1971, the *Rooseveltian* theme changed to "Power"—learning power, brain power, brawn power, club power, administrative power, success power, recognition power, skills power, and soul power. Students wrote: "The class of 1971 was born in changing times, and having lived through static turbulence must undertake the task of history making for which

preparedness and understanding are partial cures" (*Rooseveltian,* 1971, p. 3). Two pages in

the yearbook were devoted to defining *soul*:

> Soul is a naturalness which privileges us to be ourselves! Soul power is togetherness which manifests itself in our work and play. The student who possesses soul shows it in his talk, his walk, and his feelings! Soul is both brain and brawn! (*Rooseveltian,* 1971, pp. 8-9)

Courses in Black history were added to the curriculum and a new club, "Black Culture,"

sponsored by YJean Chambers, was organized in 1971. Its purpose was "to develop

knowledgeable racial pride" (*Rooseveltian,* 1971, p, 71). Making sure that students had

plenty of opportunities to become leaders and express themselves was part of Jones'

philosophy. Joe Winfrey, the new Dean of Students, explained:

> Robert Jones' philosophy was to do the kind of things that will pre-empt most disciplinary problems. My number one assignment was to coordinate, supervise, support, and assist with all student activities. I sponsored the Hi-Y (Hi-Y is an organization for young men). Each Hi-Y member would have to bring his report card to the Hi-Y meeting, and basically the peers would do the discipline. We had a family atmosphere at the school. (J. Winfrey, personal communication, January 17, 2010)

The kids called Mr. Jones "Uncle Bob." Former teachers, students, and parents agree that

Jones was a hands-on, people-person who rarely missed any school activities and made it his

business to know the students by name. He loved Roosevelt and wanted the students to love

it as well.

The Black pride, on which Jones was counting, led students to walk out in protest of

the transfer of some of their teachers to White schools for the purpose of integrating the

teaching staff across town. The school board mandated teacher transfers that meant

Roosevelt would lose some of its most experienced teachers. When the students heard this,

about 100 of them stormed out of the building in protest and marched to the School Service

Center to lodge a formal complaint. According to the *Post Tribune,* about 30 of the

Roosevelt student delegation camped out on the Service Building front lawn to voice

opposition to the transfers. The students claimed that "less-experienced White teachers there

don't relate to them as well as do the Black veterans" (Roosevelt "rap" on transfers, 1971,

p. A5). The protest drew a lot of publicity and community support. The class of 1972

reviled in its newfound soul power.

But soul power was not the only power emphasized in the 1971 *Rooseveltian.* The

administration was flexing its power as well. After one year as principal, Jones and his

administrative team, David Williams and Dale Weingart, communicated an important

message, probably more to the faculty than the students:

> Educators many times resist change and reform. Educators sometimes become
> stagnated. Educators often forget the how thing in learning. Resistance is not the
> answer! Educationwise [sic] resistance is a liability and a disability. Constant
> evaluation, updated instruction, the latest in equipment, the tried and true, and the
> best of the old and new are needed educationwise for success in preparing the young.
> (*Rooseveltian,* 1971, pp. 32-33)

Was this the beginning of increased standards and accountability?

Certainly, change seemed imminent, yet, many of the familiar racial battles raged on.

To bus or not to bus, that was the question. In 1972, Gary, as was the rest of the country,

was reacting to President Nixon's 8,000 word white paper on desegregation that had called

for a halt of court-ordered busing. Nixon's statement was reviewed in a March 27, 1972

article in the *Post Tribune.* School officials expected that Nixon's ruling could be a potential

financial windfall for the Gary schools because while Nixon had called for an end to funding

for court-ordered busing for the purpose of integrating schools, he was requesting that

millions of dollars be given to school districts to aid in the education of the poor. The

indigent population in Gary was steadily increasing which meant more money would flow

into the city for education. Additionally, Gary school officials claimed that busing in Gary,

which began in 1963, "wasn't to integrate the White schools but to accommodate the Black students in the schools that had more room" (Hernandez, 1972, p. B1). The paper asserted:

> The Black students were overcrowded in their neighborhood schools, while there were seats to spare in the Glen Park schools. In 1969, however, forced busing was discontinued, Gary School City President Gordon L. McAndrew ordered that only volunteers would be bused. These are the students who ask to go to the Glen Park Schools, or whose parents seek the transfer. (Hernandez, 1972, p. B1)

The common perception was that many of the first Black students bused to White schools were hand-picked based upon their academic record. The practice came to be known as *creaming* or selecting the alleged best, or most likely to succeed in the White environment. I should know since I was one of the chosen. Some worried that such practices hurt Black schools and, in some instances this may have been true, but most of the teachers and graduates interviewed for this research believe the damage to Roosevelt was minimal. Many assert that Roosevelt suffered much more from brighter students being encouraged to attend the Gifted and Talented High School Program at West Side High School some years later.

Dr. Haron Battle, Assistant Superintendent of Gary Schools, explained "about 10 years ago, the clamor for desegregating schools was strong. But now, communities demand better facilities and faculties for their own neighborhoods, and they have them" (Hernandez, 1972, p. B1). "It's [desegregation] no longer an issue because everyone has a strong self-image. The students are proud of their school" (Hernandez, 1972, p. B1). Indeed, by the early 1970s, many Roosevelt parents and students expressed strong anti-busing sentiments. Sadie Jackson, the mother of Carmen Williams and the parent of five Roosevelt graduates, all of whom graduated in the 1970s, wanted her children to go to school close to home. Jackson shared that "at that time, you could really depend on the teachers to give a good report of what your child did" (S. Jackson, personal communication, February 27, 2010).

Carmen had been bused to a predominantly White high school, but Jackson requested that

that she be transferred to Roosevelt:

> I felt like her education would have been limited and she wouldn't have been able to express herself in a leadership role, or do some of the things that she wanted to do and felt comfortable with. I felt like she could do better where it was predominantly Black. (S. Jackson, personal communication, February 27, 2010)

Jackson was not alone in her views. In light of Nixon's (1970) white paper and the strong

sentiment of Gary residents, there would be no plans to establish racial balance at Roosevelt

or any of the other Gary schools. Dr. McAndrew and Dr. Battle did assert "there is some

merit to racial socializing" (Hernandez, 1972, p. B1).

One effort to promote racial socializing at Roosevelt had been the implementation of

a foreign language magnet program. In the fall of 1969, the Gary Schools was awarded a

$65,000 Carnegie Grant to develop magnet schools. The magnet schools would be centers

of excellence and the foreign language magnet at Roosevelt was expected to accommodate

up to 130 students from all over the city. The hope was that each high school would develop

a magnet theme. The plan was for students to send half of their day at the magnet school

and the other half at their home school. School officials had explained:

> Educators also see magnet schools as a method of achieving integration since students are drawn into a single building without regard to neighborhood. Unlike busing for the sake of upsetting segregation, students would be bused into other schools for the sake of education. ("Magnet school" plan to open at Roosevelt in fall, 1969, p. D1)

By 1972, the magnet program at Roosevelt had ended due to lack of funding and

participation from students outside of Roosevelt. This was a disappointment to students and

faculty who had high hopes for the program, but the short-lived magnet trial did not hamper

the high spirits at Roosevelt. The theme for the 1972 *Rooseveltian* was "The Class of 72

IS." "Golden Boy" was the senior play. Indicative of the times and dramatic adolescent

fervor, the class of 1972 referred to themselves in the *Rooseveltian* as "a collection of our todays and yesterdays, a combined love affair of one and many, a thunderous songfest loudly reverberating, an non-timid rap session picturesque and mod" (*Rooseveltian,* 1972, p. 4). They saw themselves as "concerned . . . children of the universe," (*Rooseveltian,* 1972, p. 5) and liberated in style, dress, and color. More than previous issues, the 1972 *Rooseveltian* addressed current issues and events. Students felt they were "all part of the freedom movement" (*Rooseveltian,* 1972, p. 12). Affirmative action opened new doors of opportunity for many college-bound students as some Roosevelt graduates went off to schools formerly forbidden to African Americans. Indeed, the class of 1972 felt free.

The Gary school system, as was the city, however, was anything but free. Plagued by debt, a rising indigent population, and a growing dependency on federal funds, the School City of Gary remained inundated with serious financial problems. The population in Gary was shrinking and so was the population of children attending Gary Public Schools. Cutbacks in the operations of U.S. Steel led to fewer jobs. White flight and the abandonment of the city by smaller and private businesses added to the economic depression in Gary. Many people in the middle class had opted for exit over loyalty or voice that caused the city to become increasingly Black and poor. The school population began to experience the same phenomenon. Ernie Hernandez, the *Post Tribune* correspondent who frequently covered school news, reported in August of 1971 that "Gary Public Schools, which have outstanding contracts for $25 million worth of school construction, will open the 1971-72 school year on Sept. 13 with 5,114 more seats than students" (Hernandez, 1971b, B1). By the mid-1970s, one in three pupils was classified as indigent in the Gary schools causing the Gary School Board to receive $2.1 million in federal school aid (Boyer, 1975,

p. F1). Lackluster reading student achievement scores brought the issue of accountability to the forefront. Then, as now, the parents and potential employers began demanding greater accountability. Complaints from parents, the business community, and employment agencies lashed out at school officials who attended a meeting called by an education task force determined "to insure that Gary high school graduates are functionally literate and possess basic math skills" (Boyer, 1974, p. B1).

In 1974, plans to begin competency-based testing program in the Gary schools were underway. The issue of accountability was not exactly new to the Gary schools. In 1971, McAndrew called for cuts in music, art, and physical education in order to save money, focus more attention on the "three Rs [and] improve our educational program and promote efficiency" (Hernandez, 1971a, p. A1). This time, the emphasis was on testing. Although the testing program encompassed grades K-12, the testing did not begin at the high school level until October 1975, when the mathematics proficiency test was administered. The Reading Proficiency Examination was given to high school students in January of 1975. Examinations in written and oral language were added in the 1977-78 school year. A summative report of trend test data for the district from 1977 to 1979 indicated that, by 1979, over 90% of 10th, 11th, and 12th graders were passing the test (Hoock, 1979, pp. 1-4). Students who failed the test were placed in remedial classes to help them pass. Waivers were often given to students who were unable to pass. Gary, then, had its own version of proficiency testing long before No Child Left Behind.

Interestingly, rarely did any of the former teachers, administrators, or Roosevelt graduates interviewed for this study mention standardized testing in the 1970s. Martin Henrichs recalled "that in the 1960s, we had standardized tests for all the students, and that

[test scores] would be shared with the teachers. . . . I believe they might have even posted IQ scores back then" (M. Henrichs, personal communication, January 20, 2010). Barbara Banks, a former school counselor and test coordinator, remembered the competency-testing program in the 1980s (B. Banks, personal communication, January 26, 2010). There are, however, photographs in the 1975 *Rooseveltian* of a school assembly aimed "at helping *Rooseveltians* become more aware and more Proficient in reading" (*Rooseveltian,* 1975, p. 38). The theme of the assembly was "Reading Through Action" and the message given to students was that reading "is an important ingredient for success" (*Rooseveltian,* 1975, p. 38). Clearly, the tests were not perceived as high stakes examinations. No one recalled a student not graduating because of failing the test. Because the district data are not reported by school, it is difficult to determine how Roosevelt students faired. In fact, life at Roosevelt, in the memories of some was "near perfect" (anonymous, personal communication, March 1, 2010).

Roosevelt was unique in a number of ways. While most of the schools in Gary were experiencing declining enrollments, Roosevelt's numbers soared. In the early 1970s, the school was overcrowded, a phenomenon about which none of the interviewees complained. Graduating classes generally exceeded 500 students with honor graduates holding at approximately 10% of each class. The emphasis on Black pride and being the best was evident in commencement programs. As the years progressed, it seems that Roosevelt's past was expected to carry the school into the future. See Table 5.2 for a chronology of commencement themes.

Table 5.2

Chronology of Commencement Themes for Roosevelt

1970	Dimensions for a New Decade:	Of Earth Of Man
1971	The Essential Revolution:	In Morality In Accomplishment
1972	The Pursuit of Excellence:	As an Individual As a Race
1973	Continuing Our Quest for Equality:	In Politics and Economics In Education and Social Relationships
1974	This America, Our Country:	In Conflict In Accord or Harmony
1975	Today's Youth, the Foundations of Tomorrow:	Dreams of Tomorrow Realities of Today
1976	Preoccupied with Progress:	The Realities of Yesterday The Promise of Tomorrow
1977	Know Thyself:	Our Fruitless Effort? Our Fate Redeemed
1978	Where One Road Leads, Another Begins:	Reflections of the Past Predicting the Future
1979	A Review and Preview:	A Past to Remember A Future to Hold

Note. From the 40th through 49th Annual Commencement Programs (1970-1979).

Inarguably, Roosevelt's past and glorious tradition was a positive influence on the school culture in the 1970s. As mentioned previously, many of the teachers were Roosevelt graduates and harbored fond memories and great pride. Most teachers with high school age children elected to send their children to Roosevelt. In the 1977 *Rooseveltian,* staff and their

children were featured as "Frame-ups of Excellence" (p. 22-23). The fact that teachers

wanted their children to go to Roosevelt meant the teachers had a vested interest in the

school's success. It also communicated to the general public that Roosevelt was a quality

educational institution. Commencement programs listed all of the scholarships students

received to attend college. Newspaper articles boasted of the achievements of the band, the

ROTC, and the renowned Madrigal Chorus. Teachers and students from across the city

wanted to be a part of the Roosevelt experience. Special transfers made it possible for

students who lived in other areas to attend Roosevelt. Sophomore Senetha Hunter (1973)

captured the aura of Roosevelt in this original poem:

> Why I Like Roosevelt High School:
> *R-0-0-S-E-V-E-L-T,* nine letters put together to make a very meaningful word.
> R—is for all the *respect* that there is between students, teachers and administration of
> Roosevelt.
> O—is for the *obligation* that our principal has to keep apathy out of the student body.
> O—is for the *optimism* that you'll find in the Roosevelt counselors.
> S—is for the *self-determination* that a Roosevelt student should develop.
> E—is for the entire togetherness that you'll find at Roosevelt High School.
> V—is for the *victory* that our sports teams strive for every time they are challenged.
> E—is for the *emphasis* that is put on studies that prepare you for college.
> L—is for the *liberation* of the mind when you're learning and getting an education.
> T—is for the *tradition* that has been, and always will be with Roosevelt. (Hunter,
> 1973, p. C1)

If there were serious problems at the school, the public was largely unaware, but

things were slowly changing. The school was not immune to the increase to increases in

poverty and the ills that accompanied it. The city and the school district were growing more

dependent on federal funds just as conservatives in Washington cutback on the generosity of

Great Society social programs. Nixon's halt to forced busing, though seemingly not

perceived as a problem for some Blacks in Gary, fueled the resegregation of schools which,

historically, led to separate but unequal learning conditions. To make matters worse, jobs

were disappearing in Gary because of a declining steel industry and the flight of private

business. Downtown Gary was becoming a ghost town. The middle class and Whites

continued to abandon the city. There had always been poor people and people who dropped

out of high school, but the steel mills allowed those people to live reasonably well. Things

were changing. The gap between the haves and have-nots was growing, even within the

Black race. Fewer and fewer Blacks were living comfortably. Many Blacks who were

fortunate enough to have options exercised them. Some began to put their children in

private schools or left the city. Others believed because they had made it, so could others.

Too many Blacks began to think the nation was moving toward a post-racial era. Several

former teachers remember the condescending attitude of some of their co-workers toward

less fortunate students. They remember hearing comments like "well, I got mine, they need

to get theirs." Meanwhile, Gary grew Blacker and poorer. The bedfellows of poverty,

namely despair, hopelessness, crime, drugs, and low school achievement began to surface

everywhere. As the memory of the struggle of Blacks in America grew dimmer and children

began coming to school with little knowledge about the politics of oppression and even less

about the politics of liberation, would the legacy be enough to take Roosevelt into the

future?

What saved Roosevelt in the 1970s was its tradition and the successful creation of a

figured world rooted in the memory of the Black struggle. Many teachers who remained at

the school remembered living through the struggle or being taught by their teachers about it.

They continued the legacy. They kept the collective identity of Black pride and achievement

alive. Even the evaluators from NCA in 1978 recognized Roosevelt's counterhegemonic

tradition of excellence. They wrote:

The feeling of the community of Gary is that Gary Roosevelt High School is "the School." . . . The administration, faculty, and student body make this high school unique for an intercity [sic] school. There is a striving for superior achievement which proves that intercity schools need not be inferior. . . . *Roosevelt is a school with a soul"* [emphasis added]. (Report of the NCA Visiting Committee, 1978, pp. 7-8)

Chapter VI: The Eighties—The Politics of Fear

> Today we deal with a new kind of child, from a different background, with a
> different set of values, hopes, and dreams. That child's parents are different. As
> surroundings have changed, so have the aspirations. (Feistritzer, 1985, p. vi)

> What we have concluded after analyzing the data is that the biggest reason schools
> must change is to meet the demands of the children of the 1980s. These children
> come from vastly different structures, economic conditions, and language and
> cultural backgrounds than did the children of only 15years ago. . . . The new baby
> boom is non-White. (Feistritzer, 1985, p. 59)

The 1970s were an era of contradiction characterized by a tug-of-war between

conservative and progressive political and social ideas. I likened the national climate in the

1970s to that of a quiet storm. By the end of the decade, neoconservatives had secured an

ideological hegemony that would garner bipartisan support and dictate educational policy-

making and reform for at least the next 20 years. The conservatism that smoldered during

the quiet storm of the 1970s went public during the 1980s. I contend, in the eye of the

storm, was the unrelenting threat of race and loss of White privilege. In the first part of this

chapter, I trace the macro level evolution of the educational reform agenda known for

promoting excellence, standards-based education, and accountability and analyze its covert

and overt purpose. In the second part of the chapter, I return to Gary, Indiana where I

examine what that reform looked like in practice and how it affected the African American

children and teaching and learning at Theodore Roosevelt High School.

Risky Business: The New Federalism

> We are at risk. . . . We report to the American people that while we can take
> justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and
> contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational
> foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity
> that threatens out very future as a Nation and a people. If an unfriendly foreign
> power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance
> that exists today, we might well have viewed it as act of war. (National Commission
> on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 5)

Part of what is at risk is the promise first made on the continent: 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 interests, but also the progress of society itself. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 8)

Passionate and ubiquitous complaints that railed the 1970s about the state of public education in the U.S. picked up steam in the decade that followed. Americans reiterated the long-held belief that the country's future depends on public education. If the schools were failing, the nation would surely follow, and a steady dose of negative reports seemed to indicate, beyond a doubt, that public education was in crisis and the nation was at risk. At the time, few questioned the validity of the crisis or the motivation of those who promoted it. Promoting a crisis seems a bit odd, but, according to Berliner and Biddle (1995), that is exactly what the conservatives in America set out to do.

I pointed out that during the 1970s, serious social problems placed greater pressure on the schools. Violence and drug use increased. Cities across the nation experienced decay. The middle-class, both White and Black, was abandoning the inner city. The economy was bad and poverty among America's children, especially Black and brown children, was worsening. Americans were becoming understandably concerned about the ability of the schools to combat these problems. Whether or not the schools can or should be expected to resolve such dilemmas is arguable, but the fact is that, since the founding of the common school in 1830, schools were considered the panacea for society's woes. In the 1980s, argued Berliner and Biddle (1995), these issues were "perceived somewhat differently by educators, school boards, suburbanites and urban dwellers, legislators, minorities, elite groups, bigots, ideologues, and other sets of concerned citizens" (p. 134).

As Fred L. Pincus (1984) wrote in "From Equity to Excellence: The Rebirth of Educational

Conservatism:"

> If the 1960s go down in history as the decade of liberal educational reform, the 1980s
> will most likely be known as the decade of conservative restoration. Although many
> reforms were eroding by the late 1970s, they came under direct assault in the 1980s,
> especially after the election of Ronald Reagan. (p. 152)

Berliner and Biddle (1995) contended "a major reason for increased criticism of

schools in the 1980s was that reactionary voices were given more credence in America

during that decade" (p. 132). They argued that after the election of Ronald Reagan, right

wing ideologues were given "legitimacy and prominence" (p. 132) by the media.

Historically critical of public education, the ring wing was not (and is not) monolithic. The

far right favored decentralization and states' rights: the religious right was most known for

favoring school prayer and family values, and the neoconservatives professed to represent

centrist conservative opinion. It was the latter group that was most responsible for the rise

of the accountability movement in America. Although there were factions within the right

wing, they did share a few common beliefs. Put off by what they perceived to be excessive

progressivism in the schools, these new conservatives clamored for a return to the golden

years when schools were more to their liking. Convinced that the public schools had

deteriorated, they had little faith in educators to serve as competent professionals and did not

trust students to function as self-motivated learners. As had happened repeatedly in the

history of public education in America, the schools became the scapegoat for society's ills.

Society's ills were ascribed, in turn, to America's fastest growing population, poor

minorities living in female-single dominated homes.

Increasingly, Americans were reminded in school reform literature of "dramatic

growth in Black and Hispanic populations" (Shea as cited in Shea, Kahane, & Sola, 1989,

p. 8). The data indicated that the "most significant changes in America are considered to be

the nation's changing racial and ethnic composition" (Shea as cited in Shea et al., 1989,

p. 8):

> It is estimated that by the year 2000, about 38% of the under-18 population will be made up of Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians. It is also estimated that "their" portion of American children and youth is expected to grow for many years thereafter. (Education Week Staff as cited in Shea et al., 1989, p. 8)

According to Shea et al. (1989), after establishing that minority populations were growing

much more rapidly than the White population, data analysts then aimed to correlate the

growing minority population with a "poverty boom" (p. 8). Increased poverty became

associated with the rapid growth of female-single dominated homes, a relationship that

Moynihan first opined in 1965. Historically racialized and traditionally considered a

personal flaw by Anglo native-born Americans who firmly believed in the existence of

meritocracy and the fairness of it in America, poverty also became feminized and urbanized.

The reform literature of the 1980s flooded the public with statistics suggesting that "female

personality deficiencies in such households (i.e., sexual license, egocentricity, moral laxness,

low IQ, lack of social responsibility, etc.)" (p. 10) were the cause of the alleged demise of

poor, minority families. Dismal statistics were unyielding:

> One in five children now live with a mother with no father present. Over half (56%) of these children are poor. The number of female households, no husband present, has doubled since 1970 and tripled since 1960. One-third of all female householders are poor. (Feistritzer, 1985, p. 59)

> The figures for the Black female-headed household is [sic] subject to even greater concern—one in three female householders is Black. Forty-seven percent of all Black women maintain families of their own children, but with no husband present. Almost always below the poverty level. Some 70.7% of the children who live with them are classified as poor. (Feistritzer, 1985, p. 60)

Poverty and female-headed households among African Americans and other minorities came to be viewed as a major reason for low high school grades and achievement test scores. Based on the reports such as these, neoconservatives built a strong case for the argument that the country was in trouble. White Americans experienced the threat of race and the threat of culture. As Goldberg (2009) explained:

> Perceived racial threat fueled fear of loss- of power, of resources, of competitiveness, of life itself—and their attendant antagonisms and aggressivities. This sense of threat, almost invariably tinged with anxiety or exacerbated by paranoia upon racial mediation, tends to articulate self- with social protection, no matter the cost. (p. 29)

> It is of the very nature of culture, accordingly, that despite itself, in spite of its disposition qua cultural identity to repeat itself and reproduce itself, it could develop into something else. The threat to a culture is that it could become something different, lose its (current) identity, cease to be by seeing what it takes as its core convictions, values, or commitments eroded. (p. 367)

White Americans were worried. How could America possibly hope to maintain its competitive world supremacy?

Achieving and maintaining competitive world supremacy has been a persistent goal of the U.S. government (Cremin, 1980; Kaestle, 1983; Reese, 2005; Shea et al., 1989). Whenever the nation has appeared to be losing ground to foreign countries (for example, as in the case of Sputnik in 1957), America's public schools have shouldered the brunt of the criticism and blame. History repeated itself in the 1980s, but under the banner of a "New Federalism" (Shea et al., 1989). President Reagan and the neoconservatives effectively introduced a new conservative approach to domestic social policies. "Instead of employing the traditional classical/libertarian Republican party solutions, this New Right coalition called for a much more centrally controlled, activist federal government to provide the framework for renewed national supremacy" (Shea as cited in Shea et al., 1989, p. 16). Shea et al. (1989) elaborated:

> The New Federalism was conceived as a political arrangement whereby federal level policy experts were empowered to prescribe the "consensus goals," whereas individual states, school systems, and local business groups were delegated to compete between and among themselves over the most efficient means to implement these natural goals. (p. 16)

Furthermore:

> There was a commitment to achieve these goals not through liberal "give-away" programs, but rather through a series of federal level *incentive* programs in the areas of tax, trade, antitrust policies, etc. . . On the state level, therefore, the principles of the New Federalism worked to play off one state economy against
> Another, thereby extracting tax breaks and labor concessions in order to attract large, multinational, corporate industry and huge Pentagon-controlled defense production plants. (p. 16).

Reagan's "New Federalism" employed a novel approach that was actually aimed at keeping things the same and essentially maintaining the status quo (e.g., White privilege and U.S. world dominance). The goal was to revitalize America's international competiveness and, thereby, secure its place as a superior and dominant world power. Preserving America's superiority is inextricably tied to the preservation of western White privilege and ideological, as well as cultural hegemony. In simple terms, many White Americans sat at their kitchen tables and lamented "there goes the neighborhood, the schools, the nation!" The underlying implications of conservative White reactionary voices, however, bear a closer, race-critical examination.

First, let us consider a probable implication of the White reaction to the population data released in the early 1980s. The new demographic data directly challenged earlier data that had suggested that because so many more women were entering the workforce, the population of youngsters under age five was declining and would continue to decline through at least the year 2000 (Shea et al., 1989, p. 8). However, new data released in the 1980s indicated otherwise. Not only did the population under age five growing "at a rate

three times the overall population from 1980 to 1983 (9%), reversing a decline in population

of this age group in the last 15 years" (Shea et al., 1989, p. 8), but as pointed out earlier—the

babies were increasingly not White. The situation was reminiscent of the race-suicide

dilemma in the early 1900s.

In 1905, President Teddy Roosevelt announced that because so many White women

were entering the workforce and deciding to delay the start of their families, the White race

was risk of a take-over by immigrant populations. An Arizona newspaper, the *Copper Era*,

covered Roosevelt's pronouncement:

> The avoidance of reproduction by educated women is creating a dangerous, dysgenic
> tendency for the best American "stock" to produce too few children while the
> inferior produce too many; the woman who avoids her maternal destiny, whether
> from viciousness, coldness, shallow-heartedness, self-indulgence . . . why such a
> creature merits contempt as hearty as any visited upon soldier who runs away in
> battle. (Gordon, 1999, p. 164)

Roosevelt's virtriolic declaration, aimed at urban, educated White women, actually inspired

a movement among organized White women and helped define "a political culture"

(Gordon, 1999, p. 164) that was instrumental in shaping "America's foundational racial

structures" (Gordon, 1999, p. 164). Gordon (1999) clarified:

> The internal logic of the White-woman-as-civilizer claim paralleled that of some
> women suffragists that "the woman's vote could counteract Black power, signifying
> that womanhood was White and Blackness was male. In the big Northern and
> Midwestern cities, White women "civilizers" increasingly marked immigrants, not
> Blacks, as the objects of their uplift efforts. (p. 164)

This political culture helped formulate a racial structure in which Blackness conjured the

threat of race. A similar situation existed in the 1980s. That is to say, with the increased

rights of women in the 1970s and the employment opportunities that affirmative action

afforded White women, more White women were opting to work outside the home and

postpone having children. The realization that America was becoming Blacker and poorer

was a disconcerting thought to many White Americans. I posit, further, that this realization ignited real anxiety about the quality of education in the nation's public schools, particularly those in urban areas. Raising standards in all of the schools across the nation was seen as one way to protect the country's competitive edge. The desire to raise standards was not so much to uplift the status of Blacks and other minorities, but to ensure increased opportunities for Whites. I do not allege that the intent was deliberate so much as it was natural inclination to preserve White hegemony. White privilege is like a bad habit, except many Whites are unaware they have the habit. It is difficult, if not impossible, to kick a habit that is hidden from one's consciousness (McIntosh, 1988; Sullivan, 2006).

Second, I think we can infer that the well-publicized correlation between low school achievement and poverty among African Americans along with the inferred causal relationship between female-single headed households and misplaced family or lack of family values revitalized familiar and comfortable assumptions of Black inferiority predicated on cultural dysfunction and underdevelopment. Such assumptions downplayed the role that racism plays in adversely affecting educational opportunities and outcomes for African Americans. In fact, the new conservatives were beginning to shift the national conversation away from race as a significant determinant of one's life chances and the concept of colorblindness was beginning to emerge. As Goldberg (2009) explained in *The Threat of Race*:

> In the U.S., the stress on colorblindness took a couple of decades longer [than it did in Western Europe] to solidify, given the firm hold race exerted over social life. Colorblindness accordingly materialized fully first as a characteristic expression of the civil rights regime and then as a reaction to its commitment to affirmative action. One was not supposed to judge intellectual or moral competence, or for that matter physical prowess, by the color of a person's skin.
> Colorblindness—or racelessness more generally—claimed to judge people according to individualized merit and ability. *Where members of a racially identified*

group were generally and repeatedly judged to fail, or to be less qualified, it would
be attributed to cultural deficiencies of the group, historically developed, rather than
as naturalistically, biologistically determined [emphasis added]. (p. 330)

The outcome of this rationalization was the stigmatization of Black intellectual and cultural

inferiority predicated on historical rather than biological racism. In reality, historical racism

served as a more acceptable, less racist camouflage for the now unpopular more openly

racist biological racism. The consequences for Black children remained the same: they were

the victims of low expectations that were frequently based on assumptions of inferior

intellectual ability. Given that the nation was becoming increasingly Black and poor,

conservatives were compelled to create a sense of urgency to improve the nation's public

school system, long thought to be the panacea for society's ills and the link to the nation's

economic prosperity and international competitiveness.

The neoconservative movement of the 1980s was moving the country toward an

emergent neoliberal political economics that would achieve ideological hegemony in the

1990s. It is important to remember that neoliberalism represents what most Americans

associate with conservatism. Goldberg (2009) explained how neoliberalism serves as a

response to the threat of race, the threat of culture, and the "impending impotence of

Whiteness" (p. 337) created by the social programs of the Civil Rights Era and the

affirmative action policies that followed:

> Neoliberalism is committed to privatizing property, utilities, and social programs, to
> reducing state expenditures and bureaucracy, increasing efficiencies, and to
> individual freedom from state regulation. As the state was seen increasingly to
> support Black education, and to increase regulation to force compliance, White
> neoconservatives found neoliberal commitments increasingly relevant to their
> interests. . . . *It was a short step from privatizing property to privatizing race,*
> *removing conception and categorization in racial terms from the public to the private*
> *realm* [emphasis added]. . . . The state is restructured to support the privatizing of
> race and the protection of racially driven exclusions in the private sphere since they
> are of-limits to state intervention. (p. 337)

Neoliberalism should not, however, be perceived as doing away with the state. Like the New Federalism, it is about shifting "its priorities, to redirect it to represent different interest, to do different work" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 333). The shift in educational priorities that accompanied the emergence of neoliberalism included privatizing education, increased parental choice, charter schools, vouchers, and removing race and racism from educational vernacular. many neoconservatives had long since been critics of public schools and public education was one of the few state-owned industries, so public schools became a convenient target for reform.

Berliner and Biddle (1995) alleged that a myriad of conservative groups invested heavily in think tanks or institutions that could be counted on to reinforce negative perceptions of public education, including "organizations such as the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, the American Enterprise Institute, the Hoover Institution, the Manhattan Institute, and the Madison Center for Educational Affairs" (p. 133). There was nothing novel about public criticism of the schools—that had happened many times in the past. What made the criticism of the 1980s unique was that never before had criticism of education appeared that:

- was sponsored by a secretary of education in our national government;
- was prepared by such a prestigious committee;
- was endorsed by a president of the United States;
- made such explicit charges about a supposed recent, tragic decline of American education;
- asserted that because of this putative decline of education the nation was losing its leadership in industry, science, and innovation;
- assigned blame for said decline inadequacies in teaching programs and inept educators; and
- packaged its messages in such flamboyant prose. (p. 139)

Indeed, if Americans had any doubt that the schools were in trouble, the crisis

became real when *A Nation at Risk* was released on April 26, 1983. The report was the

culmination of an investigation that began in 1981. Then U.S. Secretary of Education, T.H.

Bell, made public his dismay about "the widespread public perception that something was

seriously remiss on our educational system" (National Commission on Excellence in

Education*,* 1983, p. 1). Unlike Reagan and other more conservative Republicans who

wanted to abolish the Department of Education, Bell initially proposed the commission of a

presidential commission to investigate the state of education in America. His request was

denied. As a result, Bell personally created the National Commission on Excellence in

Education to examine the quality of education in the United States (Vinovksis, 2009, p. 16).

Chaired by David P. Gardner, President of the University of Utah, the 18-member "blue-

ribbon" commission was given 18 months to accomplish the following tasks:

- Assess the quality of teaching and learning in the nation's public and private schools, colleges, and universities.
- Compare American schools and colleges with those of other advanced nations.
- Study the relationship between college admissions requirements and student achievement in high schools.
- Identify educational programs which result in notable student success in college.
- Determine the degree to which major social and educational changes have affected student achievement in the last 25 years.
- Identify problems which deter America's schools from achieving excellence in education. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 2)

In addition, the Commission's charter directed it to pay particular attention to adolescents;

consequently, many of the findings were related to the condition of the nation's high

schools.

Unlike the Coleman et al. (1966) report and The Westinghouse-Ohio Study (1969), *A*

Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) was a qualitative

reassessment of published research, most of which was commissioned by the government.

The findings of 41 studies and seven testimonies from public hearings were reviewed. The

National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) concluded "declines in educational

performance are in large part the result of disturbing inadequacies in the way the educational

process itself is often conducted" (p. 61). The findings were reported in four categories:

content, expectations, time, and teaching. The findings are summarized in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Findings from National Commission on Excellent in Education (1983)

Category	Findings
Content	1. Secondary school curricula had been homogenized to the point that it has no central purpose. 2. Curricula was like a smorgasbord; offered too many choices. 3. 25% of general curricula were non-academic.
Expectations	1. High school students were not being given enough homework. 2. Other industrialized countries were requiring specific academic courses of *all*; we were not. 3. High school students were being allowed to graduate with too many electives courses. 4. Minimum competency examinations fell short of what was needed. 5. Colleges were not selective enough in their admission practices. 6. More spending was need for textbooks and other resources.
Time	1. American students spend less time in school than do students in other industrialized countries. 2. Too few school hours were devoted to instruction. 3. Too much school time was spent learning how to cook and drive.
Teaching	1. Too many teachers were not being drawn from the top percent of their college graduating classes. 2. Too much of teacher education curricula were focused on methods as opposed to content. 3. Teachers were underpaid. 4. There were severe shortages of teachers in science, mathematics, foreign language, special education, gifted and talented, and handicapped. 5. 50% of teachers in mathematics and science were not qualified.

Note. From National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983, pp. 61-66).

Numerous, specific recommendations were made to remedy the concerns listed above. For the sake of brevity, five key recommendation statements from the report have been condensed in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2

Five Key Recommendation Statements

Content	Strengthen high school graduation requirements. Create New Basics for high schools: 4 years of English; 3 years of mathematics; 3 years of science; 3 years of social studies; one-half year of computer science; and 2 years of foreign language for college-bound students.
Expectations	Adopt measurable, more rigorous academic standards in schools, colleges, and universities.
Time	Devote more time to the New Basics.
Teaching	Improve teacher preparation. Ensure that teachers are well-qualified.

Note. From National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983, pp. 69-77).

Based on the evidence cited in *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983)*,* it certainly appeared that schools in the United States needed mending and reform, but the evidence to support this contention was not based on empirical research or scientific experimentation. What the report lacked in concrete, empirical evidence, however, it made up for with patriotic and nationalist sentiment. The last paragraph of the report put forth this challenge to all Americans:

> The America of all of us, that is at risk; it is to each of us that this imperative is addressed. It is by our willingness to take up the challenge, and our resolve to se it through, that America's place in the world will be either secured or forfeited. Americans have succeeded before and so we shall again. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 84)

Following the publication by National Commission on Excellence in Education

(1983) of *A Nation at Risk*, the entire nation became fixated on the failures of the American

school systems in domestic performance and global competition. In the decades after *A*

Nation at Risk, more reports were released that further documented deteriorating U.S.

performance on both national and international tests. Policymakers cited these reports as

evidence of a crisis in the nation's educational system and called for large-scale school

reform. The findings and recommendations of *A Nation at Risk* brought forth a wellspring

of educational research and ignited a wildfire of large-scale school reform plans across the

country aimed at raising standards, increasing accountability, and reducing gap between the

achievement of children living poverty and their more privileged peers (Wang, Beckett, &

Brown, 2006).

One of the most celebrated reports, also released in 1983, was Ernest L. Boyer's

High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America. The sentiment fueling the

research was that nature and demographics of American society had changed dramatically

since Conant's seminal work, *The American High School*, was published in 1959 and that

schools were in crisis. In the synopsis of the book, allegations were made that "academic

standards have slipped and test scores have declined. Teachers who are less than competent

are protected and school systems have become disturbingly bureaucratic. In short, the goals

of education are confused" (E. Boyer, 1983, synopsis section). E. Boyer, President of The

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, spearheaded a study of 15 public

high schools in the U.S. Their focus was on both excellence and equity. E. Boyer

explained:

> In choosing the theme of quality in education, we were determined to push
> vigorously for equity as well. Equity and excellence are connected. Expanding

access to the nation's schools must be seen as only the first step toward opportunity for all. And it was our conviction that equality be advanced as the *quality* of education is improved for every student. (p. vii)

Twenty-five educators were selected to visit pre-selected high schools across the nation. Visits at each school were scheduled for at least 20 school days at each site. Team members conducted interviews with principals, teachers, counselors, students, and parents. They also sat in on classes and attended sporting events, as well as faculty and PTA meetings. Startling statistics of declining SAT scores and decreasing American productivity in the world justified the need for such research. Additionally, E. Boyer (1983) noted:

Of special concern is the fact that Black and Hispanic young people are precisely those with whom our schools have been least successful. In 1980, 78% of White 19-year-olds on the United States were high school graduates. However, that same year, 61% of Black and 65% of Hispanic 19-year-olds held high school diplomas. Opportunity remains unequal. And this failure to educate *every* young person to his or her full potential threatens the nation's social and economic health. (p. 5)

E. Boyer reiterated that "the push for excellence in linked to economic recovery and to jobs" (p. 5) and "education and the security of the nation are interlocked" (p. 5), yet, at the same time, he acknowledged the conundrum of balancing equity and excellence "Where is the recognition that education is to enrich the living individuals? Where is the love of learning and where is the commitment to achieve equality and opportunity for all?" (p. 5). How do we balance equity and excellence? We are wrestling with the same question today.

E. Boyer (1983) identified four essential goals:

- First, the high school should help all students develop the capacity to think critically and communicate effectively through a mastery of language.
- Second, the high school should help all students learn about themselves, the human heritage, and the interdependent world in which they live through a core curriculum based upon consequential human experiences common to all people.
- Third, the high school should prepare all students for work and further education through a program of electives that develop individual aptitudes and interests.
- Fourth, the high school should help all students fulfill their social and civic obligations through school and community service. (pp. 66-67)

The report specifically called for more emphasis on mathematics, science, technology in school curricula, as well as decentralization of school bureaucracy, an examination of teacher certification processes, and an increased focus on instructional leadership. Information in this report along with *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983) and a myriad of other reports called for comprehensive schools reform. Other influential assessments of public education included *A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future* (Goodlad, 1983), *America's Competitive Challenge: The Need for a National Response* (Business-Higher Education Forum, 1983), *Action for Excellence: A Comprehensive Plan to Improve Our Nation's Schools* (Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983), *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (Sizer, 1984), and *Investing in our Children: Business and the Public Schools* (Committee for Economic Development, 1984). The cumulative impact of these reports was a powerful one. Americans believed that the public schools were failing and academic achievement was declining.

NAEP data, however, did not and does not confirm the need for the nation's hysteria. NAEP tests are administered to national samples of pupils aged nine, 13, and 17. Pupils are tested every two years in mathematics, reading, science, writing, geography, and computer skills. Between 1970 and 1980, the average NAEP reflected almost no change (NAEP Trends in Academic Progress, 1999). More extensive trend data reported from the NAEP and other tests revealed:

> The performance of elementary and secondary pupils dropped slightly on some of those examinations between the early 1970s and the early 1980s; but their performance improved modestly on some of the other examinations. Average NAEP science scores remained about the same for 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds between 1977 and 1982, but decreased for 17-year-olds. But for mathematics, the NAEP

scores for 13-year-olds rose from 1978 to 1982, while they remained the same for 9-year-olds and 17-year-olds. On reading, the NAEP scores between 1975 and 1980 stayed the same for 17-year-olds and increased for 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds. (Vinovskis, 1999, p. 5)

Ironically, after the NAEP trend data report for 1991 was released, former Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, concluded that "today's children seem to know about as much math and about as much science and read about as well as their parents did at that age about 20 years ago" (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 26). Assistant Secretary of Education Diane Ravitch also admitted "the achievement trend lines are essentially flat over the last 20 years" (1995, p. 26). White House criticism of public education, however, was relentless and *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983), along with other reports, provided the evidence necessary to substantiate the allegations of serious decline in the quality of American schools and student achievement. What probably alarmed the nation more than anything else was the alleged relationship between the country's economic crisis and our public education system. The crisis argument was bolstered by the contention that the U.S. was losing ground to other nations which would ultimately threaten the superior position to which Americans were accustomed. Two years after the release of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983), the Committee for Economic Development, an independent group of business people and educators, issued a report that told Americans the nation's inadequate public education system was jeopardizing the country's ability to compete with foreign countries. According to the report, the U.S. was losing ground to Japan:

> Japan, America's most important competitor, has the highest rate of high school completion and literacy in the world, close to 100%. Japanese students study more and learn more. They spend more time in class than their American counterparts do; and by the time they graduate from high school, they have completed the equivalent

of the second year at a good American college. In science and mathematics, Japanese test scores lead the world. (Vinovskis, 1999, p. 6)

In reality, the relationship between education and the economic well-being of the country was elusive and difficult to prove, but Americans were convinced, nevertheless, that the connection was real. The perception was that education should be thought of as "investing in human resources and that appropriate investments in education can benefit industry and fuel the national economy" (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 141). There may be some correlation between the quality of education and economic prosperity; but, the problem lies in the historic tendency of policymakers and educators to treat such assumptions, often lacking in empirical wisdom and moral conviction, as indisputable facts.

The National Governor's Association (NGA), in an unprecedented effort, led the charge to improve America's failing public education system. The NGA played a pivotal role in garnering support for the establishment of educational goals and standards. Vinovskis (1999) prepared a thorough report for the National Goals Panel entitled, *The Road to Charlottesville: The 1989 Education Summit*, that chronicled the governor's efforts. Under the direction of Governor Lamar Alexander, the NGA met in Idaho in August of 1985 where they seven task forces to determine how education could be improved in the states (p. 17). The results of their efforts were published in much publicized report, *Time for Results: The Governors' 1991 Report on Education* (National Governor's Association, 1986). "The report was released in 1986, but intended to show what the stats should do for the next five years" (p. 17). The tasks included:

1. creating a more highly professional teaching force
2. strengthening school leadership and management
3. promoting greater parent involvement and choice in their youngster's education
4. helping at-risk children and youth meet higher education
5. making better and more effective use of new technologies in education
6. making better use of the resources invested in school facilities

7. strengthening the mission and effectiveness of colleges and universities.
(p. 17)

In keeping with the current administration's New Federalism, Alexander proposed "some old-fashioned horse-trading. We'll regulate less, if schools and school districts will produce better results" (p. 18). This left each state with a fair amount of autonomy but they were expected to work in collaboration with the federal government.

The Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) also weighed in on the direction educational should take. The state of education in the southern states was of particular concern because of low academic achievement and the overall perception that the South was backward, somewhat behind the rest of the nation. In June 1988, the SREB Commission for Educational Quality issued a report, *The Need for Quality,* that set 12 goals they hoped would be accomplished by the year 2000:

1. All children will be ready for the first grade.
2. Student achievement for elementary and secondary students will be at national levels or higher.
3. The school dropout rate will be reduced by one-half.
4. 90% of adults will have a high school diplomas or equivalency.
5. 4 out of 5 students entering college will be ready to begin college-level work.
6. Significant gains will be achieved in the mathematics, sciences, and communications competencies of vocational education students.
7. The percentage of adults who have attended college or earned two-year, four year, and graduate degrees will be at the national averages or higher.
8. The quality and effectiveness of all colleges and universities will be regularly assessed, with particular emphasis on the performance of undergraduate students.
9. All institutions that prepare teachers will have effective teacher education programs that place primary emphasis on the knowledge and performance of graduates.
10. All states and localities will have schools with improved performance and productivity demonstrated by results.
11. Salaries for teachers and faculty will be competitive in the marketplace, will reach important benchmarks, and will be linked to performance measures and standards.
12. States will maintain or increase the proportion of state tax dollars for schools and colleges while emphasizing funding aimed at raising quality and productivity.
(Vinovskis, 1999, p. 21)

In response to the call for change, Murphy (1990) observed three waves of reform during the 1980s. The first wave (1982-1986) sought to achieve excellence by concentrating on establishing standards for minimum requirements for student achievement and teacher certification. Focused on "repairing the system" (p. 22), the prevalent philosophy favored expanding centralized control via a top-down, state-controlled bureaucratic change organization. State departments of education established policies and standards with which local schools districts were expected to comply. Similar to the way corporations do business, those districts that met or exceeded the standards were rewarded with incentives and favorable performance assessments. Lackluster improvement in student achievement and persistence of the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged youngsters prompted educators and policymakers to call for a second wave of reform that would be more focused on restructuring schools and making classroom improvements. In other words, the focus was moving from a macro to a micro-level reform or, as educational reform scholar-researcher Michael Fullan (2007) put it, from "big picture" reform to "little picture" (p. 8) reform.

The second wave of reform (1986-1988) focused on moving beyond minimum requirements and emphasized quality improvements at the school sites. Increasingly, the problems confronting schools were seen a systems problem; consequently, it was believed that a bottom-up approach to change might be more effective. Educational professionals as well as parents came to be viewed as valued stakeholders. By the end of the 1980s, the change process underwent a shift from talk of restructuring the schools to redesigning the schools and, eventually to threats of state or private school take-over and increased options for parents like charter schools and vouchers.

Public schools all over the country began experimenting with a variety of comprehensive, large-scale reform programs. Some examples included the Algebra Project (as cited in Moses & Cobb, 2002), Coalition of Essential Schools (2010), Core Knowledge (1986), and Success for All (Office of Research Education Consumer Guide, 1987). The Comer School Development Process (1993), founded in 1968, and the Effective School Reform (Cuban, 1983), first publicized in 1979, grew in popularity throughout the 1980s and into the next two decades. A brief synopsis of each is given provide below:

Comer Process or School Development Program—also known as the Comer Process (1993)—was a program intended to improve the educational experience of poor minority youth. Its focus was on creating a *positive school climate* by building supportive and collaborative relationships between students, parents, and the school. A core belief of the Comer Process is that when children feel valued, secure, and comfortable in school, they will develop positive emotional relationships with school personnel and parents and, also, formulate positive attitudes toward school. The combination of these factors will then lead to increased academic learning. "Three principles underlie the Comer Process:

- Schools must review problems in open discussion in a *no-fault* atmosphere.
- Each school must develop *collaborative working relationships* among principals, parents, teachers, community leaders, superintendents, and health-care workers.
- All decisions must be reached by *consensus* rather than by decree. (Comer School Development Process, 1993)

The Effective Schools project was founded by Lawrence Lezotte and Ronald Edmonds, this reform began as a response to the Equal Educational Opportunity Survey (1966). The reform is based on the belief that all children can learn and that schools have control over the variables that determine student learning. In a paper entitled, "Programs of School Improvement: An Overview," Edmonds (1982) stated that all effective schools have:

- The leadership of a principal notable for substantial attention to the quality of instruction;
- a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus;
- an orderly, safe climate conducive to teaching and learning;
- teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery; and,
- the use of measures of pupil achievement was the basis for program evaluation. (p. 4)

Since then, the Effective Schools Movement has been expanded to include 10 correlates and "concepts of decentralization and empowerment, the importance of organizational culture, and the principles of total quality management and continuous improvement" (Lezotte, 2009, pp. 1-5).

The Algebra Project was founded by Civil Rights activist Robert Moses and the program is based on the premise that mathematical literacy is the key to full participation in modern society and that algebra is essential for mastery of higher level mathematics. The project is as much of a socio-political undertaking as it an educational pedagogy program. Originally conceived as a middle school intervention, "the concept that provides minimum common conceptual cohesion for the work of the Algebra Project takes the form of an 'if, then' sentence: If *we* can do it, then *we* should" (Moses & Cobb, 2002, p. 92).

> The "we" refers to a complex configuration of individuals; educational institutions of various kinds; local, regional, and national associations organizations (both governmental and nongovernmental); actual state governments and the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the national government. The "it"—the goal of educating all our children well—rests on a complex conceptual consensus that is woven into the cultural fabric of this country: the idea that young idea that young people in the United States are entitled to free public education, from kindergarten through 12th grade. (Moses & Cobb, 2002, p. 92)

The Coalition of Essential Schools was founded by Theodore Sizer (1984) of Brown University and the reform is based on ten principles:

- Prioritize students' learning to use their minds well (e.g., intellectual growth and purpose).

- Less is more, depth is more important than the breadth of material covered.
- Goals should apply to all students.
- Teaching and learning should be personalized.
- Students should function as workers; teachers as facilitators.
- Schools should exude a tone of decency and trust.
- Commitment must be made to the entire school (e.g., teachers should expect to serve in multiple capacities).
- Resources should be dedicated to teaching and learning.
- Emphasis should be placed on student performance on real tasks (authentic assessments).
- Schools should practice democracy and equity. (Coalition of Essential Schools Common Principles, 2010)

The Core Knowledge program was founded by E. H. Hirsch Jr. and the underlying premise is a grade-by-grade core of common learning is necessary to endure sound and equitable education. Based on research in cognitive psychology, Core Knowledge asserts that in order to achieve academic excellence, education in the early grades must be specific, shared, uniform, and follow a sequence of grade-specific topics in language arts, mathematics, science, history, geography, music, and fine arts (Core Knowledge: Presechool through Grade 8—Educatioanl Excellence & Equity for All Children, n.d.).

The Success for All program (1998) was founded by Robert Slavin, Nancy Madden, and a team of developers from Johns Hopkins University and is an evidence-based, comprehensive school reform program.

> Success for All is a school-based achievement-oriented program for disadvantaged students in grades pre-K through five. This program is designed to prevent or intervene in the development of learning problems in the early years by effectively organizing instructional and family support resources within the regular classroom. In particular, the goal is to ensure that virtually every student in a high-poverty school will finish the third grade with grade-level reading skills. A corollary of "success for all" is that no student will be left to "fall between the cracks" on the path to acquiring good reading skills. Major elements of the program include school wide curriculum, tutors, primary emphasis on preschool and kindergarten language development and reading, eight-week assessments, family support teams, and the use of program facilitators.

While there were isolated success stories, the reforms of the 1980s had only a limited effect largely because educators failed to align legislative policy with district policy to stimulate school change. In other words, they did not see the big picture (Fuhrman, Elmore, & Massell, 1993; Fullan, 2007; Massell & Fuhrman, 1993). Reforms toyed with change by making the superficial changes, but rarely got to the heart of the problem. In poor urban areas, Kozol (1991) opined that:

> Even in the schools where some "restructuring" has taken place, the fact of racial segregation has been, and continues to be, largely uncontested. . . . The perceived objective was a more "efficient" ghetto school or one with greater "input" from ghetto parent or more "choices" for the ghetto children. (p. 4)

The implication is that a ghetto school warranted inherently lower standards. This pattern of racial injustice continues even in the face of reform.

In 1984, Secretary Bell instituted what was known as the *wall chart*, which was a means of ranking states by how well tested on the ACT and SAT. Because the wall chart only measured, for the most part, the achievement of college-bound students, state governors began considering other ways to measure academic growth. Comparing test scores from the National Assessment of National Progress (NAEP) was one consideration, but governors had to first convince state and local educators of the viability of publishing results by state and then using them as a means of evaluating academic progress. Heretofore, NAEP results had not been reported at the state level. In 1984, however, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), of which Bill Clinton, then governor of Arkansas, was a member, called for more state comparison of student achievement. The role that state governors would play in educational policy-making and reform greatly increased in the years to come (Vinovskis, 2009).

In July 1989, President George H. W. Bush addressed the National Governors'
Association in Chicago and proposed that they convene for "a summit to share ideas and to
explore options for educational progress" (Bush as cited in Vinovskis, 2009, p. 23). The
governors met at the Charlottesville Education Summit and proposed the crafting of national
education goals. Following the summit, the NGA and President Bush agreed on six national
education goals which Bush would later announce in his 1990 State of the Union address.
The goals were:

1. All children in American will start school ready to learn.
2. We will increase the percentage of students graduating from high school to at
   least 90%.
3. American students will leave grades four, eight, and 12 having demonstrated
   competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics,
   science, history, and geography.
4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
5. Every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills
   necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and
   responsibilities of citizenship.
   Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and offer a
   disciplined environment conducive to learning. (adapted from the Office of the
   White House Press Secretary as cited in Vinovskis, 2009)

Despite the overall positive reaction to the six national goals and the 1988
reauthorization of Chapter I of the ESEA, many state legislators registered concern about the
lack of attention to exactly how these goals would be achieved. In an effort to focus on
means of achieving the goals, the nation's governors added specific objectives to the six
national goals, assigning each objective to the appropriate goal. Additionally, Democrats
and Republicans crafted the Equity and Excellence in Education Act, "which codified the six
national goals and added two more goals: 1) every child will have competent teachers, and
2) all barriers to higher education will be removed" (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 29) but, serious
questions remained about funding for these lofty goals, as well as how the goals would be
met by the year 2000. Perhaps what was most important was what was happening at the

grassroots level in those cities and with those populations that *A Nation at Risk* (National

Commission on Excellence, 1983) and other reports were allegedly most concerned? What

was going on in the inner city?

The Legacy at Risk

> Since the mid-70s there have been some profound changes in society's attitudes
> towards certain kinds of activities (sex, drugs, alcohol, etc.). The American family
> structure, even at the highest economic and social level has changed for the worse
> [sic[. . . . Church membership and worship have suffered. Poor Black, inner-city
> youngsters have suffered most. . . . Roosevelt, like many other caring inner city-
> schools has some difficult years ahead. While student attitudes are basically good,
> there are too many students who underachieve and/or drop out. However, Roosevelt,
> being a unique, proud, resourceful institution is confident that it will meet the
> challenge and overcome any and all obstacles in its QUEST FOR THE BEST.
> (Jones, 1986)

The revitalized call for excellence touted by proponents of national educational

reform was a familiar mantra to Rooseveltians. While the nation's leaders were busy

convincing Americans that the nation was at risk of losing its international position as the

supreme world power and that this threat was attributable to a weakened educational system,

what was most at risk for Gary Roosevelt was the loss of its soul. Soul carries many

connotations:

> The vital principle or animating force within living beings; the essential being of a
> person, regarded as immaterial and immortal; a member of the human race; the most
> central and material part; the seat of a person's innermost emotions and feelings.
> (Farlex, 2009, p. 1)

Black pride and a commitment to being better than the rest were the marrow of

Roosevelt's soul. The intangible something about Roosevelt that cockled the heart of

Rooseveltians and the Black community in Gary was at risk. Roosevelt was striving to hold

on to its legacy and tradition. In a strange sort of way, so was the rest of the nation, but for

very different reasons. Mainstream America sought to preserve the status quo of Anglo

American world superiority; African Americans in Gary sought to preserve their dignity and pride. Both turned to public education as the change agent to find new ways to effectively keep things the same. The contradiction between reform and change is clear. At the core of the contradiction is race.

A major difference in perspective and purpose existed between White and Black America. The 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commision on Excellence), while painting a grim portrait of America's public schools in general, also drew renewed attention to the underachievement of students, especially in the nation's inner cities. As mentioned earlier, disconcerting realizations surfaced alongside the emergence of *A Nation at Risk.* America was becoming increasingly less White; the minority population in public, city schools was outgrowing the White population; and underachievement among minorities was commonplace in the nation's inner city schools. I have suggested that the urgent push for excellence in the public education that came about as a consequence of *A Nation at Risk* was more of a response to the threat of a loss of White privilege and U.S. world dominance than a concern for a mediocrity in the public schools. Reese (2005) alleged that "people wanted equality and quality, democracy and efficiency, and equal educational opportunity but extra opportunity for their own children" (p. 250). As Reese pointed out, not unlike interest-convergence theory (Bell, 1995, 2004), I posit, further, that if the education of African Americans improved, it would do as a consequence of raising standards for White Americans attending public schools. For African American educators like Robert Jones and others, however, concern for Black underachievement and racial inequality of opportunities and outcomes were hardly novel. The purpose behind school improvement for African American was not so much about preserving U.S. international dominance as it was about

Black survival, the preservation of dignity and pride, and the promise of a better life for

African Americans. There was nothing new about the risk to prosperity for Blacks in Gary,

Indiana.

As early as 1971, the *Post Tribune* reported a story released by the Washington

Associated Press on the widening educational gap:

> A wide educational gap has opened between the nation's central-city and suburban
> dwellers, the Census Bureau says. Not only do more suburbanites complete high
> school, they achieve a higher level of education than the more deprived residents of
> the inner city, the report shows. . . . Although the study uses 1967 population figures,
> census officials said, more up-to-date tabulations "show about the same kind of gap,
> with a general upgrading in both areas. . . . (Washington Associated Press, 1971,
> p. B4)

The study alleged that the gap was caused by the fact that fewer Whites lived in the inner

city and that "persons of Negro and other races have a lower educational attainment than

Whites" (Washington Associated Press, 1971, p. B4). "Once a central-city dweller gets a

college education, he [sic] is more likely to move to suburbia" (Washington Associated

Press, 1971, p. B4). The article continued:

> About 37% of the Whites and 76% of the Negroes and other races who had
> completed four years of college or more lived in the central cities as compared with
> 44% of the Whites and 83% of the Negroes and other races who had not completed
> this much education. (Washington Associated Press, 1971, p. B4)

Gary's Black percentage rate, surpassed only by Washington, D.C. and Newark, New Jersey,

had grown to 52% by 1971, making its Black population the third largest of any city in the

nation. By the 1980s, Gary was more than 70% Black. The fact that Gary and its schools

were predominantly Black was a problem, not because of anything inherent to race, but

because of the history of racism in America and the impact that racism has imposed on the

quality of educational opportunities and outcomes for African Americans. Many African

Africans recognized the inequity and fought to beat the odds. That was what the push for

excellence at Gary Roosevelt was all about, overcoming the odds and striving to be the best. Mr. Jones and his staff fought to continue beating the odds. The movement ignited by *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983) changed the measure of school success and raised the ante for improvement.

Local response to *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983) was strong and swift. In the days that followed the release of the report, headlines in the *Post Tribune* newspaper read "Mediocre U.S. Schools Put U.S. at Risk: Panel Asks for Tougher Standards" (Washington Associated Press, 1983a, p. A1); "Reagan: Education Parents' Responsibility" (Washington Associated Press, 1983b, p. C8); "What are America's Basics?" (Mills, 1983, p. A6); "Teachers Challenge Orr's Education Goals" (Ashley, 1983, p. B1); "200-day School Year Coming for Indiana" (James, 1983, p. C1); "Teachers: We Need Better Courses, Not More" (Dolan, 1983, p. C1); "Teacher Shortage Addressed" (1983, p. C1); "Student Quality in Area 'Improved'" (Isidore, 1983, p. C1); "Educational Erosion Produces Risk" (1983, pp. B1, B3); "Area Schools Put Down Rising Mediocrity (Editor's note, 1983, p. A1); and "Reagan Urges School Campaign" (Washington Associated Press, 1983c, p. A1).

A sense of urgency filled the air and, clearly, some educators did not accept the findings or the blame. One thing was for certain, the manner in which student progress and school achievement would be viewed was about to change, even if the quality of education in remained the same.

As mentioned earlier, the early stages of national educational reform were largely top-down efforts, with individual states mandating that local districts beef up high school curricula and impose stricter teacher certification requirements, both of which were aimed at

achieving excellence in education. Instead of investing in research that may have helped

teachers better understand the how of teaching and learning and systemic educational change

or confronting the institutional reasons for racial achievement gap, the government "settled

for playing the diagnostic technician" (Vinovksis as cited in Gordon, 2003, p. 124).

Improved racial equality of opportunities and outcomes was minimal in inner cities across

the nation. Gary was no exception.

With the expansion of the NAEP, standardized testing became the primary indicator

of student progress and schools were encouraged to measure progress regularly; however,

standardized testing was not new to the Gary school system. Annual records of student

achievement test results from as early as 1960s are recorded in the William Hoock

Collection archives at Indiana University Northwest Historical Archives. During the 1980-

81 school year, three years before the release of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on

Excellence, 1983), the manner in which test data were collected and coordinated was re-

conceptualized. Dr. Ernest Jones had replaced Gordon McAndrew as Superintendent of the

Gary Schools and, at an October, 1980 school board meeting, Dr. Hoock, then Director of

Testing and Evaluation, outlined the citywide achievement testing program:

> The achievement testing is analyzed and reported in three sections: standardized,
> basic comp, and federal, based on four programs of measurement. The standardized
> testing is based on national norms and the tests are administered city-wide to grades
> 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 12. We are using the Iowa Rest of Basic Skills at Grades 4, 6, and
> 8; and Test of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) at Grades 9 and 12. (School
> board minutes, 1980, pp. 423-424)

> The Basic Comp testing is divided into two parts: 1) our own program from 1974 in
> which we began testing in 1976 in reading and math, along with writing and
> speaking for proficiency information in minimum skills for high school graduation,
> and 2) the State CAPPS Program—Comprehensive Assessment and Program
> Planning System which extended competency testing into spelling, social studies,
> math, and science. (p. 424)

The Federal Testing, Hoock explained, pertained to Title I Programs and was subject to government guidelines. While progress was noted at the elementary levels, Hoock (1979) reported "a serious portrait of educational deficits in the middle and high schools which have not been overcome with basic competency programs as yet," and added that "useful steps were being taken to set up new programs to deal with this problem" (p. 424).

By 1987, Indiana State Department of Education had begun the process of establishing a state assessment known as the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP), which necessitated a modification in the assessment program currently in place within the district. In the words of Dr. James Wooten, Assistant Superintendent of Support Services with the Gary Schools, "the long arm of House Bill 1360 or Public Law 390 has reached out again" (School board minutes, 1987b, p. 337). In July of 1987, the State School Improvement Program devised a state assessment that would replace the district's Basic Competency Program in 1988. In anticipation of the ISTEP assessment, central office administrators proposed that Gary's Basic Comprehension Program be revised to include only seniors who have not passed one or more of the current proficiency tests for the 1987 school year. Hoock explained that ISTEP "is a long and difficult standardized test battery which also requires that they identify students for remedial work in summer school, for the grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8" (p. 337). Hoock cited several reasons to amend the current Basic Comprehensive Testing. Among them were:

1. The original problem is no longer as big as it was in 1974, where the number of students who do not receive diplomas because of the proficiency testing amounts to only 3 or 4 each year.
2. There has been an increase by the state of in the number of course units required for graduation. They require one more unit each in English, science, and math and the Basic Competency has not raised achievement levels as they had hoped.
3. They [the state] feel that ISTEP will provide the equivalent of our program because there will be retainment under ISTEP at five grade levels, 1, 2, 3, 6, and

> 8 [sic]. The state assumes that most students would have learned their basic
> skills by the time they get to high school. (School board minutes, 1987b, p. 338)

Hence, the end of the local Basic Competency Testing was imminent as ISTEP loomed in

the future. A sense of urgency was mounting. An editorial in the *Post Tribune* captured the

complexity of the situation:

> Americans with their nobody-can-do-anything-as-well-as-we-can mentality,
> suddenly find that their country is struggling to compete in the world market. . . .
> Other countries are making better products—and more efficiently; other countries are
> turning out more engineers, scientists, scholars, etc.; and other countries are
> developing more skilled and happier workers.
>   It takes creative thinkers, lots of them, to maintain a thriving economy. The
> United States is facing a complex challenge. And so is Northwest Indiana . . .
> everyone should see the crucial need for equal education opportunities for all,
> something this country espouses in principle, but not in fact.
>   The minority population is growing at a much faster rate than the White
> population in both the U.S. and Lake County. And, in Lake County, the White
> population is decreasing. The estimate is that one of three U.S. citizens will be non-
> White by 2000. Minority youths, concentrated in cities, are less apt to go to college
> than White youths. . . . Yet, most well-paying jobs require a college education.
> Northwest residents were lulled into thinking college isn't necessary to earn a good
> living; mill jobs were ready and waiting for the taking. Now that option is gone.
>   The family plays a major role in communicating expectations and
> instilling respect for education. But there are many broken families; there are many
> single-parent families; there are more and more children living in poverty; there have
> been several generations produced who place a low premium on education; there is a
> mixture of cultures to be considered.
>   From unequal education emerges an upper-income class and a low-income
> class, with little in between. Providing equal educational opportunities for everyone
> is morally right. It also pays off—for everyone. (Put urgency in the curriculum,
> 1986, p. A4)

The messages in this editorial are quite revealing. There is a sense of disdain for the

arrogance of the American mentality, yet an admission that the fact that the U.S. is lagging

behind other nations is troubling. Neither is the word "Black" used, which is interesting in a

city where more than 80% of the population is Black. Family factors, cultural differences,

and class are mentioned in the same breadth as inequality, but the words race and racism go

unmentioned as possible contributing factors to the dreaded inequality. Reminiscent of the

Truman Commission's appeal to end the mistreatment of Blacks in the 1947, the argument

for fixing inequality in education, while portrayed as a moral issue, is backed up with an

economic justification. One thing was for sure—time was running out.

Confronted with a number of ongoing and pressing challenges unrelated to ISTEP,

the administration and faculty at Roosevelt had their hands full. Fully aware of the

challenges, Principal Jones expressed concern for Roosevelt and the community it served.

Increasingly, he observed changing attitudes of students. According to Jones (1986):

> The typical Roosevelt student of the late 50s, 60s, and the early 70s was rather
> carefree, respectful, somewhat secure, naive, and sheltered when compared with
> students of the 80s. . . . Behavior-wise, youngsters of today are slightly more
> rebellious. There is a general desire to learn and discipline is sound but moderate
> tenseness and insecurity permeate the makeup of even the best students. This feeling
> seems to perpetuate a mild resentment toward constituted authority causing school
> personnel to have to work harder to maintain order. Most of this is attributable to the
> instability of the present along with a marked uncertainty in terms of the future.
> Sports and other schools activities are no longer as popular as they used to be . . .
> there are too many other things to do. . . . TV addiction is common, often replacing
> homework.

Jones was also worried about racial polarization in the city of Gary, the disintegration of

local economy, and the high unemployment all of which created "significant obstacles to

teaching and learning" (Jones, 1986). Increasingly, he saw the school having to cope with

complications resulting from "hunger, behavior, child neglect, abuse, unwed motherhood-

fatherhood, chronic truancy, poor health, drug-alcohol abuse, suicidal tendencies, general

frustration and depression" (Jones, 1986). An optimist, Jones maintained beliefs he has

expressed earlier:

> Much of the beauty and strength in our area is found in the courage, intelligence,
> determination, pride, and common sense of the people who populate it. This, indeed,
> is the finest asset an area can have. If we apply ourselves to the task diligently . . .
> we will overcome all major obstacles which stand in the way of the economic,
> cultural, and social rebirth of our beloved Northwest Indiana. (Jones, 1985, p. B3)

He was hopeful that the "stable, professional staff" at Roosevelt would be able to keep

Roosevelt "strong and efficient in its effort to provide students with a quality secondary

school experience" (Jones, 1986). Although the changes to which Jones alluded seemed

somewhat new, the literature indicates that there were periods in Roosevelt's history in

which the perils of the inner city, poverty, and the wages of racial inequality of opportunities

and outcomes imperiled teaching and learning at Roosevelt.

In spite of all its glory and success, Roosevelt was no stranger to unique concerns

and controversy. In 1941, the Purdue Survey Committee conducted a survey of Secondary

Education for the Gary School Board. The committee wrote extensively about educational

needs at Roosevelt:

> The Roosevelt High School has all of the problems that develop in a community which has a high proportion of homes of low economic level, large families, inadequate housing and the resultant health problems which grow out of such conditions. To this must be added the unjustified but nevertheless real limitation of opportunities, vocational and otherwise, extended to the colored race. A high percentage of pupils withdraw from high school before graduation.
>
> This group reveals a pattern of limited family background plus poor adjustment to the existing school program. Building facilities are badly crowded at Roosevelt High School.
>
> In the opinion of the survey staff the destiny of the Roosevelt School can best be achieved by the staff of that school attacking its own problems, developing within that school a comprehensive and realistic program based on the needs of the group and largely ignoring the pattern of other high schools of Gary. The attempt to follow an academic pattern, common to the city, conventional and academic courses in the Roosevelt School. The city-wide testing program with the unfortunate comparisons of achievement of students at Roosevelt, with their limited background and environmental opportunities, with students from more favored backgrounds has made little contribution to educational progress at Roosevelt and has done possible harm. It has too often resulted in more desperate attempts to achieve what is not to be achieved because of its lack of meaning and importance to students.
>
> The reality of the situation would demand a program of general education in Roosevelt with special attention to problems of citizenship in 1941, extensive work in home management, dietary and health problems plus a realistic program of vocational education in terms of occupational opportunities open to pupils of Roosevelt School.

It is hoped that specialized offerings at other centers would be available to colored students. That is a decision, however, which none but the Gary community can eventually decide. Remedial work should be offered to the extent of available staff. It need not be implied from the preceding suggestions that vocational and academic fields to the limit of their interest, for a very considerable number continued their education beyond high school; but it is to be stressed that a primary emphasis upon this phase of education neglects the needs of the pupils in the Roosevelt High School to say nothing of the considerable additional percentage of those who might be held in school by a better adapted program. (Purdue Survey Committee, 1941, pp. 180-181)

Four years later, in December of 1944, the National Urban League released the

findings of a study they completed for the Gary Council of Social Agencies. The report

entitled "A Study of the Social and Economic Conditions of the Negro Population of Gary,

Indiana" refuted the Purdue Survey Committee findings. The National Urban League report

(1944) argued:

Roosevelt must not become more of a special problem than it already is, and its students must be considered as those of a standard school in the community. The students of this school must fit into the general American community whether it be east or west and they will not be permitted exceptions because they attended Roosevelt High School in Gary, Indiana. The same acculturation which took place among the foreign-born as they were thrown in with those more indigenous to the soil will take place among Negroes in as rapid if not a more rapid pace. The fact that vocational opportunities were not available for Gary's Negro youth was certainly no justification for limiting vocational training, but instead an indication that a factor which would open these opportunities needed to be introduced into the picture. (p. 26)

The findings of the Urban League also contested the Gary Schools Evaluation Report at End

of Intermediate Cycle Sixth Year, Second Semester, 1943-44, which suggested that

Roosevelt students tended to be "dull or slow-moving pupils" (National Urban League,

1944, p. 26). The National Urban League report (1944) challenged the local findings:

If any serious consideration is given this, it should be accepted more as an indicator for the teacher rather than a condemnation of the child. More time and attention are needed for the child which (sic) would be possible through smaller classes, and greater cooperation from home. All of the problems of the family are reflected by the child in the classroom. (p. 26)

The National Urban League report also noted:

> Among the high schools the per cent of ninth grade enrollees withdrawing before graduation was highest for Roosevelt School just as the number of ninth grade enrollees to graduate from high school was lowest for this same school. Among high schools, Roosevelt was at the top of the list for those who graduate and continue their education. (p. 27)

A significant phenomenon was revealed:

> It can be seen that dropout rates are high at Roosevelt between the ninth grade and graduation. But for those who get beyond graduation, the desire to continue in school is greater than that for the graduates of any of the other schools in the city. (p. 27)

The findings of each of the reports bear deeper consideration.

Even though these studies were conducted more than 60 years ago, they provide insight into what was occurring at Roosevelt during the 1980s and what occurred thereafter. Many of Gary's Black families during the 1940s had migrated from Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, and other Southern states where educational opportunities for Blacks were among the worst in the nation (National Urban League, 1944; Potts, 1937). The Gary Schools Evaluation Report that classified many Roosevelt students as "dull" and "slow-moving" (as cited in National Urban League, 1944, p. 26) ignored the life history of Blacks in the United States and discounted the impact of the ongoing disaccumulation of educational and economic opportunity imposed upon African American by racism (Brown et al., 2003). The durability of racial inequality in America is contingent upon an ahistorical view of life for Blacks in America and contributes to the persistent misconception of Black intellectual inferiority, thus abetting the case for biological racism (Goldberg, 2002). While acknowledging the unfairness of comparing the achievement of Roosevelt students to other students, the Purdue Survey Committee concluded that a traditional, academic curriculum was inappropriate for many Roosevelt students. Their perspective was reminiscent of a

more sympathetic, but equally debilitating historical racism (Goldberg, 2002). I posit that the National Urban League report (1944) most reflected the position of Roosevelt's educational leadership.

Mr. Tatum and his successors, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Jones, supported a traditional, academic curriculum at Roosevelt reminiscent of Du Bois' (1994) ideal New England college. The model was not perfect, but it worked through the 1970s and into the mid-1980s. Roosevelt graduated some of Gary's finest by anybody's standards but, as suggested in the National Urban League report, many students did not graduate. All was not lost for the dropouts. Some of Roosevelt's dropout students attended the Martin Luther King School, a second-chance school established to accommodate Gary's high school dropouts. Roosevelt commencement programs indicate that the percentage of graduating seniors from Roosevelt with honor roll status (a 3.0 cumulative grade point average) held steady at 10%. Yet, and this is very important, according to anecdotal accounts of Roosevelt graduates and teachers, even the struggling students benefitted from the prideful, positive, family-like school environment. The myriad of extra-curricular activities offered daily gave almost everyone an opportunity to connect with the school. As former teacher, Barbara Taliaferro, stated, "There was something for everybody at Roosevelt" (personal communication, January 10, 2010). Students enjoyed the aura of excellence that the school exuded and were proud to be Rooseveltians. Whether or not school leaders agreed with the Urban League Report's assertion that Blacks would and could be acculturated in much the same fashion as White immigrants is less certain. In fact, by the 1980s, Principal Jones sensed the unsettling influence of growing social disorder and the appearance of a different kind of student with pressing needs and a smoldering resistance to the Roosevelt school culture and tradition.

Jones' (1985, 1986), written comments in the *Post Tribune* and Gary School Community

newsletters suggest that he tried to nurture a balance between the push of change and the pull

of tradition.

The Gary School Community attempted to address some of the non-academic needs

of Roosevelt students. In 1980, the Roosevelt Adolescent Health Clinic (RAH), part of an

Adolescent Health Care Proposal, was established at the school. The goals and objectives of

the clinic were to:

- Improve the health care status of students,
- decrease the adolescent health management problems by 90% utilizing the clinic,
- increase awareness and knowledge of preventive health care in 50% of the students
- impact the drop-out rate by 10%. (School board minutes, 1983, p. 80)

The clinic staff, funded by a grant from the Maternal and Child Health Division of the

Indiana State Board of Health, consisted of a medical director, clinic nurse coordinator,

nutritionist, social worker, secretary, and two medical assistants who provided assistance

upon request. Services were provided during the school day and students were seen on a

voluntary self-referral basis. Students were grateful for the RAH Clinic. In the words of one

student, "RAH Clinic is a blessing. Teens need and can appreciate the advice given in a

RAH Clinic session" (*Rooseveltian*, 1985, p. 7). The RAH Clinic served Roosevelt students

for almost 20 years before losing its funding. It demonstrated not only the recognition of the

influence of external factors on school climate, student behavior, and academic achievement,

but also, a laudable effort to actively address those influences in a positive, student-oriented

manner.

Maintaining Roosevelt's revered tradition, however, remained a primary focus.

Understandably, Mr. Jones and his staff tried hard to keep some things the same. Sometimes

the effort to hold on to the legacy of excellence and being "the best" took precedence over preparing for the changes that lay ahead. The Roosevelt Class of 1979 presented the first class of the Eighties with a new Black and gold marquis for the front lawn. The first page of 1980 *Rooseveltian* featured a photograph of the marquis that read "50 Years of Excellence." Although the 1980 yearbook carried the theme, "A Golden Era," the push and pull of tradition and change was unmistakable. Captions throughout the *Rooseveltian* yearbook (1980) like "the more we colour [sic] change, the more it remains the same," "changing faces in a golden era," changing activities in a golden era," "50 years of excellence changes little of what is remembered," reflect the acknowledgement of what was good about the past and current changes in the present. Comparing the past and the present became a frequent refrain through the 1980s. Intended to inspire excellence, the ongoing comparisons may have become a source of growing frustration.

According to interview accounts of teachers, administrators, and graduates of Roosevelt during for the first half of the 1980s, Roosevelt managed to hold onto the legacy. JoAnn Sams, a retired secretary of Roosevelt and 1955 graduate of the school, is an example of the legacy. She had two daughters to graduate from Roosevelt, the first in 1977 and the other in 1981. Her younger daughter was valedictorian of her class; both went on to do very well in college and life. When Sams returned to work at Roosevelt in 1964, she "felt it was an honor and a privilege" (J. Sams, personal communication, December 12, 2009). "My children were young," she recalled, "and when they reached high school, of course, they came to Roosevelt." Mrs. Sams attributed much of her daughters' high school success to a teachers "who took charge" and the leadership of Mr. Jones. According to Sams, "they [teachers] didn't try to appease the students and try to be their friends. They said what they

meant and meant what they said. . . . Teachers during that era took a personal interest in the students. They were role models." Sams recalled the influence of some of her former teachers at Roosevelt—teachers like Ms. Catherine Beckman, for instance, who served as a role models for her so much so that when Sams began working at Roosevelt, she strove to be the same kind of positive influence for the students she encountered. Sams believed that motivating students and giving them encouragement was a major strength of Roosevelt and, based upon her observation, Principal Jones knew how to motivate students. He made sure that students were recognized for their hard work. J. Sams elaborated:

> Each year Mr. Jones had an awards banquet and the students who maintained a certain G.P.A. throughout the year received a trophy. This was an incentive. At one point, he had it on a Sunday afternoon, and it was in the form of a luncheon where the parents could come. . . . Mr. Jones was special, he really was, and he wanted to bring the best out of those kids. He was very intensified [sic] in projecting a good image for the school, and getting the best out of the teachers and the students. (personal communication, December 12, 2009)

Dr. Marsha Sullivan recognized similar qualities in Mr. Jones and the faculty. Sullivan wrote a dissertation in 2002 entitled "A Study of African American Males Focusing on Indicators Motivating Their Academic Success in a Predominantly Black Inner City High School," the subject of which was Roosevelt. She also worked at Roosevelt as a guidance counselor between 1980 and 1990. Like most Roosevelt staff members, Sullivan sent her own children to Roosevelt as well. Her research confirmed what she found to be positive about the Roosevelt experience for her son, that high expectations and outstanding Black role models from leadership figures spur success and great achievement in Black males (Sullivan, 2002). M. Sullivan spoke highly of the teachers and Principal Jones:

> They (Roosevelt) had the AP classes, and they had outstanding teachers. . . . Mr. Jones was very involved in the community and he knew everybody by name. He was very involved with the students, he was very involved with the teachers, and he was very committed. (personal communication, March 15, 2010)

Sullivan had a son and daughter to graduate from Roosevelt in 1985 and 1988, respectively. Both earned the honor of valedictorian. A prickly, but pertinent question to ask at this point might be what, if any, distinction might there have been between the quality of education offered to high achieving students and their more average counterparts.

A review of Roosevelt's history may provide an answer. Prior to Jones becoming principal, Roosevelt was known for graduating the best and brightest African American high school graduates in Gary. This made sense, not only because it had excellent teachers, but also because it was the school that most Blacks attended. As I have pointed out, when Jones became head principal of Roosevelt, he acknowledged the need for improved academic achievement and indicated that he was counting on Black pride, high expectations, and a caring school environment to make the difference. Dissatisfied with the number of high achieving students, he instituted the slogan "the best" and it worked for Roosevelt and students through the 1970s and much of the 1980s. Many teachers throughout the city, especially former Rooseveltians, were eager to teach at Roosevelt. Verl Shaffer, a 1965 graduate, was one. V. Shaffer remembered:

> It was '82, and then I got my wish. I got to go to Roosevelt. Oh, I was so happy to go there! I taught Advanced Composition and Literature. I taught the advanced classes throughout my career as an English teacher at Roosevelt. And so I was blessed in that. I had the very best. I taught kids that went to West Point, Yale, Harvard, Morehouse, and Spelman. I mean, we had children who were phenomenal. (personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Like Shaffer, many teachers throughout the city, especially former Rooseveltians, were eager to teach at Roosevelt because it was perceived as the best. Roosevelt students who did well did very well; in some cases better than the rest of the best, Black or White, in the city. As 1985 graduate Lorenzo Anderson, a student with average grades, explained: "When I went to Roosevelt, our quest was a quest of the teachers and us [sic] to be better than the

White person. We used to win academic super bowls. We excelled in everything" (L.

Anderson, personal communication, March 3, 2010).

M. Sullivan concurred:

> I'm thinking just about Roosevelt . . . and [what] they did with African American students. What they did was they threw those guys out into the community—other communities, and they competed against other students that were not African American. And they came out on top, and they felt good about themselves. I guess that's just part of what the school was about—building up self-esteem. I just know that the parents and the community were wholeheartedly behind the students. And the teachers worked with these kids. I guess, to use a slang word, it was cool to be smart. . . . They honored you for being achievers. There was as much honor in being an academic achiever as it was with their sports. I don't know if it was purposely done, but that was really the atmosphere, the environment, and the culture of the school at that time. (personal communication, March 15, 2010)

Roosevelt was known across the city for excellence. For instance, at a May, 1985 school

board meeting, Roosevelt had six graduates recognized for earning National Achievement

Commendation Honors, more than any of the other Gary High Schools. What's more,

Roosevelt's success seemed contagious. Not only did Roosevelt achieve academic honors,

but the athletic teams won numerous titles, the band was extraordinary, and the ROTC was

recognized across the region. And, much like the National Urban League study (1944) had

concluded almost 50 years earlier, Roosevelt graduates did extremely well. Although he

wished for more honor graduates, Jones was proud of the fact that, consistently, at least 10%

of each graduating class at Roosevelt during his tenure earned the distinction of being honor

graduates.

In fact, the report of the North Central Association Visiting Committee (1984)

applauded the diversity in Roosevelt's academic program:

- An excellent comprehensive educational program, directed to meet the needs, goals, and aspirations of the student population,
- an exemplary ROTC program,
- a positive affiliation with the second-chance Martin Luther King School,

- four years of improvement in standardized test scores,
- an organized sequence of courses, and
- teaching strategies that prioritize students' building a sense of personal worth and pride in their school. (p. 10)

I would argue that Roosevelt was about excellence in everything, not just academics. The focus on academic excellence at Roosevelt was geared toward the students identified as having above average ability and the academic tracking system facilitated that emphasis, but that is not to say that students of average or lower ability were ignored. To the contrary, one of Jones' goals had been to raise student achievement and, since Roosevelt already had a stellar reputation for graduating some of the best students in the area, it is safe to assume that he wanted, not just to encourage the students most likely to succeed, but also those who had not been identified as high achievers. Lorenzo Anderson, a 1985 graduate and by his own admission, a jokester in high school, remembered that teachers cared enough about him to make sure he learned by varying instruction and modifying the way they did things for him. He was grateful that "they knew how to play me" (L. Anderson, personal communication, March 3, 2010). Anderson explained, "I got [sic] a photographic memory. They wouldn't let me take the multiple choice test. They would have me write it down because I could remember the joker" (personal communication, March 3, 2010). Jones and many of the teachers on his staff believed that schools should provide a variety of extracurricular learning opportunities from which students with varying talents could excel. For many years, teachers willingly worked beyond the school day to provide a wide variety of fun, healthy, and cultural experiences for students to enjoy and explore. The Roosevelt tradition was all about Rooseveltians representing their school, themselves, and their race excellently in every situation. Roosevelt offered something worthwhile to students of all abilities.

"Solid Gold," the 1981 *Rooseveltian* theme, honored excellence and celebrated the beauty of youth and tradition. The temptation to sing one's way through the yearbook was irresistible because the idea behind the Solid Gold theme was that "a Rooseveltian's mood is reflected in song." Students recognized at the 1981 Motivation Awards Banquet found "A Time for Us" apropos to boast of their scholastic achievements (1981 *Rooseveltian,* pp. 28-29). An honor student selected by the Indiana Honors Program in Foreign Languages to spend the summer studying in Mexico was encouraged to "Climb Every Mountain" (*Rooseveltian,* 1981, pp. 30-31). The Jazz Band, the internationally acclaimed singing group, the Madrigals, and the Omo Dora Dance Group gleefully boasted "I Love Music" as the freshman class anticipated "Our Day Will Come." Always, four pages were reserved to honor the valedictorian and salutatorian. The legacy continued.

In 1982, "Proud as a Panther: Our Best is Yet to Come" spoke to the future as the yearbook theme. That year, the titles of television shows and soap operas like "One Day at a Time," "Kid's World," "The World of Sports," "Search for Tomorrow," and "The Young and the Restless" provided a light-hearted refrain. Typical of the perpetual spotlight on academic excellence, a brand new scholarship fund was highlighted in the 1982 *Rooseveltian*: the H. Theo Tatum Scholarship Endowment. Ten "Roosevelt Scholars" posed for a photo with Mr. Tatum. The article explained:

> Ever a dreamer who stood out as the answer to "why not?", Mr. Tatum, now retired and active in community affairs, contributed an initial $5,000 and donors responded with matching donations to establish a $10,000 scholarship fund for Roosevelt students. The first scholarship will go to a deserving member of the Class of 1982. (*Rooseveltian,* 1982, pp. 14-15)

As the mid-1980s approached, Principal Jones began tightening the reins a bit. On the first full page of the 1985 *Rooseveltian*, a message read:

> TEACHERS,
> "Operation Hallsweep is now in effect! Please close
> classroom doors, and do not admit any students who are
> tardy. I repeat . . ."
>> When Rooseveltians hear Mr. R. E. Jones, Principal, announce on the
>> intercom that "Hallsweep" is in effect, they realize serious offenses of tardiness will
>> result in probable suspension if it is a third offense. Hallsweep has done much to
>> reduce the tardy traffic in the school halls. (p. 1)

Tracey Benford-Price, valedictorian of the Class of 1986, remembered life before and after

hallsweep:

> We would look forward to running into each other in the hallways, and being able to
> greet each other, and say hello, even just in passing. I feel like we had a very
> amicable student-teacher relationship, but I do feel like maybe from freshman to
> senior year that there was a little bit of a change in that things became more, you
> might say, punitive in terms of the freedoms that students were allowed. (personal
> communication, February 21, 2010)

Benford-Price was right about the change at Roosevelt. Principal Jones set a new tone for

the upcoming school year in a September 1985 newsletter.

It was the first comprehensive newsletter of its kind sent from the building principal

to parents, teachers, alumni, and friends of Roosevelt. I cannot be sure what exactly

prompted Jones' decision to produce the newsletter. Based upon federal and state mandates

underway for raising standards, requirements, testing and accountability and the negative

effect that various local factors (e.g., a diminishing economy and increasing poverty,

unemployment, and crime) were imposing on the inner-workings of the Gary community,

and Roosevelt in particular, I think it is safe to say that Principal Jones recognized that not

only were the children changing, but the whole enterprise of educating of young people was

beginning to change. The measures of school success were not the same. The newsletter

was given a formal title, "The State of the School Summary Roosevelt High Newsletter." Its

basic contents included:

1. Significant Accomplishments—Academics and Related Areas (June 1985—August, 1985),
2. Significant Accomplishments —Athletics (June, 1984—June, 1985),
3. A Brief General Report on School Progress (June, 1984—June, 1985),
4. A Concise Report of plans for Improving the School (September, 1985—June, 1986) and Management and Instruction,
5. Concluding Statement. (Jones, 1985, p. 1)

Principal Jones (1985) noted that "Roosevelt remains very much alive and well in keeping its rich tradition" (p. 5). He continued:

> The school year began last September with a student enrollment approximating 2100 and a basic classroom teaching staff of 84. It continues to be the largest high school in the city with respect to the size of the student body and school spirit continues to be very high. (p. 5)

Jones wrote positively about the most recent North Central Association Evaluation Report as well as student achievement progress. He assured parents that test scores can be used to monitor the overall achievement progress of students using the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP) and quoted ninth grade trend data in the form percentile scores since 1983. Percentages of students passing and failing the basic skills or minimum achievement proficiency scores required for graduation were printed for the December test administration. Roosevelt students led the city's high schools in both reading and math performance. Parents were informed "students who failed the proficiency exams are placed in remedial classes and allowed to take the exams again" (Jones, 1985, p. 6). The newsletter included a mini school improvement plan. Parents were informed of new course offerings in ethnic studies, keyboarding, and a secondary honors program, as well as professional development opportunities and plans to increase instructional monitoring. They were assured that Roosevelt "continues to be concentrated on the three R's throughout the entire school day with limited socializing" (Jones, 1985, p. 6). A stricter dress code was outlined and a revised student handbook had been prepared by the Dean of Students. A revised teacher

handbook would be available for parents to review through the Parent-Teacher-Student-Association. The 1985 *Rooseveltian* theme, "Go for the Gold," maintained a similar focus. The yearbook celebrated the Gold NCA rating, superior scholars, and the First Annual Prep Bowl, an in-school competition among Rooseveltians vying for the honor of representing Roosevelt in the all-city Academic Superbowl. Based on interviews and other anecdotal data, 1985 was a relatively good year. By all accounts, however, things began to change for the worse at Roosevelt between 1986 and 1990.

Many factors contributed to changes within the Roosevelt school community. The threat of state-mandated testing, ISTEP, was one. As mentioned earlier, teachers and students in Gary were accustomed to annual achievement testing so it was not the mere idea of testing that upset the status quo at Roosevelt. High school students had already been required to take a battery of assessments created within the district called the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency. Table 6.3 shows the secondary testing schedule for the 1983-84 school year.

Table 6.3

Secondary Testing Schedule, 1983-1984

Name of Test	Date	Grade
	Fall	
Tests of achievement and proficiency (reading, math, and language)	October 10-14	11
Written proficiency exam (essay and objective)	November 28-December 2	10 thru 12
Reading proficiency exam	December 5-9	10 thru 12

Mathematics proficiency exam	December 12-15	10 thru 12
Oral proficiency exam	January 3-27	10 thru 12

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Spring

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Tests of achievement and proficiency (reading, math, language, and Iowa—spelling)	March 5-9	9
Tests of achievement and proficiency (for remedial reading only)	March 12-16	10
Tests of achievement and proficiency (social studies and science)	March 19-23	11
Iowa tests of basic skills	April 2-6	7
Iowa tests of basic skills	April 9-13	8
Written proficiency exam (essay and objective)	April 9-13	10 thru 12
Mathematics proficiency exam	April 30-May 4	10 thru 12
Reading proficiency exam	April 30-May 4	10 thru 12
Oral proficiency exam	May 7-18	10 thru 12

Note. Schedule was obtained from Hoock (1983).

Interestingly, when asked about these tests, memories of former graduates and teachers are vague. No one remembered any students from Roosevelt failing to graduate because of not passing any of the tests. Very little anxiety accompanied the district's Basic Competency Testing. ISTEP, however, would prove to be different story.

Barbara Banks, one of the first Basic Skills Coordinators, clearly recalled the Basic

Skills Testing Program and the genesis of ISTEP:

> It [Basic Proficiency Testing] began in the late 1970s. Basic Proficiency Testing continued until ISTEP came along and we always said, well, they [the state] just took our idea and ran with it, because the state started ISTEP testing around the mid-80s. They were doing pilot tests. (personal communication, January 26, 2010).

According to B. Banks, teachers reacted negatively to the impending ISTEP:

> People started grousing. They started saying, oh, this means nothing and there was very negative attitude throughout about the state coming and imposing these tests. Then people would say, "Oh, they're testing these kids and nothing is going to come of it . . . this is ridiculous!" "It's cutting into our teaching time." I caught a lot of flack. People didn't believe it would last. And they didn't believe in what the state was trying to do. No one really bought into it because it was imposed on them from the outside. It was coming from Indianapolis. What does Indianapolis care about Northwest Indiana? . . . *I think the basic proficiency testing did more because teachers felt involved because they were setting the standards. They were making the determination, but when it came from Indianapolis, it was like alien. What is this all about? What are they trying to do? Us against them, that kind of mentality* [emphasis added]. (personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Banks' observation about the foreignness of ISTEP and teacher detachment from it is a

critical one. For certain, the "us against them" attitude was counterproductive to teacher

engagement and ultimately, student learning. In the late 1980s, preparation for ISTEP

basically amounted to teachers and students cramming blindly for the test. Taliaferro

recalled that teachers were assigned to tutor students after school and during the lunch hour,

"especially the low-achieving students." Typical of reform in the early to mid-1980s across

the nation, there was very little systematic effort within the Gary Community Schools or

Roosevelt to identity standards or align curriculum, let alone, reform the educational

process, that is, the quality of teaching and learning.

Dr. Ella Bush, assistant principal at Roosevelt from 1985 to 1988, recalled no

"intensive or even casual discussion about standards as a plan in the Gary system or

Roosevelt" (E. Bush, personal communication, January 29, 2010). Bush explained "I think there was an effort to first of all, to get what could be accepted as a curriculum because we didn't have all the standards at the state level at that time" (personal communication, January 29, 2010). Teachers, according to Bush, were "textbook-driven" and 'in a strong union town . . . teachers were doing pretty much what they thought they should do" (personal communication, January 29, 2010).

ISTEP aside, in the 1980s, what appears to have most concerned teachers at Roosevelt was the school board's decision to institute a separate Gifted and Talented Program at West Side High School in the late 1980s. As far as many Roosevelt faculty were concerned, designating a single location for the gifted and talented could not have come at worse time. From their perspective, Roosevelt was already facing difficult challenges. It was becoming more and more difficult to motivate the children, maintain discipline, and preserve the school's fine tradition. ISTEP was coming. They questioned the district's decision to entice the best and the brightest to attend a school within a school for the gifted and talented at West Side. Arguments were strong on both sides.

Plans for a K-12 Gifted and Talented Program had been in the making for years. In 1982, Gary was selected as one of 10 model sites in the state of Indiana to develop a program for students designated as gifted and talented. When the program was initially funded, the district was required to submit a three-year plan to the state with the understanding that as long as the proposals in the plan were carried out, funding for the program would continue. Mrs. Dorothy Lawshe, General Supervisor of the Gifted and Talented Program, and Anne Thompson, Coordinator for the program, were instrumental in

writing the proposal. At a May 14, 1985 school board meeting, Mrs. Lawshe explained the

basic provisions of the program and discussed plans for its development:

> At the elementary level a lot of curriculum work and staff development was done with teachers at Banneker [the elementary school program site]. At Tolleston [Middle School], about 240 students were serviced, that is our one-day-a-week program. The Banneker program continues to service students from all 27 elementary schools. The teachers who work with those students work with them in what we call the Academically Able Program. . . . At the middle school level we will implement in September the new Middle School Honors Program for approximately 125 students. . . . At the senior high level, work will continue in the area of Writing As a Way of Thinking. That project started about four years ago. This project will also be working with teachers at the 10th and 11th grade levels. (School board minutes, 1985, p. 80)

To clarify, when the Gifted and Talented Program first began in the Gary Schools, high

school students identified as "academically-able" were given opportunities to take advanced

classes in high schools throughout the city. The 1984-85 school year marked the onset of a

secondary honors program called CLASS, an acronym for stood for Collegiate Level

Advancement in Secondary School. The program was explained in detail in a district-wide

newsletter distributed by the Gary School Corporation. CLASS was designed to "serve

college-bound students who are willing to follow a strong academic program. Students who

were identified for the Academically Able Program or the Secondary School Honors

Program may be recommended for the CLASS" (Gary Community School Corporation,

1984-85, p. 13). Admission requirements for grades nine, 10, and 11 were:

- Rank in the top 10% of the current class,
- have plans to attend college,
- maintain a grade point average of 3.00,
- to be enrolled in the suggested courses for CLASS Program participation,
- have a counselor's recommendation, and
- have parental permission to enroll in the program.

Tracey Benford-Price remembered being in the CLASS program at Roosevelt:

> I guess they called it a tracking system from grade school, maybe as early as elementary. I'm not sure when it starts, but kids were in the high class versus the low class versus average or high average, and once you kind of get stuck in one of those tracks, for the most part, what I saw is that people kind of stayed in those tracks throughout their school career. I was in CLASS. I think it was called college prep; it was the most elite academic echelon of the school, as so we were expected to do well, I think, and most of us probably went to college. I don't know that many from the other sort of categories went to college or tried to achieve any higher education. . . . I had many friends who were not in the quote/unquote "academically-able" classes, but for the most part, that was my social group. (T. Benford-Price, personal communication, February 21, 2010)

Although tracking was hardly new to Roosevelt, Mrs. Taliaferro remembered noticing signs of an increased stratifying effect of academic tracking in the 1980s:

> Toward the first part of the 80s and definitely the mid-80s, there was some friction sometimes with this idea of good students that I can remember. . . . I can remember the kids talking about the preppies, those students who were honor students.
>   They more or less went to the community room and they studied, or they were in their own small groups. Some of the other kids who weren't trying to do anything, didn't want to do anything, or didn't buy into it, were in the surge area, and sometimes there was a lot of confusion back there because they would get into fights. Some kids would sometimes have very mean things to say about those students who weren't doing very well. I suppose it had always been like that, but it got to be a little touchy. (B. Taliaferro, personal communication, March 3, 2010)

She shared, further, that many of the courses in which the less academic students could excel were removed from the curriculum. According to Taliaferro, "in the 80s, especially toward the mid-80s, '85 or '86, the areas that average students could do well in began to vanish. The art classes were reduced; the band classes were reduced; the music classes almost disappeared" (personal communication, March 3, 2010). When asked why electives were cut, Taliaferro explained:

> Well, there were budget cuts. Also, the focus began to change as people started talking about ISTEP and the testing measures that were coming down the road. The idea was that we can't afford to allow these kids to be there [in these classes]; they've got to get their academics; they've got to take more English; they've got to pass their math class; and so, the focus shifted to what I would call mini-math classes and mini-English classes to try and really zero in on student achievement to make

sure that these kids were able to pass these tests that were coming down the road. (personal communication, March 3, 2010)

By 1987, the school board was considering a proposal to place the high school Gifted and Talented Program at one high school, West Side, as part of a new school-within-a-school restructuring program. Rigorous discussion took place on the matter at an April 16, 1987 board meeting. Critics argued that the program would promote elitism within the district and possible derision between students in the high school who were considered "academically-able" and those who were not. They worried also how students would be identified and how the term *gifted* would be defined. Proponents, like Dr. Myrtle Campbell, argued that "grouping is an inherent part of the educational system" and that "among the population of gifted students al research indicates that we have the highest dropout rate and the highest underachievement rate with those students because they experience boredom in the classroom" (School board minutes, 1987a, p. 115). Campbell continued:

> Some of the people who might not have been identified as gifted individuals include: Michelangelo, Abraham Lincoln, Thurgood Marshall, all received inspiration. In terms of the number of documents received in recent years regarding excellence and some of the questions they had about the achievement of
> students within the educational structure of our nation, "A Nation at Risk" and "A Place Called Schooling," [sic] by John Goodlad address the problems of not providing for those students at the upper end of the spectrum and that is something we need to look at. (School board minutes, 1987a, p. 115)

Campbell also pointed out that the program would be optional. Parents and students could choose to remain in their home schools, thus, all of the gifted and talented would not be removed from their home schools.

The overwhelming consensus among Roosevelt teachers and graduates with whom I spoke was that consolidating the Gifted and Talented Program at West Side hurt Roosevelt

deeply in the years to come. Former Roosevelt guidance counselor and parent Dr. Marsha

Sullivan commented:

> I think that was the worst thing they could have done or did, to take the cream of the crop out of all the high schools and place everybody at West Side because that's when all of the other schools started going down. They [the other students] had no one to look up to and they didn't strive, you know, to achieve at a high level because all the better students were taken out. (personal communication, March 15, 2010)

M. Sullivan added that moving the high school program to West Side affected teachers as

well:

> I'm sure it affected teachers as well because if you don't have quality children, that doesn't mean you shouldn't still attempt to teach, but I think that the teachers sort of felt that they were being robbed and cheated because everybody wants to teach good kids as well as average and below average kids. So they need a variety I think to stay on their toes, and I think it greatly affected our teachers. And it certainly affected the schools, especially Roosevelt because they had always been at the top of the heap in education as well as a in athletics. And then all of a sudden, they're not there anymore . . . It was a lose-lose situation. (personal communication, March 15, 2010)

Ella Bush, former assistant principal at Roosevelt in the 1980s, believed there was a "thrust"

for the Gifted and Talented Program from the state. She elaborated:

> It seemed like a good idea on paper to provide more learning opportunities for this segment of the population because so often we look at the special needs group. . . But what I saw happen in Gary was that in the effort to have enough students in the gifted and talented program, they siphoned off the, for the sake of a better term, the best from each school and that left a void at all of the high schools. Roosevelt was no exception and we didn't have anybody to fill that void. (personal communication, January 29, 2010)

Assistant principal during the 1980s, and later head principal from 1990-1992, David

Williams explained:

> See, at one time, we offered advanced placement courses [at Roosevelt] so our kids could earn college credits. Then somebody came up with the idea of having a separate gifted and talented program. All they did was take the celebrated program out and put it in a single location, so average and below average kids didn't have the opportunity to see these good kids perform. (personal communication, January 19, 2010)

According to William Reese, by the time he became principal of Roosevelt in the 1990s, the

negative effects of consolidation of the Gifted and Talented Program at West Side School

had become painfully obvious:

> Once the higher achieving students left, you had some teachers that just did not want a class full of low-average, average students. It showed in their teaching. . . it brought expectations down. They [teachers] would say, "He can't learn anyway. We have average and under in the building so high expectations have to come down." My response was, "All children can learn." This is where you really have to put your foot to the metal and really start teaching. You may not be able to do the same type of teaching styles you did. You have to get away from the notes you have from 50 years ago. You have to use group teaching and peer tutoring and those types of things. *That was the scary because the tradition was so powerful. The legacy was so powerful, even those projects had been across from Roosevelt since existence—when the separation came from those high achieving students, people realized, "Oh, my students are from the projects. I can't teach in this condition"* [emphasis added]. (personal communication, January 29, 2010)

W. Reese was appalled at the increasingly falling student grade point averages. He

remembered discussing his concern with one student:

> I said, "What happened?" Last year, you guys were smoking! He said, "Our motivation is gone." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Those kids that are gone to the other school, they really pushed us." My point is it was just not the teaching that motivated those kids. Other students motivated them and even that student with the low-average—there was an honor roll student that took that student by the hand and said, "Come on man, you can do that." (personal communication, January 29, 2010)

It is doubtful that Roosevelt's woes can be blamed on the Gifted and Talented

Program. The real issue lies in the age-old conundrum in education of what to do about the

natural inclination of teachers and the system to group students and, more importantly, how

to ensure that all groups are treated equitably so that every child is afforded equal

opportunities and outcomes. Harvard professor, Robert Rosenthal's, research (originally

published in 1968) and expanded in 1992 (Rosenthal & Jacobsen), documented what is

commonly referred to as the *Pygmalion phenomenon*. Simply put, when teachers expect

students to do well and show intellectual progress, they do; conversely, when teachers do not have high expectations and students are not expected to exhibit much intellectual growth, they do not and their growth may be, in fact, discouraged in a variety of ways (Rhem, 1999, p. 1). More than 40 years ago, Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1992) (originally published in 1968) conducted the famous Oak Hill experiment in which teachers were led to believe that a certain group of students were likely to manifest a spurt in academic performance. Teachers were told that the children's anticipated intellectual growth spurt was based on the results of IQ tests administered to students at the beginning of the school year. In reality, the children were a randomly selected percentage of the student body and their IQ scores showed nothing more than their current IQs. At the end of that school year, and for the next two years, the students believed by their teachers to be the alleged spurters made unusual intellectual and performance gains (Rhem, 1999, p. 2). We know that teacher expectations matter and students achieve less when teachers have low expectations. As Executive Editor of the National Teaching and Learning Forum pointed out, Rosenthal (as cited in Rhem, 1999) frankly admitted that "we don't know what to do with these findings" (p. 2). The question is not whether the gifted and talented deserve a special program or where that program is housed. Rather, how do teachers combat the very human tendency to expect different things from different groups of students? How can teachers learn to hold high expectations for all students? How do we get educators to actually live and practice the espoused belief that all children can learn?

The Effective Schools Movement, initiated by Gary Schools Superintendent Dr. Betty Mason, seemed to some in the Gary district like a plausible approach to addressing the problem of equity and excellence in education, but acrimonious relations between decision-

making entities within the district made it difficult to focus on systemic reform. In 1987,

Mason replaced Dr. Ernest Jones as Superintendent of the Gary Schools. In her book,

Closed Chapter: An African American Educator's Memoir, Mason (2000) described her

feelings about Gary and the job as Superintendent of Schools:

> I read about Gary, Indiana. It was 87% Black with 27,000 students enrolled. I thought, *that does sound good, if I were to get this job, I may get an opportunity to prove something significant about Black children.* (p. 115)

One of her primary goals was "to bring in consultants to train principals, teachers, and board

members in effective school methodology" (p. 121). According to Mason, "effective school

methodology is based on the research findings that *all children can learn* regardless of their

sociological or cultural background" (p. 121). In March of 1988, she presented a proposal to

the school board called Project STAY (Successfully Teaching All Youth) which would

allow for the possibility of all board members, service center administrators, building

administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals to be trained in the Effective Schools

Research (School board minutes, 1988, p. 99). Mason explained "the Effective Schools

Research, which has been on the scene for about five years says that, given certain kinds of

conditions in schools all children will learn to their potential" (p. 99). Acknowledging that

the phrase "some literature" may identify as many as 10 to 13 essential correlates, Mason

enumerated five that she considered most basic:

1. The principal is the instructional leader of the school.
2. Teachers and administrators must have high expectations for children.
3. There must be a conducive learning environment where the climate is one where teachers can teach and children can learn.
4. There must be an ongoing evaluation session which will cause teachers, parents, and students to know where their successes are and where their weaknesses are.
5. There must be an educational focus. Teachers must be able to say to students each day what the instruction is going to be focused on and they must stick to that focus rather than have a smorgasbord attempt to teaching. (School board minutes, 1988, p. 100)

Training began in August of 1988. Barbara Taliaferro remembered the Effective Schools

training at Roosevelt:

> We had many workshops, faculty meetings, and additional workshops on this idea of
> Effective Schools. Ron somebody? . . . Ron Edmonds . . . Instead of us talking about
> things in the building and the principal more or less driving what we were doing, all
> of our efforts were being spent on the Effective Schools. We had all these correlates.
> We went through them one by one. Well, we were supposed to have, but to be
> honest with you, I really believe that there were people who were sincere about it,
> but most of the folks just went through the motions. If you happened to be in a
> workshop with teachers who were mad and upset, you got nothing done, and I
> happened to be in some of those where the whole time people just complained.
> "Why are we doing this? This doesn't make any sense. It's not going to work."
> And so, instead of us sitting there sincerely examining and trying to go through the
> Effective School methods, the workshops were disastrous. (personal communication,
> March 3, 2010)

Taliaferro and others on the faculty at the time shared that, by the end of Jones' tenure, some

of the faculty were becoming increasingly uncooperative with the administration and cynical

about the district. Certainly, the social dimensions of any reform effort are important

considerations. Payne (2008) reminded us:

> If the research of recent years has done nothing else, it has taught us how everything
> from efforts to get parents more involved to efforts to get teachers to take
> professional development seriously can be undermined by low levels of social
> capital. . . . Reform after reform fails because of nothing more than the sheer inability
> of adults to cooperate with one another. (p. 6)

Lack of cooperation was a problem all too common in the Gary school district.

Relations between the school board and Mason grew more contentious. They were

able to agree on a mission statement and six objectives, but disagreed on many important

policy and reform issues such as the development of a strategic planning for the district

(School board minutes, 1989a, p. 246). Board member Burt-Bradley informed the board that

the state had come up with a new policy "which says that school corporations must provide a

special learning package for students who have not been successful in ISTEP" (School board

minutes, 1989a, p. 248). The district seemed to be making progress toward establishing an

instructional focus, but board members bickered over the difference between the meaning of

essential skills and core curriculum (School board minutes, 1989b, pp. 543-544). There was

also a great deal of discussion about aligning the curriculum to the essential skills guide and

determining what assessment to use to measure mastery of essential skills. To say that the

district was inundated with pressure is an understatement.

Additional mandates were steadily coming from the state. Graduation requirements

had been increased from 32 to 38 credits in 1983. According to Joseph DiLaura, a

spokesperson for the State Department of Education, there was some comfort in knowing

that the State Board of Education wanted to analyze the effects of the 1983 changes before

adding more requirements (Associated Press, 1987, p. B5). The state's indecisiveness about

the impact that high school ISTEP failures might have on students worried parents and

teachers. Should students be required to pass ISTEP in order to graduate? William Strange,

senior officer for the center for school assessment in the Indiana Department of Education,

warned "the whole notion of the definition of high school credit is at stake" (Sangiacomo,

1988a, p. 1). Strange explained:

> As it stands, the state has set up requirements for students to graduate. They must
> take a certain number of courses in science, math, English, and other subjects for a
> certain number of credits. The legislature felt that putting another set of standards in
> there with ISTEP could make high school graduation more complicated than
> necessary. (as cited in Sangiacomo, 1988a, p. 1).

It should be noted that by the year 2000, ISTEP was made a graduation requirement. No one

knew exactly what to expect next.

Increasingly, the community had begun to express confusion, dissatisfaction, and

concern. Comments in the *Gary Info*, the African American newspaper, expressed disgust

with the teachers. In a column called "As I See It," Charlena Taylor (1987) wrote:

> There is a dirge of qualified teachers and anyone who takes the stance that it is a
> national problem, does so from a blind and ignorant perspective. It's like saying that
> because there is dirt in the air, there is no reason to sweep the floor; everyone is
> having a dirt problem. (p. 14)

The increased accountability measures only added to the anxiety. Superintendent Mason

began holding informational meetings to address the questions of Gary parents about ISTEP.

Roosevelt parents were to attend a meeting held at Lew Wallace High School on February 2,

1988. The *Post Tribune* informed parents of the new accountability measures:

> Between March 1 and 11 [1988], students in grades 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 11 will be
> given standardized tests that will measure their ability in areas of language arts,
> reading, and mathematics. In 1989, the test will be expanded to include social
> studies and science.
>
> Students who score below the state minimum score will be required to attend
> summer school. At the end of summer school, they can go on to the next grade. If
> they fail, they must repeat the year. Retesting will be given by July 15.
> (Sangiacomo, 1988b, p. B1)

Apprehension within the community was building and it did not appear to be going away

anytime soon.

Meanwhile, Roosevelt remained under the guardianship of Mr. Jones. Always an

advocate for Roosevelt, Jones told reporter, Betty Sacek of the *Post Tribune*, "this is a blue-

collar community and the educational backgrounds of the students' parents aren't that high,

but we turn out a good number of successful youngsters, nonetheless. Youngsters have a

tendency to succeed in spite of the system" (Sacek, 1986, p. D1). But, Roosevelt, along with

17 other Gary schools, was confronted with an unprecedented challenge in 1989. After an

on-site review by the State Department of Education, Roosevelt was deemed "not ready" for

state accreditation. Superintendent Mason tried to explain the disturbing situation to an

angry public in article published in the *Post Tribune:*

> Mason said this was the first time the state had done the school accreditation study.
> For many years, Gary high schools as well as other high schools in the state had been
> accredited by the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges.
> The NCA accreditation is a well-established process, whereas, the state accreditation
> is something new. . . .
>
> Under the state's new performance-based accreditation program, schools
> must meet three requirements to be accredited: compliance with legal standards,
> meeting expected student performance levels, and completion of a school
> improvement plan. (Post Tribune & Associated Press, 1989, p. B1)

One day later, the state suspended the accreditation program amid public uproar. Alleging

that the non-accreditation gave false impressions, Mason explained that only one of the Gary

Schools was cited for an academic violation. It was not Roosevelt. The citations were for

issues like exit lighting and fire alarms. Six months later, Governor Orr's successor, Evan

Bayh, reinstated the accreditation process. Roosevelt and the other Gary schools met the

requirements. Gary schools had weathered that storm, but serious personal conflict

continued between Superintendent Mason and the board (Mason, 2000). In July of 1990,

Mason resigned. She left Gary and, for the time being, so did the district-wide thrust for

Effective Schools reform.

Mr. Jones retired at the end of the 1989-1990 school year. Only the fourth principal

in Roosevelt of 60 years, he had been a good shepherd of the Roosevelt tradition. Although

Roosevelt's enrollment had declined from more than 2,000 students when Jones first became

the principal to 1,745 when he retired, it still had the largest enrollment of any school in

Gary. Jones always believed that "Roosevelt is unique because it is an all-Black school"

(Knightly, 1990, p. B1). Jones acknowledged the difficult challenges that confronted

Roosevelt, but said, "we have attempted to establish an environment in which youngsters are

made to feel that it is a place where people care about them" (p. B1). When Jones first started as principal, very few students were graduating with a B-average, but he credited the special scholarship and leadership motivational program that he instituted with encouraging more students to achieve academically. "It's time for Roosevelt to have new leadership," Jones said, "and for me to have a rest" (p. B1). In many ways, Jones successfully guarded the Roosevelt legacy. He always counted on the power of Black pride. All was not lost. The theme of the 1989 Commencement kept hope alive: "Ambition, Perseverance, the Essentials for Black Achievement—Attaining Success, Maintaining Success" (59th Annual Commencement Program, 1989).

Chapter VII: The Nineties—Reinventing America's Schools

Reformers carrying the banner of the excellence movement have made valiant efforts during the past decade to upgrade educational performance. Nearly all of these have been well intentioned, hard fought, and compatible with the diagnosis rendered by innumerable studies, experts, panels, and task forces. The problem is that they do not seem to have done much good, at least when gauged in terms of student learning. The average pupil continues to emerge from the typical school in possession of mediocre skills and skimpy knowledge. Most of the trend lines are flat. The patient is in more-or-less stable condition but still gravely ill. (Finn, 1991, p. 40)

Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton accurately described the impact that *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983) had on the country when he declared in 1990 that *A Nation at Risk* "burst on the scene like a firestorm" and unleashed "feelings about public education and its problems that a large majority of Americans had held for some time began to surface" (Gordon, 2003, p. 123). I have already pointed out that, while a few critics accused conservatives of exaggerating, if "manufacturing a crisis in education" (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 2), the vast majority of Americans treated the scathing assessment of America's educational system as indisputable fact. The raising of standards or call to excellence was translated into a number of top-down mandates: stiffer requirements for teacher certification, increasing the number of courses required for students to get a diploma, reducing class size, increasing opportunities for gifted students, providing students with more access to computers and technology, testing students more frequently, evaluating teachers more effectively, and rewarding outstanding performance by schools and teachers. Indeed, educational reform in the 1980s was a belt-tightening era that focused on intensifying standards of professionalism and achievement.

Unfortunately, the top-down mandates paid too little attention to the how of change and the need for additional education research or development. "What might have happened if the federal government had not settled for playing the diagnostic technician and instead

had invested in more rigorous, large-scale research and development projects that eventually

might have suggested ways of improving student achievement?" (Gordon, 2003, p. 124) In

spite of efforts to fix the educational system and numerous attempts to restructure the

schools, there was "little, if any, overall, progress in student achievement" (Gordon, 2003,

p. 123). America's public schools were still broken. I attribute the failure of the 1980s

reform to achieve excellence to the same factors that rendered the birth of the movement:

suspect evidence, inflammatory rhetoric, and naïve perceptions of the relationship between

excellence and equity in education. The numerous studies, experts, panels, and committees

that promoted the school crisis did not create a balanced assessment of the state of education

in the U.S. and much of the evidence was founded upon misleading assumptions and myths

(Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Although there was talk of equity, framers of the excellence

movement in the 1980s did not or would not acknowledge that achieving equity in the

American educational system would require a great deal more than federal mandates and

task forces. It would require first the acknowledgement and then the dismantling of the

durable inequalities (Brown et al., 2003) of a history of institutionalized racism, sexism, and

other isms. It was easier to focus on excellence, but even that had its limitations. Missing

was an appreciation for the dynamics and phenomenology of educational change. Fullan

(2007) explained:

> The problem of meaning in educational change is central to making sense of
> educational change. In order to achieve greater meaning, we must come to
> understand both the small and big pictures. The small picture concerns the subjective
> meaning of or lack of meaning for individuals at all levels of the education system. . .
> . It is also necessary to build and understand the big picture, because educational
> change is, after all, a sociopolitical change. (p. 8)

Not enough effort was directed toward effecting systemic change or recognizing the

"capacities that would be required at all levels of the systems to actually do the work of

improvement" (Fullan, 2007, p. 9). Even in the latter 1980s, when schools began to take

ownership of the reform process, the little picture did not change, meaning that teachers did

not change the how of their instruction. As I have pointed out, many teachers on the front

lines, preoccupied with the challenging day-to-day, moment-to-moment realities, continued

to do what they had always done. They got the same results or worse.

In this chapter, I trace the progression of educational reform in the 1990s. First, I

analyze philosophical and practical changes in leadership at the national level and how the

decisions and actions that resulted from those changes influenced reform at state and local

levels. Next, I return to Gary, Indiana and Theodore Roosevelt, where I examine the impact

of educational reform on African American youth.

Systemic Change: Breaking the Mold

> An unprecedented bipartisan association of governors, senior national administration officials, and Congressional representatives, the Panel monitors and reports annually to the American people on the nation's and each state's progress in achieving these goals. The purpose of these reports is not measurement for measurement's sake. Rather, by demanding an annual accounting of progress, they reinforce a commitment to the goals and to education improvement efforts that will be necessary if the goals are to be achieved. . . . The Panel also recommends improvements and enhancements to existing data and assessment systems so that better information relevant to the National Goals can be provided to the American people in the future. (The National Goals Panel Report, 1992, pp. 12-13)

> Some of you will use the new provisions of Goals 2000 to expand what you have started. Some you will use it to reinvigorate and connect existing reforms. And others of you will use it to launch a comprehensive new effort to improve teaching and learning. That's really what we're about isn't it? But how you use Goals 2000 to encourage learning back home is really your choice. I urge you to think big, to think comprehensively, to recognize that this won't happen in a year of in just a few years. We spent 10 years getting to the point where we had the support to pass Goals 2000. *A Nation at Risk* was 10 years ago. We will probably spend another 10 years making it work for all of our children. (Riley, 1994, p. 5)

Each of these statements provides insight into the philosophies of Presidents Bush

and Clinton and help explain how educational reform in the 1990s differed from that of the

1980s. The first passage describes the composition and purpose of the National Goals Panel,

established in July of 1990 in response to the 1989 Education Summit in Charlottesville

where, at the urging of President Bush, the nation's governors outlined six national

education goals. The National Goal Panel's statement reflects a conservative reform agenda

heavily invested in assessment and monitoring of school achievement. In contrast, the 1994

statement issued by Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, suggested an investment in

human capital and demonstrates trust and confidence in the capacity for change at the

grassroots level supported by the government, but forged by teachers, parents, and

communities. The conservative agenda remained intact until the election of Bill Clinton in

1992.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the most historic events in the history

of American education in the post-*Brown* era took place at the 1989 Charlottesville

Education Summit where President George H. W. Bush met with the nation's governors to

map out a plan to reform public education. Six national goals were outlined. In April of

1991, Bush further explained the role the federal government would play in the promotion of

better schools:

> Working closely with the governors, we will define new world class standards for
> schools, teachers, and students in the five core subjects: math and science, English,
> history, and geography. We will develop voluntary—let me repeat it—we will
> develop voluntary national tests for 4th, 8th, and 12th graders in the five core
> subjects. . . .
> We can encourage educational excellence by encouraging parental choice. . . .
> It's time parents were free to choose the schools that their children attend. (Bush as
> cited in Vinovskis, 2009, p. 45)

He called upon every community to do four things: (a) to adopt the National Education

Goals, (b) develop a community-wide strategy to achieve the goals, (c) design a report card

to measure their progress, and (d) plan for and support a New American School. Eager to

support the President and feeling, no doubt, that they had a vested interest in the quality of

education in America, the business community established the New American School

Development Corporation (NASDC) in 1991, "a private, nonprofit, tax exempt

organization" with a stated mission "to support the design and establishment of new high-

performance learning environments that communities across the country can use to

transform their schools for the next generation of American children" (America 2000:

Excellence in Education Bill, 1995, p. 5). NASDC was:

> To raise $200 million to support the work of Design Teams that focus on the talent, energy, and expertise of a wide range of individuals and organizations on the task of designing and implementing new learning environments for the future. (America 2000 Excellence in Education Bill, 1995, p. 5)

In May 1991, Bush revealed more details about his vision for the New American Schools

and the legislative package he planned to propose, the America 2000: Excellence in

Education Bill (1995) :

> The *New American Schools* program would provide seed money for the start-up of "break-the-mold" schools. . . .
>   The Merit Schools program would reward schools that make notable progress toward achievement of the National Education Goals, particularly the goal of ensuring that all students leave grades four, eight, and 12 having demonstrated competence in the core academic subjects. . . .
>   The Education Reform through Flexibility and Accountability part of the legislation would authorize projects that would improve student outcomes through increased flexibility in using federal, state, and local categorical funds and services to achieve specific goals. . . .
>   The bill would amend the Chapter I Compensatory Education program to support decisions by parents making educational choices for their children. As amended, the statute would provide that Chapter I series follow the child participating in Chapter I to the public or private school that the child chooses to attend. (Bush as cited in Vinovskis, 2009, p. 46)

Specifically, the America 2000: Excellence in Education Act would include:

- Presidential awards for excellence in education: appropriation of funds to give $5,000 awards to teachers in every state who meet the highest standards of excellence.

- National science scholarships: 570 college scholarships to be awarded on a competitive basis to local districts to high school seniors in order to encourage them to take more courses in the sciences and mathematics.
- Magnet Schools of Excellence: grants would then be awarded on a competitive basis to local districts to support magnet schools for purposes other than desegregation.
- Alternative teacher and pupil certification: one-time grants awarded to states to design, develop, or implement creative and flexible alternative teacher certification systems.
- Historically Black colleges and universities: provision of $60 million over a four-year period to help sustain Black colleges.
- Drug-free schools urban emergency grants: one-time grants to urban school systems to develop and test approaches to the local drug problems.
- Literacy program for homeless adults: funds to be used to implement and fully fund the McKinney Act program designed to address the special needs of homeless elementary students. (America 2000: Excellence in Education Bill, 1995, p.1)

Supporters of America 2000 argued that it would use principles of a free market economy to improve education by rewarding excellence and introducing the element of choice. Opponents insisted that that the legislation did not provide enough financial federal assistance to individual states and did not focus on the areas of real concern. Ultimately, Congress did not pass America 2000, but its significance should not be diminished. Indeed, some of the ideas espoused in Bush's America 2000, would reemerge in key legislation a few years later.

In 1992, William (Bill) Jefferson Clinton became the first baby-boomer President and the third youngest President in the history of the United States. During the presidential campaign, Clinton promoted a human capital agenda. He emphasized the importance of investing in education and training for the American people as a means of strengthening the nation's economy and democracy. "It's time to put people first, that is the core of our national economic strategy for America" (Clinton as cited in Smith & Scoll, 1995, p. 389). Three factors drove the human capital agenda: "direct data on achievement indicating

weaknesses in the quality and equality of our systems, the demands of the new economy,

and the challenges of our democracy" (Smith & Scoll, 1995, p. 391). Frustrated with 10

years of largely failed school reforms, the public and policymakers determined that the

educational system was still not working. International competition and changing demands

in the workplace drew attention to a "new economy in which technological and industrial

innovations have altered the nature of work and management" (Smith & Scoll, 1995, p. 390).

Then Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich, had aroused concern for the future of democracy in

America. In the book, *The Power of Public Ideas*, Reich (1988) stressed that if democracy

was to thrive, Americans would need to make responsible decisions about complicated

issues. Hence, it was essential that citizens be afforded greater opportunities to grow as

individuals and gain access to new skills. The case for building human capital was

convincing and education was key.

One of the first cabinet appointments he filled was the position of Secretary of

Education. Clinton appointed a close ally and then Governor Richard Riley of South

Carolina to the position of Secretary of Education. Riley and Clinton had worked on

educational reform as governors in their respective states. They were able to garner

bipartisan support in the 103rd Congress for three major legislative actions: Goals 2000:

Educate America Act, the Improving America's Schools Act (the reauthorization of the 1965

Elementary and Secondary Act), and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (Smith & Scoll,

1995; Vinovskis, 2009). On February 23, 1993, Riley revealed information to Congress

about the Clinton administration's proposal for educational reform and reauthorization of the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Riley explained:

> We must have national goals to move the entire system of education forward. The
> legislation makes the National Education Goals a matter of formal national policy. It

establishes the National Education Goals Panel in law with the full partnership of Congress on the panel. . . .

As important as goals and standards are, they alone are not enough. We must also find ways of ensuring that students have an available opportunity to learn and an educational environment to succeed. To accomplish this purpose, the legislation establishes an Opportunity to Learn Commission. (as cited in Vinovskis, 2009, p. 68)

The primary focus of Goals 2000 was content-driven, standards-based, systemic reform. It expanded the role of the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) to include not only the monitoring of progress toward meeting the National Goals, but also identifying promising practices and coalescing bipartisan support for school reform (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 73).

The preamble of Goals 2000: Educate America Act (2007) summarized its purpose:

- To improve learning and teaching by providing a national framework for education reform, and
- to promote the development and adoption of a voluntary national system of skill standards and certifications. (p. 1)

Below are the new provisions proposed under each Title:

- Title I added two additional goals to the original six: teachers will be given professional development opportunities, and every school will promote partnerships with parents.
- Title II created the National Education Reform Leadership, Standards, and Assessments and established in law the National Goals Panel (NGP) and the National Education Standards and Improvement Council (NESIC). NESIC was responsible for establishing and certifying criteria voluntary national content standards as well as state standards and assessments submitted on a voluntary basis. The main thrust was to promote the establishment of academic content standards and to align those standards with state assessments.
- Title III was designed to encourage states and local districts to reform their schools. The centerpiece of Title III was the State Improvement Plan, which all states who chose to participate in Goals 2000 were required to develop.
- Title V established a National Skills Standards Board to assist industry, labor, and education identify and develop high standards needed in each work area, appropriate curricula, and quality assessments.
- Titles IV, VI, VIII, and IX created small grant programs for Parental Assistance, International Education Programs, Minority Focused Civic Education, and Teacher Research and Community Partnership, respectively.
- Title VII appropriated funds to local school districts facing high rates of crime, violence, and disciplinary problems.

- Title IX established five national research centers that would study effective educational practices in achievement, curriculum, assessment, policy-making, and post-secondary education. (America 2000: Excellence in Education Bill, 1994, pp. 5-7)

The Improving America's Schools Act, passed in January of 1994, reformed Title I, the $7 billion program for teaching basic and advanced skills in high-poverty schools by eliminating lower educational expectations for poor children in order to ensure that disadvantaged children were held to the same standard as their more advantaged counterparts (U. S. Department of Education, 1996, p. 1). It also expanded funds for professional development to assist teachers in working with students to meet the new standards, provided opportunities for waivers of the federal requirements for the first time, and offered start-up monies for charter schools (President Clinton's Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century, 1997, p. 1). In addition, the new ESEA gave schools more flexibility in how they structured Title I and other programs. For instance, schools with at least 50% of their students living on the poverty level could combine funds from Title I and other programs like Bilingual Education and Safe and Drug-Free Schools to serve all of their students (Smith & Scoll, 1995, pp. 398-399). The Safe Schools Act was "the first federal program to direct funds to local school districts specifically to help make them safer" (Clinton, 1994a, p. 7). The attention given to safe and drug-free schools paved the way for the passage of 1994 Gun-Free Schools Act and the rise of zero tolerance policies in the nation's public schools (Ayers, Dohm, & Ayers, 2001, p. 45).

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act, passed in May of 1994, was administered by the Departments of Education and Labor and aimed to "create a comprehensive and coherent system to help youth acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to make a smooth transition from high school to career-oriented work for further education" (Raising the Educational

Achievement of Secondary School Students, 1995, p. 3) Funding was available to individual

states in the form of grants for assistance with research, development and implementation.

School districts that opted to implement a School-to-Work Program were required to provide

work-based learning (e.g., job training and experiences), school-based learning (e.g., career

awareness and counseling), and connecting activities that would coordinate the efforts of

employers, schools, and students. The program was designed to enable all secondary

students to enter adult life prepared to succeed in the workplace and contribute to their

communities as active citizens (Raising the Educational Achievement of Secondary School

Students, 1995, p. 4).

On March 31, 1994, President Clinton signed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act

(P.L. 103-227) at a San Diego magnet school declaring:

> We insist, with Goals 2000, that every student can learn. We insist that it's time to abolish the outdated distinction between academic learning and skill learning. We know now that most academics has practical application, and that, more and more, practical problems require academic knowledge. And I hope to goodness we don't do anything else—we've finally erased that divide so that we can teach our young people to learn in the way that best suits their own capacities and the work they have to do. But I am absolutely convinced that there is not a single, solitary problem in American education that has not been solved by somebody, somewhere. What we have done as a nation is to resist learning from each other, to resist institutionalizing change, to resist, therefore, holding ourselves accountable for results as a nation.
>   Here are the goals, you figure out how to get there, you learn from each other. Come up with aggressive plans, we will help you fund them and go forward, but you are in charge. The federal government can't tell you how to do it, but we can help you get it done. What this Goals 2000 movement, with the School to Work program, with the adult education program, with the retraining program and the re-employment program, what it all seeks to do is to give America a system by which at the grass roots level we can fulfill the promise of Brown v. Board of Education for all our people. (Clinton, 1994b, p. 1)

Clinton believed in the capability of private citizens to collectively effect change at the grass

roots level. The government's role, in his view, is to provide guidance and support. His

philosophy about the nature of humanity and the meaning of purposeful living was and is

that "because we live in an interdependent world, we cannot escape each other's problems, .

. . in every corner of America and all over the world, intelligence and energy are evenly

distributed, but opportunity, investment, and effective organizations aren't" (Clinton, 2007,

p. 3). "As a result, billions of people are denied the chance to live their lives to the fullest"

(Clinton, 2007, p. 3). He hoped that the guidance and financial assistance from the federal

government provided in Goals 2000 would spur an innovative intuitiveness of community

and educational leadership that would fashion new and better ways of educating America's

youth.

Not everyone shared Clinton's views on Goals 2000. Although Goals 2000 received

bipartisan support, it also met with strong criticism from the Right. Conservative

organizations such as the Christian Coalition, Concerned Women of America, U.S. Alliance,

Eagle Forum (1997), Family Research Council, and Focus on Family protested passage and

implementation of the legislation. *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* (Schlafly, 1997) published a

scathing assessment of School-to-Work Opportunities Act and Goals 2000. According to

the report, Clinton, Marc Tucker, President of the National Center on Education and

Economy (NCEE), and other alleged left wing gurus, the Goals 2000 Act, Improving

Schools Act, and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act would browbeat public schools into

changing their mission "from teaching knowledge and skills to training them to serve the

global economy in jobs selected by workforce boards" (Schlafly, 1997, p. 1). The

publication viewed School-to-Work as a threat to the individual privacy, goals, and

education of students.

> Vocational courses in high school for illiterate and semi-literate students will train
> young Americans to compete in the global economy with people in the third world
> willing to work for 25 and 50 cents an hour. That's why a lot of big businesses have

entered into partnerships with governors and school districts to promote Schools-to-Work. (Schlafly, 1997, p. 3).

Some of the more conservative Republicans in Congress also voiced strong opposition (Vinovskis, 2009). So did some parents and everyday citizens. One Ohio parent, challenging the African proverb, "it takes a whole village to raise a child," spoke out at a protest rally in Columbus, Ohio claiming that:

> It does not take a whole village to raise a child. We did not sign over our rights to the village or to the Department of Education. This is war and to the victor goes the minds of our children. (Pitsch, 1994, p. 1)

No doubt, the battle for the minds of children was largely responsible for the contentious debate over national standards. Thomas Toch (1994), a reporter for *U.S. News and World Report*, contextualized the harsh criticism that was aimed at efforts to establish national curricula and school standards:

> In the early 1990s, frustration with the slow pace of local school reforms sparked the radical idea of drafting a national curriculum and testing system. But now the standards movement is struggling:
>
> The U.S. Department of Education recently pulled the plug on a three-year, $2 million project to draft a national English curriculum, claiming the recommendations were too superficial. A recently released U.S. history curriculum was widely criticized for overemphasizing multiculturalism.
>
> Traditionally, the nation's 15,000 local school systems have been responsible for shaping education. But under the Bush administration, the Education Department funded professional organizations to study what students should master in subjects such as art, geography, civics, and government, American and world history and science. Meanwhile, the New Standards Project, a four-year-old, foundation-funded consortium of states and school systems educating about half of the nation's students is attempting to create a national testing system. And this year, Congress passed two bills designed to give states fiscal incentives to adopt "world class" standards and creating a presidential panel to endorse them. (p. 74)

Arguably, the history standards generated the most heated debate (Vinovskis, 2009).

Senator Bob Dole, the presumptive Republican presidential candidate in the 1996 election, and other conservatives made the national standards and other Clinton educational reform

ideas major campaign issues. Lynne Cheney, former chairperson of the National

Endowment for the Humanities from 1986 to 1993, wrote a well quoted article, "The End of

History" for the *Wall Street Journal* (Oct. 20, 1994) in which she attacked the new national

history standards. Cheney (1994) asserted that the proposed history standards advanced a

revisionist agenda preoccupied with political correctness and aggressively opposed to

"privileging" (p. 1) the West. According to Cheney and her sources, after the election,

African American and Native Americans "no longer bothered to hide their hatred for

traditional history" and, as result, "nobody dared to cut the inclusive part" of history.

Cheney argued that the standards were so inclusive that traditional history had been

forsaken. "African and Native American societies, like all societies, had their failings but

one would not know it from National Standards" (p. 2). As far as Cheney was concerned,

the new standards focused too much on "multiple perspectives and on how the American

Revolution did or did not serve the interests of different groups" (p. 2). "We are better

people than the National Standards indicate, and our children deserve to know it" (p. 3).

Simply put, the National History Standards cast Anglo native-born Americans in an

unfavorable light. Congress concurred and issued a 99 to 1 vote for denunciation of the

history standards (Vinovksis, 2009, p. 126). The battle over the history standards should not

be taken lightly. It represented the essence of ideological hegemony (Gramsci, 2008). The

tension between dominant and subordinate worldviews is a critical issue in determining and

legitimizing social norms and structures. The ruckus over the history standards frightened

educators and legislators and put an end to the writing of National Standards. The Clinton

administration shifted its focus to helping the states draft individual content standards.

Most states and local districts attempted to implement standards and systemic reform in the public schools; some began experimenting with charter schools and vouchers. President Clinton supported charter and magnet schools as viable forms of school choice. In a speech given at the 1999 National Educational Summit, Clinton applauded the New York legislature for recently authorizing the establishment of charter schools and praised the state of California for removed the cap on the number of charter schools the state could have.

> We still have a lot of interest in magnet schools and other public school choice initiatives, . . . [and I] think that we are well on our way to having 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000 which is the goal I set for our administration when we started down this path six years ago. (Clinton, 1999, p. 1)

By contrast, Clinton was opposed to vouchers and, unlike his predecessors, Reagan and Bush, fought vigorously against legislation to provide for them in the District of Columbia (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 121). Clinton and the Democrats supported expanding school choice but opposed using American tax dollars to fund private schools. The matter of school choice is a prickly topic that, historically, has prompted heated debates.

Generally speaking, charter schools have fared more favorably with the public than vouchers (Fuller & Elmore, 1996; Vinovskis, 2009). Charter schools appeal to parents because of their perceived better academic and disciplined school environment. Magnet schools, another form of school choice, also sit well with the public and many policymakers because they promote diversity and curricular options. The popularity of vouchers is rooted in the "decentralized magic of markets" (Fuller & Elmore, 1996, p. 9). The logic is as follows: "if families are empowered (with vouchers and tax credits) to act from their particular preferences and definitions of high quality, the array of schools and service providers will diversity and become more accountable" (Fuller & Elmore, 1996, p. 9). In *Who Chooses? Who Loses? Culture, Institutions, and the Unequal Effects of School Choice*,

Fuller and Elmore (1996) combined the empirical research findings of research contributors to illuminate the arguments surrounding school choice. They identified four propositions from their research:

1. Increasing educational choice is likely to increase separation of students by race, social class, and cultural background (p. 189).
2. Greater choice in public education is unlikely, by itself, to increase either the variety of programs available to students or the overall performance of schools. Coupled with strong educational improvement, however, choice may increase variety and performance (p. 193).
3. Details matter in the design and implementation of choice policies. For example, providing choices to those who wish to choose. Option-demand programs create, by their design, a large category of non-choosers who are disproportionately poor and minority and who tend to engage their children's schools less actively (p. 195).
4. Context matters in the design and implementation of school choice policies (p. 197).

More research is needed to determine how African American children, in particular, have fared from the various forms of school choice.

The 1990s also witnessed a number of whole-scale school reform designs that emerged from the recommendations of the New American Schools Development Project (NASDP), the "Breaking the Ranks I" report released by National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CRSD) (Smith, n.d.; Vinovksis, 2009). Some of the more publicized reform programs were:

- America's Choice School is a comprehensive K-12 school reform program that grew out of an earlier National Center on the Economy (NCEE) school reform program, the National Alliance for Restructuring Education. National Alliance was identified by Congress in the 1990s as the kind of reform initiative the current Administration was hoping schools would adopt. The program, which measures its work against international standards, helps districts and schools focus on creating a standards-based system with corresponding assessments, aligning instruction to standards, strengthening instructional leadership, building professional learning communities, and engaging parents and the community in the educational process. (America's School Choice, 2010)

- Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment for all Students (ATLAS), conceived in 1992, supports a data-driven approach to systemic change. It was developed in 1992 out of a partnership between four educational reform programs: James Comer's School Development Center at Yale University, Howard Gardner's Project Zero at Harvard, Theodore Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, and Janet Whitia's Education Development Center. The program is built around pathways and focuses on feeder patterns from elementary to middle school and middle school to high school. Heavy emphasis is given to disciplinary understanding, learning in context, problem solving, relationship building, self-reflection, and community engagement. (ATLAS Learning Communities, n.d.)

- Chicago Annenberg Challenge (CAC) was a Chicago public school reform project between 1995 and 2001 funded by a $49.2 million matching challenge grant over five years from the Annenberg Foundation. Supported by William Ayers and others, the CAC funded implementation grants for reform to more than 200 Chicago public schools over five years. Eighteen of the schools it supported were identified as "breakthrough schools" and served as models for other reform efforts. Its primary emphasis was on systemic professional development. (Chicago Annenberg College, 2003)

- Co-nect Schools, founded in 1992, by members of the Educational Technologies at Bolt Beranek and Newman Incorporated (BBN), a communications company and Internet service provider, combine high standards for all students with a focus on technology and project-based learning. BBN, a communications company and Internet service provider, developed the K-12 design with two educational organizations and an environmental group. Students at Co-nect Schools use technology to work collaboratively and learn by doing. Each school develops a clear set of standards that apply to all students and are based on national, state, and local standards. Teachers work in interdisciplinary teams and measure student progress using authentic assessment. (Accelerated Learning Laboratory, 1994)

- Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) was established by two former Teach for America teachers, Mike Feinberg and Dave Levin, in 1994 who opened a fifth grade public school program in Houston, Texas. KIPP is based on the conviction that "demographics do not define destiny," is a national network of free, open-enrollment, college-preparatory public schools. There are currently 82 KIPP schools in 19 states and the District of Columbia serving more than 21,000 students. KIPP strives to build partnerships between parents, students, and teachers that put learning first. It is a program that helps students get to and through college. KIPP offers a structured, no-nonsense learning environment in which students spend up to 60% more time on learning and principals are generally given more autonomy than in the typical school. KIPP accepts students from all backgrounds. (KIPP, n.d.)

- Modern Red Schoolhouse (MRSh) is a whole school reform that seeks to build high-performing schools that are standards-driven by developing the capacity of principals and teacher in two areas: professional judgment (e.g., appropriate and effective use of data, development of coherent instructional design, use of educational best practices, and sustaining a positive school climate) and participative management (e.g., building a collabroatvie culture, using resources wisely, developing improvement plans, and managing effective meetings). MRSh involves administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, families, and the community in the improvement process. (Modern Red Schoolhouse, n.d.)

- Talent Development High Schools began in 1994 as a partnership of the Center for Social Organization of Schools at Johns Hopkins University and Patterson High School in Baltimore and has expanded to more than 125 high schools in 15 states and the District of Columbia. Some these schools use the full model of organizations, curricular, instructional, and professional development reforms; others use parts of the model or only curriculum. It is a comprehensive reform model for high schools confronted with serious problems, such as, student attendance, discipline, achievement scores and dropout rates. The model attempts to address, "at the forefront," anonymity and apathy. The model features smaller learning communities, ninth-grade intervention, a strong curriculum, teacher and students partnerships, and professional development for teachers where they need it the most—in their classrooms. (U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Services, 2007)

This list merely touches on some of the reform designs. There were other programs that offered a framework for school improvement such as High Schools That Work, First Things First, and the trend toward smaller learning communities and school-within-a-school designs funded by the generous Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, established in 1999. Additionally, by the year 2000, there were over 50 for-profit companies managing almost 500 regular public or charter schools, the most well-known of which may have been the Edison Project, headed by former Yale University president, Benno C. Schmidt (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 122). Despite these efforts, at the end of the 1990s, two realities could not be refuted: schools were not going to meet the goals set for the year 2000 and the racial achievement gap remained persisted.

Findings from a U.S. Department of Education (1995) report on *The Condition of*

Education 1994: The Educational Progress of Black Students revealed:

- Black children start elementary school with less preschool experience than White children, and a gap in preschool enrollment rates has developed.
- Gaps in the academic performance of Black and White students appear as early as age 9 and persist through age 17. Black children on average may be reading at a level as much as two years below their White peers when they enter high school.
- On the SAT, college-bound Blacks have made substantial gains relative to Whites, but a gap remains.
- At age 13, Black children are more likely than White children to be below the modal (most common) grade for their age.
- Students who repeat grades are at a greater risk of dropping out of school.
- Fewer Black students are dropping out of school than a decade ago. While Black students are still more likely to drop out than Whites, the gap has been closing over time.
- Black students are more likely than their White peers to face a disorderly learning environment, but Black and White students have similar attitudes about teaching quality in their schools.
- Black students are no less likely than White students to have their parents involved in their schooling.
- Both Black and White high school students are following a more rigorous curriculum than a decade ago.
- Black high school graduates are still less likely than White graduates to take advanced science and mathematics courses or study a foreign language.
- The educational aspirations of Black and White students are similar.
- Blacks are less likely than Whites to make an immediate transition from high school to college.
- In 1971, Black 25 to 29-year olds were only about half as likely as their White counterparts to have completed four years of college, and this gap has not diminished.
- Blacks take longer to complete college on average.
- Bachelor's degree attainment varies by both race and gender.
- Employment and earnings rates rise with educational attainment for both Blacks and Whites, but are lower for Blacks than for Whites with the same amount of education.
- Blacks have lower literacy rates than Whites overall and for similar levels of education, but the gaps are smaller for young adults than for older ones.
  (NCES, 1995, pp. 1-20)

As is the case with most data, when taken at face value, there are at least as many questions

as there are answers. Each of the points above warrants further investigation, but I suggest

that the evidence of racial inequity is clear and strongly suggest that the inequity is directly

related to the racist culture in America. Most Whites would likely agree with the clear

indications of inequity; they might not be of the same mind about why the inequities exist.

In 1965, Moynihan wrote:

> It was by destroying the Negro family under slavery that White America broke the
> will of the Negro people. Although that will has reasserted itself in our time, it is a
> resurgence doomed to frustration unless the viability of the Negro family is restored.
> (para. 10)

Even though Moynihan was criticized by liberals and Black activists, I believe that a large

segment of White Americans agreed with his assessment of the imperiled Black family. His

interpretation of the Negro family reinforced historical racism (Goldberg, 2002), while

passing the burden for the legacy of racism on to African Americans. I allege that, today,

many White and Black Americans would conclude that Moynihan's 1965 predictions were

correct. In fact, recently, James T. Patterson wrote in the *New York Times*, "sadly,

[Moynihan's "Report on the Negro Family, A Case for National Action"] predictions about

the decline of the Black family have come true" (Patterson, 2010, p. 1). I take issue with the

assumption that slavery killed the will of African Americans to live, resist, or be educated as

there is plenty of evidence in the literature to suggest otherwise (C. Anderson, 1994;

Anderson, 1988; Banks, 1996; Bethune, 1999; Cooper, 1892; Dempsey & Noblit, 1993; Du

Bois, 1935, 1994; Franklin, 1990; Foster, 1990; Franklin & Moss, 1994; Gilbert, 1998; Hill

Collins, 2000; Kelly, 2010; Loeb, 1947; Morris, 1999; Payne & Strickland, 2008; Siddle

Walker, 1993, 1996, 2000; Thompson, 2003; Washington, 1901; Webber, 1978; Williams,

2005). We might do well to consider Du Bois' evaluation of the challenges confronting

African Americans:

The question is: how and by whom can Negro culture be preserved? Not simply for the social movements of America, but for the greater world of human culture.

In our concentration of thought on the United States, as the locus of our fight, we have come to think of this land as the center of the universe and lately as the predestined leader of civilization. This is because of our recent growth in world power, based on unusual natural resources; a democracy in government which emancipated former lower classes, and gave them work and high wages; and finally, because the leading nations of Europe lost their power through rivalry, exploitation, and war.

It was not America's virtues, but Europe's mistakes, that gave us our present primacy. We Negroes have thoughtlessly failed to recognize this and have tried to become more American than the Americans; loud in our conversation, our boasting and arrogance, showy and ostentatious in dress, careless in manners, wasteful in conspicuous expenditure, and smug and uncritical in judgment. Like all America we read few books; we get superficial "news" from radio gossip and doctored opinion from a press known to be prejudiced and monopolized. (Du Bois as cited in Gates & West, 1996, pp. 165-166)

The problem is not a loss of will, but a misguided one that has grown increasingly naïve and injudicious in the last 40 years. Too many African Americans have bought into the myth of color-blindness and its delusions. There is nothing pathological about Black culture; what is pathological is Black people not acknowledging, respecting, and perpetuating their cultural heritage. In the nation's schools, particularly in the alleged post-racial era, Black youth lack a critical awareness and understanding of how the systemic, systematic, and institutionalized inner workings of racism work to oppress them and how they contribute to their own oppression. African American youth know too little of the culture of their African American ancestors, not to mention their African cultural heritage. I would argue further, as does Theresa Perry (2003) in *Young, Gifted, and Black*, that most reform efforts suffer from the common misconception that "if you know what works for the White child, then you know what will work for the Black child" (p. 4). Perry (2003) explained:

Indeed, there are generalizable competencies required of and competencies embedded in the learning tasks students are asked to perform in school. But since learning is fundamentally contextual, I would argue that there are social, emotional, cognitive, and political competencies required of African-

American youth, precisely because they are African-American, if they are to be able
to commit themselves over time to perform at high levels in school. (p. 4)

The popularity of cultural diversity and multiculturalism has diminished the uniqueness of the African American experience and neutralized the efforts of Blacks to "resolve their unique dilemmas" (C. Anderson, 1994, p. 56). We must recognize the distinct experience of African Americans (e.g., the impact of race and racism), in our efforts to address racial inequality of educational opportunity and outcomes. I strongly suggest that neither the phenomenology nor the practicality of educational change can be White-washed. To put it another way, racism is endemic to American society and its institutions. Public education is certainly no exception. If we are to bring about real change (e.g., equality of educational opportunity and outcomes for all children), we will have to acknowledge that we are not a colorblind society and race remains a major determinant of one's life chances. We cannot afford to pretend otherwise. To be clear, I am not advocating that we focus on racism. Quite the contrary, I contend that we focus on being anti-racist and race-critical. I argue that we need to be critically aware and actively against attitudes, decisions, policies, and actions that perpetuate White privilege and contribute to the marginalization of people of color. To speak of excellence, equality, and color-blindness in the same breath does not make sense. "In our quest for higher standards we seem to have forgotten that schools cannot be excellent as long as there are groups of children who are not well served by them" (Oakes, 2005, p. xvi). I will have much more to say on this matter in the discussion that follows. For now, I wish to continue my focus on tracing the history of reform in the U.S. during the 1990s.

Many districts were trying to do things differently but almost every district was challenged to write standards and align curriculum and assessments to those standards. Perhaps one of the most controversial examples of standards-based reform and high stakes

testing was the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TASS) (Meier & Wood, 2004; Orfield & Kronbacher, 2001). In response to historically low educational achievement and low investment in education, Texas implemented the TAAS in 1991, an accountability system that was based on the testing of children with high-stakes for teachers and students. Test scores were used to monitor and evaluate the performance of principals and teachers, as well the effectiveness of schools and school districts. The life choices of students were diminished if they failed to pass the high school test because they were refused a high school diploma (McNeil & Valenzeula, 2001). Third grade students were denied promotion to the fourth grade if they failed the reading portion of the third grade TAAS. The highly publicized and emulated accountability system received accolades from politicians and was credited with raising the quality of education for all students, including African Americans and Latinos. McNeil and Valenzuela (2001) reported dramatically different findings about the impact of the TAAS on teaching and learning, especially within poor and minority populations in the Texas educational system. Their research is pertinent to this research because it bears strong similarities to the effects of high stakes testing on administrators, teachers and students in the case study high school.

McNeil and Valenzuela (2001) conducted an in-depth, longitudinal study of the effects of the centralized testing in Texas "beginning with the Perot reforms of 1980s through the 1990s, when such tests were increasingly tied to high-stakes tests for children and school personnel" (p. 128). They found that:

- TAAS reduced the quality of the curriculum as well as the variety of courses taught because teachers were only teaching what was on the test.
- Educational expenditures were distorted. Money that might have been invested in better quality curricular resources was being funneled into test-preparation materials.

- TAAS actually minimized the level of information and skills taught and learned and frequently disengaged students, especially poor and non-White youngsters.
- TAAS contradicts substantive research that shows that children learn by drawing upon prior knowledge and actively interacting with exploring new learning using all of their senses. TAAS only one cognitive mode of learning: the mastery of "brief, discreet, randomly selected pieces of information."
(p. 147)

McNeil and Valenzuela concluded:

This system of testing is, therefore, not the benign "reform" its political advocates claim. Nor is it the remedy for a malfunctioning bureaucracy system that is merely in need of stricter internal management and accountability. The TAAS system of testing exerts a direct, negative impact on the curriculum, creating new problems outlined here and exacerbated old ones related to historical inequities between rich/majority and poor/minority children. In addition, it masks the real problems of inequity that underlie the failure to educate children adequately. Because it shifts funds and scarce organizational and budgetary resources away from schools and into the coffers of the testing industry vendors, the futures of poor and minority children and the schools they attend are being compromised. . . In conclusion, the TAAS is a ticket to nowhere. (p. 147)

McNeil and Valenzuela's assessment of the TAAS, and other high-stakes testing scenarios, is harsh, but, I assert, clearly representative of the sentiments, experiences, and observations of many teachers trying to teach and students trying to learn under the siege of the current testmania. The story they tell is true of everyday life in schools.

While educators struggled with the everyday reality of teaching and learning, the NGA and corporate leaders continued to convene for National Education Summits. Two were held during the 1990s: one in 1996 and the other in 1999. Palisades, New York was the site for both. The sense of urgency and crisis in the nation's schools present 13 years earlier in *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983 persisted as was evident in the opening statement of the official 1996 summit review document:

There is in America today a sense of urgency about educational reform. Students in many other countries outperform Americans in tests of basic skills. Our schools and students will not meet any of the key academic goals set at the start of the decade.

Corporate leaders question how much longer we can compete effectively in a global economy. (National Education Summit, 1996, p. 1)

The mission of the summit was "to start a national effort to establish high academic standards, assessment, and accountability and improve the use of school technology as a tool to reach high standards" (National Education Summit, 1996, p. 1). Increasingly, the business community was encouraged to play a pivotal role in educational policy and decision-making. Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., Chairman and CEO of IBM Corporation, told the group, "we could debate ideas for days and weeks. Instead, let's act. Let's take risks. Let's start to make change happen. There has to be a starting point for change, and here it is" (National Education Summit 1996, p. 1).

Based on a November 1995 progress report issued by the National Education Goals Panel, (as cited in National Education Summit, 1996) was clear to those at the summit that, "at the current pace, we will not meet these goals [Goals 2000] in any area" (p. 6). According to the report, not only was the nation off course for meeting the 1989 summit goals by the year 2000, but the report also suggested that "limited information is being collected to help us understand how students are performing. . . it is clear that simply setting goals is not enough" (p. 6).

The top issues at the Summit were technological skill development, knowledge acquisition, and the utility of education in advancing the nation's global competitiveness. Technology, in fact, was proclaimed to be the education's "great equalizer" (National Education Summit, 1996, p. 11). John L. McClendon, Chairman and CEO of BellSouth Corporation, argued that "the jobs we're hiring for are technology-driven" (p. 11). "If we don't apply technology during the school year, how can we expect our graduates to acclimate to the jobs they aspire to hold?" (p. 11). Governor Tommy G. Thompson,

Chairman of the NGA and the Education Commission of the States, added that technology

would ensure that "all of our children have access to a high quality education" (p. 11). The

consensus was that students needed to be able to see the utility of a getting an education.

"Students are going to know," asserted John E. Pepper, Chairman and CEO of Proctor and

Gamble, "that outstanding performance in the classroom leads directly to better jobs and

economic opportunity" (p. 8). Corporate America was expected to provide insight into what

students should be taught in schools. Colorado Governor, Roy Romer told business leaders,

"You have got to tell us . . . what kind of skill levels do we have to have to compete in the

world?" (p. 9) "Support from government and business leaders," insisted Waldemar "Bill"

Rojas, Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified District, "is essential. Without it, we

can't set and meet the higher academic standards we know we need" (p. 12). President

Clinton declared "here in 1996 you are saying that you can have all the goals in the world,

but unless somebody has meaningful standards and a system to measure whether you meet

the standards, you won't achieve the goals" (p. 13). Although he welcomed the input of

corporate America, Clinton (as cited in Brackett, 1996) raised an important caveat to the

effectiveness of the business community:

> I also believe, along with Mr. Gerstner and the others who are here, that it's very
> important not only for businesses to speak out for reform but for business leaders to
> be knowledgeable enough to know what reform to speak out for, and how—what to
> emphasize and how to hammer home the case for higher standards, as well as how to
> help local districts change some of the things that they're now doing so that they
> have a reasonable attempt, a chance in meeting these standards. (p. 2)

Significant implications can be drawn from this statement. Clinton appears to be suggesting

that if the business community is to be useful, it has a responsibility to make sure it is in a

position to not only make wise and appropriate choices about what schools need to do, but

also provide assistance in meeting enacting those decisions. In other words, it is not enough

to give orders; schools must be given the means to actualize reform into real change.

Whether or not this message was taken seriously is arguable, but, one certainty is that

educators continued to rely heavily on the alleged expertise of corporate America to help

determine the future course of education. This was not the first time that important decisions

about education were turned over to the business sector nor would it be the last. Although

prompted more by concern for fiscal accountability than academic achievement, the era of

scientific management and efficiency in education between 1916 and 1930, was also a

period when educators looked to the corporate world for direction. And today, the current

neoliberal influence on education is inextricably related to values of business and capitalism.

By the end of the 1996 Summit, the governors and business leaders issued a policy

statement that identified a series of commitments:

- Within one year, businesses participating in the Summit will require job applicants to demonstrate academic achievement through transcripts, diplomas, and portfolios.
- Within one year, an external, independent, non-governmental group will be in place to provide leadership, a national clearinghouse, national and international benchmarking, technical assistance, and support for public reporting on the annual progress made by each state and by businesses.
- Within two years, the governors will establish internationally competitive academic standards and assessments to measure academic achievement and accountability systems within their individual states.
- Businesses participating in the Summit will place a high priority on the quality of a state's academic standards and student achievement when determining business location decisions. (National Education Summit, 1996, p. 3)

The nation's governors and corporate leaders also created Achieve, "an independent,

bipartisan, non-profit organization" based in Washington, D.C. to assist individual states in

raising academic standards and graduation requirements, improving assessments, and

strengthening accountability (Achieve, 2010, p. 1). *Improving America's Schools: A*

Newsletter on Issues in School Reform was released in 1996 by the U.S. Department of

Education that provided basic definitions of content and performance standards, as well as an overview of the issues involved in developing assessments to measure state content and student performance standards. Although participation was voluntary, most states scrambled to raise standards and align curriculum and assessments.

Pressure from the Clinton Administration continued. Declaring education as his number one priority, Clinton announced a 10-Point Education Plan in the 1997 State of the Union Address.

> To prepare American for the 21st century, we need strong, safe schools with clear standards of achievement and discipline, and talented and dedicated teachers in every classroom. We must provide all our people with the best education in the world. Together, we must commit ourselves to a bold plan of action. (President Clinton's Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century, 1997, p. 1)

He outlined 10 steps:

- Set rigorous national standards, with national tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math to make sure our children master the basics.
- Make sure there's a talented and dedicated teacher in every classroom
- Help every student to read independently and well by the end of the 3rd grade.
- Expand school choice and accountability in public education.
- Make sure our schools are safe, disciplined and drug-free, and instill basic American values.
- Modernize school buildings and help support school construction
- Open the doors of college to all who work hard and make the grade, and make the 13th and 14th year of education as universal as high school.
- Help adults improve their education and skills by transforming the tangle of federal training programs into a simple skill grant.
- Connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000 and help all students become technologically literate. (President Clinton's Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century, 1997, p. 1)

Additional assistance was given to districts with high poverty populations. In 1998, at the urging of the President, Congress authorized the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP) program (GEAR-UP, n.d., pp. 1-3). GEAR-UP (n.d.), a grant-awarded program, serves low-income students and their families by helping them

become better prepared for post-secondary education. Services may include "tutoring, mentoring, college field trips, career awareness, college-readiness counseling, classes, meetings, parent education about access to higher education, curricular reform, and teacher training" (p. 1). GEAR-UP is designed on a grade cohort model. Services must begin by or before grade seven. The first GEAR-UP grants were awarded in 1999.

In addition to promoting national content standards of excellence, the Clinton administration supported the development of rigorous national tests in 4th-grade reading and 8th-grade mathematics. The national tests would be based on the NAEP reading test and the 8th grade Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) test of mathematics with pilot testing beginning in 1998. Participation would be voluntary. Clinton urged schools and teachers to prepare students for these assessments. In the end, Congress blocked the completion and implementation of the proposed national tests, but the push for increased accountability was evident; the door was open for charter schools was open; and the tone was set for punitive consequences for continued school failure to meet the new standards.

> We must insist that schools and districts have good principals, recruit and hire talented teachers, reduce administrative costs, and provide more options for parents. Moreover, we should overhaul or shut down schools that fail, and allow new charter schools to start over in their place. The Clinton Administration is urging students and districts to use their authority under the reformed Title I program to hold schools accountable. For the assistance they receive, including reconstituting chronically failing schools. (National Standards of Academic Excellence, 1998, p. 5)

By the time the governors and business leaders met again in 1999, the 2000 Presidential election was fast approaching and support for the Clinton education agenda had waned. Nevertheless, Clinton praised the governors for progress made since the 1996 Summit and pushed for more diligence in establishing greater accountability measures. He noted the increase in Pell Grants and establishment of educational IRA's. "Last fall, we fought for and

won a big bipartisan consensus to make down payment of 30,000 teachers, on getting

100,000 more teachers out in the country to lower class sizes in the early grades" (Clinton,

1999, p. 7). He spoke of Chicago and the struggling inner city schools there where high

numbers of children need to attend mandatory summer school because of low test scores, but

"we cannot pretend there will never be any painful consequences" (Clinton, 1999, p. 7).

Clinton advised:

> All the governors can do a world of good by going into those schools and saying I'm
> doing this because I want you to have a good life; I'm doing this because it's not too
> late for you. This is just the beginning of your life. I'm doing this because your
> teachers and your principals and your parents and the business leaders in this
> community, we care about your future and we're trying to make this work. (Clinton,
> 1999, p. 10)

Clinton reminded the audience that, in 1996, only 14 states had measurable standards; 50

states had measurable standards in 1999. Stating that only 16 states identify and sanction

low-performing schools, he encouraged more states to do "the hard part" (Clinton, 1999,

p. 9). He applauded the unprecedented diversity in the nation's public schools as a godsend,

especially in the global society of the 21st century and issued this appeal:

> We know they can all learn . . . you can do a brain scan and determine that. That's
> always been—that's the wrong question. The question is, can we teach them all, and
> are we prepared to do it, and are we prepared to have constructive compassion for
> their present difficulties by having genuine accountability and also heartfelt support. .
> . . The reason that there is still so much enthusiasm for all of this—10 years after the
> Charlottesville Summit, 16 years after *Nation at Risk,* 20 or 30 years after the
> Southerners figured out that it's the only way to lift our states out of the dirt—is that
> everybody knows that deep down inside it's still the most important public work.
> (Clinton, 1999, p. 10)

Clinton's words were poignant but what had ten years of testing and accountability done for

the African American children? What were the human consequences? Where was the

constructive compassion and heartfelt support?

Drowning in Quicksand, Gasping for Air

> Gary Roosevelt ranked at the bottom in the state. "Of course we're disappointed" said Roosevelt Principal William Reese, "We're Roosevelt. We don't expect to be mediocre in anything. (Carlson, 1997, p. A1)

> I understand there are tremendous problems at Roosevelt and the alumni are up in arms about it, [school board member] Holliday said, For them this was always called the great "VELT" and the annual report card was a tremendous embarrassment for the alumni in Gary and also throughout the country.
> (Paul, 1997a, p. A1)

It was hard to believe but by the late 1990s, Roosevelt was ranked the lowest performing high school in all of Indiana. According to the test data, Roosevelt was a far cry from "the Best." The ISTEP scores of students at Roosevelt illuminated the Black-White achievement gap and more directly, the troublesome low achievement of African American youth. The scores for Roosevelt supported what has already been pointed out in summative NAEP trend data: the racial achievement gap remained a pervasive problem through the 1990s. Most educators would agree that the data were quite telling but the real questions are what exactly do the data tell us? How should we interpret the data and what factors should be factored into our analysis of what the data mean?

During the 1990s, there was a flurry of research on the racial achievement gap data and a great deal of commentary about what it meant. Herrnstein and Murray (1996) suggested, in *The Bell Curve*, that intelligence can be measured and differs by heredity, but acknowledged that school achievement is attributable to more than innate intelligence. Good personal habits, an ability to defer gratification and self-discipline also contribute to school achievement. The implication is that Blacks may be intellectually inferior and lack the personal qualities necessary to achieve as Whites do. In *America in Black and White*, Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997) urged "color-blind public policies" (p. 540) and "one

nation, indivisible" (p. 530). They concluded that aberrant, self-defeating aspects of Black

culture (e.g., crime, single-female headed households) along with inept Black teachers (e.g.,

"can they teach what they don't know?") (p. 349), low expectations, and too much White

liberalism were largely to blame for racial discrepancies in school achievement.

Discounting common arguments of liberals who "blamed the gap on some combination of

Black poverty, racial segregation, and inadequate funding of Black schools," and

conservatives who frequently blamed "genes, the culture of poverty, and single

motherhood," Jencks and Phillips (1998) argued that parenting practices might be the culprit.

They proposed "changing the way parents deal with their children may be the single most

important thing we can do to improve children's cognitive skills" (p. 46). If one agrees with

these arguments, then, 30 years later, we are back to the well-publicized conclusions of

report by Coleman et al. (1966). In-school factors are not the primary determinants of

school success. Furthermore, if test scores are the primary measure of individual capability

and school success, then Theodore Roosevelt High School could very well be the poster-

school for Thernstrom and Thernstorms, Herrnstein and Murray, and others who share

similar views. I argue differently. I assert that schools can positively affect the health of the

community and the lives of children, but it is essential that everyone involved in the

educational process in a given school community first know, respect, and understand the

pulse of the community. I contend further that there is much more to Roosevelt's story than

test data reveal. In this chapter, I elucidate the story behind the test scores.

In chapter 3, I gave a brief account of the history of Gary. I did so for two reasons.

The first is that Roosevelt's history is inextricably intertwined with the history of Gary and

the second is that the character of public life is relevant to what goes on in public schools

(Mathews, 1996). By 1990, Gary looked different and the same in a variety of ways. Many troublesome trends observed earlier (e.g., White and middle-class flight, increase in poverty, and loss of revenue) continued creating a sense that things had changed, when in reality, the situation was simply exacerbated. Based on comprehensive data compiled by the Knight Foundation (n.d.), American Institutes for Research, released in the early 2000s, a quick profile of Gary in the 1990s revealed:

- By 1990, 80.6% of Gary's population was African American compared to 70.8% in 1980 (p. 12).
- In 1990, more than a third (35.2%) of Gary adults did not have a high school diploma (p. 14).
- More than half of all family households (51.9 %) with children were headed by single parents. More than one in four (41.2 %) children under age 18 lived in single-parent homes (p. 21).
- More than four in 10 children (42%) in Gary lived in poverty in 1989 compared to 25.8% in 1979 (p. 23).
- Enrollment in the Gary School Community School Corporation declined by almost 5,000 students from 1990-1991 to 1998-1999 (p. 58).
- Black students comprised 96.9% of the total school population in 1999 (p. 59).
- The violent crime index in Gary decreased during the 1990s from 212.5 in 1990 to 124.4 in 1998 (p. 104).

In short, the Gary community was in distress. But was this new? I think not. What may have been more the case was that many of the troublesome trends, observed earlier in the research (e.g., racial polarization that led to segregation and White flight, middle-class flight, increase in poverty, loss of capital and revenue, declining city and school population, and an overall dearth of economic opportunity) had worsened. The Roosevelt community was increasingly affected by all of these factors. And then, there was the relentless push of change and pull of tradition. How would Roosevelt maintain the legacy of excellence with an ever-increasingly needy student population and higher standards?

Judging from the 1990 *Rooseveltian,* nobody was giving up on "the Best" just yet. The yearbook theme, "Already a Legend," bade farewell to Robert Jones and welcomed

former assistant principal, David Williams as the new principal. Williams was no stranger to

Roosevelt or its tradition. He had worked alongside Jones as assistant principal for all of

Jones' tenure at Roosevelt. After a brief time as assistant principal at Horace Mann High

School during the early days of integration, Williams was assigned to Roosevelt as an

assistant principal. He was a big proponent of maintaining Roosevelt's tradition of being

"the Best." The measure of excellence, however, was gradually being redefined by ISTEP.

ISTEP testing had begun in 1988. Yet, Williams admitted recalling very little about

ISTEP, unapologetically commenting that in his opinion, "one test is not going to determine

whether a person can succeed or not" (D. Williams, personal communication, January 19,

2010). ISTEP was the hot topic at Central Office and school board meetings. ISTEP was

part of the Indiana State legislature's 1987 school reform package. Passage or failure was

determined by legislatively determined cut scores. Students in grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8 who

failed to meet the state determined cut-offs were required to attend 80-hours of summer

school. Although ninth and 11th graders took the test, they were not mandated to attend

summer school. Interim Superintendent of the Gary Schools called upon Dr. Joel Schwartz,

Director of Testing and Evaluation, to report on the 1989-90 city-wide ISTEP/CAT City-

Wide Achievement Test Results at two October 1990 school board meetings. His report was

mixed. The good news was that ISTEP performance improved from 1989, especially in

grades three through nine, but serious deficits remained at the secondary level. Schwartz

explained:

> Vocabulary deficits became more pronounced after grade six and remain below
> Reading Comprehension Levels for secondary school students at grades 7, 8, 9, and
> 11. Math concepts and Applications Skills are below grade level beginning at grades
> six and remain below Math Computation Skills for secondary students. The
> Metropolitan Readiness Test results show a reduced range of talent at the higher
> stanine levels. Test gains in the transition school years for grades seven and nine

show reduced achievement gains. These educational deficits appear to remain in subsequent years and account for a large part of the 9-month and 13-month deficit reported at grades 9 and 11. (School board minutes, 1990a, p. 459)

Nevertheless, there was positive news to report about two of Gary's high schools at the next board meeting. Carey informed the board that upon further review by the state, two of Gary's high schools were awarded performance-based incentive awards: Roosevelt and Lew Wallace (School board minutes, 1990b, p. 468). In order to receive the awards, schools had to "demonstrate measurable, significant gain over the previous year in at least two of the following areas: Reading and Language Arts, Mathematics, the total battery score on ISTEP, and Attendance" (p. 468). Dr. Carey, then Interim Superintendent, explained that "the state uses a two-tier formula in calculating the various amounts of the award for each eligible school, and, of course, the size of the school in terms of enrollment is a factor in that calculation" (p. 468). While the news of progress at Roosevelt and Lew Wallace was somewhat encouraging, students were still a long way from where they needed to be. A review of supplementary instructional assistance programs in the high schools indicated "high school students have the most difficulty in reversing long-term deficits" (p. 468). Board member, Dilts, expressed concern about the practical significance of mean scores:

> I know they have mean scores for the state, but it doesn't really help you here. It sounds nice if you take them altogether, we're going ahead, but when I look at Chapter I and the number that we are not increasing. . . . I would like to out more stress on the individual scores. (School board minutes, 1990a, p. 460)

Others expressed concern about the increase in elementary students required to attend summer school in 1990 as compared to 1989. Schwartz explained that "the state standards changed in 1990" which "was expected causing the number of students Statewide, who qualified for summer school" (School board minutes, 1990a, p. 459). Former Roosevelt principal, Robert Jones, who was appointed to the school board after retiring, questioned

another change made by Indiana Department of Education, changing the test of basic skills

that students would be required to take in 1991. He asked, "was this a unilateral decision on

the part of the State Department or did local test persons . . . have a chance to give input"

(School board minutes, 1990a, p. 460). Schwartz responded:

> It was basically a unilateral decision by the state. The only input that I know of is that they do have a Testing Advisory Committee, which I am on for our state Department, and they do sometimes solicit people's opinions. I don't think they solicited our opinion for this particular project. (School board minutes, 1990a, p. 460)

Schwartz's response did not sit well with the former principal. Jones continued:

> It seems to me that we should take a posture that whether they solicit our opinions or not, we need to give our opinions about these sudden shifts because, as you indicated, it gives us a terrible problem in that we cannot compare what the youngsters do next year with what they did last year because the instruments are different. . . . I had heard there might be an end to ISTEP testing. But, the state has extended it one more year, you say? (School board minutes, 1990a, p. 460)

The answer was yes. Jones was not alone in wishing ISTEP would go away and his

concerns were shared by other educational and community leaders in Gary and Northwest

Indiana.

Various leaders from area voiced skepticism about ISTEP and displeasure with the

lack of local input in a September 30, 1991 article, "School Plan Falls Short: Goals Called

Pie in the Sky," featured in the *Post Tribune*. Valparaiso Community Schools

Superintendent, Michael Benway, strongly argued:

> It was put together with virtually no input from public school people, complained Valparaiso Community Schools Superintendent Michael Benway, "I, as an educator feel disenfranchised. I'm put in the position of having to endorse something that I didn't have input in and that I have problems with. . . . The six goals are worthy, but nowhere is there a commitment on the part of the federal government's part to make it a reality. How can you argue that every child should enter school ready to learn. This is the first stab at privatization. We really want to ask: Do we want something as precious as an education delivery system subjected to the free market system?

Will it destroy the egalitarian nature of education? I view this as a plan to dismantle public education. (Carlson, 1991a, p. B1)

Lake Central School Corporation assistant superintendent added, "politicians assume if you set these goals and demand them, everyone will jump. But they leave you to do it yourself. It's easy to set standards, but tough to help people reach them" (Carlson, 1991a, p. B1). Jean Campbell, a former teacher and executive director of the Gary YWCA, labeled the Bush 2000 agenda "simplistic" (Carlson, 1991a, p. B1). Campbell explained:

> I think it's typical of Bush. He doesn't recognize the diversity of which our country is made up and that really makes teaching a challenge. You can't have universal tests. You have to recognize the differences. To me, those goals are like pie in the sky. Just look at the statistics on abuse and neglect. I guess it's good to have high goals but it seems very unrealistic. (Carlson, 1991a, p. B1)

Each of these statements reflects the attitude of many in the community and portions of each have merit. What is missing from the commentaries is a gut belief and healthy faith and optimism that all children can learn and a commitment to helping all youngsters, even society's most marginalized and neglected, achieve "the Best." Opinions aside, ISTEP had begun to dominate the conversation on education within the greater community and within the Gary Community Schools district.

According to George Comer, the Executive Director of Curriculum Services for the Gary Community Schools during much of the 1990s, the district began preparing for ISTEP "the moment we knew it [ISTEP] was coming" (G. Comer, personal communication, January 23, 2010). Comer continued:

> Oh, we started right away. We realigned our curriculum which called for professional development. . . . Teams were selected to write it and then, of course, to share it with the entire staff. Some of it was done by the Central Office Professional Development Staff, but then we also had department chairs within the schools who could do some of that. Our central office became the trainer of trainers. (personal communication, January 23, 2010)

Teachers who taught at Roosevelt at the time also remember efforts to get ready for ISTEP,

but everyone may not have understood exactly what standards they were expected to meet

and, certainly, those teachers who taught upper classmen or untested content areas (e.g.,

subjects other than reading and math) were less involved in ISTEP preparation. Vertelle

Staton, chair of the Science Department, recalled:

> My involvement with curricula had to do with sitting in meetings between department heads all over the city, writing curricula, and I assumed then that it was to meet certain standards. There were opportunities for us to be relieved of classroom duty. Paid substitutes came in so that we could work on curricula. . . I felt that if there was going to be a comparison made between how students tested, our involvement was necessary. I didn't have a negative feeling about meeting for that purpose. (personal communication, January 22, 2010)

Barbara Taliaferro stated:

> We just began hearing: ISTEP is coming, ISTEP is coming, and, so there was a lot of preparation. Teachers were assigned after-school tutoring, lunch hour tutoring and low-achieving students especially were tutored to bring up their skills so they would be ready for ISTEP. (personal communication, March 20, 2010)

No one knew what to expect.

By the fall of 1991, revisions had been made to the 1990 ISTEP without input from

the local district. Communication between the state and Gary remained inadequate. At a

July 1991 school board meeting, a frustrated Swartz explained:

> It is important to note that the ISTEP changed format in 1991 as compared to 1990. To accommodate this change, the 1990 scores are reported twice in the tables. The first 1990 scores are aligned with the 1989 version of ISTEP to permit Board members to review the gains and losses between 1989 and 1990. The second set of scores are equated scores and these are aligned with our 1991 version of ISTEP. They will permit Board members to make comparisons from 1990 to 1991. . . Based on comparison of equated scores with our current 1991 scores, overall district test performance does show a decline when 1991 performance is compared to where we were in 1990. . . . Specifically, grades 6, 8, 9, and 11 show losses ranging from 2 to 13 months in the areas of reading, language, and math. (School board minutes, 1991b, p. 769)

The state's plan already called for summer school intervention for grades 1, 2, 3, 6, and 8 but not at the high school level. In 1991, the state decided not to test 11th graders anymore. Indicative of a trend that persisted through most of the 1990s, the focus of intervention was on the early grades, an interesting approach to take, especially in light of the fact that, by 2000, high school students could not graduate without passing ISTEP. Some board members questioned the lack of intervention, particularly for reading in the high schools but nothing the Gary school board discussed was likely to change the mind of the decision-makers at the State Department of Education and Gary lacked the funds to independently fund intensive high school program intervention. While it was important to stay abreast of what the state was doing, the board was eager to enact local reform.

Gary school officials were trying to answer the call for accountability. Carey's term as interim superintendent ended in the fall of 1991. The newly hired superintendent, Dr. James Hawkins, wanted to establish new goals. He explained to *Post Tribune* reporter, Carole Carlson that the district would maintain the seven broad-based goals established in 1989 that addressed instruction, curriculum, staff development, parent/community relations, school atmosphere, and finance and would add three new goals. The first involved the establishment of "acceptable standards of such as self-discipline" (Carlson, 1991b, p. B3). The second called for more efficient use of human and material resources. The last goal was a commitment to increased development of technology and opportunities for students to actively engage in learning through technology. Eighteen specific objectives would be devised to help achieve the goals such as "develop a plan to improve student attendance at the secondary level" (Carlson, 1991b, p. B3). The Gary community also had its own ideas about accountability and what the schools teach.

One idea that had sparked earlier public debate was the issue of expanding the teaching of Black history in the schools. By 1990, most Northwest Indiana Schools had integrated Black studies into the curriculum (Strong, 1990, p. B1). Opinions in the community continued to vary on the extent to which African American history should be incorporated in the curriculum. Some wanted infusion of African American history into the regular Social Studies curriculum; others supported adding a full-year, mandatory course to the curriculum. Arthur Daronatsy, a representative from the African American Advancement Corporation favored mandating 10th graders to take a year-long course in African American history. He asserted "the textbooks to which students are exposed are not in any meaningful way dealing with minorities" (Carlson, 1992, p. B1). John Attinasi, a professor education at Indiana University Northwest, which is located in Gary, voiced skepticism about whether teachers would really teach the course. "Most schools are not ready for it. Many teachers still hold very mainstream values and won't change their teaching methods" (Carlson, 1992, p. B1). Tony Sanchez, a visiting professor of education at Purdue University Calumet in Hammond, Indiana, expressed his opinion:

> Devoting some time is fine. You can't make the assumption that Blacks know their own history. But let's not make the fatal mistake of teaching only one perspective. Where will these people work? They'll be in the Anglo society. Will they be handicapped by not learning the Anglo side of it? (Carlson, 1992, p. B1)

 Again, the issue of which history children should be taught exposes a very telling quandary, particularly if one believes color no longer matters. Superintendent Hawkins was opposed to making African American history a required course, and stated that "kids have to understand their culture, but we're not an all-Black society" (Carlson, 1992, p. B1). He favored infusing the African American content in the school curriculum and fully explained his views at a board meeting:

> We know that it is important that we provide a curriculum that allows our young people to understand and know about their heritage and culture. In order to do that, our curriculum has to be adjusted. As we modify, it will not be the only thing we teach, but it will be fused form somewhat of a multi-culture perspective [sic]. Students will have a curriculum that will emphasize, make them cognizant and aware of their heritage and culture. (School board minutes, 1992b, p. 210)

African American history eventually became a one-semester graduation requirement in 1996. It remained a requirement until the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year. Contrary to the claims of Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) and other racial realists, none of the Roosevelt teachers interviewed blamed poor performance on the ISTEP on time spent learning about African American history. It is currently an elective course offering. Black history and interest in Black culture had been unofficially infused into Roosevelt's school culture for decades.

Principal Williams was determined to carry on the tradition of excellence and Black pride during the two years he was head principal. Like his predecessor, he believed in empowering students, building positive relationships, and providing students with leadership opportunities. Although not as large as it used to be, Roosevelt had a sizeable enrollment in the early 1990s. According to pupil enrollment records archived at Roosevelt, the pupil enrollment for the 1990-91and 1991-92 school years was 1,681 and 1,662, respectively (Educational Information Systems, 1990, 1991, 1992). Although the decline was small, it was the beginning of a downward trend. By 1999, Roosevelt's enrollment had dropped to just over a thousand, 1,009 to be exact (Educational Information Systems, 1999). Life at Roosevelt during Williams' tenure became increasingly conflicted. The conflict was not so much between staff or students, but stemmed from the pull of tradition and the push of change. The one-size-fits-all state-mandated reforms were supposed to change the way

Roosevelt did business, but did they? How would the old ways of measuring success

measure up to the new standards? Would the new standards raise student achievement?

In many ways, 1991 seemed like a good year for Roosevelt and Mr. Williams. On

November 12, 1991, Williams presented what was "the Best" about Roosevelt to the Gary

School Board. Throughout the presentation, one could feel the old and the new, the past and

the future. He spoke about Roosevelt's goals for the school year:

> We have accepted the challenge this school year to improve student achievement;
> improve student attendance; and improve student behavior. To accomplish this, we
> plan to do three things: 1) improve opportunities for student leadership and
> involvement; 2) improve parent involvement; and 3) implement our 1991-1992
> Action Plan. This plan includes many strategies designed to have a positive impact
> on these three areas. (School board minutes, 1991c, p. 897)

In the true spirit of the Roosevelt way of doing things, Williams firmly believed in

empowering students, building positive relationships, and providing students with leadership

opportunities. He brought two students to the meeting, the Roosevelt Teen Scene Reporter

and a student member of the National Accreditation Association (NCA) and the

Performance-based Assessment (PBA) team. Also with Williams were a teacher who gave a

detailed account of the School Improvement Plan and a parent who spoke on behalf of

"Panther Pride" and Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (PTSO). Carol Smith, an active

participant on the School Improvement Team, explained Roosevelt's Action Plan. Even

though the district was no longer actively pushing Effective School Reform as it had when

Mason was the superintendent, the influence of Effective Schools Training was evident in

Smith's presentation:

> Goal 1—To communicate to parents, community, staff, and students the mission
> statement, school programs, faculty and student achievement, and curriculum and
> instructional improvement. This goal is based on the belief that an integral
> component of all nine correlates is adequate and meaningful communication.

Goal 2—To have teachers to make allowances for different levels of learning, which aid in helping students master essential skills. The basic belief is that teachers in effective schools expect all students to learn and their behavior conveys this high expectation.

Goal 3—Clearly stated guidelines for student conduct, attendance, homework, and the consequences for inappropriate behavior are part of a student handbook. This basic belief is based on the premise that all children can learn.

Goal 4—High expectations are maintained through increased parental and student involvement. Our basic belief is the educational staff in an effective school expects all students to learn and their behavior conveys that expectation.

Goal 5—To increase and update audio-visual equipment. The basic belief is that updated equipment is essential to enhance the quality of learning.

Goal 6—Instructional time is projection [sic] by the elimination of classroom interruptions. The basic belief is the instructional focus is hindered by classroom interruptions.

Goal 7—The School Improvement Plan is [will bring about] a positive change in student behavior, attitude, and achievement. The basic belief is that regular focus on and discussions of positive behavioral traits and attitude will have a positive effect on behavior and attitude. This will result in higher achievement. (School board minutes, 1991c, pp. 900-901)

Specific strategies were presented for each of these goals.

After each person had spoken, Williams advised the board of the favorable

evaluation Roosevelt received from the NCA/PBA team. He was particularly proud of

something Roosevelt had done differently that year:

We did something different from what most schools do. We did a mini PBA/NCA merger, which means that a part of our effort in preparing for this visit was to go back into our School Improvement Plan, which we developed in 1987, and update the strengths and weaknesses of our curriculum, take another look at our goals and objectives and put that out, and at the same time complete certain sections of the conventional NCA type report. We will have to come back in the spring of 1994 and do a full-blown PBA/NCA merges study. Since the state has gotten into the accrediting business, the two are now getting on the same cycle. (School board minutes, 1991c, p. 903)

Williams joked that he had wanted to show a video called "Roosevelt, Dearly Loved," but

"the School Improvement Team overruled me" (School board minutes, 1991c, p. 903).

Clearly, Williams was quite proud of Roosevelt. Board member Brooks applauded the

report and remarked "it's always good to know that Roosevelt is in good standing" (School

board minutes, 1991c, p. 903).

Indeed, some good things were happening at Roosevelt. The school was "accredited

without warning" in 1991 by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (McQuigg,

1991, p. 1). The basketball team maintained the outstanding athletic tradition by winning

the state basketball championship. Interim Superintendent Carey announced "I think

everybody from here to China knows, by now, that the Roosevelt basketball team is the

number one state champ" (School board minutes, 1991a, p. 625). Glenn Robinson, soon to

turn professional, was on that team and once again, Roosevelt had made Gary proud. The

1991 *Rooseveltian* hinted at the presumption of Roosevelt's greatness with a theme of

"Sounds Like Us." At commencement, the 1991 salutatorian reminded the class of the

"value of our person," and the valedictorian spoke of something Rooseveltians had long

since been known for doing, "succeeding against the odds" (61st Annual Commencement

Program, 1991).

But something was going terribly wrong. During the 1980s, Principal Jones initiated

the practice of printing a historical account of Roosevelt's Honor Graduates on the last page

of the Annual Student Achievement and Leadership Awards Ceremony programs. Table 7.1

contains the data printed in the 1992 program.

Table 7.1
Roosevelt High School Honor Graduates, 1970-1992

Class	No. in Class	Honor students	% Honor Students
1970	552	25	4.5
1971	721	41	5.7
1972	554	23	4.1
1973	662	56	9.2
1974	616	59	9.6

1975	608	60	9.9
1976	560	71	12.7
1977	555	69	12.4
1978	570	73	12.8
1979	547	68	12.4
1980	470	67	14.3
1981	451	49	10.9
1982	462	67	14.5
1983	494	58	11.7
1984	482	51	10.6
1985	437	53	12.1
1986	427	44	10.3
1987	342	38	11.1
1988	352	40	11.4
1989	370	42	11.4
1990	321	30	9.3
1991	355	27	7.4
1992	297	11	3.7

Note. Data from Twenty-first Annual Student Achievement and Leadership Program (1992).

These were the kind of data that had motivated and inspired excellence in previous years.

Each class strove to outdo the last in the quest for the best. By 1992, it appeared as though

excellence was becoming increasing elusive for most students. Gains made in higher student

achievement during the Jones era seemed all but gone and close examination of the data

reveals that the dramatic decline in the number of honor students (e.g., students with a

cumulative B- grade point average) became most apparent the same year that students began

taking ISTEP.

Of course, ISTEP, alone, can hardly be blamed for the downward trend at Roosevelt.

Mr. Jones had voiced serious concerns on numerous occasions in the past and previous

studies like the Purdue Survey (1941), National Urban League report (1944), and the Public

Administration Service report (1955) had also noted unique challenges that confronted the

school, most of which were related to a history of racial inequalities. I posit that ISTEP

exacerbated problems already in existence at Roosevelt and want to reiterate the fact that

many of those problems can be attributed to "durable racial inequalities" and "disaccumulated" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 22) advantages"imposed upon the Black community by a history of racial oppression, segregation, poverty, and lack of exposure and opportunity. Racial realists like Thernstrom and Thernstom (1997, 2003) would argue that persistent inequalities are more likely the result of laziness, dysfunction within the Black family and culture, misplaced values, or other "self-sabotaging" (McWhorter, 2001, p. 184) behaviors. Let me be clear, I do not allege that Blacks bear no personal responsibility for underachievement in school. I am well aware of the role that individual initiative and hard work play in school achievement or any achievement in any arena. What I do assert is that color-blind, one-size-fits-all reforms and standards-based measures of student achievement like ISTEP are dangerously ahistorical, unfair, and racist. They are ahisotrical because they turn a blind eye, if you will, to the lingering impact of the unwanted disinvestment this nation has put into the quality of their lives and education. They are unfair because they impose standards predicated on the accumulated advantages and life experiences of the White majority on children. They are racist because they perpetuate White privilege and the perception of White intellectual superiority. Again, it is critical not to be deceived by the appeal of the term color-blind. In practice, color-blind does not mean not seeing color; it means not considering the significance or history of race, race relations, and racism. It assumes that Black children are just like White children. "That world doesn't exist yet. Race is a social location, and where one is located socially determines how one experiences and interprets the world" (Payne, 2008, p. 109). ISTEP and other similar measures do not acknowledge that in America being Black creates obstacles to the personal and collective development of Black people. Such measures are oblivious to the unresolved,

misunderstood, and often unvoiced dilemmas that confront African American youth and complicate the task of school achievement.

Perry (2003) theorized that African American children face dilemmas that make the task of school achievement distinctive. According to Perry:

> The task of achievement is distinctive for African Americans because doing school requires that you use your mind, and the ideology of the larger society has always been about questioning the mental capacity of African Americans, about questioning Black intellectual competence. The task of achievement requires investment over time, being "in there." It essentially demands that you be capable of bringing to the task who you are socially and emotionally and physically. And the only way you can do this is to bring your full sociocultural person to the task. *The task of achievement requires that you and others believe that the intellectual work you engage in affirms you as a social being and is compatible with who you are* [emphasis added]. (p. 6)

The historic presumption of Black intellectual inferiority and racial stigmatization of African Americans is well documented (Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 1924, 1935, 1969, 1994, 2001; Goldberg, 2002, 2009; Gordon, 2003; Hacker, 2003; Horvat & O'Connor, 2006; Loury, 2002; McLaren, 2007; Myrdal, 1944; Oakes, 2005; Payne, 2008; Perry et al., 2003; Reese, 2005; Shea et al., 1989; Sizemore, 2008; Tyack, 1974; Watkins, Lewis, & Chou, 2001; Webber, 1978; Williams, 2005; Wise, 2009; Woodson, 1993). I allege, with profound sadness, that too many African Americans have bought into the stereotype and stigma of Black intellectual inferiority and only give lip service to the statement that all children can learn. I argue, further, that ISTEP, and other measures like it, appear to have widened the gap between within the African American community between students most likely to succeed and those expected to fail.

In the case of Gary Roosevelt, ISTEP scores were discouraging, to say the least, and fewer and fewer students achieved excellence by more traditional measures (e.g., maintaining a B average and earning the status of being an honor graduate). By the time

Williams retired in 1992, success seemed increasingly elusive for most students at Roosevelt

on anybody's terms. William Reese, a 1968 graduate of Roosevelt, was named the new head

principal for the 1992-93 school year. Reese had not intended to become a building

administrator:

> I had no vision of doing that. Matter of fact, I was happy in the classroom—very
> happy. I felt I was a very good teacher, teaching social studies and world history. I
> received a phone call from Nick McDonald asking me to assist as a dean at Froebel.
> He told me that at the end of the year, he would evaluate me and see what I thought
> about it [being an administrator] and he would return me to the classroom. . . . I did
> accept the position at Pulaski as an Administrative Assistant Dean and worked for
> one year. I went to Edison as principal for one year, and then to Roosevelt high
> School as principal. (personal communication, January 29, 2010)

Reese remembered that buildings were "real keen on teacher development and identifying

effective schools at that particular time" (personal communication, January 29, 2010).

Teachers and administrators attempted to "cover all the correlates." Reese elaborated:

> We had staff divided into each correlate. At that particular time, the school
> improvement plan was almost tied in with those correlates—the principal as effective
> leader. Family, school, work relationships, effective monitoring of students. That
> [Effective Schools], the district initiatives, and the school improvement plan were
> running hand-in-hand. The writing of the improvement plan was by a school
> appointed team. I selected a number of teachers, which [consisted of] usually the
> department chairs and chairperson of the Guidance Department, the nurse, security,
> and so forth. The writing of the plan was not very difficult. (personal
> communication, January 29, 2010)

The hard part, according to Reese, was getting the rest of the staff and teachers union to buy

in. Getting teachers to buy in to the improvement plan and actually modify what and, more

importantly, how they taught were not new problems. Clifton Gooden, who served as

Assistant Principal at Roosevelt with David Williams, asserted that the improvement plans

often existed "more on paper" (personal communication, January 27, 2010) than in practice:

> We had things on paper that were very well in line with the standards, but when you
> took a look at the overall staff and what they did in the classroom, I think that
> sometimes we did not walk our talk. . . . I pretty much believe the district was

working to ensure that what was being taught was in line on paper with the ISTEP. And I think that sometimes you don't always practice what you preach because if you're talking about change, it has to occur in the classroom. (personal communication, January 27, 2010)

Concerned about the reception the plan was getting from some of the departments, Reese decided to use some of the school improvement monies to hire an educational consultant to come in and work with the staff on "instructional delivery, technology, and those types of things" (W. Reese, personal communication, January 29, 2010). Reese recalled that some teachers:

Received him [the consultant] better as an outsider than they did the building persons and I saw an increase in academic achievement in those particular classes. To be frank, I think it was the humanistic side of teaching that began to develop—they began to see students as people and people started caring about students. (personal communication, January 29, 2010)

The district, Reese said, continued to pull teachers out of the building to align curriculum to ISTEP, adopt textbooks that were aligned to the curriculum, and to learn new ways to teach to the standards. Several of the teachers interviewed disagreed with pulling teachers out of the building. They felt teachers needed to be in their classrooms teaching. Gooden concurred:

I think that many of them [teachers] were participating in the in-services because that was part of the school day, but once that was over with [sic], I think some of them went right back to their old traditional mode of instruction. . . . You still saw the traditional teacher as a sage on the stage. (personal communication, January 27, 2010)

Teaching styles and methods may have been slow to change, but that did not slow down the mandates for change at the district level. In July 1992, the Gary School Board reviewed recommendations from the Secondary Curriculum Advisory Committee. Mr. Christoff, chair of the committee gave the presentation. The current graduation requirements were as listed in Table 7.2

Table 7.2

Graduation Requirements, 1992

Course	Years	Credits
English	4	8
Social Studies	2	4
Mathematics	2	4
Science	2	4
Speech		1
Health and Safety		1
Physical Education		1

Note. Date from School board minutes (1992a).

A total of 38 credits (23 state and local requirements, plus 15 required electives) were needed to graduate. Additionally, Christoff explained, "a student must successfully complete a sequence of courses listed under a major area of study. Those major areas include academics, fine arts, business, technical studies, and practical arts" (School board minutes, 1992a, p. 53). The advisory committee recommended the changes listed in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3

Recommended Changes in Graduation Requirements, 1992

Course	Years	Credits
English	4	8
Social Studies (including African American History)		5
Mathematics	3	6
Science	2	4
Speech		1
Health and Safety		1
Physical Education		1

Note. Data from School board minutes (1992a).

With the changes, 42 credits, instead of 38 credits, would be required to graduate; however,

42 credits would only be the minimum credits a student could earn because as Christoff

explained, "in a normal four-year sequence in high school excluding any failures, a student

can complete 47 credits" (School board minutes, 1992a, p. 53). The thinking behind the

increase in graduation requirements was that "student accountability will improve, the major

area of study will be completed and the corporation will improve staff allocations and course

offerings, as well as the understanding and appreciation for African American History"

(School board minutes, 1992a, p. 53). Upon close examination, the new requirements also

maintained a tracking system (e.g., the major area of study, a practice widely accepted in the

Gary Schools). Christoff added:

> You will note that a great deal of emphasis was placed by the committee on building
> a good four-year program in keeping students on track. We also had some
> recommendations . . . that included trying to reduce student failure to the point where
> we are keeping everybody on track, keeping them successful and then, hopefully,
> getting a better quality of 42 credits towards graduation. (School board minutes,
> 1992a, p. 54)

The changes were approved. Almost 10 years after *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission

on Excellence, 1983), Gary had raised standards within the district for high school

graduation, but some worried that simply adding courses may not be enough. Board

member Jones warned:

> Forty-two credits are nice, but if it is more of the same, in many cases, that won't
> mean too much. Again, let's remind ourselves that we must stop these basket
> weaving courses: general science, general math, etc. Let's take a look at that because
> our children can learn whatever they want to learn. We must expect more of them.
> We must not allow them to sit back in these courses and vegetate. (School board
> minutes, 1992a, p. 54)

Superintendent Hawkins assured Jones and the rest of the Board that the proposed district

goals and objectives would allow the district to "eliminate or significantly reduce the

number of low level course offerings of remedial programs in our school corporation"

(School board minutes, 1992a, p. 54). No one talked about what measures would be taken to

assist students previously tracked to take the so-called basket-weaving classes achieve

success in more difficult courses. How would their skills be strengthened? Would higher

standards raise achievement or create barriers? Who would benefit? The impact of higher

standards and ISTEP on youngsters remained a mystery.

As mentioned previously, high school students in Gary had been taking the TAP for

years. It was a low stakes examination and the passage rate was high across the district.

Very few students failed to graduate as a consequence of poor test performance. When

ISTEP first began, it was not a high stakes examination at the high school level either.

There were no consequences associated with failing it other than having to take it again.

Even in the eyes of typically conscientious students pursuing the academic track, ISTEP was

inconsequential. Roland Walker, salutatorian of the class of 1989, was among the first

group of students to take the pilot test of ISTEP at Roosevelt. As far as he was concerned,

ISTEP was something of a joke.

> We were told it didn't count so we were very loose about it. I was a very focused
> person. I was like—this is a waste of my time. I remember looking at the test and
> not liking it. I really thought I was smart. . . . I think they gave us results, but I don't
> remember what mine were. They probably weren't what I wanted, but I know how
> my mind works. (R. Walker, personal communication, January 27, 2010)

Delia Akins, salutatorian of the Roosevelt class of 1993, barely remembers ISTEP or talk of

standards. "I think I just heard about the standards. The teachers didn't really focus on that

too much. We did take ISTEP. I don't really remember when" (D. Akins, personal

communication, January 9, 2010). Carol Smith, an English teacher at the time, agrees that

initially, "the students did not take it [ISTEP] very seriously. You would hear folks say, you

know the kids won't take this test seriously" (personal communication, March 1, 2010).

Former teacher and counselor, Barbara Banks noted that teacher attitudes were often

negative:

> There was a lot of background chatter . . . it was total negativity about what couldn't be done, what shouldn't be done, how it should be done. People didn't buy into it and the people in Central Office started foundering. (personal communication, January 26, 2010)

During the early 1990s, many parents knew very little about ISTEP as well.

In the age of increased accountability, parental choice, and color-blind, one-standard-

fits-all measures of success when educators are expected to bring all children up to the

higher levels of achievement by arbitrarily designated points in time, it is critical for

educators to understand parents (e.g., how they feel, what they think, what they want). I had

a conversation with a Roosevelt parent and grandparent, Ms. Sadie Jackson, which needs to

be shared because of the insight it provides about parental perceptions and expectations.

Jackson, who was quoted earlier in chapter 5, is a retired registered nurse. She worked to

send herself to nursing school when her children were young. All five of her children

graduated from Roosevelt and went on to college. Twenty years later, she was raising two

grandsons as a single grandparent. Both of her grandsons graduated from high school in

1994. One attended the Gifted and Talented Program at West Side; the other went to

Roosevelt. Below is an excerpt from the interview transcript:

> Interviewer: As a grandparent in the 90s, did you have much involvement with the school? Did you visit the school often?
>   Ms Jackson: No, because they liked sports—they loved sports. And they had to have good grades in order to play. So right after school, they would go to sports. And then they would stay there until the time I picked them up. And I would pick them up around about 6:00-6:30, so they had to get them books. And I used to hear them—they had their own phone, but I used to tell them to get their grades [homework]. It was time for them to go to bed because I insisted on them going to bed. And they got up early.

Interviewer: Do you recall them having to take important tests at school?

Ms. Jackson: Yeah.

Interviewer: Does the name ISTEP ring a bell?

Ms. Jackson: Yes, I remember ISTEP; they had ISTEP. I remember he took it right here at Drew [an elementary school]. He did alright each time, never did fail it. But teachers they prepared them, I guess. They did, I'm sure they did. Because they didn't have any problem with ISTEP, they didn't publish anything bad in the paper—they were doing alright.

Interviewer: What was your perception of Roosevelt when your grandson was a student there? Had it changed in any way from when your children went there?

Ms. Jackson: Like I said, I wasn't in the PTA so I wasn't aware. I didn't know anything about enrollment or anything. They didn't publish in the paper . . . they were doing alright.

Interviewer: How would you describe a good parent? What is a parent's role and responsibility?

Ms. Jackson: I think that a parent should work close with the teachers and find out what they expect of my child. And then I think sometimes it's good to observe the teachers because sometimes—a couple of times, I've seen some things that I wasn't sure about. I thought some of them didn't seem like they cared whether the kids learned or not.

Interviewer: And this was at Roosevelt?

Ms. Jackson: At Roosevelt.

Interviewer: Did you feel comfortable addressing that?

Ms. Jackson: I didn't feel like I was qualified. You know, I think that just to observe one time would not be enough. And I felt the principal should have some type of standard to see if the children are really learning. (S. Jackson, personal communication, February 27, 2010)

Several lessons can be gleaned from Ms. Jackson's comments. Among the most salient are:

1. Single-female dominated homes should not be indiscriminately stigmatized.

2. Parents send their children to school expecting and trusting teachers to do their job and teach their children what they need to know.

3. Parents do what they are comfortable doing for their children.

4. Parents expect the school to have standards and want their children to meet them.

Although Mrs. Jackson is only one example, I suspect that her story is not unique. As mentioned previously, much of the scholarly literature pertaining to the racial achievement gap casts a negative light on Black parents and their parenting practices, especially in

female-dominated homes (Moynihan, 1965; Thernstorm & Thernstrom, 1997, 2003).

Jackson's story refutes much of that research, as have the personal stories of many other

African American parents. In the book, *What African American Parents Want Educators to*

Know, Thompson (2003) found that the majority of the African American parents she

interviewed placed a high value on education and employed variety of strategies to support

their child's education. Mrs. Jackson did not know very much about ISTEP, but it was not

because she did not care. She knew what she thought she needed to know: her grandson was

not causing any trouble at school; he was passing his classes; and he graduated on time from

Roosevelt. As far as Mrs. Jackson and many others in the community knew, the Velt was

still the Velt. It would not be long, however, before everyone in the community would find

out that Roosevelt was in trouble.

Despite efforts to align curriculum, adopt textbooks, become familiar with and teach

to new standards, and tutor students in need of remediation, Roosevelt's test scores were a

far cry from where they needed to be. By anyone's standards, instead of looking like "the

Best," Roosevelt was beginning to resemble the typical racially stigmatized urban high

school, an image the school had historically fought hard to defeat. That does not mean that

students were showing no gains. In fact, in 1994, Roosevelt was awarded another Indiana

School Incentive Award (the first had been given to Roosevelt in 1990). The problem was

that the gains being made were just not good enough to meet the standards, but there was no

evidence of failing to meet the standards in the 1994 *Rooseveltian.* "Simply the Best" was

the yearbook theme and things seemed like they always did except one thing was different

about that yearbook. There were not as many clubs featured in the yearbook and fewer

students participated in the clubs that still existed.

Principal Jones had noticed the decline in student participation before he retired, so, certainly ISTEP, alone, cannot be blamed for the decline in extracurricular activities, but the poor test performance on ISTEP was beginning to take its toll on morale and perceptions of teachers, particularly those who had taught at Roosevelt in the good old days. When morale goes down, teachers and students are less likely to show interest in spending any more time at school than they are required to spend. Demoralization is a barrier to achievement and improvement (Payne, 2008). Part of what had made so Roosevelt such a good school was the sense of connectedness students felt toward the institution. I posit that the decline in extracurricular activities interfered with this connectedness. Indeed:

> A growing body of research suggests that good extracurricular activities and community-based activities are associated with lower rates of academic failure, lower drop-out rates, better school attendance, more satisfaction with the school experience, better rates of college attendance, especially for low-achieving children, and lower rates of various antisocial behaviors. (Payne, 2008, p. 116)

Declining interest in school activities was a sign of pessimism and cynicism. Increasingly discouraged, people began looking for someone to blame. One teacher contended:

> There was no bringing in people who were willing to sit down and flesh out the program. It was like throwing raw meat to the dogs because there was never a concerted effort to plan. There was never a concerted effort to bring people in and really explain what was going on and, you know testing was the future. Leadership was totally lacking and teachers became more frustrated. Coming to work became more of a chore because there was so much negativity that had to be fought. . . Roosevelt School stopped working in the 1990s. (Anonymous, personal communication, January 2010)

Leading through change is easier said than done and many changes were occurring in education at all levels in the 1990s. Each change directly or indirectly affected the leadership and building climate at Roosevelt. For instance, the push for accountability modified the manner in which schools were accredited. The state and NCA, as previously mentioned, now worked jointly to accredit schools, but the more significant change may not

have been who was doing the accrediting but what they were looking for. The push for

accountability had led to stiffer teacher licensure requirements and an increased emphasis on

efficient operations. Based on as review of NCA reports in school archives, school

accreditation documents became increasingly impersonal. Narrative reports were replaced

by checklists. It is probably safe to say that in 1990s, the accrediting bodies did not care

whether Roosevelt had soul or not. Specific violations and circumstances that warranted a

warning were spelled out in the NCA State Guide, 1993-94:

- Failure to comply with policies and standards.
- Four or more teacher violations for semester hour deficiencies or improper licensing.
- Failure to offer and teach the prescribed minimal program.
- An unqualified principal, assistant principal, superintendent, or assistant superintendent.
- An insufficient number of fully qualified administrators.
- Inadequate library and media expenditures.
- Inadequate library collection.
- Insufficient number of fully qualified guidance personnel.
- Lack of community support.
- Planning/conference time violations.
- Political influence by individuals or pressure groups in the administrative of the schools.
- Failure to complete a self-study.
- Four or more teachers with an overload.
- Improper reassignment of a teacher already cited for inadequate preparation or certification.
- Falsifying information.
- Lack of progress toward removing violations of semester hours, teacher overload, or proper certification for second year. (North Central Association Commission of Schools, 1993-1994, pp. 11-12)

Violations that resulted in accreditation with a warning had to be corrected within one school

year. In December of 1993-94, Superintendent Hawkins was informed that all of the Gary

high schools would be "placed on warning for the violation of standards relating to

Governing Board Staff relationships" (Carey, 1993, p. 1). NCA and the state charged that

the Gary School Corporation was in "violation of NCA Standard II—Administration and

Organization" (Carey, 1993, p. 2). They determined that "the general climate of the governing board/staff relations has provoked conditions that detract to a serious degree the quality of the school's educational programs" (Carey, 1993, p. 5). Carey (1993) wrote, "it is reported that high school students see the lack of cooperation and feel threatened and insecure about their future" (p. 5). Principal Reese was also notified of violations of the more stringent state-mandated teacher licensure guidelines at Roosevelt, specifically. Warnings, however, were just that—they did not result in denial of accreditation unless they went unaddressed. A review of records shows that Roosevelt's troubles were resolved by February of 1994, in plenty of time to avoid any further warnings from the state and the Gary School Corporation began working to improve their relations with one another and school employees but public trust in the district was in need of great repair.

Low ISTEP+ scores across the district only added to public frustration. "Gary's failure rate," the *Gary Post Tribune* reported, "jumped from 15.10% in 1993 to 16.91% in 1994" (ISTEP Scores Lack of Test Improvement, 1994, p. A6). Roosevelt's scores were even more dismal. The board looked for ways to get the scores up. At one meeting, tempers flared over payment for a "premier expert" (School board minutes, 1994a, p. 294) who was hired to assist the district in developing a test-wiseness curriculum that, after two years and thousands of dollars, had yet to be implemented. No one seemed to understand exactly what the test-wiseness curriculum entailed, but the fact that it was promoted by an expert and promised to raise test scores made it worth a try. Passing the test was fast becoming the primary goal, more important, perhaps, than actual teaching and learning. Board members expressed a myriad of sentiments related to ISTEP: hope, despair, anger, compassion, and desperation, but never indifference. Sometimes the dialogue resembled what Payne (2008)

called "Happy Talk" (p. 30), meaning when harsh, unpleasant realities are denied and

covered up by positive half truths or untruths.For instance, when the annual report was given

for the 1994 ISTEP scores, the board member Burt declared "I am happy to present to you

the results of our students who participated in a number of testing programs during the

school year" (School board minutes, 1994b, p. 369) and then proceeded to give a dismal

account of student performance. ISTEP scores for all of the secondary schools were well

below state averages. Forty-three percent of Roosevelt students tested below proficiency in

reading; approximately 80% were below proficiency in math. Burt concluded:

> Considerable steps, particularly at the secondary level, should be taken to ensure that
> the essential skills at a minimum are integrated in the curriculum and taught. If
> necessary, assistance in the form of staff retraining opportunities must be encouraged
> for those teachers whose students are having difficulty in mastering selective skills.
> School improvement teams must take a more aggressive approach in the
> development of plans to address the underachievement of students. In addition,
> School Improvement Teams must develop strategies for monitoring the overall
> success of students in their school. (School board minutes, 1994b, p. 374)

As the impact of the data sank in, the dialogue turned from happy talk to obvious frustration.

Board member Alfonso Holliday lamented:

> We have a big problem, I don't say that you have all the answers but I think the
> public should know that [in] over three quarters of some of the schools, the
> graduating people do not have the basic skills to sustain themselves as adults.
> (School board minutes, 1994b, p. 376)

Another board member suggested, "we need a bunch of Joe Clarks to come in. We need to

jack up the teachers. Let's not let them get off the hook. . . either they [the children] have

been taught or they are not taught" (School board minutes, 1994b, p. 376). Attempting to

put the situation in perspective, Burt explained that a large part of the problem stemmed

from the state changing the rules. She had a valid point. Since 1990, a number of

modifications had been imposed on local districts by the state. Burt explained:

In 1991, the basic philosophy of the state shifted from minimal skills to essential skills. In 1991, 17% of our students were below what is called "minimal skills." When the state increased the rigor of the test per se, we had a 300 and some percent increase in the proportion of students who were no longer meeting the standards. This was across the state and it certainly had a tremendous impact on us. . . . We know that in the 1995-96 school year a new testing program will be implemented. More importantly, during the 1998-97 school year there is a competency program that will, supposedly come into effect. For those students who do not pass the competency examination in the 10th grade, they will not get a diploma. . . . When we have approximately 75% of our students failing below essential skills, it certainly suggests that we have a problem and that we must look at some new kinds of measures to ensure that our students do well. (School board minutes, 1994b, p. 376)

Burt's statement implied that the district could only anticipate what the state might do next.

The communication problem between the state and the district about which Robert Jones had

spoken earlier still existed. It was a maddening situation, but the district moved forward

with reform ideas of its own. Among them was the development of a strategic plan

spearheaded by Superintendent Hawkins called Genesis 21. After two and a half years of

"blood, sweat, and tears" (School board minutes, 1996a, p. 1115) the plan was approved by

the board in January of 1996. Using language strikingly similar to the vernacular in

Clinton's Goals 2000, Hawkins described Genesis 21 as "a plan to design and implement a

world-class school system that will serve as a national model for other school systems"

(School board minutes, 1996a, p. 1115). The plan was the result of the collective efforts of

the district employees, parents, community representatives, the Indiana Department of

Education, and the Policy Center for Lifelong Learning at Purdue University, Lafayette,

Indiana. Hawkins proposed seven district objectives associated with the proposed plan at a

September, 1996 school board meeting:

- Begin development of the 13th year college with goal completion of the model by the end of the 1996-97 school year.
- Study and develop, for possible implementation during the 1997-98, an alternative scheduling program for high schools.

- Begin a study on feasibility of implementing themed academies at all levels throughout the school district.
- Develop a plan to upgrade science education within the school corporation.
- Explore the feasibility of designing and implementing program of school-linked (or school-based) integrated services.
- Study the feasibility of maintaining Emerson Visual and Performing Arts Center as an educational institution in terms of refurbishing, a new facility, integration with the Gifted and Talented Program, or relocation. (School board minutes, 1996b, p. 164)

The term *themed academies* raised questions from board members. Hawkins explained that "themed academies are almost synonymous . . . almost like magnet schools. There is a certain kind of emphasis that a particular school would emphasize as part of the instructional program" (p. 165). Themed academies are precisely the reform being implemented today in all of Gary's new 7-12 secondary schools. Hawkins hoped that Genesis 21 would assist the Gary Community School Corporation in becoming accredited as a Freeway School Corporation. To clarify:

> Schools achieve accreditation under performance-based accreditation under performance-based accreditation or by implementing a quality-focused approach to school improvement such as the criteria for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award for Education or those criteria of a national or regional accreditation agency that are approved by the state of Indiana. (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.e)

The Freeway School idea fell by the wayside. As Roosevelt alumni and former principal Marion Williams candidly stated, "it never happened" (personal communication, January 19, 2010). The reason for bringing up the Genesis 21 Plan is not to ridicule the plan or those who worked so ardently on it; but, rather, to demonstrate the treadmill on which school districts often find themselves in their desire to effect change and improvement. Clinton's Goals 2000: Educate America Act, in a well-intentioned effort to inspire innovation, tied financial assistance, especially for struggling schools and school districts, to the writing of improvement plans.

The Gary school board applied for and received a number of reform initiatives and grant opportunities during the 1990s. Some examples are provided in the following paragraphs.

The district received the Challenge Grant from the Federal Department of Education. The Challenge Grant was a five-year, $4.4 million grant. At the heart of the district's proposal was the African American Infusion Program. Dr. James King, one of the key arbiters for the grant, provided details about how the grant monies would be used:

> The African American Infusion Program will be the main core of what we are trying to do. One of the main reasons for that is a very highly motivational program, but it also is a cross-curricular program. We felt that it was good project to use in the integration of technology to help deliver the message across all curricular areas and to enhance the program for the students and to increase their total involvement. It is called, "Students as Leaders" or "Students as Teachers." (School board minutes, 1996c, p. 195)

King went on to explain that the project would focus first on language arts at the sixth grade level. An African American Infusion Cadre, comprised of teachers, administrators, and community members, would use the Internet "to actively research potential projects for inclusion in the African American Infusion program" (School board minutes, 1996c, p. 196). Teachers from the middle schools and three students from each of their classes would attend a three-week summer technology camp "to learn how utilize a complete gamut of technological tools" (School board minutes, 1996c, p. 196). By the end of the camp, students and teachers would be expected to produce a CD-Rom. According to King, the CD-Rom and all of the additional resources obtained and developed during the course of the camp would be shared with their cohorts at the middle school level. As of 2010, the African American Infusion effort continues within the district. According to interview data, the quality and the degree of implementation varies from school to school. A strong relationship

between infusion of African American history and the use of technology is not evident at Roosevelt.

The Gary School Corporation received a $3.4 million grant from the National Science Foundation in 1996. The district hoped to improve the quality of science and mathematics education by increasing the number of minority students enrolling and successfully completing core-college courses and the number of math and science teachers employed in the Gary schools (School board minutes, 1996c, p. 197). One outcome of the grant was the implementation of the Algebra Project at Dunbar-Pulaski Middle School, one of Roosevelt's feeder schools.

The district submitted proposals to the Indiana Department of Education in 1996 and 1997 for the Educate America Grant. Proposals were submitted to support the Genesis 21 objectives and an ISTEP-UP Student Improvement Program in 1996. In 1997, the district qualified for an extension proposal. At an August 1997 board meeting, Christ Christoff described what this meant:

> Within the Extension Proposal are two categories for which we have funds available to the corporation. I might tell you that we have gone for the maximum amount. . . . We have asked to participate in the new North Central Association's Accreditation Program, which is called the TRANSITIONS Program. . . . It is something very, very new. We understand from our state consultants that in all probability within a few short years, this will be the model that will be mandated for all corporations within the state of Indiana. . . . At the heart of TRANSITIONS accreditation is the credentials of individual students, K-12, as they move from school to work. . . . It will force us now to do an evaluation on every student every year as they progress through the various levels, elementary, middle and high school, and then show evidence of where they will be going afterwards. (School board minutes, 1997, p. 369)

Stating that Transitions was a five-year program, Christoff added that it would be "much more rigorous than the PBA program that we went through before" (School board minutes, 1997, p. 369). School archival records indicate that Roosevelt participated in the Transitions

Endorsement process, however, no one recalled anything about it. Transitions Accreditation remains an option today; it never became a state mandate.

I would argue that Gary, like many other local school districts and school improvement teams across the country, became adept at writing improvement plans, but not at improving student achievement. Roosevelt began writing improvement plans in the late 1980s. Based on a review of the plans that could be retrieved, during the first few years, the plans included brief, doable goals and measurable objectives. Mr. Jones' plans, mentioned earlier in the research, were succinct and practical. As time went on, the plans became longer and more detailed but not necessarily instructive or credible to teachers. One of Roosevelt's more recent improvement plans was almost 200 pages long. The point I wish to make is here is more energy may have been exerted writing impressive than using those plans to inform and improve actual teaching and learning.

Interestingly, mandates from the state appear to have had a much more immediate effect on what was taught and how, but not necessarily in a positive way. There were several important changes dictated by Indiana legislators in the 1990s. Following the establishment of ISTEP, legislators worried that the tests were not challenging enough and for almost two years, the Indiana General Assembly bickered over how to make ISTEP more rigorous. The first proposed revision, the Indiana Performance Assessment for Student Success (IPASS), was rejected by the General Assembly in 1995. According to a press release, "the most divisive issue related to IPASS has been the need for funding to train teachers and tutor students who fail the test" (Tully, 1995, p. A5). A year later, the Indiana General Assembly agreed upon a new test called the ISTEP+ which raised the bar, so to speak, by requiring students to answer more essay-type questions. On April 11, 1996, the

Indiana State Board of Education established ISTEP+ as Indiana's "graduation" or "exit" examination (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.b, p. 1). The class of 2000 would be the first class mandated to pass the test in order to receive a high school diploma. The initial exit exam was administered for the first time to 10th graders in the fall of 1997 (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.b, p. 1). Then, in 1999, one year before the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Indiana General Assembly passed Public Law 221 (P.L. 221, Indiana Department of Education, n.d.f). The law aimed to establish major educational reform and accountability statewide. Indiana schools would be placed into one of five categories based on performance and improvement data from the state's ISTEP+ assessments:

- exemplary progress,

- commendable,

- academic progress,

- academic watch (priority), or

- academic probation (high priority).

The Indiana State Board of Education first adopted the category placements for public and accredited non-public schools with the 2005-06 school year. Based on the interview data, the changes definitely affected teaching and learning as almost everybody was teaching to the test.

In addition, the state altered the diploma system. In 1994, the state introduced Core 40, a new set of course requirements recommended as the best preparation for success in college and the workforce. Beginning in 1998, Core 40 became a requirement for all Indiana high school students who wanted to be considered for admission to a four-year

Indiana state college. By the fall of 2006, Indiana offered four different types of diplomas:

General, Core 40, Core 40 with Academic Honors, and Core 40 with Technical Honors. In

order to receive any of these, however, students must pass the Graduation Qualifying Exam

(GQE), the 10th grade version of ISTEP+. ISTEP+ was the common denominator. Life in

school was not the same and neither were the measures of success. School administrators,

teachers and students had quite an adjustment to make. I argue that the cries for excellence

and equity in the 1980s, which led to the implementation of higher standards and increased

accountability in the 1990s, were displaced by high-stakes testing. In Indiana, education was

all about passing ISTEP.

The atmosphere at Roosevelt might best be described as harried. Mr. Reese was still

the principal when ISTEP+ took effect and according to him the teachers:

> Stayed on those state standards because our supervisor made sure did. Most schools
> were up to par. We would teach items that we knew—kind of had an idea of what
> would be tested. The curriculum departments were putting together packets.
> (personal communication, January 29, 2010)

He recalled encouraging all teachers to teach vocabulary and writing:

> The gym teacher, shop teacher, music teacher, everybody [but it was an uphill
> battle]. Some teachers look[ed] at it like—I don't teach reading, so you're having a
> problem with that vocabulary word, I can't help you. See your English teacher. See
> your Language Arts teacher. (personal communication, January 29, 2010)

Barbara Taliaferro remembered a shift in priorities from "trying to make sure that we had

high-achieving students in the building to focusing on the low-achievers" (personal

communication, March 3, 2010). It was a familiar conundrum—how to serve all children

equitably except, now, ISTEP was forcing teachers to find the answers. All children were

held to the same standard in order to have an equal chance at success after high school. This

is not such an awful thing except few people knew how to raise standards without

inadvertently punishing children who were not yet equipped to meet them. Taliaferro

continued:

> I just recall a lot of time spent in workshops, going over ways to do things to help the low-achieving students. I can remember a lot of money being thrown to teachers to tutor. Teachers were given materials and money and it was primarily for math and reading, only. Everybody else was just kind of on the sidelines.
> We talked about doing things in your individual classrooms to improve this, but they're to improve math and reading. But the focus was done in workshops, and for the teachers who taught the kids who needed to have their scores improved. That's what I remember. (personal communication, March 3, 2010)

When asked if she thought if the tutoring was effective, Taliaferro responded:

> You know what? I have a personal philosophy that if kids are failing in my class, during the regular hour, how can my tutoring them on lunch hour, and after school, when I've put in a whole day, and the kids have put in a whole day—how can that help them? Being tutored by the same people teaching the classes they're failing during the regular day. That never made any sense to me. (personal communication, March 3, 2010)

Unfortunately, Roosevelt's efforts to prepare students for ISTEP+ proved to be ineffective.

According to records obtained from the Indiana Department of Education, the first year 10th

graders took the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE), Roosevelt scored lower than

any other high school in Gary, and based on the Gary School Corporation's Annual Report

Card, Roosevelt was identified as the lowest performing school in the state. Seventy-eight

percent of the 10th graders tested below the state proficiency level in math; 66% tested

below proficiency for language arts. Across the state, 45% tested below proficiency for both

math and language arts. Roosevelt and the Gary community were stunned. Roosevelt had

the lowest performance in the state (Paul, 1997a, p. A1).

The Gary community was in an uproar over the ISTEP+ scores, especially Roosevelt

alumni. Kathy Stone, a 1976 graduate of Roosevelt High School and the parent of a

Roosevelt student, told the *Gary Post Tribune*:

It's a disgrace. I think this school is nothing. It compares in no way. It was when I went to school. The teachers let the kids run wild. The education is not here. It's not here because the teachers are not teaching. (Paul, 1997b, p. A1)

School board officials tried to explain some of the challenges confronting the district that contributed to the low scores. School board member Dr. Alfonso Holliday attributed part of the problem to the fact that the district employs so many teachers with limited licenses. Holliday said:

Particularly in areas like science, math, and special education, we are terribly short. We do not have certified teachers. We have a large number of teachers who are fired at the end of the year and then hired back and they never take the time to get their qualifications. (Paul, 1997c, p. A1)

Greg Smith agreed that it was difficult for the Gary to attract qualified science and math teachers. "Those teachers are out there, but it's a perception problem, with a lot of teachers. . . . We try recruiting and we come up with a lot of good candidates. Sometimes the candidates for whatever reason, go elsewhere" (Paul, 1997c, p. A1). Another problem that Holliday identified was that the change in the mood of society:

We are going through a very critical time in society. Up until now poor test scores were bad—but exceptions were made for minorities through affirmative action. The mood of the country now has been to eliminate all affirmative action from work and school, which means unless minority students are able to achieve some level of test scores, [sic] they will be shut out of all advanced education and jobs in the country. (Paul, 1997a, p. A1)

Things did not get better. Principal Reese, baffled by Roosevelt's low ISTEP performance, had commented back in the spring of March 1997, "we just have to keep plugging away. We can't blame it on one thing. We don't know if it's the fault of the test or the way we're teaching" (Carlson, 1997, p. A1). In September of 1997, when the state's report card confirmed that Roosevelt's scores were the lowest in the state, Reese was still unable to determine what had gone wrong. A Roosevelt alumni himself, he expressed deep

disappointment saying, "Roosevelt alumni are not used to being at the bottom. How do you explain that to people?" (Paul, 1997a, p. A1)

Apparently, nobody was much in the mood to listen to explanations. Hawkins assigned Reese to the position of Supervisor of Social Studies for the school district and the school board informed Hawkins that his contract would not be renewed at the end of the 1997-98 school year. The Gary School Corporation again hired Maggie Carey as Interim Superintendent and Edward Lumpkin became the new principal of Roosevelt. Lumpkin recalled:

> In '97, I started the year as an assistant principal, but about two weeks into that term Mr. Reese moved to another position and I was named acting principal. . . . I was given the job on a permanent basis in December of 1997. . . . I retired at the end of the term in '99. Actually, it was never my intention to be the principal of Roosevelt, because I was really preparing myself for retirement at that time. (E. Lumpkin, personal communication, January 24, 2010)

Teachers at Roosevelt intensified the focus on ISTEP. Lucretia Tolliver taught 10th grade English at Roosevelt. She recalled both the good and the bad about ISTEP:

> Well, I'll say the benefits first. The students were able to review basic skills. They got feedback on their areas of weakness and that was the good part. For the teachers, it forced us to teach skills that the students needed. It forced us to sort of individualize our program.
>   We got a profile of the students and we were supposed to address those needs. The other side of it was that it was very frustrating to everybody—teachers and students. The students who didn't pass felt pressure and fear. And I think at one point they failed so many times, they just gave up. Most students had trouble with the math, some had trouble with the English, and it was embarrassing to know that you were a 10th grade student, an 11th grade student, and you didn't have the skills to pass the test. (personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Maxine Miller, one of school counselors at Roosevelt in the late 1990s, believed that "teachers were forced to teach to the test at the expense of developing reasoning and critical-thinking skills" (personal communication, January 22, 2010). According to Miller, it took awhile for the reality of ISTEP to sink in:

I think what happened was, and this is just my opinion, because there had been so many reforms in the past, teachers knew that this too would pass. And even though they knew about all the mandates, I don't think they took it seriously. . . . Well, the first year, the scores were horrible. The second year, I think we were in a state of shock when the state said, Oh no, they must pass this test to receive a high school diploma. Going into the fourth year, we started to realize this is something we must do. (personal communication, January 22, 2010)

Lumpkin took a slightly different view. From his perspective:

I guess our staff was not in a position to handle or to do well I terms of preparing students, because they were not sure. I suggested, and it did not go over well, that the teachers take the test. At least they would know what the students are going o be up against. . . . I think the test-makers should be involved in the curriculum. (personal communication, January 24, 2010)

The district did provide professional development for teachers, but according to all of the

teachers interviewed, the training took teachers away from their classrooms way too much

and the children missed out on badly needed instruction. Tolliver explained:

Well, every time a new program came in there were hours and hours of preparation. They would take us out of class, send us to other schools, and we would have to get a [substitute]. There was a lot of excitement. The administrators and department heads were all on top of you though—everything was just sort of frantic. We were trained and they would observe us and give us input but most of it was criticism. But some of the items we needed to implement the programs never came, like the computers. We had all these books and we would go through all these book adoptions and then when it came time to order the books, we might get one set per teacher. (personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Tolliver was not the only person who spoke about a lack of materials, especially computers.

All of the people interviewed agree that students at Roosevelt never had ample exposure to

computer technology. By all accounts, there were too few computers for the size of the

student body, teachers were inadequately prepared to use technology as an instructional tool,

and there was not enough assistance in the building or within the district to properly service

and maintain the computers or guide teachers in effectively using them. If Clinton and the

NGA proclaimed technology as education's great equalizer, Roosevelt students were

cheated. Just listening to the comments of those who lived in the experience of the 1990s at Roosevelt, it was clear that they were dealing with unprecedented pressure and uncertainty. The situation was exacerbated by the frequently changing leadership. This, too, was unprecedented: after having only had three head principals in 40 years, the building leadership changed hands four times in the 1990s. Lumpkin retired, as he had planned to do, at the end of the 1998-99 school year. In September 1999, Marion Williams became the new head principal.

Few people questioned the principle of raising standards. The question, particularly in districts with high minority and African American populations, was how to help youngsters, whom society has historically deprived much and offered little, meet those standards. In the words of Orfield and Kornbacher (1996), were we raising standards or raising barriers? Who was benefiting from the standard reform movement of the 1990s? What about the children?

Three students wrote a piece in the 1996 *Rooseveltian* called "A Cry in the Dark." An except is shared below:

> Some people are quick to give up on Gary's youth instead of leading them in the right direction while our school system doesn't always have programs and activities to catch the interest of every student. Gary School Community needs help from all who have a stake in this community to develop more programs that will help all students enhance their self-esteem and reevaluate their character. Such programs can be established by adults who are willing to give up time to help today's youth and tomorrow's future. If we can form programs that will capture the interest of all students, then perhaps truancy wouldn't be such a problem. We all have to listen to the students and pay more attention to their interests so we can get them involved in more positive things.
> Students need to be involved with activities in and away from school that will enhance their talents and creativity. . . . The local churches and community leaders could be presented with ideas to get young people involved in activities that will prepare them to be more future-oriented. Students involved in positive activities should encourage our peers to take part also; instead of treating other less studious or unfortunate students as outcasts. Many times young people are trying to find their

identity and a place to fit in, they may also shy away from adults for the fear of being judged.

Gangs and violence are on the rise, and the problem is not going to get any better if we don't make many changes. As students, we can also do our part to help our peers. Teenagers can man the "crisis hotlines" in their spare time to help peers in need.

This article was not written to criticize anyone. We hope it can merely be the nucleus of steadily growing idea of a positive approach to this complex issue; along with a request for action to be taken by all of us, to create a more positive environment for not only today, but also for the future ahead for the Roosevelt Family. We hope that positive activities in the 1996 *Rooseveltian* will let adults and students alike reflect upon the positive things that can be accomplished with a lot of caring, teamwork, and effort. (Goodloe, Jones, & Kuykendall, 1996, pp. 72-73)

I suspect that people heard their cry but it was muzzled by the threat of ISTEP.

Chapter VIII: The 2000s—Winners Take All

"Without losers, where would winners be?" (Stengall, n.d., p. 1) Public education in America has always had difficulty serving all segments of the population equally well. Historically, African Americans and other minorities have been served the least well. Contrary to the dominant narrative, education has not been the great equalizer for many of the nation's neediest people. The racial achievement gap and educational inequalities of opportunity and outcome persist in spite of the path breaking 1954 *Brown* decision, numerous compensatory education programs, and Goals 2000 legislation. I would argue that, despite the rhetoric espoused through the years about wanting to level the playing field and eliminate racial inequality, recent reforms have only exacerbated inequality, refueled racial stereotype, and secured White privilege in an increasingly diverse America.

In theory, America prides itself on its compassion and diversity. The inscription engraved a bronze plaque mounted inside the Statue of Liberty, arguably the nation's most well-known symbol of openness, opportunity, charity, and compassion, describes a caring nation open to offering a better life to the less fortunate: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me. I lift my lamp beside the golden door" (Lazurus, 1883).

I suspect most Americans would rightly argue that many immigrants have indeed acquired a better life in America. America was essentially founded by immigrants. Many might also assert that opportunity, at least in the post-*Brown*, post-Civil Rights Era, has been equal and available equal for all Americans who really want to achieve and live a good life. Race is no longer a significant determinant of one's life chances. Given that disposition, it is

easy to argue that those who fail to make a decent life for themselves have not taken advantage of the opportunities available to them. Furthermore, Americans love competition, free market enterprise, and capitalism. American democracy depends on these principles. We like to win and be on top, but everybody cannot win. Historically, racism, sexism, and other isms have worked to ensure that White, middle-class Americans maintain the edge in the race to win. I argue that winners and losers today look just like they did 200 years ago only now, with the posture of color-blindness, we can tell ourselves that success is an opportunity afforded equally to all Americans and that if inequality persists, it has little or nothing to do with racism—the desire of Whites to preserve White privilege and in so doing, oppress Blacks and other minorities. I suggest that the impetus for and response to *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983) stemmed more from a desire to secure Anglo, western supremacy than excellence in education for its own sake or the sake of the American people as a whole.

The standards movement of the 1990s that followed the 1980s push for excellence made sense as it became apparent that just calling for excellence was not going to make it so. If schools were going to achieve performance excellence, they had to first establish standards and devise a systematic and systemic approach to implementing those standards. The next logical step would then be to devise an accountability system. As discussed in the previous chapter, Clinton promoted both standards-based education and accountability within the framework of a human capital agenda predicated on human compassion and fairness—a sort of tough love approach to educational reform. The 1994 legislation received bipartisan support for standards-based education and school accountability, but federal enforcement of the law was lax and progress varied significantly from state-to-state despite

strong rhetoric in support of standard-based curriculum and accountability from the nation's governors. The September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the Twin Towers in lower Manhattan provided an opportunity for the nation's leaders to revive the call of excellence and justify claims that the nation really was at risk.

Almost exactly one month after the events now known as 9/11, the NGA held its third National Education Summit in Palisades, New York. A profound sense of urgency promulgated the convention. Then Governor of Michigan, John Engler, "put recent events in perspective" (Engler, 2001, p. 1):

- America experienced a severe shock to its security and well-being.
- The skies over our nation no longer seem to be ours.
- An event of great magnitude unfolded within the span of about 100 dramatic minutes.
- That event ushered in a new era.
- As a result, every aspect of American life was changed—political, military, technological, scientific, and educational.
- Every single child felt the impact. (Engler, 2001, p. 1)

Contrary to what many people might surmise, Engler was not talking about the infamous events of September 11th, he was referring to Sputnik, 1957. Drawing a strong parallel between the Russian launch of the space age and the attack on the Towers, his intent was to impress on his colleagues the notion that "Americans in 2001, as in 1957, are . . . in a new war. We want to secure ourselves from external and internal enemies" (Engler, 2001, p. 1). Ignorance and high school graduates ill-prepared for post-secondary education or the workforce are the internal enemies. Engler applauded the progress made since the 1996 Summit saying:

- In 1996, only about a dozen states had developed standards in core subjects: today, 49 states have.
- What is more, the standards are higher today than they were in 1996. The best of the 1996 standards would be in the middle of the pack today.

- The tests themselves have become more rigorous, requiring students to demonstrate that they've met high standards. Many more tests include questions that require an essay or short answer. The students have to write.
- Since 1996, many more states are holding schools to stricter accountability. There are more incentives in place for districts, schools, and students to improve. (Engler, 2001, p. 2)

Three principles were set at the Summit: measuring results, strengthening accountability, and imposing "tough but fair" sanctions—"failure is not an option" (Engler, 2001, p. 3. These principles paved the way for NCLB.

By the end of the decade, NAEP data indicated that the racial achievement gap persisted despite reform efforts. Many legislators believed the tough-love approach was too weak; it needed stricter accountability. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) gave legislators what they were looking for an "accountability engine driven by two pistons: the insistence that states adopt systemic standards and testing for schools and districts, and the intervention in ineffective schools and districts, executed while providing immediate relief for their pupils" (Hess & Finn, 2007, p. 5). Many of the tough interventions and relief measures have left many teachers and students in ineffective schools and districts wondering, "Where is the love?" In this chapter, as in those preceding, I review the history and critique the impact of educational reform on macro (national) level and micro (local) level, specifically at Theodore Roosevelt High School. My attention in this chapter focuses on NCLB. Because NCLB is so current, I have added a third component that enables me, as the researcher, to interact with people and events in the case study. Hence, the last year of the decade, 2009-2010, is addressed separately from the rest of the microanalysis.

On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

Who could object to a law that promises no child left behind when it comes to our schools? After all, isn't this the great promise of our public school system—that all children, regardless of race, socioeconomic, status, gender, creed, color, or disability

will have equal access to an education that allows them to enjoy the freedoms and exercise the responsibilities of citizenship in our democracy?

As proposed, the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation stood as a continuation of this historic promise. It is a promise that began with Thomas Jefferson's proposal for the first free public system of public education in Virginia; a promise offered as the balance wheel of society by the first state superintendent of education, Horace Mann; a promise put forward as the most basic of human rights by W. E. B. Du Bois. (Wood, 2004, p. vii)

It certainly sounded like a noble cause. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) originally supported by a bipartisan coalition, proposed to improve the way education serves its poor children and generally raise the achievement of all students in America's public schools by mandating a system of color-blind, uniform standards and accountability measures through high-stakes testing. Just as the nation's governors had grown keenly aware of public support for increased school accountability and expenditure to improve the quality of education, so too had candidates for Congress and the presidency in the upcoming election. Republican nominee George W. Bush and Democratic nominee, Al Gore education promulgated education reform and accountability as key issues in the 2000 presidential race (Peterson & West, 2003, p. 7).

Governor Bush held a position different from many Republican leaders in the mid-1990s. He agreed that the federal government should assist state and local school districts with improving education for all students, but did not agree with the ways in which Clinton and Gore proposed the government should provide that assistance. As Vinovskis (2009) explained, "based on his education policies as Governor of Texas, Bush pushed for allowing states leeway to design and implement K-12 education programs but holding then strictly accountable to the federal government for demonstrating significant improvement in student's achievement scores" (p. 155). Bush supported mandatory testing of pupils in every state in grades 3-8 who attended Title I schools and wanted to appropriate $5 billion for a

reading initiative. He was a strong proponent of giving parents vouchers to send their children to private schools, particularly for parents of at-risk students attending low-performing Title I schools. The Republican platform reflected the revised Republican position on education and many of Bush's views. It prioritized the ineffectiveness of current federal programs and recommended ideas that appealed to voters such as "strong parental involvement, excellent teachers, safe and orderly classrooms, high academic standards and a commitment to teaching the basics—from an early start in phonics to mastery of computer technology" (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 155). At the urging of Governor Bush, Republicans abandoned talk of doing away with the Department of Education, an idea that Reagan had entertained years in the early 1980s. Democrats faced the difficult challenge of framing an education reform platform that offered new ideas without overtly criticizing the efforts of Clinton's Goals 2000.

The fact that increased funding for innovations in state and local education reforms had produced modest results hurt the Democrats. Americans had witnessed a myriad of innovative reforms under Goals 2000 and the Clinton-Gore administration. Yet, many of the same problems in education remained. Gore was forced to acknowledge not enough had been done to eradicate the pervasive racial and poverty achievement gap. Additionally, the lingering perception of a crisis in education created real anxiety in some voters. Most states had agreed to comply with the stipulations of Goals 2000 but many were dragging their feet with quality implementation or simply found it difficult to put in place what Goals 2000 required. During the campaign, the Democrats accused Republicans of not wanting to invest in education. They emphasized the importance of teachers and the need to recruit more quality teachers and pushed for increased student responsibility and testing. Increasingly,

state and federal government accountability for improving student achievement moved to the

center of the educational debate. Both parties wanted more accountability but differed on

how to achieve that goal (Rudalevige, 2003).

As anticipated, the election was extremely close. The definitive outcome was not

known until after the U.S. Supreme Court announced on December 12, 2000 that George W.

Bush had won the election (Rudalevige, 2003, p. 35). Republicans retained control of the

House while the Senate was evenly split between the two parties. Vice President Dick

Cheney owned the tie-breaking vote in 107th Congress. Because education had been a

major issue in the campaign and Bush had pledged to make the reauthorization of the ESEA

a top domestic legislative priority, the Bush administration went to work right away on

promoting a new education reform agenda. Three days after Bush was inaugurated, No

Child Left Behind emerged in the form of "thirty-page legislative blueprint" (Rudalevige,

2003, p. 35). The blueprint mirrored Bush's campaign agenda. Rudalevige (2003)

explained:

> It included his version of categorical grant consolidation; a broad block grant
> program providing new spending flexibility to "charter states;" new content
> standards in history and science; grade three through eight annual testing; fourth and
> eighth grade NAEP participation each year; state and school report cards
> disaggregated by subgroup; and a requirement that adequate yearly progress be made
> by the "disadvantaged" students within any school receiving Title I funds.
> Requirements for corrective action when a school or district identified as failing
> continued to fail were not fully specified, but public school choice and, later, "exit
> vouchers" toward private school tuition or for supplemental services were to be
> included. Schools and states that succeeded "in closing the achievement gap" would
> receive funding bonuses from the federal government; those that did not would lose
> administrative funds under Title I. (p. 35)

The language in the blueprint was broad enough to allow for flexible collaboration between

Democrats and Republicans in Congress. The stickiest issue was accountability but it was

also the most "powerful lure" (p. 35) to pass new legislation. Four senators oversaw the

political and language involved in negotiating a bipartisan agreement: Edward M. (Ted)

Kennedy (D-Massachusetts), Zell Miller (D-California), John A Boehner (R-Ohio), and Judd

Gregg (R-New Hampshire) oversaw the language and politics of accountability in the bill.

This unlikely partnership reflected the common perception among legislators (and their

constituents) that the education policies of the federal government had not demanded

tangible, measurable improvement in exchange for the billions of dollars spent on public

education since Johnson's war on poverty. In the end, Bush's NCLB bill, received

unprecedented bipartisan support. Senator Lieberman observed:

> President Bush has articulated a set of priorities that overlap significantly with our
> New Democratic proposal, We . . . feel strongly that the circumstances . . . have
> never been better for breaking the ongoing partisan stalemate and reaching bipartisan
> agreement on legislation that will that leverage real improvement in our schools. (as
> cited in Vinovskis, 2009, p. 163)

Some policymakers questioned the emphasis on high stakes testing and Democrats balked at

the idea of federal monies being used to support vouchers but in mid-December, 2002, the

House and the Senate reached an agreement with 90% support from both chambers of

Congress. On January 8, 2002, in a widely heralded ceremony in Hamilton, Ohio, President

Bush signed into law the 1,200-page NCLB Act and the reauthorization of the 1965 ESEA.

Some of the most important provisions in the act are explicated below:

> *Annual testing*: By the 2005-2006 school year, states must begin administering
> annual, statewide assessments in reading and mathematics for grades 3-8. States may
> select and design their own assessments, but the tests must be aligned with state
> academic standards. . . .
> Test results must include individual student scores and be reported by race,
> income, and other categories to measure not just overall trends, but also gaps
> between, and progress of various subgroups. . . .
> *Academic improvement*: States must attain academic proficiency—as defined
> by each state—for all students within 12 years. . . . If a school fails to make adequate
> yearly progress for two consecutive years, the school will receive technical assistance
> from the district and must provide public school choice. The district must provide
> transportation for students who chose other district schools.

After a third year of failure to make adequate yearly progress, a school will also be required to offer supplemental educational services chosen by students' parents, including private tutoring. . . .

If a school fails to make adequate yearly progress for four consecutive years, the district must implement corrective actions, such as replacing certain staff members or adopting a new curriculum. . . .

Teacher and paraprofessional qualifications: All teachers hired under Title I, beginning this fall, must be "highly qualified". . . . By the end of the 2005-2006 school year, every public school teacher must be "highly qualified." . . .

Reading first: This new program, authorized at $900 million in 2002, provides help to states and districts in setting up "scientific, research-based" reading programs for children in grades K-3. . . .

Early reading first: This new competitive-grant program, authorized at $75 million this year, seeks to enhance reading readiness for children in high-poverty areas where a high number of students are not reading at grade level. It is aimed at 3- to 5-year olds to help them prepare to learn to read. (Robelen, 2002, pp. 28-29)

Under NCLB, every state has to develop its own content standards and establish criterion for proficiency but several stipulations are non-negotiable. For instance, a mutual starting point must be set for math and reading/writing (e.g., language arts) based on the performance in the 2001-2002 school year for all of its student subgroups, schools, and districts. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward achieving the state's goals by the year 2013 -2014 school year is determined separately at the school, district, and state levels with independent AYP measures outlined for reading and math. States were also required to designate at least one additional indicator. In many states, the mandatory secondary indicator for high school is the graduation rate (Vinovskis, 2009). Additionally, NCLB mandated all states to participate in the federal NAEP, which would "serve as an external audit to monitor the progress of states in meeting their goals" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 98). In short, the single most important accountability measure is student test scores.

Based on student test scores, any school that does not make AYP for every subgroup toward the goal of 100% proficiency is identified as a school in need of improvement (SINI). Schools labeled as such are subject to a series of onerous penalties. Former NCLB advocate

and assistant secretary of education for President Bush, Diane Ravitch (2010) described, in

greater detail, the punitive sequence:

> In the first year of failing to make AYP, the school would be put on notice. In the
> second year, it would be required to offer all its students the right to transfer to a
> successful school, with transportation paid from the district's allotment of federal
> funds. In the third year, the school would be required to offer free tutoring to low-
> income students, paid from the district's federal funds. In the fourth year, the school
> would be required to undertake "corrective action," which might mean curricular
> changes, staff changes, or a longer school day or year. If a school missed its targets
> for any subgroup for five consecutive years, it would be required to "restructure."
> Schools required to restructure had five options: convert to a charter school;
> replace the principal and staff; relinquish control to private management; turn over
> control of the school to the state; or any other major restructuring of the school's
> governance. (pp. 97-98)

As indicated above, NCLB encourages the element of choice and the option to privatize

education. The provision of SES in the NCLB Act is the result of a compromise between

opponents and supporters of school vouchers and attempts to address the issue of school

choice. Farkas and Durham (2007) explained:

> When congressional advocates of school vouchers for private-sector were unable to
> insert a voucher provision into the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, they
> compromised instead on a provision to increase after school-tutoring, defined as
> supplemental educational services (SES) to at-risk, low-income students. The hope
> of these voucher advocates was to speak to the creation of an industry of outside
> providers who would help low-income, at-risk students to succeed, even within
> failing public schools. (p. 202)

In general, a local education agency (LEA) must make SES available for eligible students

attending Title I schools that do not make AYP after one year of school improvement or

three years of not making AYP. Stipulations related to SES include:

- School districts are required to reserve at least 20% of their Title I monies to
  address the cost of SES and any transportation expenses that may be associated
  with providing SES.
- School districts can provide SES themselves unless it has been determined that
  the district is systematically failing.
- Districts must inform parents when their children are eligible for SES; identify
  and provide a list to parents of approved SES providers (SES providers must

meet stringent requirements established by individual states); and explain the process for enrolling students in the designated SES programs.
- States are required to closely monitor the approved SES providers.
- In the event that parents opt for a private SES provider, the district must enter into a contractual agreement with each provider to establish compensation.
- Private providers may hire public school teachers to provide the tutoring. (Henig, 2003, p. 68)

Another major stipulation in NCLB that warrants further attention involves the new minimum professional qualifications for teachers, paraprofessionals, and informing parents about the qualifications of the teachers educating their children (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 176). Under NCLB, states could define their own licensure requirements as well as the term *highly qualified*, but some federal mandates were non-negotiable. For instance, all Title I teachers hired after the first day of the 2002-2003 school year who taught academic core subjects were required to be highly qualified which meant they were required to have a state teaching license, a bachelor's degree, and evidence of subject-matter competence. By the last day of the 2005-2006 school year, all public school teachers, not just Title I teachers who taught core subjects, had to be highly qualified according to the definition of highly qualified in each state. Paraprofessionals were also required to meet new standards. The NCLB legislation mandated that paraprofessionals with instructional duties have a high school diploma (or a GED) and two full years of college training (or an associate's degree). Those without these credentials could meet the new requirements by taking a "rigorous state assessment in reading, writing or mathematics knowledge and instruction" (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 177). Newly hired paraprofessionals were expected to meet the requirements on January 8, 2002, the day the legislation was signed. Indeed, the push for excellence affected everyone. NCLB asserted, however, that excellence could not be achieved without scientifically-based research, hence, NCLB encouraged schools to use scientifically based

programs and best practices (Vinovksis, 2009). Encouraging the use of scientifically

research based best practices addressed complaints from those who charged that the

excellence movement of the Eighties had lacked scientific rigor.

A great deal has been written about NCLB and its impact on education in the last

decade. Initially, the American public favored the new law "by a comfortable margin"

(Loveless, 2007, p. 259). Between 2001 and 2005, opposition to the law steadily increased.

By 2005, sentiments were almost evenly divided. Based on 2005 national polls conducted

by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and Phi Delta Kappan and Gallop, Loveless

(2007) offered the following breakdown of public opinion:

> Support for NCLB differs among several groups. Republicans favor NCLB more
> than Democrats, rural residents more than urban or suburban dwellers, African
> Americans and Hispanics more than Whites, and middle and low income workers
> more than those making more than $75,000 per year. The public favors the core idea
> of NCLB—testing students and holding schools accountable for student learning—
> but does not want accountability to include negative consequences. (pp. 259-260)

When the governors convened for the fourth NGA Summit in February of 2005, the tone

was optimistic and resolute. Slightly different from the other meetings, this summit focused

on the state of the nation's high schools. Bill Gates, philanthropist and mastermind of

Microsoft, addressed the group. Early in the 2000s, Gates and his wife, Melinda, had

created a foundation, a college scholarship program aimed at ensuring that "talent and

opportunity meet with opportunity" (Gates, 2005, p. 1) promising minority students who

aspire to go to college. Gates (2005) noticed that many deserving young people were

inadequately prepared for higher education and strongly spoke out against the inequity in the

American public school system and the rationing of quality education in the nation's high

schools. "In district after district wealthy White kids are taught Algebra II while low-

income minority kids are taught to balance a check book" (p. 2). He argued for change on

moral and economic grounds. On the one hand, the moral argument asserted, "we'd better do something about these kids not getting an education because it's hurting them" (p. 3). The economic argument, on the other hand, contended, "we'd better do something about these kids not getting an education because it's hurting us" (p. 3). I would argue that, true to America's track record thus far and the current ideological hegemony enjoyed by neoliberalism, it is the economic argument that most drives the current movement. Nevertheless, Gates introduced a language of reform that caught on like wildfire in many schools across the nation: the new three R's, rigor, relevance, and relationships:

> Rigor: making sure all students are given a challenging curriculum that prepares them for college or work;
> Relevance: making sure kids have courses and projects that clearly relate to their lives and their goals;
> Relationships: making sure kids have a number of adults who know them, look out for them, and push them to achieve. (p. 4)

He called upon the governors to commit to educating all children to be prepared for college, work, and citizenship, publish school data and disaggregate it, meaning to stop hiding behind it; and turn around failing schools and open new ones. Partly as a result of Gates' power and the appeal of his pleas, Achieve, the organization that sponsors the NGA Summits, launched the American Diploma Project Network (ADP) in 2005. Its aim is to close the Expectations Gap in America's high schools. ADP is designed to:

- Align high school standards and assessments with the knowledge and skills required for success after high school.
- Require all graduates to take rigorous courses—aligned to college and career-ready standards—that prepare them for life after high school.
- Streamline the assessment system so that the tests students take in high school also can serve as placement tests for college and hiring for the workplace.
- Develop reporting and accountability systems that value college and career readiness for all students. (American Diploma Project Network/Achieve: Closing the Expectations Gap, 2010, p. 1)

The ADP and NCLB make the same mistake. Both assume that simply raising standards and making children take harder courses will alter teacher expectations and raise student achievement.

The primary winners in this scenario continue to be White, middle-class children. It took awhile for minorities to get the message. As mentioned earlier, if the polls were accurate, minorities (now among the most vocal opponents of the law) initially favored NCLB more than Whites. This should come as no surprise. I would argue that support for the new law from parents of children historically underserved by public education is understandable, if not expected. Why would they not want to believe that NCLB would actually do what it purported to do, close the achievement gap? Their children stood to gain the most or so it seemed. However, the more they and others learned about NCLB, the less appealing the law became. When NCLB met the reality of life in schools, many unintended consequences associated with the law became increasingly evident (Hess & Finn, 2003; Meier & Wood, 2004; Peterson & West, 2003; Sunderman, Kim, & Orfield, 2005). Since 2005, the research literature suggests supporters and opponents agree the law has not accomplished what it set out to do (Gold, 2007; Gordon, 2003; Hess & Finn, 2007; National Education Association, 2004; Rebell & Wolff, 2008, 2009; Vinovksis, 2009).

The politics of accountability remain the most contentious issue. Supporters of NCLB complain that concessions made in first negotiating the bill into law and then in implementing its provisions have weakened the transformational potential of accountability provisions and parental choice options. Opponents assert that the accountability measures are unfair as well as unrealistic and that the choice options undermine the success of public education (Peterson & West, 2003). The plethora of opinions and fervent emotion that

accompanies them is understandable. NCLB represents a bold move in educational policy

toward an outcome-based, coercive accountability that is predicated on three measures:

standards, tests that determine whether the standards have been met, and consequences (e.g.,

penalties or rewards) associated with test performance. Two beliefs underlie outcome-

based, coercive, or high-stakes accountability. The first is that "states ought to establish

performance criteria and then free educators to achieve them" (Hess, 2003, p. 59). The

second is that linking incentives and penalties to student and teacher performance will

"harness the self-interest of students and educators to refocus schools and redefine the

expectations of teachers and learners" (Hess, 2003, p. 59). Hess (2003) elaborated:

> Conceptually, outcome accountability offers a number of advantages. Specifying
> what skills and knowledge students are responsible for mastering fosters agreement
> on educational goals, giving educators clear direction. This enables administrators to
> more readily gauge teacher effectiveness. They can take steps to mentor or motivate
> less effective teachers and to recognize and reward effective ones.
>   Clear expectations and information on performance can ensure that hard-to-
> educate students are adequately served and make it difficult for schools to casually
> overlook such students or argue that they are being served adequately. High-stakes
> accountability can enhance educator professionalism and boost public support for
> schooling by holding educators to clear standards and sanctioning those who do not
> meet them. (2003, p. 59)

NCLB advances a conservative ideology of change that assumes institutional change can

best be achieved by imposing an incentive system of reward and punishment and has little

faith in the capacity of people to change without being forced to do so (Chubbs & Moe,

1990; Finn, 1991; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). People respond best, conservatives

contend, when they fear punishment or failure. In the case of NCLB and educational reform,

the conservative argument goes something like:

> What we have allowed to develop is a situation in which people feel it's okay to fail
> with urban kids and are allowed to get away with it. We need accountability. We
> need high-stakes environments for teachers and kids. At the same time we need to
> remove the bureaucratic impediments that keep professionals from doing their jobs.
> (Payne, 2008, p. 193)

Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) attributed the racial achievement gap to poor schooling and "group cultural differences" within the Asian, Hispanic, and African American population" (p. 4). They defined culture in terms of "values, attitudes, and skills that are shaped and reshaped by environment" (p. 4). As far as they were concerned, the Black-White gap in academic achievement is more than an educational crisis, it is the very cause of the persistent problem of racial inequality. Thernstrom and Thernstorm argued:

> Race has famously been called the "American dilemma." But since mid-1960s, racial equality has also been an American project. An astonishing, peaceful revolution in the status of Blacks and the state of race relations has transformed the country. And, yet, too few Americans have recognized and acknowledged the stubborn inequalities that only better schools can address. (p. 2)

The answer, they say, to racial inequality in society and academic achievement is better schools, better teachers, high-stakes accountability (e.g., testing with consequences based on performance) and a no excuses attitude. The Thernstrom and Thernstrom and other conservative proponents of the law believe that the accountability provisions within NCLB will institutionalize high expectations for everyone, motivate teachers, and create tools that building administrators can use to effectively monitor and evaluate instruction (Payne, 2008).

More liberal opponents view things differently. The liberal progressive ideology of change seeks change "by changing people, by developing them" (Payne, 2008, p. 193). Payne (2008) explained:

> People have to be convinced that there is some value in what you're asking them to do. People must have ownership over change, and that means change must be a voluntary process. You cannot simply issue mandates from on high and get real change in institutions as complex as schools. You issue mandates, you get compliance, and that's on a good day. (p. 193)

Adversaries of NCLB assert that the law neither acknowledges nor confronts the massive

and historic inequalities in the provision of education in America's public schools (Kozol,

1991; Meier & Wood, 2004). Darling-Hammond (as cited in Meier & Wood, 2004) argued

"the biggest problem with the NCLB Act is that it mistakes measuring schools for fixing

them" (p. 9). Darling-Hammond (as cited in Meier & Wood, 2004) continued:

> There is no doubt that the current conditions of schooling for many students of color and low-income students in the United States strongly resemble those that existed before *Brown v. Board of Education* sought to end separate and unequal education. Unfortunately, this law, though rhetorically appearing to address these problems, actually threatens to leave many children behind. The incentives created by an approach that substitutes high-stakes testing for highly effective teaching are pushing more and more of the most educationally vulnerable students out of school earlier and earlier. In a growing number of states, high school completion rates for African American and Latino students have returned to pre-1954 levels. (p. 23)

Educators, serving students on the front lines, are among the most ardent critics of

accountability provisions in the law.

Teachers and administrators maintain that the NCLB does not take into consideration

the varied skill levels of students or the impact that external factors, beyond the school

setting, have on student learning. Increasingly, career educators are concerned about

accountability measures that threaten job security, monetary compensation, and merit pay

(Hess, 2003, p. 58). Some contend that the law adversely affects minorities and sets up

schools with diverse populations for failure (Gamoran, 2007; Kane & Staiger, 2003; Meier

& Wood, 2004; Rebell & Wolff, 2008; Sunderman et al., 2005). Others lament over the

severe penalties imposed on students who fail the tests. As one Texas educator explained:

> I question whether high-stakes testing is the only way to create change in schools, and I wonder if this testing will, in the end, serve the best interests of all students. Last year, I had to tell a student that she didn't pass the "last chance" TAAS exam administered in May of her senior year; I do not even want to imagine the heartbreak that she and her family felt. I've only had to do this once, but it was one time too many, and I don't know that I have it in me to it again. (Hess, 2003, p. 58)

Increasingly, parents are complaining about high-stakes testing as a means of accountability and it does not seem to matter whether they are rich or poor. Parents who live in low-achieving districts dislike the punitive sanctions that may be imposed on their children and schools as a result of low and failing test scores. "The educated, wealthy, and politically involved residents of highly performing suburban districts have a visceral desire to protect the practices and the reputations of their schools" (Hess, 2003, p. 64). They worry that the school's curriculum will become narrow and watered-down and that teachers will spend too much time teaching what is on the test. In particular, parents of children in gifted, advanced placement, and international baccalaureate (an accelerated international honors) programs express concerned that such programs would be compromised. The emphasis placed on state curricula and preparation for state assessments, they argue, detracts attention from preparation for tests they deem more important for their children like the SAT and ACT (Hess, 2003). Parents of children with special needs allege the law is unjust because in many states, like Indiana for instance, the law allows for accommodations and waivers, but still requires special needs children to pass the exit exam in order to receive a high school diploma. Likewise, parents of children who are non-English speaking or limited English proficient (LEP) also have legitimate concerns about the fairness of high-stakes testing for their children. In short, the people closest to life in schools and directly affected by the interventions, relief measures, and punishment/reward system are squeamish about the outcome-based, high-stakes, coercive accountability measures for which NCLB is best known. They are leery of the no excuses attitude that NCLB encourages. So are many measurement experts. Psychometrician Samuel Messick (1995) coined the term

consequential validity, that is, the consequences of making decisions based on certain

measures. He defined consequential validity as follows:

> The consequential aspect appraises the value implications of score interpretations as a basis for action as well as the actual and potential consequences of test use, especially in regard to sources of invalidity related to issues of bias, fairness, and distributive justice. (p. 745)

Simply put, what Messick is referring to is essentially the phenomenon of the assessment tail

wagging the dog, so to speak. In essence, as schools worry about achievement tests, the tests

begin to drive the curriculum itself. This viewpoint has resulted in a no excuses outlook on

learning that is reinforced by punitive consequences.

Many African Americans allege, as do I, that the no excuses attitude of NCLB hurts

far too many children of color because it fails to acknowledge or address the durable and

cumulative impact of race and racism on the school achievement of Black children. Those

who buy into the no excuses disposition, likely view such claims as examples of the very

excuses they abhor. Blacks and liberals, they say, are just playing the race card, meaning

they are using race as an excuse. I do not doubt that there are times when race is used as a

scapegoat to mask other issues, but I strongly suggest that Du Bois' (1994) (originally

published in 1903) prediction that the color line would be the greatest problem in the 20th

century rings true for the 21st century. Racism still has a strong pulse. The new race-less,

color-blind racism is more obscure, but no less potent than the old; different, yet the same.

Anti-racist author-activist Tim Wise (2009) compared the old and new racisms in *Between*

Barack and a Hard Place. According to Wise, the old racism, *racism 1.0*, the "old-

fashioned bigotry" that tainted the nation's history, is the "racism with which we are, as a

nation, familiar but remain sadly naïve as to the depths of its depravity" (pp. 10-11). Much

more obscure, the new racism, *racism 2.0*, can be likened to "racism without racists"

(Goldberg, 2009, p. 23), "color-blind racism," (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 3), and "everyday racism" (Essed, 1991, p. 52). The new racism is less obvious, even patronizing, but the effect it has on youngsters in school is the same. It is manifested in teacher attitudes and behavior, meaning low expectations and less tolerant attitudes (Ferguson, 2003). "Race helps shape a sense of limited possibilities, partly because it becomes a signifier of intelligence" (Payne, 2008, p. 77). The impact on Black children has been markedly destructive causing stereotype threat and racial stigmatization both of which complicate the task of Black achievement (Loury, 2002; Perry et al., 2003). Black children begin to doubt themselves and their capabilities.

In the age of 21st century racism, the misguided notion that America has moved beyond race and should adopt color-blind policies is particularly frustrating and disturbing, if not, dangerous. When African Americans criticize NCLB for the toll it has taken on Black youth and urban schools, their allegations fall on deaf ears and are dismissed as weak justifications for personal flaws or poor judgment. There is no glory in denial. Yet, Americans are caught in a vicious cycle rife with denial, blame, and few productive solutions. Even when motivated by the best of intentions, the issue of race is a very tricky one. To illustrate just how tricky the issue of race in education really is, I review key points emphasized by Nettles, Millett, and Oh (2009) in *Reexamining the Federal Effort to Close the Achievement Gap* to illuminate just how tricky the issue of race in education really is. Diamond (as cited in Nettles et al., 2009) found:

> What is abundantly clear from prior research on race and education is that there is a material and symbolic cost to being Black in the contemporary United States. These disadvantages are embedded in our social fabric and reflected in our social structures, schools, and perceptions of race and intellectual ability. Black students face a racialized educational terrain that creates material and symbolic disadvantages for them. (p. 46)

Diamond (as cited in Nettles et al., 2009) pointed to several experiences unique to being

Black in America:

- Schools that Blacks attend are frequently less conducive to academic success

  (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Diamond & Spillane, 2004).

- For a variety of reasons, students African American students who attend

  segregated schools with a concentration of low income students tend to achieve at

  lower levels than those in integrated settings (Bankston & Caldas, 1996) and,

  increasingly, schools are becoming resegregated (Orfield & Eaton, 1996).

- Black students are typically taught by less qualified teachers than their White

  counterparts (Uhlenberg & Brown, 2002).

- Teachers of African American children tend to have low expectations;

  consequently, students are placed in lower academic tracks, given less

  challenging work, and learn less (Hallinan, 1994; Oakes, 2005; Oakes, Ornseth,

  Bell, & Camp, 1990).

Nettles et al. (2009) wrote:

African American educational achievement in the United States is a veridical
paradox. On the one hand, as a population group, African Americans place the
greatest stress on the nation's education system, requiring the most attention while
delivering the weakest results. On the other hand, African Americans provide the
best target of opportunity for the nation to realize the overall gain in achievement and
return on the investment. The challenge for the nation and especially for
policymakers is twofold: first, to acknowledge that African American student
achievement is vitally important to the nation's future and merits being the highest
priority and receiving substantial sustained investment of resources; and, second, to
produce a compelling new strategy that adequately addresses the specific challenges
of meeting African Americans' educational needs. (p. 44)

While I agree and argue, in fact, that African American children bring a set of variables to

the classroom that differs from their White counterparts, I take issue with some of the

statements the authors make. It is important not to regard African Americans as the

"population that places the greatest stress on the nation's schools" (p. 44), for there is danger

of encouraging educators to perceive the challenge of educating Black children as a burden.

To the contrary, educating Black children well should be viewed as an educational and

moral responsibility because it is the right thing to do. Furthermore, I assert that we should

not be motivated to do what is educationally right because it is the "best opportunity to for

the nation to realize the greatest overall gains on achievement and return on investment"

(p. 44). African Americans are no longer the property of the United States; they are not

investments. Our motivation should stem from a desire to provide equality of educational

opportunity and life outcomes to every citizen, especially those that the nation has

historically marginalized and oppressed. If we want our children to think well of their

country and as Lynne Cheney (1994) said when she protested the alleged revisionist history

promoted by the proposed National History Standards, "we are a better people than the

National Standards indicate, and our children deserve to know it," (p. 1) then we had better

start doing right by others—not to advance our capitalist interests and world superiority, but

because it is the right thing to do. Acknowledging, respecting, and accepting what makes

life and learning for Blacks in America different and figuring out how to best serve the needs

of Black children is our duty, especially since much of what is so different about being

African American is the result of historical and institutionalized racism. Different, I might

add, does not mean substandard or inferior—it just means different. I assert that NCLB

attempts to legislate sameness and negate difference through a complicated accountability

system based on reward and punishment. In spite of the rhetoric about the closing the racial

achievement gap and increasing equality of opportunity and outcomes, the accountability

system established in NCLB has not led to greater racial equality in education. It has created winners and losers. African Americans along with other minorities, the poor, and the schools they attend are frequently the losers.

Kane and Staiger (as cited in Peterson & West, 2003) examined the unintended consequences of racial subgroup rules in NCLB. Within the guidelines of the law, subgroups are defined by more than race and ethnicity. Children are also placed in subgroups based on income, disability status, and English proficiency status. NCLB does not specify the number of students needed to be considered a subgroup. What it does stipulate is that a group of students could be excluded from the meeting the minimum standard if "the number of students in a category is insufficient to yield statistically significant reliable information" (p. 158). The number of subgroups with which schools have to be concerned is directly related to the diversity of the school population. Quite simply, the more White and middle class the student population, the easier it is to make adequate yearly progress because all subgroups are held to the same absolute standard of minimum proficiency. Kane and Staiger gave a thorough explanation of minimum proficiency and its relation to adequate yearly progress, the cornerstones of NCLB:

> The legislation allows states to create their own definition of "proficiency" based upon their own curriculum standards. However, the legislation circumscribes states' flexibility by specifying the manner in which the minimum proficiency rate determined. Once a state defines proficiency, the minimum proficiency rate for each school and subgroup is set at the maximum of the proficiency rate of the 20th percentile school and for all subgroups will be higher. Regardless of the initial proficiency level, the minimum proficiency level must be raised at regular intervals until it reaches 100% at end of 12 years. (p. 154)

Proponents of NCLB contend that the racial subgroups gain from NCLB because the law forces schools to focus on the academic achievement of students formerly left behind (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003). Opponents argue that focusing on the subgroups has

resulted in teachers teaching to the test (Meier & Wood, 2004; Orfield & Kornbacher, 2001; Ravitch, 2010). Kane and Staiger examined minority subgroup performance in Texas, California, and North Carolina and found that "the use of subgroup targets in school accountability programs was not the answer" (p. 174) to closing the achievement gap. Their analysis suggested that there was no positive relationship between subgroup targeting and the test performance of minority groups. Instead, schools with more diverse populations tended to fail state measures that resulted in punitive sanctions that further disadvantaged schools and students. According to Kane and Staiger, the cost of subgroup targeting in test-based accountability systems outweighs its benefits and is counterproductive to the goal of raising the academic achievement of minorities. They concluded:

> Test group accountability systems are intended to shine a harsh light on low-performing schools and raise the stakes for improving student performance. Unfortunately, if a large share of schools is failing to achieve the new standards because of the racial subgroup rules, the law may simply make it easier for the lowest performing schools to be lost in the crowd. (p. 175)

If schools are lost in the crowd, where does that leave students?

The provision of school choice in the NCLB Act is supposed to address this very question. School choice can be considered the second most contentious issue in the law (Peterson & West, 2003). Hill (2007) critiqued the choice provisions of NCLB. Unlike the issue of AYP, which he maintained has "produced results no one will defend," (p. 230), Hill contended that school choice is more difficult to assess because it is hard to determine how much choice NCLB was intended to provide and for whom. The language regarding choice in NCLB gives parents of children attending low-performing schools the opportunity to choose to send their children to a high performing school, but it also allows schools to provide tutoring as a choice option. It does not require schools to create high performing schools in districts where few exist or there are no seats available in high performing

schools; consequently, what the choice provision actually looks like in practice depends on the "pulling and hauling of bureaucratic, rule-making, enforcement, and intergovernmental politics" (p. 231). Nothing in the law prohibits states from amending tests or recalibrating achievement expectations. In other words, the standards can be legally manipulated to avoid having to provide the choice option. I suspect, however, that in high poverty, high minority school districts, what tends to happen is not that state standards are lowered, but weak and cost-effective school choice options (i.e., in-house tutoring) become the parental choice option. Hill reported that "to date, the choice options have proven weak" (p. 231) and suggested that, where there are few viable choice alternatives and little money to create them, parents may be subject to an illusion of school choice and move their children from a bad situation to one that is even worse. Additionally, the verdict is still out on the quality of charter schools expressly formed in response to NCLB (p. 236). Hill stated that in spite of a lack of positive evidence or scientific consensus on the benefits of school choice, the prevailing common sense about choice follows this reasoning:

> If Catholic schools are more effective for disadvantaged students, then increase the number of students who can attend them, via vouchers funded by government and private parties. Further, if there is a limited number of places available in existing private schools, create public programs that will encourage creation of new schools that have some of the attributes of private schools—independence, control of hiring and programmatic decisions, and admission by choice. (p. 235)

NCLB authorizes charters as a desirable alternative to failing schools. While districts are not required to create charters, there are benefits to doing so. School districts that create new charter schools avoid facing federal charges of noncompliance. Calling for more research, Hill suggested "those who support NCLB choice need to undertake serious work on how choice can be made to work well for students" (p. 249).

The other major aspect regarding choice in the NCLB Act is the provision of Supplemental Education Services (SES) (i.e., after-school tutoring), the details of which were outlined earlier in this chapter. Farkas and Durham (2007) have researched the role tutoring serves in standards-based reform. They reported that the biggest glitch in the law is that schools are prohibited from offering SES until after they have not met AYP for three consecutive years. Consequently, implementation is delayed for the students most in need. Since 2005, the number of students receiving SES has grown significantly. Struggling school districts, however, often remain somewhat handicapped because, according to the law, districts identified as in need of improvement are prohibited from providing SES. The result is that large urban districts with the highest population of students eligible for Title I tend to lose large amounts of Title I funds to outside SES providers. Chicago, for instance, battled the U.S. Department of Education in the early years of NCLB over this very issue. Chicago school officials petitioned for a waiver of NCLB regulations that would enable them to provide their own SES with Title I funds. In the meantime, they found ways to make it difficult for outside agencies to provide services. Eventually, Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings granted the waiver in 2005 and Chicago agreed to make access to outside SES providers more accessible to parents. The question is whether or not the competition for funding between private for-profit and non-profit SES providers will lead to better quality SES for children. According to Farkas and Durham, it is too early to tell. In my view, the more pressing question is whether or not either provider is delivering quality service. Are SES providers in either setting, public or private, being innovative or are at-risk youngsters simply getting more of the same—more of what has not worked in the past?

In the era of NCLB and accountability, *at-risk* has become quite a buzzword, a catchphrase used to identify and target poor, minority youth for educational and socio-economic interventions (Ayers et al., 2001). Many of the targeted assistance programs under Title I do, indeed, benefit disadvantaged and minority children. However, since the passage of the Gun-Free Schools Act (1994), targeting of at-risk youth in conjunction with the growing demand for increased student accountability has resulted in a rash of despotic and racist zero tolerance policies in schools across the nation (Ayers et al., 2001). No one would contest the fact that safe and drug-free schools are a right to which all children are entitled. The problem is that schools "have used repressive overkill" (Ayers et al., 2001, p. 46) to give the impression that schools are safe and free of violence. Ayers et al. (2001) explained:

> This authoritarian policy, it seems, is what American politicians do best. Lionel Trilling once said, "Our culture particularly honors the act of blaming someone." We take pleasure in doing that. Punitive measures are used harshly and with very little long-term consideration of the potential effect. (p. 46)

A number of negative consequences have resulted from zero tolerance policies. Schools have become militarized causing the children who most need to feel connected to school experience feelings of disconnection and antagonism. Ayers et al. stated teachers and administrators now treat children as though they are the enemy with little regard for their health and welfare (p. 80). Like color-blindness, zero tolerance policies target the most vulnerable and impose the harshest of sanctions all in the name of accountability and with no regard for the historical and underlying causes of the problem. All too often, African American children disproportionately bear the brunt of zero tolerance policies as racial profiling—the practice of targeting behavioral problems on the basis of race—is routinely practiced, often unconsciously and unchecked, a by-product of color-blindness (i.e., color-

blind racism). Ultimately, student behavior is demonized and criminalized, thereby paving the way from school to prison.

In addition to the concerns mentioned above, inadequate funding for effective implementation of NCLB has been a constant source of consternation. Only Title I funding enjoyed an increase in federal funding and, in the eyes of critics such as National Education Association (NEA), it was debatable whether the increase was enough. In 2004, the NEA issued a report on the funding gap in NCLB. The report stated:

> Although providing no shortage of sanctions against schools rated as "in need of improvement," ESEA/NCLB fell short by more than $32.6 billion in needed funding in fiscal 2003. In particular, a funding gap of $16.5 billion for ESEA Title I-A programs leaves unserved nearly 60% of the 8.5 million children who are its intended beneficiaries. Thus, rather than leaving no child behind, the 2003 funding gap for Title I-A alone leaves some 5 million needy children without such services as individualized instruction, smaller classes, and special programs. (p. vi)

The document went on to discuss other funding gaps related to NCLB. Funding for the new teacher certification standards and requirements is one. Bush's commitment to "providing every child in America with an equal chance," mandates that "schools have highly qualified teachers in every classroom who are certified and competent in the subjects they are teaching" (p. 1). To meet this mandate, school systems will need funding for "effective, professional development for new teachers, along with more teachers and support staff to meet rising enrollments and to staff smaller and more numerous classes" (p. 1). According to the report, funding was insufficient. Charges of inadequate funding continued as more challenges confronted NCLB during President Bush's second term in office, so much so that the 2007 reauthorization of ESEA stood in jeopardy. Trying to make good on a pledge he had made on January 12, 2005 to expand the focus of educational reform to secondary education, Bush proposed a series of high school initiatives. Few took exception with the

fact that education in the nation's high schools needed massive reform but agreeing on the

kind of reform needed and how it should be implemented proved to be quite a challenge.

Bush favored more testing in reading and math in grades 9, 10, and 11. In the first State of

the Union address of his second term, Bush reiterated, "Now we must demand better results

from our high schools, so every high school diploma is a ticket to success" (Robelen, 2005b,

p. 23). Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, agreed:

> We must finish the job and build on that work in our work in our schools. Every
> child needs to graduate with the skills to succeed in higher education or the
> workplace or in the military, and right now, we're falling short. (Robelen, 2005a,
> p. 32).

In the end, Congress rejected Bush's specific high school initiative. As NCLB

reauthorization drew near, supporters of the law proclaimed that NCLB was working, yet

NAEP data indicated:

> Elementary and middle school students have made modest academic progress in
> reading and mathematics in recent years, though high school students do not appear
> to have improved much. Moreover, students overall were not progressing
> sufficiently to reach proficiency by 2013-2014 if NAEP standards were employed
> instead of the lower state education standards. (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 198)

Even the performance on the individual states' tests, which many analysts regard as less

rigorous their NAEP counterparts was not meeting the federal expectations. "Based upon

data for 36 states, Stullich, Eisner, and McCray (2007, p. 37), reported, 'most would not

meet the goal of 100% proficiency by 2013-2014, unless the percentage of students

achieving at the proficient level increases at a faster rate'" (Vinovskis, 2009, p. 198). In

spite of the meager improvement suggested in this report, which says nothing directly about

the persistent racial achievement gap, Bush and Secretary Spellings hailed the small progress

shown on NAEP achievement. Spellings proclaimed:

> At a time when our student population is becoming more diverse, educators and
> students are rising to the challenge and excelling in the classroom. I'm pleased with

the progress but not satisfied. As we inch closer to our goal of having every child on grade level in reading and math by 2014, we need to continue to pick up the pace. I am confident that we can get the job done. (Spellings as cited in Vinovskis, 2009, p. 197)

Not everyone shared Spelling's optimism. By 2007, it became clear that the ESEA would not be reauthorized before 2009 (Vinovksis, 2009). That responsibility would be passed on to the next President of the United States and the 109th Congress.

On November 4, 2008, the country elected its first African American president, Barack Obama. It was an historic moment for every American, irrespective of personal preference.

For a nation built on a foundation of slavery, disenfranchisement, and White domination, the election of a man of color (and a man who, according to the racial taxonomy that has long existed in the United States, is indeed Black) to the highest office in the land, is of no small import. (Wise, 2009, p. 7)

Almost immediately, Americans began asking what the election of a Black President meant for the state of race and race relations. For those people already convinced that race is no longer a major determinant of one's life chances, the election was proof that the United States is, indeed, beyond race. Some Americans believed (or seriously hoped) the victory signaled the end of the bold, irrational bigotry (e.g., racism 1.0) that had been so prevalent among Whites throughout American history. Others, such as I, interpreted Obama's victory as an indication that the racism of old had simple receded and wondered how long it would take for the old racism to resurface, even if in sheep's clothing (e.g., racism 2.0; racism without racists; color-blind racism). It is too early to be sure how the educational agenda of the Obama presidency will affect education, but we know from history, that educational policy is profoundly influenced by the philosophy of the President and the appointed Secretary of Education.

President Obama appointed Arne Duncan, the former Chief Executive Officer of the Chicago Public Schools, as Secretary of Education. Duncan was well known for the reform initiatives he implemented in Chicago. Many of Chicago's reform efforts were funded by private philanthropic organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates and Eli and Edythe Broad Foundations, both of which support reform strategies that favor increasing accountability through incentive structure and competitive market school choice. Soon after taking office, President Obama and Duncan took action that supported the Gates-Broad education agenda (Ravitch, 2010). President Obama called for the removal of state caps on charter schools and endorsed merit pay for teachers. "Duncan appointed a high-level official from the Gates Foundation to serve as his chief of staff in the Department of Education" (Ravitch, 2010, p. 218). While it may be too early to know for certain the changes the Obama administration will suggest when NCLB is reauthorized, from all indications thus far, the Obama administration will continue to pursue a school reform agenda that is based on high-stakes accountability (e.g., merit pay, performance-based evaluation, closing or restructuring failing schools) and choice (e.g., charters, competitive market place school choice) (Ravitch, 2010; Vinovksis, 2009).

On November 4, 2009, President Obama proclaimed, "it's time to stop talking about education reform and start actually doing it. It's time to make education America's national mission" (Race to the top executive summary, 2009, p. 2). Three months later, he signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (AARA), "a historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education" (Race to the top executive summary, 2009, p. 2). AARA provides for a $4.5 billion competitive grant program called the Race to the Top. The goal

of the Race to the Top Grant program is to reward states for creating conditions for

innovative school reform, significantly improving student achievement outcomes and

achievement, closing the achievement gap, raising graduation rates, and ensuring that

students are prepared to succeed in college or the workplace (Race to the top executive

summary, 2009, p. 2). Applicants for the grant must submit ambitious plans in four areas:

- Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;
- building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform and principals about how they can improve instruction;
- recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and
- turning around our lowest-achieving schools. (Race to the top executive summary, 2009, p. 2)

States have two opportunities to apply for the grant in 2010, January and September. The

states with the best plans stand a chance to win the race to the top.

In the meantime, most teachers, principals, and students are still subject to the

mandates of NCLB. Despite the inarguable fact that NCLB has not closed the racial

achievement gap and clearly will not meet the goal of 100% of American students testing

proficient in reading and mathematics, NCLB remains the law of the land and coercive,

high-stakes accountability is the order of the day. Even as critics line up to deplore the

alleged unintended consequences of NCLB, life in schools, especially in low-performing

schools, revolves around tests and test scores. The testing mantra has achieved ideological

hegemony within the educational community. As Thernstrom and Thernstrom (2003) put it:

> In short, tests matter. They tell us what students, educators, parents, and the general public need to hear. When students leave high school barely knowing how to read, their future—and that of the nation—is in jeopardy. Our sense of moral outrage should be particularly great when those students are non-Asian minorities. A decent society does not turn a blind eye to such racial and ethnic inequality. (p. 40)

In this passage are subtle and not so subtle precepts about education and racial inequality in America that are worthy of critical dialogue. I assert that such dialogue is often stifled by ideological positions advanced by two age-old educational camps: conservatives and progressives. These ideologies have resulted in what Payne (2008) called "Holy Postulates" (p. 93). Payne's exaggerated portrayal of the two ideologies flatters neither side which is exactly my point. No good can come from anti-intellectual (i.e., critically unconscious) ideological banter.

According to Payne (2008), liberal progressives ascribe to the following postulates:

1. Thou Shalt Never Criticize the Poor. It is okay to imply that the poor agency but only do to do good. If the poor do anything that's counterproductive, it is only because of the inexorable weight of oppression, which leaves them no choice. We do not talk about poor children or parents as part of their own problem.
2. The Only Pedagogy Is Progressive Pedagogy and Thou Shalt Have No Other Pedagogy Before It. . . . Real teaching is always inquiry-based, student centered, constructivist.
3. Leadership in a Community of Professionals Is Always Facilitative, Inclusive, and Democratic. . . . Real change must be voluntary; you must have buy-in from the bottom before you can do anything.
4. Test Scores Don't Mean a Thing. They don't reflect the most important types of growth, it's easy to cheat, easy to teach to the test. Tests take us away from the real business of education. On the other hand, if test scores the context of progressive instruction, then they are further proof of the superiority of that method of teaching. (pp. 193-195)

Conservatives, on the other hand, hold to a set of different postulates:

1. Money Doesn't Matter. The mother of all conservative sins is refusing to think about resource allocation. The popularity of vouchers and charters is due partly to the fact that they present themselves as revenue neutral. Look at Washington, D.C., they will say. Lavish spending and terrible results.
2. It Only Counts If It Can Be Counted, Only the Quantifiable Is Real. This applies to everything to everything from children's growth to teacher's credentials.
3. The Path of Business Is the True Path. Leadership, decision-making, and organizational functioning should all mirror what is found in the American business community, renowned for its efficiency and hardheadedness.
4. Educators are Impractical. . . . In contrast to the practical, get-it-done businesspeople, educators are . . . whiners.

5. Change Is Simple If You Do It Right. "Doing it right" often comes to mean the changing of structures. (Payne, 2008, pp. 193-195)

I suggest that when the element of race is added to the mix, two more postulates come to mind. To the progressive side, I would add "Thou Shalt Not Say Anything Bad about Black People: It's not their fault." To the conservative list, I would insert "Racism Is Dead: The only thing standing between African Americans and racial equality is a quality education." Holding steadfastly to either of these additional axioms or the ones offered by Payne (2008) is counterproductive. It is time to find solutions and that will require critical consciousness (Freire, 2007), not blind ideology. Clearly, NCLB has not yet done what it set out to do and the most vulnerable of our youngsters have suffered negative consequences that one can only hope were unintended. But then, no one has to tell the people of Gary, Indiana that, especially the students, parents, teachers, and administrators at Roosevelt (see Appendix A for Roosevelt High School Annual Performance 2000-2009, from Indiana Department of Education, 2010b).

Finding Their Way?: A Distinctive Task

> The insistent problem of Negro happiness is still with us. We American Negroes are not a happy people. We feel perhaps as before the sting and bitterness of our struggle. Our little victories won here and there serve but to reveal the shame of our continuing semislavery and social caste. We are torn asunder within our own group because of the rasping pressure of the struggle without. We are a race not simply dissatisfied, we are embodied Dissatisfaction. (Du Bois, 2001, p. 107)

> But rapidly in the future until long before the year 2000, there will be no school segregation on the basis of race. The deficiency in knowledge of Negro history and culture, however, will remain and this danger must be met or else American Negroes will disappear. Their history and culture will disappear. (Du Bois, 2001, pp. 196-197)

> The task of achievement, I would argue, is distinctive for African Americans because doing school requires that you use your mind, and the ideology of the larger society has always been about questioning the mental capacity of African Americans, about questioning Black intellectual competence. The task of achievement requires investment over time, being "in there." It essentially demands that you be capable of

bringing to the task who you are socially and emotionally and physically. And the only way you can do this is to bring your full sociocultural person to the task. The task of achievement requires that you and others believe that the intellectual work that you engage in affirms you as a social being and is compatible with who you are. (Perry as cited in Perry et al., 2003, pp. 5-6)

During the pre-*Brown*, pre-Civil Rights Era, history tells us that African American educators understood and effectuated caring strategies in their schools and classrooms that taught book-learning but also, gave children confidence, hope, and the desire to achieve (Dempsey & Noblit, 1993; Foster, 1990; Franklin, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Perry et al., 2003; Siddle Walker, 1993, 1996; Williams, 2005). Black teachers created a *figured world*, meaning a socially and constructed, as-if world, a counterhegemonic community. Essential to the construction of a counterhegemonic community is the perpetual handing down or passing on of counternarratives aimed at instilling a collective and self-identity that contradicts the dominant narrative. According to Holland et al. (as cited in Perry et al., 2003):

> Identities are the key means by which people care about and care for what is going on around them. Identities are hard-won standpoints that, however, dependent upon social support and however vulnerable to change, make at least a modicum of self-direction possible. (p. 93)

Perry (as cited in Perry et al., 2003) illuminated the nature of the counterhegemonic community African Americans teachers created in the segregated, all-Black school:

> Counterhegemonic in nature, the school-community operated an "as if" community (as if we were free), and it also simultaneously and explicitly recognized the nature of oppression and, as such, mobilized all available resources so that the idea of African Americans as an achieving and a literate people could be realized. The school community was counterhegemonic in that it acknowledged the nature extent of the ideological and material oppression of African Americans as students and intentionally organized itself to counter the effects of this oppression. The school-community was counterhegemonic in that it explicitly passed on those dispositions, behaviors, and stances that were viewed as essential to academic achievement (persistence, thoroughness, a desire to do one's very best, commitment to hard work). The school-community was counterhegemonic in that the school's public culture

included African-American classical and popular cultural formations, as well as the classical and popular cultural formations of the dominant society. In these schools, indigenous African-American cultural formations were rendered classical, and mainstream classical formations became indigenous. (p. 94)

I imagine that, back in the day, few if any, Black teachers were familiar with terms like *figured world*, *counterhegenomic*, or *counternarrative*, but they knew that the children they taught needed to be uplifted, encouraged, and able to love and see themselves as literate, achieving individuals. They knew that the children they taught would not get very far it they bought into or gave into what White people expected of them. They understood that their job as teachers was as much about creating a different and positive identity for their race as it was about teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. The historical account of education at Roosevelt in the pre-*Brown* era concurs with these assessments.

The emphasis on sustaining that counternarrative in schools began to wane in the post-*Brown*/post-Civil Rights Era. The change, however, was gradual. Based on interview and archival data, the figured world at Roosevelt continued to flourish through the mid-1980s. In the words of 1985 Roosevelt graduate Lorenzo Anderson, the object was to be better than the White man—quite a feat in a world in which Blacks are presumed to be intellectually inferior. Increasingly, the focus of education at Roosevelt grew less about consciously sharing African American stories or deliberately constructing a counternarrative and more about meeting prescribed standards and passing somebody else's tests. I maintain, however, that African American children still need a counterhegemonic school-community. Perry (as cited in Perry et al., 2003) provided insight into the dilemmas that make the task of academic achievement for African American youth unique:

How do I commit myself to achieve, to work hard over time in school, if I cannot predict (in school or out of school when or under what circumstances this hard work will be acknowledged and recognized?

How do I commit myself to do work that is predicated on a belief in the power of the mind, when African American intellectual inferiority is so much a part of the taken-for-granted notions of the larger society that individuals in and out of school, even good and well-intentioned people, individuals who purport to acting on my behalf, routinely register doubt about my intellectual competence?

How can I aspire to and work toward excellence when it is unclear whether or when evaluations of my work can or should be taken seriously?

Can I invest in and engage my full personhood, with all of my cultural formations, in my class, my work, my school if my teachers and the adults in the building are both attracted to and repulsed by these cultural formations—the way I walk, the way I talk, the way I use language, my relationship to my body, my physicality, and so on?

Will I be willing to work hard over time, given the unpredictability of my teachers' responses to my work?

Can I commit myself to work hard over time if I know that, no matter what I or other members of my reference group accomplish, these accomplishments are not likely to change how I and other members of my group are viewed by the larger society, or to alter our caste like position in the society? I still will not be able to get a cab? I still will be followed when I drive through certain neighborhoods. I still will be viewed as a criminal, a deviant, and an illiterate.

Can I commit myself to work hard, to achieve in school, if cultural adaptation effectively functions as a prerequisite for skill acquisition, where "the price of the ticket" is separation from the culture of my reference group? (pp. 2-3)

I argue that African American youth still require an "as if" (as if we are free) school environment today. The popular delusion that the U.S. is post-racial, meaning beyond race, obscures reality. Such thinking justifies the adoption of color-blind policies in society and, particularly in education. All that seems to matter now is raising test scores and Roosevelt is having a tough time doing that.

Toward the end of the 1990s, poor ISTEP scores had many people doubting whether Roosevelt could measure up to the standards. Nevertheless, Marion Williams, the new principal, had high hopes and "high ideals" (Paul, 1999, p. B1). No stranger to Roosevelt or the principalship, Williams was a Roosevelt graduate and had served as principal of the Gary Career Center, Dunbar-Pulaski Middle School, and Horace Mann and Lew Wallace high schools. He hoped to "bring back the glory days when Roosevelt was known for athletics and academics" (Paul, 1999, p. B1). Williams spoke about his new assignment:

> The district has had some reorganization—(my becoming principal of Roosevelt) was part of the reorganization of the school district. I think the thing that was in place here was the comprehensive school improvement plan. . . . My responsibility is to take the plan—which I call the blueprint for teaching and learning—and use it to build on the positives and identify the weaknesses. (Paul, 1999, p. B1)

A champion of the Effective Schools model, Williams' vision was that the Roosevelt staff would implement the best practices of effective schools. "My strategy is to look at common practices and research in education to determine the strategies we should use at Roosevelt and then emulate practices where schools have been effective" (Paul, 1999, p. B1).

According to Williams, the Gary district, however, was no longer systematically or wholeheartedly pushing the Effective Schools model. There were people in positions of leadership however, like Williams, who had bought into the Effective Schools model when the district was first introduced to it and continued to employ the principles and the language associated with the reform design. The relatively new Superintendent, Dr. Mary E. Guinn, had her hands full with increasing school violence, dismal ISTEP scores, and accreditation woes. Immediate concerns about new high-stakes state mandates took first priority. As mentioned previously, beginning in the fall of 1997, 10th grade students began taking an exit examination, the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE). The class of 2000 was the first group of seniors required to pass the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE) in order to receive a high school diploma. According to Indiana Law (I.C. 20-10.1-16-13):

> Sec. 13. (a) Beginning with the class of students who expect to graduate during the 1999-2000 school year, each student is required to meet:
> (1) the educational proficiency standard tested in the graduation examination; and
> (2) any additional requirement established in the governing body; to be eligible to graduate.
>   (b) A student who does not meet the educational proficiency standard tested in the graduation examination shall be given the opportunity to be tested during each semester of each grade following the grade in which the student is initially tested until the student achieves a passing score.
>   (c) The board shall develop and adopt a procedure to enable students who;

(1)   undergo the graduation examination; and

(2)   do not receive a passing score on the graduation

examination; to appeal their particular results. The rules adopted by the board must provide for the specific eligible bases for which an appeal may be made and must include as one basis for which an appeal may be made the submission by the appellant student of written evidence indicating that the student's teacher in areas tested by the graduation examination and principal, in their professional judgment, believe that the student's graduation examination results do not accurately reflect the student's attainment of the educational proficiency standard.

(d) A student who does not meet the educational proficiency standard tested in the graduation examination may:

(1)   have the educational proficiency standard requirement waived; and

(2)   be eligible to graduate; if the principal of the school the student attends certifies that the student will within one month of the student's scheduled graduation date successfully complete all components of the Core 40 curriculum as established by I.C. 20-10.1.-5.7.1.

(e) The state board of education shall determine the appropriate grade during which a student may initially undergo the graduation examination. The grade established under this subsection must be higher than 9. Exit Examination. (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.b, p. 2)

The GQE requirements and waiver provisions have been a work in progress for much of the

2000s. The nebulous language in the original guidelines has become more defined and also

more complicated. Currently, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) stipulates that

the GQE requirement may be satisfied in four ways:

1. Pass the GQE.
2. Fulfill the requirements of the GQE Core 40 waiver:
   - Complete a Core 40 diploma
   - Have a grade of "C" or higher in all required and directed elective courses
   - Have the recommendation of the principal.
3. Fulfill the requirements of the GQE Evidence-based waiver
   - Take the GQE at least one time your sophomore, junior, and senior years.
   - Complete any extra help sessions offered each year by your school to prepare for the GQE retests.
   - Maintain a school attendance rate of 95 percent or better over the course of your high school experience (excused absences are not counted against your attendance rate).
   - Have a "C" average in the courses required for graduation.
   - Satisfy any other state and local graduation requirements.
   - Complete the course and credit requirements for a general diploma, including the career academic sequence; a workforce readiness assessment; and, at least

one career exploration internship, cooperative education, or a workforce credential recommended by your school. (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.d, p. 1)

Graduating from high school in the new millennium became a whole new ballgame. It was difficult for everyone to adjust to the changes. Not only were teachers and building administrators expected to teach to and meet new and different standards but parents, grandparents, legal guardians were also expected to grasp the idea that education had changed, especially at the high school level. People raising high schoolers needed to understand that making sure that children went to bed early, got to school on time, behaved in school, stayed out of trouble, and passed their classes would no longer ensure that their children would receive a high school diploma. Perhaps it was never wise to assume, as Sadie Jackson did, that teachers would adequately prepare students for the test or that "principals would have standards to make sure children are learning," (S. Jackson, personal communication, February 27, 2010) but in the in the post-NCLB era, it became downright dangerous to assume anything. The stakes were too high. Ironically, graduating from high school had never been more essential than it was in the 21st century; yet, NCLB was making it more difficult to obtain a high school diploma. The law wrongly presumed that more stringent requirements and punitive consequences would bring about excellence and that leaving no child untested and holding all children to the same standards would achieve equity. Neither assumption proved to be the case at Roosevelt.

By the year 2000, the impact of the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE) was finally beginning to sink in and given the low student performance levels on ISTEP in previous year, a mixture of anxiety and curiosity gripped the Gary community. A series of community forums were held by the Superintendent Guinn and the school board to inform

the public about ISTEP and the GQE and also address their concerns. Already, the district

was considering an acceptable waiver process. Guinn explained:

> We have had one community forum at Roosevelt High School on January 29th. That
> community forum as videotaped and publicized over the radio. We are continuing to
> have community forums to review the GQE or the ISTEP+ Exam. The purpose of
> these forums is to highlight for the general public and, particularly our students who
> are in high school, the guidelines and requirements for the ISTEP test. The
> Department of Education has provided an opportunity for school districts to consider
> a waiver process. The Board adopted the waiver for the students in our school
> district on December 12, 1999, and are now communicating the guidelines for the
> waiver process. (School board minutes, 2000a, p. 21)

Attendance was lower than school officials wanted, but the forums continued across the city

(School board minutes, 2000a). Transportation was even provided to make it more

convenient for parents to attend. Despite the effort, only a handful of parents showed up at

the forum held at Roosevelt on January 20, 2000. Undeterred, Williams had his own ideas

about how to engage parents, teachers, and students in the Roosevelt community and the

Effective Schools model would play a major role.

Williams, an advocate of participatory leadership, began immediately talking to

teachers about effective leadership, instructional focus, monitoring student progress, and

involving parents and other stakeholders in the learning process. "I was one of those persons

who felt really good about it [Effective Schools] so I re-introduced it at Roosevelt,"

Williams recalled (personal communication, February 27, 2010). Some of the staff were

already familiar with the concept; others were not. He relied heavily on Verl Shaffer, the

appointed school facilitator for implementing school improvement, to help promote the

initiative. An English teacher, Schaffer was familiar with school improvement plans and

had also worked closely with the former principal, Mr. Lumpkin, as chairperson of the

School Improvement Team. Shaffer talked enthusiastically about her role as facilitator:

Mr. Williams convinced me to come out [of the classroom] and assume a new position of School Improvement Facilitator. In most buildings, a School Improvement Facilitator was also the chairperson of the School Improvement Team. . . . The facilitator had several jobs. I had to work closely with the principal on professional development, on Title I programs, and help monitor and model what was going in the classroom, as far as teachers implementing the school improvement plan. It was a lot of work initially, but one of the things that Mr. Williams and I tried to do was to bring more teachers into leadership roles, and so where it started out as a one woman show, every semester we'd add more people and more people would be drawn in.

First, I got the department chairs more involved, and then we expanded our professional development to other people. Mr. Williams was very insistent on teachers knowing everything that was going on every step of the way. We even had in-services on teacher's planning periods. I would do PowerPoint presentations on data, how data should inform instruction. (personal communication, January 16, 2010)

The improvement process began with a needs assessment completed by the staff. According to Shaffer, the first year, she and Williams "pieced together a kit from the old days" (personal communication, January 16, 2010) and the staff collectively worked through the nine correlates of the Lezotte Effective Schools Model. The idea was to get teachers to develop a common language about what a school should look like. The following year, professional development was more individualized. Teachers were asked to look at how each of the correlates and examine how they could be applied to their classrooms. "Are all students learning at the same rate in your classroom? Are they failing and passing at the same rate? Is there a great disparity? What can we do about that? Is there a gender difference? What's going on there?" (V. Shaffer, personal communication, January 16, 2010) When asked if the staff bought into the idea of Effective Schools as a school improvement model, Principal Williams recalled mixed reactions:

Much of the work at Roosevelt, I think, was about getting people to buy into a paradigm and believe in the fact that there was a commitment for improvement. I really felt people wanted to see improvement. But, it appeared as though there was some concern that here's another person coming in and they will be here for a short time, and then we will have someone else and something else will start. (M. Williams, personal communication, January 19, 2010)

Things seemed to be progressing, but then "things started going on in the system" (V.

Shaffer, personal communication, January 16, 2010).

Indeed, there was always something going on the system. Individual schools and the

district were mandated to meet tougher standards from the state. Indiana's Performance-

based Accreditation (PBA) is one example. As mentioned previously, PBA was Indiana's

accountability system. All Indiana schools were required to participate in that process in

addition to the traditional NCA process. Accreditation may be granted for up to five years.

If a school receives probationary accreditation, it has three years to earn accreditation. If

after three years, the school still has not met requirements, the school district is placed on

probationary accreditation (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.e, p. 1)

In March of 2000, PBA monitors came to Gary to evaluate several schools. Like

NCLB, the PBA system focused on measuring outcomes and how well available resources

are used to reach the ultimate goal of the educational system, meaning getting students to

pass the test. Practically speaking, the PBA system, primarily concerned with whether or

not schools were in compliance with education laws and rules, hinged on student

achievement (ISTEP performance) and planning for school improvement via a self-study

process. Twenty-one Gary schools were visited; five, including Roosevelt, received on site

reviews by the PBA team. Only Edison Middle School "provided a sufficient amount of

information and data along with the information gathered from the school staff, school team,

parents, and students that they would in fact be awarded a five-year full-accreditation"

(School board minutes, 2000b, p. 79). Guinn explained that the other four schools would be

given additional time "to prove that they too can demonstrate the ability to improve in the

areas noted" (School board minutes, 2000b, p. 79). She acknowledged the responsibility of

the district in the process:

> While each school was responsible for demonstrating the ability to show continuous improvement, we cannot ignore the responsibility of the district level for providing the support and guidance for schools to improve. It was noted that a lack of district-wide curriculum, the need for comprehensive professional development of all staff, which leads to improved instruction, and an attendance policy that links attendance in class to credit earned are all areas neither teachers nor building administrators are responsible for. (p. 79)

Specifically, Roosevelt was placed on probation for the following reasons:

- Students continue to achieve below expected performance levels.
- Technology is woefully deficient and currently cannot be considered as a viable instructional and communication tool.
- Assessment data have little effect on improving instruction.
- Frequent change in administration fragments implementation of change processes and policies.
- Lack of district support to address the needs of students and staff
- Patrons are very concerned about the rapid decline in the status of education at the school.
- A current written curriculum in accordance with state proficiency standards does not exist in most areas.
- Not all special education teachers are certified to teach special education.

(KJ Learning Partners, 2005, p. 5)

Roosevelt and the district had three years to develop an improvement strategy. Meanwhile,

a totally unexpected event occurred. On July 20, 2000 at 2:30 a.m., the unthinkable

happened. The entire West Wing of the building collapsed. Roosevelt was built in1929, but

the West Wing (the old Longfellow, the school that White students attended), was completed

five years earlier in 1924. Another addition was made the West Wing in 1972 and it was

that addition that collapsed. As the Post-Tribune so aptly put it, "call it premonition or

maybe a kind of sixth sense," but when Marion Williams became principal in 1999, he

closed the wing, because of declining enrollment and "under-used classrooms throughout the

rest of the building" (Patterson, 2000, p. A1). Williams said, "I've never seen anything like

it. I got a call saying there was extensive damage, but I didn't expect it would be to this

extent" (Patterson, 2000, p. A4). No one thought it would take almost two years for the site

to be completely cleared. Despite the structural damage and lingering eyesore, the 2001-

2002 school year began on schedule. Williams, considered by many to be a visionary leader,

had big plans for the new school year, plans he hoped would improve the quality of teaching

and learning at Roosevelt. The district also set ambitious goals. By necessity, both revolved

around ISTEP.

Dr. Myrtle Campbell presented an update to the school board on the district's

Curriculum Alignment Project, an undertaking that she described as being "under the

umbrella of the Effective Schools process" (School board minutes, 2000c, p. 228). Once

more, Lezotte's Effective schools model resurfaced in the language of educational reform

within the district. According to Campbell, the goal of the project was to "improve the

overall academic performance of our students by aligning classroom instruction with the

adopted curriculum so that we have some congruence between what is actually written,

taught, and tested" (School board minutes, 2000c, p. 228). She explained that the district

would be using the Instructional Design Model, a research-based, four-tiered process model;

the focus would be on the areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics, the only

academic tested on ISTEP. There were two phases in the curriculum process, both of which

dealt with assessment strategies:

> One phase will be diagnostic strategies where we would do paper/pencil tests or
> utilizing standardized tests. The other phase would be the culmination activities
> where we deal with authentic assessment so that it is more problem-based in trying to
> make a determination as to whether or not a student can perform through a project of
> what he has actually learned. (p. 228)

Assessments would be ongoing. Students would be tested at checkpoints to determine

student progress. Eventually, the nine-week district assessments would be developed as well

as end-of-the-year assessments. Campbell stated, "we hope that they will coincide with the report card and also with the overall testing through ISTEP" (School board minutes, 2000c, p. 228). All eyes were on ISTEP and raising ISTEP scores.

Principal Williams could not afford to ignore ISTEP either. Only 11% of Roosevelt's 10th graders passed the ISTEP+ math test in 1999-2000; 29% passed reading; and 21 seniors were left behind without a diploma because they failed ISTEP. But Williams remained hopeful. He established a Freshman Academy as a school-within-a-school (Paul, 2000, p. B1). The idea of a school-within-a-school (e.g., smaller learning community) was part of a growing movement trend in educational reform. Microsoft genius, Bill Gates, arguably one of the best problem solvers in the world, had undertaken reform of America's high school in the 1990s. Since 2000, the Gates Foundation had funded and overseen the conversion of many large comprehensive highs schools into smaller schools, smaller learning communities, and schools-within-a school. Williams wanted to implement the idea at Roosevelt. He named the new academy the Accelerated Learning Academy, but not for the reasons one might think. The academy was not for students with a record of high achievement and school success; rather, it was "designed for students who have not been high achievers but have the aptitude for high achieving" (Paul, 2000, p. B1). One hundred twenty of Roosevelt's 1,003 students would be in the Accelerated Learning Academy. Williams' goal was give the most vulnerable students an "extra push to live up to their full potential" (Paul, 2000, p. B1). In preparation for the new academy, 10 teachers were to participate in professional development during the summer "to learn the best practices that would be used in the academy" (Paul, 2000, p. B1). Funding for the academy came federal Title I monies and GQE technical assistance funding from the state.

The Accelerated Learning Academy lasted for two years. People directly involved in the program thought it was effective in helping at-risk youngsters succeed in school.

According to Williams:

> We had some of the best instructors in that program. They chose to go through the program, because what we tried to do, and what we did, we them two planning periods and we gave them smaller class sizes, and we insisted that we provide professional development. They had two-hour blocks. (personal communication, February 17, 2010)

Marcus Upshaw, the current Dean of Students at Roosevelt, was a math teacher in the Accelerated Learning Academy. He spoke extensively about his experience teaching in the program and the advantages of block scheduling:

> Class sizes were a little bit smaller, maybe 15 or 16 students. But in spending that much time with the students, the emphasis wasn't on necessarily covering the same amount of content but mastering the content that you cover. So we would have maybe part of the hour [where] we would spend discussing the lesson, what we're going to do, getting them familiar with the terminology and vocabulary so now they're comfortable prior to even approaching the lesson. Then once we would get to the lesson and go over the examples and have them providing examples and providing real life applications to the examples—now they're grasping the concept. Then we would allow them to demonstrate on pencil and paper or maybe go to the board. A lot of the supplemental material that we were using, could be related to the lesson. We had enough time to reach every learner,
> pretty much, in the way they learn best, rather than just try to squeeze all this information into 45-50 minutes. (personal communication, March 4, 2010)

Upshaw also believed that the students in the academy "had fewer discipline than they probably would have because it was almost like a family atmosphere" (personal communication, March 4, 2010). It was easier to contact parents; fewer teachers were calling parents; and, consequently, parents were more cooperative. Carol Smith, who also taught in the program, agreed. She explained:

> I think that was the most successful thing we did. We were on top of kids. If there was a behavior problem, we called the parent right away to come to the school. If there was an attendance problem and a child didn't show up, we called the parent that morning. You see, we were on the case. We counseled. We took them on field

trips. We were trying to develop the whole child and I think it was good. (personal communication, March 1, 2010)

Smith, "an advocate of tracking," added that:

> There was an element that most people didn't see: when you take all of those at-risk kids and put them in one place and they're not disrupting the general education classes, I think those teachers can be effective as well. (personal communication, March 1, 2010)

According to Smith, academic grades, standardized tests, and behavior were the factors used to identify at-risk students. Maxine Miller, a counselor at Roosevelt form 1997-2006, referred to the block scheduling of classes as the double-dose, an intervention strategy for raising ISTEP scores that began in the late 1990 and remains today. Verl Shaffer spoke highly of the double-dose as an in-school intervention. Williams may have had a broader vision of what block scheduling in the academy might be able to accomplish:

> Instead of having six classes for those students during the course of the day, there were three classes, so we knew that they would need more time on task. The other thing with the classes, there could be no fail. The students could only earn A's, B's, or C's, and we gave more time on task and extended the day. Teachers were given additional planning time, and there was cooperative planning rather than isolated planning. Additional instruction was given to those staff members to deal with students who were non-traditional students. So the small-school environment, we were calling it, did, I think, have an effect, because as we monitored the students, we found that we had fewer students dropping out of school and there were more students moving toward graduation. (personal communication, February 17, 2010)

But, the Accelerated Learning Academy encountered staffing and funding problems. After two years, the program ended. According to Williams, "they (Central Office) continued to fight me on it, so I had to back off" (personal communication, February 17, 2010). The double-dose intervention strategy, however, in its strictest interpretation, is still in place today.

In the fall of 2001, Roosevelt Title I status was implemented, so the school and all students were eligible for Title I funding and benefits, including SES services, but Williams

became ill and Diane Rouse became Interim Principal for the duration of the school year. In

a statement given to the *Post Tribune*, Rouse discussed her new assignment and the

challenges that lie ahead:

> I don't know if it's more difficult being principal of Roosevelt as it would be at any other school, but Roosevelt has a long history and a lot of pride associated with the school—although the challenges are the same as they would be at any other school. (McCloud, 2001, p. A1)

Some of the challenges confronting Roosevelt, however, were unique, such as the physical

deterioration of the building and the school's academic probation status. "NCA and the state

accreditation agency provided a list of things that led to the school being placed on

probation," Rouse said, "and that is what teachers will work on improving" (McCloud, 2001,

p. A1). And improve they did, at least in the areas required to get Roosevelt off of

probation. "The staff was not comfortable being where they were," Rouse said, "we were

almost like Malcolm X—by any means necessary" (personal communication, February 24,

2010). On March 7, 2002, the Indiana Department of Education removed Roosevelt from

probationary accreditation status and awarded full five-year accreditation (School board

minutes, 2002, p. 101). Everyone breathed a sigh of relief but little did they know—more

troubles lay just around the corner.

Beginning in the 2001-2002 school year, all public schools felt the brunt of AYP

requirements under the guidelines of NCLB. To clarify, all public schools are required to

make AYP for both the overall student population and any demographic group within the

schools that includes 30 or more students, often called subgroups. Schools and school

districts must make AYP to avoid negative consequences. A school can make AYP in two

ways: (a) meet all performance, participation and attendance/graduation targets for the

overall student population and all subgroups, or (b) reduce the number of students not

meeting the performance targets by at least 10% and meet attendance/graduation rate targets. This is called Safe Harbor.

School corporations also have two ways to make AYP: (a) satisfy performance, participation and attendance/graduation targets for the general student population and all subgroups in one more grade spans (e.g., grades K-5, 608, or 9-12), or (b) reduce the number of students not meeting performance targets by 10% and meet attendance rate targets. This is the Safe Harbor requirement for school districts.

It is critically important to bear in mind that NCLB only imposes negative consequences for schools and school corporations that use Title I funds. After not making AYP for two years, Title I schools enter improvement status. Charts of the anticipated AYP progress and possible P.L. 221 probation and Title I school improvement sanctions are outlined in Figure 8.1 through Figure 8.5 (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.a).

Percentage of Indiana students that <u>Must Pass</u> state ISTEP+ tests for schools to <u>Make AYP</u>		
School Year	**English/Language Arts**	**Mathematics**
2001-02	58.8%	57.1%
2002-03	58.8%	57.1%
2003-04	58.8%	57.1%
2004-05	65.7%	64.3%
2005-06	65.7%	64.3%
2006-07	65.7%	64.3%
2007-08	72.6%	71.5%
2008-09	72.6%	71.5%
2009-10	72.6%	71.5%
2010-11	79.5%	78.7%
2011-12	86.4%	85.9%
2012-13	93.3%	93.1%
2013-14	100%	100%

Indiana's AYP bar raises every three years through 2010 and every year after that through 2014 (see chart below). By 2014, the federal law calls for 100 percent of students at every school to pass state tests in both subjects OR significantly reduce the percentage of students not passing these tests by at least 10 percent annually (safe harbor provision).

Figure 8.1. Raising the AYP bar.

FOCUSED IMPROVEMENT INTERVENTIONS		
Level of Improvement	**Number of years the school has not met AYP**	**Actions that must be implemented in that level of improvement**
Focused Year 1	2 years	• **School Choice** – School must notify parents that they may send their student to another public school (including a charter school) in the district that has not been identified for school improvement.
Focused Year 2	3 years	• **Supplemental Education Services** – School must notify parents about available tutoring services provided outside of the school day or year to eligible non-proficient and low-income students from a list of state-approved providers. • **Improvement Plan** – School must develop a two-year improvement plan within three months. • **Professional Development** – School must use 10 percent of its Title I funds each year for teacher development activities. • **Technical Assistance** – State and school district must provide assistance that supports the school's improvement plan, including analyzing assessment data, improving professional development, and improving resource allocation.
Focused Year 3	4 years	• Continue above actions, plus the following: • Offer state-sponsored online courses for grade-level teachers • Send cross-disciplinary school team to state-sponsored Supporting Student Learning Conference.
Focused Year 4	5 years	• Continue above actions, plus the following: • **Corrective action planning** – School corporation must plan to carry out at least one of the following corrective actions the following year: 1) Replace relevant school staff 2) Sufficiently extend school day or year 3) Hire full-time literacy or math coach 4) Hire English language learner specialist
Focused Years 5-7	6-8 years	• Continue above actions, plus: • **Corrective action plan implementation** – School must carry out the plan developed the prior year.
Focused Year 8 and beyond *(aka Focused Intensive)*	9+ years	• Continue above actions, plus: • Resubmit corrective action plan to state for review/approval • Receive a State Support Team • Use state-provided reading/math diagnostic assessment tools

Figure 8.2. Title I school improvement interventions.

Level of Improvement	Number of years the school has not met AYP	Actions that must be implemented in that level of improvement
		*In addition to the actions described below, the 20 Title I schools in comprehensive improvement that are furthest from making AYP goals – called **Comprehensive-Intensive Schools** – face other interventions, including being assigned a School Support Team or mandatory participation in the state's Institute for School Leadership.*
Comprehensive Year 1	2 years	• **School Choice** – School must notify parents that they may send their student to another public school (including a charter school) in the district that has not been identified for school improvement.
Comprehensive Year 2	3 years	• **Supplemental Education Services** – School must notify parents about available tutoring services provided outside of the school day/year to eligible non-proficient and low-income students from a list of state-approved SES providers. *Comprehensive schools must ensure parents have access to onsite services, transportation (under state guidelines) and multiple opportunities to select a provider.* • **Improvement Plan** – School must develop a two-year improvement plan within three months. • **Professional Development** – School must use 10 percent of its Title I funds each year for teacher development activities. • **Technical Assistance** – State and school district must provide assistance that supports the school's improvement plan, including: analyzing assessment data, improving professional development and improving resource allocation. • **Diagnostic Assessments** – School must adopt and use state-provided reading and math diagnostic assessment tools • **Literacy/Math Coaches** – School must hire a full-time literacy or math coach who has received required training.
Comprehensive Year 3	4 years	• Continue above actions, plus the following: • **Corrective action*** – School must implement at least one of the following: 1) Replace principal or appoint outside mentor 2) Replace relevant staff 3) Hire English language learner specialist 4) Sufficiently extend school day or year • **Indiana Reading Academy Training** – Mandatory participation for all teachers and principals serving grades K-3. • **Indiana Algebra Initiative** – Mandatory participation for math teachers and administrators in middle schools not making AYP in mathematics.

Level of Improvement	Number of years the school has not met **AYP**	Actions that must be implemented in that level of improvement
Comprehensive Year 4	5 years	• Continue above actions, plus the following: • **Restructuring planning** – School corporation must notify parents and prepare to carry out a plan for alternative governance of the school the following year if improvement does not occur.
Comprehensive Years 5-7	6 -8 years	• Continue above actions, plus the following: • **Restructuring implementation*** – School corporation must notify parents and impose one of the following: 1) Replace principal and other relevant staff who have remained the same during sustained failure to make AYP 2) Close the school 3) Reopen as a charter school 4) Contract with private management to operate school
Comprehensive Year 8 and beyond	9 years	• Continue above actions, plus the following: • The superintendent of a school currently identified as Comprehensive Year 8 or higher must resubmit and publicly defend the restructuring plan before a state panel.

* Title I schools that demonstrate significant one-year progress on the differentiated account ability index rating—called **Comprehensive Support** schools—continue to receive comprehensive support interventions but are not required to implement a corrective action or a restructuring option.

Figure 8.3. Comprehensive improvement interventions.

Peer

Level of Improvement	Number of consecutive years the corporation has not met AYP	Actions that must be implemented in that level of improvement
Year 1 Improvement	2 years	• **Public Notice – Notify parents and the general public of corporation Improvement status.** • **Improvement Plan** – Develop or revise an improvement plan, no later than three months after the identification in consultation with parents and school staff. • **Professional Development –** Budget and expend 10 percent of the corporation's Title I allocation on professional development (each fiscal year of improvement).
Year 2 Improvement	3 years	• Continue previous actions.
Year 3 Improvement	4 years and beyond	• Continue previous actions. • **Curriculum & Instruction Review** – Under the state's direction, the corporation must review and analyze curricula and instructional practices within the corporation and make changes based upon the findings. • **Corrective Action** – State maintains the option to implement any of the following additional corrective actions if previous interventions do not result in progress: 1) Defer programmatic funds or reduce administrative funds. 2) Replace corporation staff relevant to the district's inability to make AYP. 3) Remove individual schools from the corporation's jurisdiction and arrange public governance/supervision of these schools. 4) Appoint a receiver/trustee to assume the administrative duties of the corporation's superintendent and school board. 5) Abolish or restructure the school corporation.

Figure 8.4. Title I school corporation improvement status interventions.

Year 1	
Local Response	Local school board notifies public and conducts hearing.* School improvement committee revises improvement plan, may include shifting resources and changing personnel.
State Assistance	Eligible. The local school board can request that the State Board of Education appoint an outside team to manage the school or assist in the development of a new school improvement plan. If this happens, the state will consider the school to be in Year 4 under P.L. 221. (See section on Years 4 and 5.)
Accreditation	Provisional
Years 2 and 3	
Local Response	School implements revised school improvement plan.
State Assistance	Eligible. The local school board can request that the State Board of Education appoint an outside team to assist in the development of a new plan. If this happens, the state will consider the school to be in Year 4 under P.L. 221.
Accreditation	Provisional
Years 4 and 5	
Local Response	School considers recommendations of outside team. School corporation develops an improvement plan. School must show annual progress and move to full accreditation status within three years after the school is placed in probationary status.
State Assistance	Eligible. The State Board of Education will appoint an outside team to assist the school in revising its school improvement plan and recommend changes in the school that will promote improvement, including the allocation of resources and requests for technical assistance. The expert team must include representatives from the community or region that the school serves, and may include school superintendents, members of governing bodies, teachers from school corporations that are in high categories or designations; and special consultants or advisers.
Accreditation	Probationary
Year 6	
Local Response	Implement action as determined by the State Board of Education.
State Assistance	Eligible. State Board of Education will conduct at least one hearing to solicit testimony on several possible options for the school, including merging the school with another school; assigning a special management team to operate all, or part of, the school; Department recommendations; other options expressed at hearing; and revising the improvement plan in any way (including changes in procedures or operations, professional development, and interventions for teachers or administrators). If the State Board determines that intervention will improve the school, the school must implement at least one of the options listed above.
Accreditation	Probationary. School corporation placed on probation. Corporation has one year to move the school to full accreditation status. Legislative recommendation made after one additional year in category.

* Though the statutory requirement for a public hearing under P.L. 221 technically applies only during the first year a school is placed on "Academic Probation," the Indiana Department of Education recommends that school corporations conduct public hearings each subsequent year a school remains on probation. These hearings continue the necessary community dialogue, gather valuable feedback, and garner public support to further school improvement efforts aimed at addressing areas of concern.

Figure 8.5. Public law 221: Consequences for schools on academic probation.

Gary Roosevelt, a Title I school, needed to make AYP. The pressure was on.
Unfortunately, some people took a by-any-means-necessary attitude literally. In June of
2002, the *Post Tribune* reported that graduation might be in doubt for some seniors at
Roosevelt and two other high schools because the state suspected that teachers had given
"improper test assistance" (Waterhouse, 2002a, p. A3) to students on the ISTEP. The tests
of 42 students at Roosevelt drew the attention of state evaluators because of almost identical
answers. Gary district spokesperson Chelsea Stalling reported to the *Post Tribune* that a
Roosevelt teacher "admitted to investigators that she gave students practice tests with real
ISTEP questions" (Waterhouse, 2002a, p. A3). Superintendent Guinn told reporters the
district would destroy all of Roosevelt's practice tests and require ethics training for staff.
The teacher at fault retired. Test scores for the students involved were invalidated; students
could retest or request a waiver from the state. The incident resulted in the unanimous
decision of the Indiana State Board of Education to place Roosevelt on probationary
accreditation. An IDOE spokesperson suggested the state might even consider passing an
anti-cheating law, since in 2002, 750 students had their tests invalidated because of cheating
across the state. No one interviewed wanted to talk on record about the cheating scandal at
Roosevelt, but it is clear from comments shared off the record that cheating, in various forms
and to varying degrees, was not uncommon in the Gary high schools. It is a bit of an
oxymoron, but until the scandal broke, cheating was a well-known, best-kept secret.
Cheating is, of course, never the right thing to do and the effort was hardly worth it as
Roosevelt's scores were still well below the state average. As a result of the scandal, the
state pondered reducing Roosevelt's accreditation status to two years and sanctioning the
Roosevelt teacher. The teacher implicated in the wrongdoing retired. Republican legislators

like Theresa Lubbers considered creating anti-cheating legislation. Democrats like Senator

Earline Rogers of Gary made it clear that she did not condone cheating, but maintained

"urban schools and teachers know they are a step behind based on limited monies and socio-

financial conditions" (Waterhouse, 2002a, p. A1). "They may feel children are getting to the

end of a race with weights on," Rogers added, "I'm sure they want to go the extra mile to

assist but found the wrong way to do it" (Waterhouse, 2002a, p. A2). I suggest that the most

harmful consequence of the cheating scandal was not even addressed. I would argue that the

real tragedy of the incident was the demoralizing message communicated to impressionable

youngsters about their capabilities. A teacher who helps a student cheat effectively says to

that child, I don't think you can do this. You do not have the ability to master this material.

You are not teachable. You are intellectually inferior. Teachers who provide answers and

help children cheat only exacerbate the long-held fallacy of Black intellectual inferiority.

They encourage Black children to think less of themselves. Cheating signals a vote of no

confidence. Therein lies the real crime of cheating.

Williams returned to Roosevelt for the 2002-2003 school year where he remained the

principal through June of 2005. Roosevelt was placed on Level I school improvement under

Title I for not making AYP. Roosevelt was not alone as low ISTEP scores continued to

plague other Gary high schools. Guinn blamed the cheating scandal fallout for dismal high

school ISTEP scores the following school year saying "the oversight and extreme caution

used by all our high schools did reduce the manner in which we provided remediation"

(Waterhouse, 2002b, p. A1). A frustrated Gary school board planned a retreat in March of

2003 to develop strategies to improve test scores. A number of school board members

expressed their views to the *Post Tribune*. Board President Mitchell Scott stated, "I know

our children will learn what they are taught. My question is, what are we teaching them?"

(Carlson, 2003, p. A3) Board member Josephine Brooks said, "the children have no trouble

learning a five-minute rap song, . . . My parents pushed me at Roosevelt High School.

Nobody is motivating them today" (Carlson, 2003, p. A3).

Others in the community pondered the relationship between race and education,

essentially segregated schooling and low achievement among African Americans. "There is

a color line around learning in Northwest Indiana that keeps its schools among the most

segregated in the country," (Carlson, 2002, p. A1). Carlson (2002) wrote:

> In classrooms across the region, Black children sit next to Black children and White
> students sit next to other White students. The effects of segregation, intertwined with
> poverty, have produced a Grand Canyon-sized achievement gap that leaves school
> districts like Gary almost powerless to overcome. (p. A1)

 "Noting that in Gary, just 36% of the sophomores passed the ISTEP+ last year" (p. A1), the

Post Tribune ran a special series in the spring of 2002 on race and segregation in schools.

According to the paper, "statewide, regardless of what type of classroom they're in, Black

students finish dozen percentage points behind Whites on ISTEP+ test scores. But in

schools where there is diversity, Blacks' scores are higher" (p. A1). Barry Johnson, a

professor sociology and anthropology at Indiana University Northwest, located in Gary,

opined:

> It's hard to produce a level playing field in education. Blacks and Whites don't even
> see each other. Segregated systems have not been effective in producing good
> education. That's not surprising because the way they're financed is strongly
> influenced by patterns of race and class. (p. A1)

Gary Superintendent Guinn expressed her views:

> I don't believe race is a determining factor. It's whether or not we have provided
> appropriate knowledge and skills to be successful. Preparation begins at home in
> pre-school years. We need early childhood centers and full-day kindergarten. That's
> critical to long-term achievement because our students start off behind. . . .
> Environment is a factor, but it is not an excuse. . . . There has to be a recognition by

the policy makers of Indiana that when you have less, you need more. I don't think people truly understand the difference between being in a district that does not have diversity and those that do. When you're in an environment where's diversity, the quality of education appears to be different. (p. A1)

To the contrary, I posit that race is always a determining factor, not because Black children are intellectually inferior or Black teachers are inept, but because racism and the inherent inequality that accompanies segregated schooling (e.g., funding), contribute significantly to fewer opportunities which result in lower achievement. As Kati Haycock, founder and director of Education Trust Incorporated, a Washington-based independent advocacy group for poor and minority children, so aptly put it, "society tends to care more about a school where there are some White kids" (Carlson, 2002, p. A1). African Americans who discount the significance of race exacerbate the problems that institutional racism causes. By being intellectually unconscious and not assuming a race-critical position (e.g., recognizing, analyzing, evaluating, the impact that political and policy decisions have on people of color), well-intentioned Blacks perpetuate the stigma of Black intellectual inferiority. The situation is both tragic and ironic.

I allege that the reason why some Blacks, particularly successful Blacks, insist race has nothing to do with it stems from a desire to refute or counter the enduring stigma of Black intellectual inferiority. In their haste to proclaim that Blacks can learn and achieve like Whites, they deny the ongoing role that racism plays in the political, social, economic, and educational decision-making in American society. Eager to prove the inherent equality between the races, they mistakenly profess that race and racism have nothing to do with the persistent Black-White achievement gap. In doing so, however, they unwittingly feed into the pathology of color-blindness, or the "occlusion of history and forsaking of the structural analysis of race" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 188) as an explanatory framework for inequality and

inequality in education. By removing race from the vernacular of educational reform, they

invite the systemic and structural forces of racism and racist policy to continue without

recognition, let alone criticism. I contend that, without acknowledging the organizing

principle of race in America and its influence on institutions like schools, educators cannot

begin to grasp or successfully address the "distinctive task of achievement" (Perry as cited in

Perry et al., 2003, p. 5 for Black children. Instead, educational leadership looks to

consultants with a host of best practices they purport will work with all children in all

schools to help solve the mammoth problem of Black underachievement.

As part of the Title I improvement process, the Gary Community Schools received

technical assistance from state-approved consultants. Roosevelt was part of a feeder group

selected to pilot the use of summative assessments to monitor the implementation and

impact of improvement plan strategies (Kahlich & Jensen, 2004, p. 1). The district opted to

contract with KJ Learning Partners. "All of the buildings had to participate in the KJ

Learning workshops" (V. Shaffer, personal communication, January 16, 2010). Shaffer

recalled KJ Learning, as well as other consultants that came to work with the Gary teachers:

> I found that we were starting to go down the road to being test-driven, and that is
> something that I really didn't want. One of the consultants was a woman named
> Dorothy Jensen. Later, she and another one of the consultants, Ms. Kahlich, formed
> the KJ Learning Affiliates or whoever they are, and then the state mandated or
> encouraged us to use them as our consultants. At one point, they had several groups,
> Phi Beta Kappa, and other groups. (personal communication, January 16, 2010)

A review of workshop packets and other materials used by KJ Learning Partners suggests

that, rather than building teacher capacity or focusing on improving the quality of teaching

and learning, their focus was on helping Roosevelt get better at writing plans to get better,

and using and creating summative assessments and the data they generated to determine why

children were failing ISTEP, or error analysis. Concurrently, the district was also revamping

its curriculum. Shaffer remembered when the mathematics curriculum guides were revised:

> I think this was the biggest waste of money. We have an excellent Curriculum
> Department. . . . They decided to bring in Kent State, consultants from Kent State,
> who frankly just picked up the stuff that we'd been working on and put their names
> on it because our Curriculum Department was fantastic. (personal communication,
> January 16, 2010)

In some instances, the consultants were not well received by teachers. According to Shaffer:

> There was a certain way that some of the consultants conducted themselves. We felt
> we were being rather insulted. Their casualness and their dress, their way of sitting
> on our tables, and putting their feet up on our tables when they were talking . . . we
> found to be a bit much, and some of them were downright rude to Dr. Williams.
> (personal communication, January 16, 2010)

Even though Verl Shaffer is only one person and her views should not be presumed to be

representative of all Roosevelt teachers, I posit that they are indicative of phenomena

common to struggling schools under pressure to demonstrate drastic improvement. The

rationale behind bringing in outside consultants is that once people see what works (e.g.,

best practices) in other places, they will want to implement those best practices in their own

situation. In the provocative chapter, "I Don't Want Your Nasty Pot of Gold," Payne (2008)

described the barriers to change within a discourse around best practices. This discourse,

Payne alleged, is problematic:

> The Best Practices discourse lends itself to decontextualized thinking, reducing the
> problem of urban schooling to a cognitive one. . . . That is all reforms which take the
> form of saying that we just need to get some particular information into the heads of
> people in schools, and that will make a fundamental difference. It is an ahistorical,
> apolitical way of understanding the world. There is some of this in the current
> fashion of calls for data-based decision-making in schools. Presumably, the world
> already knows that decisions are likely to be better if they are based on a little
> information. If people don't do that, presumably they have their reasons, and
> perhaps we should spend some time thinking with school people about what those
> reasons might be rather than just issuing more exhortations from on high. . . . If we
> begin with the assumption that there are many smart, talented, hardworking people in

these schools, we are less likely to accept the notion that there is some bright new idea that's going to fix everything. (pp. 63-65)

Color-blind reform, such as NCLB, is problematic for similar reasons, but with one critical difference. I would argue, on the one hand, that the worldview represented in the discourse of best practices may be educationally naïve and somewhat apolitical. Color-blind reform, on the other hand, is politically hegemonic, in that it further advantages the already advantaged.

Nevertheless, the School Improvement Team (SIP) and teachers at Roosevelt remained "committed to improving the academic performance of its students by aligning the instructional delivery system with the adopted curriculum and implementing instructional programs according to the provisions of standards-based reform and 'best practices' research" (Theodore Roosevelt High School, 2004-2005, cover letter). The 2005-2008 SIP described the school's current status:

> Currently, Roosevelt is at Level III of school improvement. It is striving to meet requirements for matching student instruction to student errors, school choice, supplemental services, and corrective action by utilizing the following: Supplemental Education Services (SES), choice, parent involvement, and an extensive professional development program involving all stakeholders. Also, Roosevelt is restructuring the Ninth-Grade Academy for Accelerated Learning, next year will designate an instructional leader with specific responsibility related to curriculum, monitoring instruction, and professional development. (Theodore Roosevelt High School, 2005-2008, p. 2)

Instructional strategies, professional development plans, and incremental student performance benchmarks were clearly outlined. Ambitious goals were projected for the next three school years. By fall of 2008, the administration hoped the following goals would be met:

1. Reading: 72.6% of students will meet state standards in English/Language Arts as measured by ISTEP+.

2. Mathematics: 71.5% of students will meet state standards in Mathematics as measured by ISTEP+. (Theodore Roosevelt High School, 2005-2008, pp. 10-15)

These goals echoed the goals set by the state; they reflected no consideration for the history of ISTEP performance at Roosevelt. I want to point out also that the targets refer to a different group of 10th graders every year. Those 10th graders who fail to pass the tests in the 10th grade must retest until they pass. If they do not pass before the time of their scheduled graduation date, they do not receive a diploma unless they qualify for a waiver.

Williams did not start the 2005-2006 as the principal of Roosevelt. Shaffer recalled, "it was like we were struggling around 38% and all of sudden we dropped . . . and that was pretty much about the same time that they took the facilitators out and moved Williams from the building" (personal communication, January 16, 2010). Replacing leadership is one of the primary sanctions imposed by NCLB—as though the problem was that easily resolved. In many instances, school boards followed the same principle. According to Williams:

> One of the things I think in No Child Left Behind law is the first thing you do is remove principals. So at first they said, "We've got to do what the state says, so, well, we may or may not consider how effective people are." (personal communication, January 19, 2010)

Comments from a school board meeting suggested Williams was right about the mandates of NCLB. At a July 26, 2005 board meeting, Board member Washington asked:

> Seeing that we did remove, due to No Child Left Behind, the majority of our principals, who were on Level 4, have we met with the Title I person through the state with our School Improvement Team for those schools in Level IV? The reason I ask is, there must be a plan in place because there will be new principals at the majority of the schools and we want to be able to have a great plan implemented so those principals at the secondary level won't have any problems. (p. 311)

Succession planning is not part of NCLB. Those kinds of issues must be addressed at the district level, but all too often no such plan exists. In fact, Gary seemed to be following the lead of the federal law. Superintendents and principals rose and fell with ISTEP scores. In

December of 2003, the school board voted not to renew Guinn's contract as superintendent.

The cash-strapped district placed Guinn on paid administrative leave in December of 2003

and named Gary native, Mary Steele-Agee as Interim Superintendent. Six months later,

Steele-Agee received an unprecedented five-year contract to be the new superintendent, less

than a month before the newly elected school board took office. Steele-Agee was the second

school superintendent in six years. Dr. Leotis Swopes replaced Williams as principal of

Roosevelt for one year before leaving Gary and the district. Confronted with a daunting

challenge, but eager to give it her best effort, Charlotte Wright became the new principal of

Roosevelt for the 2006-2007 school year, the fifth principal in 10 years. From all

indications, Effective Schools reform was interrupted again.

It is important to devote more thought to the ebb and flow of Effective Schools

reform, especially since the Gary Community Schools, at least at the level of Central Office,

continues to use the language and build upon the correlates associated with the improvement

process model. Lawrence Lezotte and Ron Edmonds, co-founders of the Effective Schools

model, set out to disprove the research of Coleman et al. (1966), Jensen (1969), and others

that claimed school factors do not make as much of a difference in predicting student

achievement as do other factors such as home and environment. Based on the research of

Brookover and Lezotte (1976, 1977), Edmonds (1974, 1979), Edmonds and Fredericksen

(1978), Lezotte (1977), Weber (1971), and others, Lezotte and Edmonds developed an

alternative body of research "that supported the premise that all children can learn and that

the school controls the factors necessary to assure student mastery of the core curriculum"

(Lezotte, 1977, p. 1). Effective Schools reform repudiates the notion that positive,

supportive family background is the principle cause of student success and prerequisite to

successful school reform. Unlike best practices discourse, Effective Schools reform is a

conceptual framework. An effective school is defined as "a school that can, in outcome

(performance or results) terms, reflective of its learning for all mission, demonstrate the

presence of equity in quality" (Lezotte, 1977, p. 1). The model identifies basic correlates

that are essential to effective schools, but it does not tell people how to achieve the

correlates. For instance, the work of deciding how the principal will function as an

instructional leader or how the school will maintain a safe and orderly environment must be

done by teachers and administrators. There are no best practices that define the course for

change. I maintain that many educators are unable to do this work because the most basic

assumption that underlies Effective Schools reform is problematic for many educators. In

other words, far too many, if not most, teachers and principals simply do not share these

beliefs. They believe, as do the critics of the Effective Schools model, that:

> The student as an individual, the school, and the home are like a three-legged stool
> that is as strong as its weakest leg, strengthening the stronger legs is far less
> productive than strengthening the weakest. (Scott & Wahlberg, 1979, p. 24)

Teachers cannot effectively behave differently from what they believe. Critics like Purkey

and Smith (1982) and Cuban (1983) have suggested that caution be exercised in embracing

the findings of the research on effective schools. Rowan, Bossert, and Dwyer (1983) have

argued that the model focuses on global descriptions of school organization and outcomes

and treats the school as the "black box" (p. 29), while failing to clarify how the processes of

teaching and learning that ultimately affect student achievement. They also warned that it

may be necessary to study Black schools separately from other schools, further suggesting,

as do others (Gordon, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Perry et al., 2003) that it is possible that

they do require a different combination of changes. "The promise of Effective Schools

research," argued Sizemore (1985), "is that it shows that Black poor children can learn and can be taught" (p. 286). Even in the best of circumstances, however, it takes time to bring about significant change or for the full impact of a vision to be actualized. In retrospect, Williams believed the Effective Schools process was starting to produce results:

> After the fourth year, I truly believe that we had begun to turn things around. We were on a growth plan. And I say that was evidenced by the fact that we saw improvement in the following areas and these are they: attendance improved, school climate improved, graduation rate, improved, ISTEP scores improved, and teacher effectiveness in the classroom. (M. Williams, personal communication, January 19, 2010)

Unfortunately, patience is not a virtue of NCLB, "the example of color-blindness par excellence" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 129). The message of NCLB is get it done and get it done now, or else.

After not making AYP in 2005, Roosevelt was officially put on probation with corrective action as mandated by P.L. 221 and was subject to punitive sanctions under Title I. Coincidentally, the Gary School Corporation decided to reject Title I funds for its middle and high schools, the lowest performing grade bands, for the upcoming 2005-2006 school year. This meant that the almost $10 million that the school cooperation received for Title I funding would be used exclusively in the elementary schools. District school officials gave several explanations for their decision. "We simply wanted to provide better support for our elementary youngsters," explained George Comer, Director Title I. "We looked at research and talked to consultants who said it was a good idea to concentrate money at elementary schools" (Waterhouse, 2005, p. A4). School board President Darren Washington opined that "everyone knows that by the time kids get to high school, Title I is not effective. That move should have been made a long time ago" (Waterhouse, 2005, p. A4). He added, "students are at their most crucial levels of development in elementary schools and can benefit from

Title I remediation the most" (Waterhouse, 2005, p. A4). As a result of the decision, middle and high students would be aided academically through more flexible Title II funds. Comer admitted that the district was "treading on waters we have not dealt with before," but he was "convinced scores will go up as a result" (Waterhouse, 2005, p. A4). Washington added:

> Because all middle schools and three high schools have failed to make adequate yearly progress as required by the national No Child Left Behind policy and measured by ISTEP scores, the schools have attained an alarming Level 4 correction status. If no progress is made this year, and the status increases to the dire Level 5, NCLB policy allows the removal of federal funds. If the money had not been reassigned, Gary schools could have lost the aid. (p. A4)

Admitting he wished he had known about the decision to pull Title I out of the high schools before the board voted to reassign secondary level administrators, Washington lamented over the fact that "some very good administrators lost their jobs. I feel deceived and wish that [Superintendent Mary] Steele had told me about her Title I plans" (Waterhouse, 2005, p. A4). Apparently, Principal Williams had been right—the corrective actions stipulated by NCLB did mandate the removal of building leadership with little or no regard for context or history. However, a few years earlier (in 2000), frequent change in administration was one of the reasons the state gave for placing the Roosevelt on probation. Increasingly, test mania trumped reason and learning. A classic example of goal displacement, that is, the process by which the means used to achieve a goal become more important than the goal itself, raising test scores had become the primary goal, not improving the quality of education.

Removal of Title I meant no SES for Roosevelt students. Without SES, the double-dose intervention became a key intervention strategy. To clarify, the double-dose is a two-hour block of time in which students receive focused instruction in a subject area, most often reading and math. It remains in place today. Faye Barnes, the current assistant principal,

indicated that the students scheduled for the double dose of classes "are the ones in the middle, who almost passed 8th grade ISTEP and they're trying to give them enough support so it's going to push them over" (F. Barnes, personal communication, January 21, 2010). The school day is not extended so students taking a double-dose have less time for electives; consequently, Barnes shared, "some of the freshman are not even taking gym" (personal communication, January 21, 2010). When asked how parents and students felt about that, Barnes responded:

> I was surprised. This year, no one complained. No one complained that they were not taking gym. Not one parent came to tell me I want my child to have gym or I want my child to have band. The first year we started doing it, I did have a couple of parents. At that time they only had either double dose English or double dose math. . . . They don't have any release time. Maybe we might try to find something for them to do after school. (personal communication, January 21, 2010)

That may be easier said than done. Extracurricular activities have been declining at Roosevelt for some time. Mr. Jones noticed it before he retired. During the 1970s and 1980s, excluding athletics and naturally exclusive groups like the Honor Society and ROTC, there were more almost 30 different extracurricular activities offered after school. The number of clubs and activities featured in issues of the *Rooseveltian* between 2000 and 2008 steadily declined. Approximately 15 non-athletic student organizations are highlighted in the 2000 *Rooseveltian,* titled "Striving for Excellence, Reaching for Perfection." A variety of opportunities to participate in sports still existed for boys and girls: basketball, football, track and field, golf, softball, tennis, wrestling, and swimming. In contrast, the 2004 *Rooseveltian,* titled "And then There Was . . . 2004," featured seven non-athletic student organizations, three of which were groups not open to all students like the Honor Society and the ROTC. By 2008, the student life section of the *Rooseveltian*, titled "A New Beginning," highlighted sports, the band, the drill team, and several candid shots of students

participating in various social events at the school. There are no elaborate tributes to

valedictorians or salutatorians. Gone are the photographs from the Scholarship and

Leadership Banquets. They do not have those events anymore. Things have changed.

Priorities at Roosevelt shifted away from the quality of school life and the essence of a

meaningful high school experience. Certainly, NCLB, P.L. 221, and the coercive, high-

stakes accountability movement should not shoulder all of the blame for the declining

quality of student life at Roosevelt, but I suspect they played a major role in what has

occurred. The student-centered focus at Roosevelt has declined. In the old days, teachers

voluntarily gave up their free time after school, for the love of children, to sponsor a myriad

of clubs and activities for any student interested in participating in the activity. As time

went on, after-school activities were increasingly spurred by funded by government funded

programs aimed at the identified at-risk population.

Some of the federal and state funded programs implemented as a result of Clinton's

Goals 2000 have proven to be very beneficial for students. Two examples are the Gaining

Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP) and 21st Century

Scholars Programs. GEAR-UP, authorized by Congress in 1998, helps prepare low-income

students for post-secondary education and uses a cohort model that begins in grade seven

and continues through high school. The program at Roosevelt took students on college

tours, provided free tutoring, organized Saturday SAT prep workshops, and worked closely

with parents (School board minutes, 2003, p. 24). Twenty-first Century Scholars, a state-

funded program, is affiliated with GEAR-UP and shares similar goals. Students in the

program must enroll by the eighth grade and pledge to maintain a 2.0 grade point average,

remain drug-free, and apply for admission and financial aid at an Indiana college during

their senior year. Those who honor this pledge receive four years of free college tuition.

Mr. Williams was particularly encouraging to the young scholars. He began placing their

names in commencement programs, a practice his successors maintained. Other programs

offered at the school included:

- Project SEED—anger and behavioral management counseling.
- CAPPS—continuing educational services for suspended and expelled general and special needs students.
- SPLASH—Support programs for learning, achieving, and staying healthy.
- Jump Start—enrichment and remedial classes for ninth grade students to earn credits in basic skills and gain preparation for ISTEP testing.
- JAG—Jobs for America's Grads—school-to-career program for at-risk youth that aims to keep them school through high school or completion of GED; includes classroom instruction from a Career Specialist, assists with job placement and/or post-secondary education. (Theodore Roosevelt School, 2004-2005, p. 41)

I do not mean to imply that Roosevelt offered no authentic, homegrown, meaning

teacher-student created activities. The leadership and teachers at Roosevelt deserve credit

for some positive mainstays. The Roosevelt marching band, for instance, has been a source

of pride, not only for Rooseveltians, but for the city of Gary for years. Band director, Sandra

Dillard, by all accounts, works hard to do more than just keep the band going. She exposes

the students to a variety of experiences outside of Gary as they travel to compete and

perform all over the country. For instance, in 2001, the band performed in Orlando, Florida

(School board minutes, 2001, p. 305). This year, Dillard will take the band to Honda Battle

of College Bands in Atlanta, Georgia. In recent years, the students have performed in the

Annual Circle City Classic Parade, a football game between Historically Black Colleges

(HBCs) in Indianapolis, Indiana. Some youngsters, like former student Amanda Bryant,

chose to attend Roosevelt because of the band. She referred to band as her major:

> That was the main thing that I was coming to Roosevelt for is . . . because they had
> an outstanding band. Before my freshman year, I was in the summer band. I got to
> be in the summer band for the whole summer, I got to see how the high school band
> was really going to be, so that made me think that really wanted to make band one of

my new priorities when I entered high school. (personal communication, March 25, 2010)

New clubs emerged like the Legal Eagles, Running Rebels, and the Science Olympiad. Another positive constant at Roosevelt is the Academic Super Bowl Competition, a city-wide competition that began in the 1970s. Even though everyone could not be on the team, the whole school could take pride in their efforts. Bryant, who attended Roosevelt from 2003-2007, also remembered the Academic Super Bowl competitions:

> That's a big deal. Academic Super Bowl is just like Homecoming. Yes, cause all the students, it's like you actually have to audition to be on Academic Super Bowl, so they actually pick the brightest students. And it's like everybody had the consensus on if they think that these [students] should be the right students to represent the students at school. So once that occurs, and then everybody studies what they have to do, basically the whole school participates. If they can, they'll get a couple of buses, and the majority of the school will go to watch the Academic Super Bowl. (personal communication, March 25, 2010)

For students like Bryant, the Academic Super Bowl was an encouraging and positive event. Bryant enjoyed Roosevelt, though she found it a little difficult to adjust to the changing leadership in the building. Ms. Wright right was her favorite. "I loved her. I had Ms. Wright from Pulaski, and she's an outstanding principal" (personal communication, March 25, 2010).

Charlotte Wright became the new principal of Roosevelt in the fall of 2006. In addition to taking over a school that had yet to make AYP and was on probationary accreditation status, she inherited a number of challenges. First of all, the new method of calculating the graduation rate took effect in 2005-06 (Indiana Department of Education, n.d.c, pp. 1-2). Prior to 2005-06, Indiana used a measure to determine graduation rate that was not a four-year high school completion rate. The new method is based on a cohort model and tracks students individually. The term cohort refers to a class of students who attend the same high school and are first considered to have entered the ninth grade in the

same year. Clearly, this method requires schools to be highly accountable for keeping track

of student mobility and is particularly challenging for schools and districts where the student

population is highly transient, often the case with low-income populations. The effect of the

new calculation was felt immediately at Roosevelt. Roosevelt's graduation rate was 76% in

2004-05; it fell to 42% in 2005-06. This meant that it would be exceedingly difficult to

make AYP by either meeting performance targets or Safe Harbor. A second challenge

facing Wright was related to the migration of low-income African American families

displaced from recently closed public housing development in nearby Chicago. In June of

2005, the *Post Tribune* reported "700 students from Chicago checked into Gary schools this

year" (Carlson, 2005, p. A1). The influx increased. Some teachers at Roosevelt, as well as

other schools in and around Gary charged that the newcomers were changing the climate of

classrooms and trying to redesign the school culture for the worse. Gary Mayor Scott King

commented, "it's because the Chicago Housing Authority is tearing down high-rise public

housing buildings like Cabrini Green and the Robert Taylor Homes. . . . The problem is the

poverty level is suggestive of more, rather than fewer, problems" (Carlson, 2005, p. A1). A

third challenge was that beginning with students entering high school in 2007-2008, Core 40

curriculum, previously required for students who planned to apply for admission to an

Indiana college or university, became a graduation requirement for all students whether they

were going to college or not. In order for a student to graduate with less than a Core 40

diploma, the student, parent, and counselor were required to complete a four-step opt-out

process. Fourth, because of the removal of Title I funds, Roosevelt students were no longer

eligible for SES. In the past, Title I Gary students were eligible to receive tutoring from one

of six providers: Edu-Care Plaza, Newton Learning, Career Resources Centers, Hamilton

Healthcare, Socrates Learning, and Sylvan Education Solutions (School board minutes, 2004, p. 81). Fifth, School board minutes and interview data indicate that confidence in Roosevelt and public opinion about the school were steadily declining. Even some teachers at Roosevelt admitted they would not send their children to the school, a big change from the days when almost all of the teachers with high school age children sent their sons and daughters to Roosevelt. Sixth, increasingly Gary parents and student were turning toward charter schools. At first, the impact of charters only hurt elementary schools, but as the charter schools began adding grades, the charter option appealed to more high school students as well. The biggest personal challenge for Wright may have been witnessing how the legacy and tradition of excellence for which Roosevelt was so well known had deteriorated. No longer an anomaly, the Mighty Velt had become everything that it had valiantly and successfully tried not to be—a low-performing all-Black urban school. The counterhegemonic spirit and figured world seemed to have disappeared.

Wright's first experience at Roosevelt was as a health and physical education teacher in 1979-1980. She returned as assistant principal one year before becoming head principal for the 2006-2007 school year and that is when she first noticed the deterioration of the school. "When I went back, I didn't feel the same enthusiasm, commitment, or dedication" (C. Wright, personal communication, February, 22, 2010). However, when she was offered the job as principal:

> I was excited because I used to look at it and say, "well, you know this has potential; this could be turned around". . . . If you just see the diamond in the rough . . . I was happy to accept the challenge. (C. Wright, personal communication, February, 22, 2010)

Wright began trying to get, what she referred to as a "divided" staff, to work collaboratively. She also focused on restoring school pride:

The first thing I did was to try to get the school song back into the fold, so I mandated that it was a part of every assembly that we had, and asked a few teachers to teach it as a poem. Roosevelt also used to be known for its dance troupe, so I opened up the dance studio, and got two dance teachers. They were also known for their athletic program, so when I looked at the gym, and it was in bad shape, I got new mats for the wall. We got black and gold, and I remember people telling me, "Oh, they're going to write on that." And I said, "No, they're not." We had the locker rooms painted. I had the field house cleaned up and painted. They were known for athletic competitions and for winning. So, that was a priority to me. (C. Wright, personal communication, February, 22, 2010)

Wright's school spirit impressed the students. It was contagious. Former student Amanda

Bryant remembered:

School spirit was awesome. Everybody had school spirit. We had Fridays where people would come—it was considered black and gold day. Everybody showed school spirit and we got extra credit points. So even if you felt like you didn't want to participate within the week, you know on Fridays it was school spirit day, it just made the whole week just seem right. . . . Ms. Wright actually participated in school activities. . . . She had the school spirit, and she didn't care where she was, she would let them know how good her school spirit was.

We had a motto that failure's not an option, so everybody lived up to that quote. And know that option was true that we said everybody that it was not an option [sic]. (A. Bryant, personal communication, March 25, 2010)

In reality, according to Bryant, not everyone bought into the failure is not an option motto.

Some of the upperclassmen who needed to retake ISTEP stopped caring.

They didn't care. Some didn't even come for the actual tests. . . . Like people knew who had to take ISTEP and the ones that didn't got to sit in the gym all day. . . . Some kids just didn't like the challenges. They would rather just stay where they are. I cared. (A. Bryant, personal communication, March 25, 2010)

As I listened, I wondered how many youngsters really did not care, and I am sure there were

some, and how many were influenced stereotype threat—"the threat of being viewed

through the lens of a negative stereotype, or the fear of doing something that would

inadvertently confirm that stereotype" (Steele as cited in Perry et al., 2003, p. 111).

Unfortunately, Bryant has yet to receive her diploma. She did not pass ISTEP and was not

given a waiver. Determined not be a failure, she has taken the test three times since 2007.

She enrolled in a local post secondary vocational school where she completed a nine-month course in massage therapy. Her goal is to work on a cruise ship. The only problem is the school she attended will not give her the credentials she needs to officially graduate from that institution until after she obtains a high school diploma or GED. Bryant is not giving up. "I'm working on my GED now, so long as I get my GED, I can get my diploma from the program I just finished" (A. Bryant, personal communication, March 25, 2010).

By June of 2007, according to information provided by the Gary Community Schools Management Information Systems Department, a total of 301 Roosevelt students were deprived of a high school diploma because they failed the GQE. Since 2000, a total of 369 Roosevelt students, who would have graduated before NCLB and the GQE, did not get a diploma because they failed the test and did not receive a waiver. Table 8.1 is the record, year by year, since 2000.

Table 8.1

Year by Year Record, 2000-2009

Year	All	Disaggregated/Special Needs
1999-00	21	10
2000-01	32	8
2001-02	34	9
2002-03	40	16
2003-04	49	10
2004-05	42	21
2005-06	39	22
2006-07	44	20
2007-08	30	14
2008-09	38	18
	Total—369	Total—148

Note. Data from Gary Community Schools Management Information Department (personal communication, May 19, 2010).

Fully aware of the need to raise academic achievement, Wright wanted "to turn the academic piece around" (personal communication, March 25, 2010). In fact, in 2007, Roosevelt won the citywide Academic Super Bowl. Photographs of the winning team still adorn the main office today, but winning the local bowl counts for little in the eyes of P.L.221 and NCLB. Wright began the effort to improve student performance by aligning the SIP to instructional strategies. She targeted the students closest to being able to pass the test. Wright explained:

> Every school has a top group that kind of makes the school. So, I went after those kids underneath that top group, and got some strategies to implement to try to turn things around. We even had academic camps and I tell you, we built up three consecutive weeks. The kids had all math and all English all day; three hours of math and three hours of English. (personal communication, March 25, 2010)

Testing and test scores became an obsession and what was happening at Roosevelt was happening in other schools all over the country. Ravitch (2010) maintained that obsession with testing and narrowing of classroom instruction are unintended consequences of NCLB:

> One of the unintended consequences of NCLB was the shrinkage of time available to teach anything other than reading and math. Other subjects, including history, science, the arts, geography, even recess, were curtailed in many schools. . . . Reading and mathematics were the only subjects that counted in calculating a school's adequate yearly progress, and even in those subjects, instruction gave way to intensive test preparation. . . . drill and practice became significant part of the daily routine. (p. 107)

According to Wright, while the 10th graders tested for ISTEP, the ninth graders were "sent on field trips every day, and most 11th and 12th graders were sent out of the building. Students were even given T-shirts to wear while they took the test" (personal communication, March 25, 2010). Results, however, were poor. Wright attributed some of the low ISTEP+ performance to test anxiety, especially on ISTEP. "We were scoring high on the District Quarterly Assessments," said Wright, "but when it came to the ISTEP, the kids just seemed to shut down" (personal communication, March 25, 2010). She also

blamed poor performance on the fact that so many children enter high school deficient in

basic reading and mathematics skills. Even error analysis, for which she credits K J

Learning with providing valuable assistance, did not seem to be as effective of a strategy to

raise test scores as had been anticipated. Wright admitted:

> It's going to take something else. You know what? The more emphasis they have put on this test, the worse our kids have done because now everything is ISTEP. You've got to pass the test, got to pass the test. Then the district bought into quarterly assessments, which I think are good. . . . But, it got to the point where teachers didn't buy into it. So, the kids had a negative attitude. And they felt it was just too much testing. (personal communication, March 25, 2010)

Union officials had been claiming for years that there was too much testing. Union

President Sandra Irons complained "teachers are harshly left with any teaching time"

(Waterhourse, 2005, p. A1). The district testing schedules for 2008-2009 and 2009-2010

testing schedule leave no month test free. Passing the testing had replaced learning and

education as the goal. It was not working. Teachers were teaching to the test. Increasingly,

the terms *data-driven* and *test-driven* became one in the same.

The emphasis on testing not only changed what was taught, but how it was taught. V.

Schaffer commented:

> You never seem to be where you where you need to be, and the pressure is a bit overwhelming for the teachers, and for some people, it took the fun out of teaching. And the fun for students is certainly not there either because it's really a test-driven environment now, and it wasn't always that way. It was about learning for life and not just for a test. (V. Schaffer, personal communication, January 16, 2010)

I assert that the banking concept (Freire, 2007), already the classic mode of instructional

delivery in far too many high school classrooms, grew even more popular in the wake of

NCLB. According to Freire, "in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift

bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider

know nothing" (p. 72). The teacher is seen as the narrator; the student is viewed as the

empty receptacle. "Education, thus, becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (p. 72). I argue that the fixation on ISTEP led to education that resembled a one-sided teacher narrative (e.g., lecture or low-level question and answer drills), punctuated by worksheets, prefabricated learning packets, and passive learning activities. Test data ended up being yet another tool to stratify and track students.

The idea of using tests to measure, categorize, discipline, punish, and reward students is certainly nothing new (Foucault, 1995). Schools have historically used the "examination" to perpetuate the power of the "norm" (Foucault, 1995, p. 196). As Foucault (1995) aptly explained:

> In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties, and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another. It is easy to understand how formal equality since within homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all of the shading of individual differences. (p. 197)

NCLB presupposes a formal equality from which to establish a norm—a passing score and in so doing, ignores the durable, ongoing inequalities imposed upon African Americans and other historically marginalized peoples. The test—the examination—has become the new oppressor even as it is promoted as the equalizer—leaving no child behind. It is not clear whether this was an intentional consequence of NCLB or not, but, why does that matter? Now that we know the consequences, we are still measuring and punishing children.

Superintendent Steele-Agee and the school board began tightening the system. Steele-Agee's signature theme, "A New Direction: Focus on Accountability and Continuous School Improvement" set the tone for the district's new strategic plan. Five overarching goals framed the plan:

- Goal 1: Ensure that all students attain high academic achievement.
- Goal 2: Ensure that all students will attend safe, orderly, and secure schools with climates conducive to learning.
- Goal 3: Increase the level of parent and community involvement in support of student academic achievement and other school-related activities.
- Goal 4: Provide effective and efficient support operations for continuous improvement.
- Goal 5: Recruit and retain qualified teachers, administrators, and staff who will utilize the most effective methods and instructional practices. (Gary Community School Corporation, 2004)

Steele-Agee reorganized the district's administrative leadership, opened two gender-based schools, implemented district-wide in-house quarterly assessments, built three new schools, instituted a district-wide student uniform policy, realigned the curriculum, shortened the school lunch period, established an alternative school, beefed up security, mandated the use of staff and student identification badges, and hired a recruitment agency to attract quality teachers. Under her leadership, the Gary Community Schools made AYP in 2007 and 2008 (Quinn, 2008, p. A8). West Side, the school for the Gifted and Talented, triumphed and was able to "shatter stereotypes" with "standout student performance" (Waterhouse, 2006, p. A5).

But, the other high schools, Roosevelt, in particular, continued to underperform. Indiana Governor, Mitch Daniels, expressed dismay, indicating that a state takeover was not beyond reason. Daniels said, "I don't think anything can be off the table. You have to ask: what can be worse than this?" (Waterhouse, 2006, p. A5) According to the *Post Tribune*, the governor offered no concrete plans to assist the Gary schools. He did appoint two Gary representatives to his Education Round Table (Waterhouse, 2006, p. A5).

By all accounts, people in Gary do not think too highly of Governor Daniels and believe the feeling to be mutual. In October of 2009, Daniels drew fierce criticism from Gary state legislators and the *Post Tribune* for comments he made at an Education

Roundtable of educational leaders from across the state in which he called Herrnstein and

Murray's (1996) *Bell Curve* "provocative" (Governor Mitch Daniels offered a disturbing

clue, 2009, p. 10). It did not help matters any when the *Post Tribune* revealed the findings

of a study conducted at John Hopkins University that identified Roosevelt and one other

Gary high school as one of 10 "drop-out factories" (Waterhouse, 2007, p. A7) in northwest

Indiana. The graduation rate for the 2006-2007 school year was a meager 39.4%. The

graduation rate in subsequent years was not appreciably better—42.4% in 2007-2008 and

44.4% in 2008-2009. ISTEP+ scores were no more encouraging. Over the course of the last

decade, the performance of 10th graders on the GQE (10th grade ISTEP+) was as shown in

Table 8.2.

Table 8.2

10th Grade Performance on GQE, 1999-2009

Year	% Passing Math	% Passing Language Arts
1999-00	11	29
2000-01	27	33
2001-02	25	33
2002-03	23	33
2003-04	18	35
2004-05	16	39
2005-06	12	30
2006-07	13	21
2007-08	11	24
2008-09	15	23

Note. Data from Indiana Department of Education (2010a), Office of Legal Affairs, Legal
and Research Department.

In addition, the *Post Tribune* reported that an inordinate amount of GQE waivers were given

at Roosevelt in 2007. "At Roosevelt last year, 42% of the graduating seniors didn't pass the

state's exit exam, but did get diplomas because principals and teachers signed off on their

waivers" (Waterhouse, 2008, p. A4). District officials suggested that the majority of the

waivers were granted to special education students (p. A4). Indeed, at Roosevelt almost half (14 of 30) of those students who did not receive a diploma because of failing to pass ISTEP were special needs students. One thought, among many, about this situation comes to mind—it is unfair to punish children with legitimate developmental delays for not meeting the same academic standards as children that do not manifest developmental delays. The unfairness of punitive sanctions seems almost unconscionable. Indiana law, however, offers no apology. In a letter from Jeffrey P. Zaring, State Board of Education Administrator, Indiana law is clearly explained to superintendents, charter schools, and administrators of accredited nonpublic schools:

> Some public schools and accredited nonpublic schools award a document to a student who completes the minimum courses required for high school graduation but who does not meet the Graduation Qualifying Examination requirement.
> There is no prohibition against awarding such a document, but a document of this nature is not a diploma. There are limitations on the titles that may be used for such a document. . . .
> Diploma—A diplomas or a document that includes the word "diploma" may be awarded only to a student who meets all of the following, (a) state minimum graduation course requirements, . . . (b) local graduation requirements, and (c) the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE) requirement. (Zaring, 2006, p. 1)

Children with special needs may opt to pursue a non-diploma track and receive a certificate of completion, which is not considered a diploma. Only the most severely handicapped students may qualify to participate in the Indiana Standards Tool for Alternate Reporting (ISTAR) which presents "a performance thread continuum for each academic grade span (3-5, 6-8, 10) in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies" (Walker, 2010, para. 2). Teachers use the ISTAR tool to document student mastery of specific skills. The problem is that IDOE seems to be continuously modifying how it measures progress. New cut scores for ISTAR were approved in March of 2010. In February of 2010, special education directors and district test coordinators were informed of a new alternate

assessment for eligible special needs students in grades 3-8, the Indiana Modified

Achievement Standards Test (IMAST), the new "version of the 2% assessment (Alternate

Assessment of the Modified Achievement Standards) or AA-MAS" (Walker, 2010, para. 2).

While the state tries to figure out how to leave no child untested, innocent children are being

left behind—life chances are diminished because they do not even have a high school

diploma. Increasingly, children and parents, presumably empowered by NCLB, feel

powerless to do much about it.

Lorenzo and Phyllis Anderson expressed their frustration. Mr. Anderson, a 1985

graduate who spoke previously about his own school experience, wished there was no

ISTEP. His son should have graduated in 2009, but did not pass ISTEP; he did not receive a

waiver:

> I think they need to get rid of that test because it's stopping kids from learning
> everything else. They teach the test . . . I think these tests take away from what the
> kid really knows. A test cannot tell you the level of intelligence a person has.
> Everybody don't test well. I know honor roll students that didn't pass that test.
> When it comes to the test that the White person is taking—he lives that life. . . .
> What's that—No Child Left Behind? I think that's taken away a person's ability to
> further his ability. This is what I don't understand. It seems like they got it set up so
> that if you don't pass the ISTEP then we're going to punish you for life. They are
> altering a person's life so you can't get a job. Kids think—"Hey, I ain't going to
> pass. I'm dropping out of school.". . . It's a set-up. (L. Anderson, personal
> communication, March 3, 2010)

 Neither Anderson nor his wife put much stock in the ISTEP tutoring. "They tutor the test

because they trying to up their scores so the state will have all the facts," asserted Mr.

Anderson, "I don't think that's right either. That's not learning that child's capacity"

(personal communication, March 3, 2010). Despite their negative opinion of ISTEP, the

Andersons made no excuses for their son not graduating, saying that he seemed to lack

motivation. "He acts like he don't care," (L. Anderson, personal communication, March 3, 2010). But, Mr. Anderson also recognized a deeper problem—a historical one:

> In order for this thing to get right here, everybody needs to hold hands around this city and pray because this its gonna take decades to get this thing right. It was flawed from the start. If you have a flaw from the start then the flaw is just going to get bigger. In order to erase a flaw, you got to chop at that big flaw to get it down to a small one. They didn't take into consideration that inner city kids are not being taught on the same level [as kids in Merrillville]. (personal communication, March 3, 2010)

I cannot confirm whether children in Merrillville are taught differently or not. What is significant about Anderson's comments is the reference he made to systemic racial and educational inequity and his recognition of the fact that a historically flawed system cannot be quickly fixed or mitigated by a test or series of tests. Furthermore, according to the Andersons, the problem is aggravated by uncaring teachers. They feel that concerned parents are frequently disrespected. Mr. Anderson said, "I really don't like going to that school because they treat you like an inmate or something" (personal communication, March 3, 2010). His wife chimed in saying, "It seems like they're rude or something" (P. Anderson, personal communication, March 3, 2010). Mr. Anderson, a Gary fireman, respects what teachers do but wishes they cared more. He likened his job to teaching:

> I take my hat off to you guys because it's not about the money. If it was, there wouldn't be a teacher out here. But just like my job, . . . it's not about the money. What other job can you have when every time you call you out, you helping somebody? It's all about the heart and if we as firemen treated the people in the city just like the teachers treat the people at these schools—the students then there would be a lot of deaths around here. Our heart is always going to be in this because even though the teachers don't see blood, guts, or burning or something like that—that's still a person's life that they got in their hands. They don't treat it like that. (personal communication, March 3, 2010)

When I spoke with the Andersons last, their son had recently gotten a part-time job. They planned for him to try to take the test again in the spring of 2010.

Something else equally disturbing was also happening—suspension rates were rising

drastically, but not for violence and fighting so much as for insubordination. The suspension

data for Roosevelt is both telling and confusing (Roosevelt Career and Technical Academy,

2010). The data in Table 8.3 reflects the school records submitted to the state the total

number of suspensions in all eligible categories. (Expulsion data is not shown.)

Table 8.3

Suspension Records, 1999-2009

School Year	Number of Suspensions
1999-00	147
2000-01	236
2001-02	337
2002-03	622
2003-04*	885 (408*)
2004-05*	749 (389*)
2005-06	369
2006-07	266
2007-08	294
2008-09	297

*Note. *Data reported for 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 were different than previously reported.
(Data provided by Indiana Department of Education (2010a), Office of Legal Affairs, Legal
and Research Department.)

Roosevelt's school Profile data reported by the Gary Community Schools Planning,

Evaluation, Research, and Assessment reported the following suspension data for three

school years. Suspension categories shown in Table 8.4 include only insubordination and

fighting.

Table 8.4

Suspension Categories, 2007-2010

School Year	Type/Number of Suspensions
2007-08	Fighting (34) Insubordination (308)
2008-09	Fighting (60) Insubordination (338)
2009-10	Fighting (134) Insubordination (477)

In a Student Suspension Report issued by the Gary CSC Student Discipline Department (2010) indicates that 1,182 Roosevelt students (including all grades 7-12) were suspended between August 19, 2009 and January 15, 2010. Before drawing preliminary conclusions, it is necessary to consider school enrollment between 2000 and 2009. Those figures are shown in Table 8.5.

Table 8.5

School Enrollment, 1999-2010

School Year	Total Enrollment	Grades
1999-00	1,138	9-12
2000-01	1,009	9-12
2001-02	904	9-12
2002-03	877	9-12
2003-04	856	9-12
2004-05	937	9-12
2005-06	893	9-12
2006-07	811	9-12
2007-08	786	9-12
2008-09	721	9-12
2009-2010*	1529**	7-12

Note. Data from Indiana Department of Education (2010a), Office of Legal Affairs, Legal and Research Department.   *Data from Roosevelt Career and Technical Academy (2010). **249 7th graders, 260 8th graders, 1,020 9-12th graders.

The 2009-2010 data is only first semester data, e.g. from August 19, 2009 to January 15, 2010. The discrepancies in the suspension data are obvious but no matter which numbers are accurate, a few painful facts are crystal clear:

- Changes in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 state suspension data and significantly fewer suspension rates in subsequent years are suspect.

- Roosevelt's current three-year profile suspension data casts serious doubt on the accuracy of low numbers shown in the state data.

- The current data reflects far too many suspensions.

- Since at least 2007-08, insubordination has been a leading cause of suspension.

The district's code of conduct defines insubordination as disregarding authority, a likely subjective call based on teacher discretion. In the age of NCLB, no excuses, and zero tolerance, I suspect the span of what might constitute insubordination has broadened. I also suspect that Roosevelt may be suffering from what Freire (2007) called "narration sickness" (p. 71), meaning too much teacher talk and not enough teacher-student interaction—a consequence of the banking concept of education. This type of school climate breeds hopelessness, indifference, resentment, rebellion, demoralization, and low achievement. Indeed, the counterhegemonic spirit and figured reality that made Roosevelt such a beloved anomaly seem to have all but disappeared.

2009-2010: Saving Roosevelt—Epiphany or Eclipse

> A young man walked up to me and said, "My name is William Zhao. Can I give you a gift?" William handed me a book. . . . The title of the book is *Serious Urgency, Education and Global Competition through the Eyes of a Young Chinese Immigrant.* William spent the first 10 years of his life in Anson, China, where he grew up with his family. His mom and dad moved to Vancouver, and two years later, they moved to Kokomo, where he has lived for the last five years. And William says, "I know a little bit about global education, seen it." He defines education globally as a big old chess game. That is what he says: this is a chess game. He says, "The folks that I

left in China, and the people from India, they're playing chess to win. And here in the United States—in Indiana, we're playing chess not to lose. And if we don't start playing chess to win with a sense of fierce urgency, they're going to get us. (Bennett, 2010)

This school year, 2009-2010, has been and continues to be an emotional roller coaster for the Roosevelt community as the tentacles of NCLB sanctions have taken hold of Roosevelt and its future. It is indeed a do or die situation for Gary Roosevelt but, in a way, saving Roosevelt has a lot to do with saving Gary and the district. Saving Roosevelt will help Gary citizens maintain control of their own education. In my view, the district's integrity is on the line and it is not an easy chore—saving Roosevelt—especially in light of the other challenges confronting the district.

Superintendent Steele-Agee had been fired in December of 2008 and the district appointed Dr. Myrtle Campbell, the former Assistant Superintendent, as the Interim Superintendent. The school corporation faced daunting budget deficits and impending reductions in staff. Forced to find solutions to daunting budget deficits, declining enrollment, and impending reductions in staff, Campbell and the school board looked for cost-effective, educationally research-based, creative solutions, to their problems. Difficult and unpopular decisions had to be made, including the closure of 12 schools. They decided to close some high and junior high schools, implement a 7-12 grade configuration in four high schools, each of which would become a themed academy. George Comer, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, explained the rationale:

> When we look at the research in terms of how kids learn, we have found that they have to be engaged; they like practical experiences and businesses, universities, whatever the youngsters may decide to go into, they're asking for a higher level of accountability. They're asking that kids be prepared. We think the academy concept is going to lead us in that direction. (personal communication, January 23, 2010)

The plan was to consolidate the middle and high and high schools to form four 7-12 themed academies: the Career and Technical Academy at Roosevelt High School; the Visual and Performing Arts Academy at Wirt High School; the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) at Lew Wallace High School; and Leadership/Military Academy at West Side (the former site of the Gifted and Talented Program). West Side would continue to house the gifted and talented population, but the program would be renamed the High Ability Program. Implementation of the academy themes would be gradual (Gary Community School Corporation, 2009). "We're not going to have whole implementation," explained Comer, "we're going to start with grade nine and add a year each year" (personal communication, January 23, 2010). The district felt fortunate to have monies available from the American recovery and Investment Act (commonly referred to as the stimulus monies passed by Congress to boost the nation's fledgling economy) to help pay for many of the expenses the changes would necessitate. According to Superintendent Campbell, the money would be spent mainly on the high schools. "That's where," Campbell explained, "we have the critical need, in secondary education" (Gonzalez, 2009a, p. A7). Predictably, some of the changes drew controversy, especially the closing of Wirt High School and the 7-12 combination. Board member Washington defended the board's decisions and expressed his views at a February, 2009 school board meeting:

> I hope you all understand that we had a $23 million dollar deficit and this is minus the stimulus. We needed to do something in the Gary Schools. We have less than 12,000 students in the school district. We have five high schools, three junior high schools, and numerous elementary schools, and to continue to operate with a $23 million dollar shortfall is impossible. The governor of the state at the last legislative session cut budget by over $200 million dollars. He is proposing this year for that session to cut $52 million dollars from the budget. . . . When I voted for the 7-12 configurations, it was under the auspices that this district needed to do something because of that $23 million dollar deficit. . . . I have a major concern as I always have being the schools talking with young people, being a definite advocate

of teen pregnancy prevention and a lot of other issues. I had a problem with the 7-12
configuration and I have a problem with it right now. (School board minutes, 2009a,
p. 43)

In addition to figuring out the logistical demands of the impending changes, dismal

performance on ISTEP and low graduation rates remained a thorn in everyone's side. The

school board sponsored focus groups with high school students across the city. Long-time

board member Barbara Leek reported the findings:

Most students who began their senior year with not enough credits to graduate have
received their credits through a Credit Acquisition Program. The biggest barrier for
our students in graduating with a diploma is passing the Graduation Qualifying
Exam—in of other words, ISTEP+. (School board minutes, 2009b, p. 95)

According to the Post Tribune, "across the state, the number of schools that made AYP

decreased by 4% from 2007 to about 50%" (Lazerus, 2009a, p. A6). Everybody was either

looking for somewhere to shift the blame or hoping for the one best solution. Some local

districts expressed frustration with the subgroup targeting mandated by NCLB. "Merrillville

did not make AYP due to achievement gaps in its Black and free lunch student populations.

Superintendent Tony Lux said the district's population in those subgroups exceeds the state

average" (Lazerus, 2009a, p. A6). Gary's Interim Superintendent Campbell hoped the

district's plan to close buildings and reorganize the secondary curriculum would improve

test scores (Lazerus, 2009a, p. A6). In a strange sort of way, NCLB, specifically ISTEP+ in

this case, was not erasing the color line, it was redrawing the color line (Freeman as cited in

Leonardo, 2009, p. 135). NCLB, particularly in a community like Merrillville, a city that

evolved from an exodus of Whites from Gary following integration, gave White people the

"license to declare students of color failures under a presumed to be fair system" (Freeman

as cited in Leonardo, 2009, p. 136). Typical of the color-blind ideology, the mounting and

punishing sanctions of ISTEP, P.L. 221, and NCLB would only "acknowledge the

symptoms [of Black underachievement] but not the causes of the achievement problem affecting children of color" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 136).

In June of 2009, Campbell, a 37-year veteran of the district, was named superintendent and the district embraced the slogan "Focusing on the Future: Creating 21st Century Schools." Campbell has served as Supervisor of the Gifted and Talented Program, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, and Acting (Interim) Superintendent. Upon becoming the new superintendent, Campbell began restructuring the district that necessitated drastic changes. The high schools required structural modifications to accommodate middle school students; teachers were given new assignments; and administrative assignments also changed. All of the administrative jobs were up for review. Campbell told the *Post Tribune*, "those decisions will be based on evaluation and performance-based assessments of the work they have done and the goals they have set for themselves" (Gonzalez, 2009b, p. A3). Anxiety was high during the summer of 2009. It was during this time that I began doing a little preliminary research.

Before the proposal for my dissertation was even completed, I visited Theodore Roosevelt High School to meet the principal and see what kind of historical information I could quickly access. Ms. Wright was still the principal at the time. She was very helpful. She gave me a copy of the most recent School Improvement Plan, the district code of conduct, and several mementos, including a T-shirt. In her office hung photograph of presidential candidate Barack Obama and her during a visit he made to the school during the campaign. Huge banner-like photos of the winning 2007 Academic Super Bowl team adorned the main office along with treasured life memberships of the NAACP that belonged

to various school clubs and organizations. Painted on the front desk were the words "Roosevelt Panther Pride" in black and gold with white. A poster with the words to the school song "Dear Old Roosevelt, we have faith and hope within thee. . ." was taped to the glass in the office entry area. Wright described Roosevelt as a diamond in the rough, and shared the opinion that it was going through changes similar to other urban schools. She also told me that the district was in the midst of making a lot of decisions that would affect the assignment of all the administrators. We discussed the district's plans to close three high schools, merge student populations, create themed academies at each of the remaining high schools and implement a 7-12 grade configuration at each of the new academies. She gave me copies of the makings of a brochure that described Roosevelt's new identity: Roosevelt Career and Technical Academy. Because of all the impending changes, within the district, Wright acknowledged that her future was uncertain, but she hoped to stay on as the principal of Roosevelt. Our conversation was cut short (she was already late for a meeting), so I wished her luck and she wished me the same on my dissertation. I asked if I might be able to have some old yearbooks. She directed me to one of the assistant principals who took me to a room where unclaimed and extra yearbooks were stored. I helped myself to one of each. It was a productive visit.

By the time I returned to Roosevelt in August, Wright had been assigned to a different school. Dr. Lloyd Booth was Roosevelt's new principal. His appointment came less than a month before the start of school (School board minutes, 2009c, p. 260). Booth had to hit the ground running. He faced many obstacles. By all accounts, renovations to the building had not been completed causing frustration for everyone. Due to the manner in which Roosevelt's feeder schools were assigned, three different student populations and

three different teaching staffs, along with some new staff displaced from other schools that closed were expected to merge into one cohesive school unit. New student transportation arrangements had to be made as well as a dual school schedule. In order to minimize the contact between seventh and eighth graders and high schoolers, separate schedules needed to be devised. Three different school improvement plans needed to be combined to reflect one unified plan. The custodial staff, cafeteria workers, and clerical personnel also had adjustments to make. Many teachers were displaced or forced to move to a different rooms. The building opened in the midst of incomplete renovations and structural issues. In the meantime, the district decided to place the high schools back on Title I, which brought new benefits as well as additional stipulations. On top of all this, Roosevelt administration and staff were expected to not only devise a detailed plan for the gradual implementation of the Career and Technical Academy the following school year, but also bring historically and atrociously low ISTEP scores up to par, in other words, make AYP. It was a tall order for everyone.

ISTEP+ results from the spring testing were released in September of 2009. Roosevelt's scores were nowhere near satisfactory, but, short of a miracle, 2009 scores were not going to change the wheels already in motion for Roosevelt. Roosevelt was in a precarious position. Prior to the 2009-2010 reorganization plan, five Gary schools were in their fourth year of academic probation category for the fourth consecutive year: two high schools and three middle schools. Because of the manner in which school officials reorganized the district, only Roosevelt remained in dire jeopardy. Corrective actions were eminent for Roosevelt. New state Superintendent Tony Bennett, a no nonsense kind of guy and avid supporter of NCLB and school accountability, was not wasting any time. Indeed,

Bennett had argued "that the state should speed up the intervention process" (Lazerus,

2009b, p. A3).

In October of 2009, the state sent the Cambridge Group to assess teaching and

learning at Roosevelt. I spoke with Dr. Booth about their visit. Booth explained:

> They came out in October and conducted some site visits. They gave us a list of concerns and areas in need of improvement. They gave us a timeline in terms of developing a brand new action plan to beef up or replace the one in that existed in the improvement plan. What they cited as a problem was the fact that we have merged and become a 7-12 configuration. They noticed that there was no marriage of all three faculties coming together. (L. Booth, personal communication, January 25, 2010)

Roosevelt was given six whole-school priorities around which they were to construct a new

school development and improvement plan:

- Build a common vision.
- Assert much stronger instructional leadership.
- Improve assessment and analysis of data.
- Develop teaching styles that are more engaging and aligned to student needs.
- Substantially reduce the number of disciplinary offences.
- Improve the quality of the physical environment. (Roosevelt Career and Technical Academy, 2009)

It took a great deal of time and effort, but Booth said the new action plan was completed, as

required, by December of 2009. Booth talked about the support Roosevelt was receiving

from Title I funds:

> We are now a target assisted high school which means we have to identify those students who are in the greatest need of additional academic support and we use those funds to get them that support. What we're doing is providing those kids with after school tutoring services, Monday through Thursday. And our focus is on grades 8, 9, and 10. We're focusing on math and language arts. (personal communication, January 25, 2010)

Students were identified, Booth explained, by two academic coaches, one for reading and

one for math. When I spoke with Dr. Booth in January, 2010, tutoring was just beginning

for the school year. Booth explained that Roosevelt teachers interested in tutoring went

through an application process prior to being selected to tutor the students and would be paid

a stipend per the teacher contract. He was optimistic that students would attend because it

was mandatory for athletes and any student participating in extracurricular activities.

Assuming that not all of the targeted students were athletes, it was not clear how the

attendance of non-athletic targeted students would be ensured. Booth expressed the hope

that:

> We'll make AYP at the end of the school year. They're giving us 24 months to
> really turn the school around and if we don't do it, the state is going to come in and
> shut Roosevelt, possibly reopen it as a charter school. (personal communication,
> January 25, 2010)

I asked Dr. Booth how the staff and students were responding to the pressure. He did not

really answer my question, but instead revealed an incentive plan he hoped would motivate

students to achieve. Pointing to three large trophies, Booth explained:

> When school first started, we issued a challenge. Competition between our 7th and
> 8th graders for the trophy and then another competition between the 9th, 10th, 11th,
> and 12th graders. We also have an AYP Championship Trophy. That's a challenge
> we have with Ms. Dunlap, the principal over at West Side. The motivation is to keep
> our trophy at home. Ms. Dunlap has a trophy just like that one so our challenge is to
> take her trophy and bring it to Roosevelt. Her challenge is win our trophy. So, the
> kids are all hyped up. . . . Our whole focus is saving Roosevelt, we're just drilling
> that, making AYP and getting ourselves off of this four year, four consecutive year
> probation. That's our focus. We talk about that no matter where we go, we preach
> it. (personal communication, January 25, 2010)

According to Booth, all of Roosevelt's stakeholders feel a sense of urgency and are working

to save the school. Booth applauded security for doing their part to keep the school safe and

secure. Aware of how important parents are, Booth said one of the reasons he is so adamant

about getting parents involved is because "parents can go out and communicate—they can

go to the beauty shop, the barber shop, the laundromat, the grocery store—they can be our

mouthpiece" (personal communication, January 25, 2010). Parents, Booth hoped, would

also be a part also of the planning for next year. He mentioned two new parent positions, parental assistants. He also mentioned two additional support staff, two transition coaches. The transition coaches work to support targeted assistance students in the areas of attendance, behavior/discipline, individualized counseling support (above and beyond the work of the school counselor), and parent communication. In contrast, the academic coaches (mentioned earlier) are responsible for testing and identifying the children eligible for targeted assistance. They, then, are expected to work directly with teachers who serve Title I targeted assistance students. Their job is to model, coach, and support teachers in the areas of instructional delivery and content knowledge. I later discovered that the tutoring for the targeted assistance students has not been as effective as anticipated.

Sometimes, what ought to be and what actually is, differ. The provision of services by the academic coaches is one example. In order to be identified for target assistance (e.g., receive services from either of the academic coaches), students must be at least three years below grade level and only 8th, 9th, and 10th graders are eligible. The measures used to determine the grade and performance levels are ISTEP scores and STAR Reading and STAR Math, computer-assisted grade level placement tests provided by Renaissance Learning. Students may receive services without an ISTEP score, but they must have taken the STAR assessment in order to receive services. The assessment data indicated that 8th grade students tested better than the 10th grade population. School records suggest that as of February 10, 2010, 368 Roosevelt students were eligible to receive targeted assistance in reading and language arts; 300 qualified for assistance in math; only 124 students are being served, meaning that they are participating in the after-school math and/or reading tutoring. An additional 35 students attend Saturday tutoring. Guarded comments from a reliable, but

unofficial source suggested that participation may be low for a variety of reasons: the system really not being set up to accommodate all of the eligible students, student unwillingness to participate, and inadequate and poor quality tutoring resources. Professional development is being offered to teachers by the coaches, particularly in the use of technology for instruction, but Roosevelt does not have enough computers. The district filled in a swimming pool to create an additional computer lab, but, even with that an unofficial source reported that most students do not use computers on a regular basis. Additionally, as of April, Roosevelt was without a math coach altogether. When things generally seem to be going wrong, every glitch becomes almost expected. Some people become demoralized, a common phenomenon in crisis-ridden environments. Payne (2008) alleged that change is difficult for crisis-ridden schools (and I would classify Roosevelt, today, as crisis-ridden or, at the very least, living in the midst of crisis).

Principal Booth's outlook, however, was positive (L. Booth, personal communication, January 25, 2010). He explained that Roosevelt has a redesign team that meets regularly with the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Directors of Professional Development, Technology, and Planning, Evaluation, Research, and Accountability (PERA). He did not mention this, but several teachers and community members reported that tensions ran high between factions within the student body at the beginning of the year. There were a lot of fights. The Cambridge Report, released in April 2010, alluded to these early problems and credited Booth and his team with handling and avoiding potentially serious conflicts. Nevertheless, Booth's tone and demeanor were determined and upbeat. He seemed pleased with the extra support he was receiving from the district.

Dr. Juanita Lyons, Director of PERA, has been of great benefit to Dr. Booth and the staff. I spoke at length with Lyons in her office at the Gary Community School Corporation Service Building. Lyons described her responsibilities:

> I'm over all assessment and special education assessment, . . . not the IEP, just the actual testing process and processing that goes along with it and that's every assessment in the district. I'm involved with Curriculum. I have to know what Curriculum is doing. They drive the why's, the when's, and the how's of what I do. I'm mainly concerned with the numbers, making sure that the district has the reports are issued on time and that it's communicated to the district and the schools and the principals. They have this information so they can work with it, ultimately, to help move the children ahead. (personal communication, March 3, 2010)

Lyons discussed the support she provides to Roosevelt. Opposed to encroaching on valuable instructional time, Lyon spends whole days at Roosevelt meeting with teachers during their planning time, lunch periods, and before or after school to help them understand and use the data appropriately. She works closely with the principal and coaches as well. Lyons elaborated:

> I've developed a database for Roosevelt. I'm trying to pare it down to students who are targeted for Title I. I also created a profile for them that goes beyond what's on the state website. It's designed to give pertinent information that involves not only formative assessment information that's not on the website but it has suspension, fighting, attendance . . . it has ISTEP scores and SAT information that goes beyond what's on the state site. It's a snapshot. (personal communication, March 3, 2010)

Lyons and I had a candid conversation about some of the pitfalls of NCLB and high-stakes testing, specifically in Indiana. According to Lyons, colleges and universities are not educating teachers about how to interpret and use data, which is a problem because they are "faced with a data-driven school mentality" (personal communication, March 3, 2010). Ongoing changes in state mandates are another problem. Edicts come from the state and local districts have little time to gather the information needed; there is little, if any, margin for error. New assessments, modified versions of old assessments, and changing

terminologies seem ongoing. The class of 2011, for instance, will be the last class to take the current GQE math and reading tests. Beginning with the class of 2012, the current GQE will be replaced by End-of-Course Examinations (algebra I and English 10). The situation breeds confusion and frustration, but Lyons was adamant that the board and superintendent remain optimistic and determined to save Roosevelt.

Unfortunately, the Gary community has received a litany of bad news about Roosevelt. Since December 2009 alone, the citizens of Gary have been inundated with negativity about Roosevelt, Gary schools, and public education in general. Frequent headlines and quotes the *Post Tribune* underscored failure:

- December 14, 2009: "Velt faces state shutdown" (Lazerus, p. 5).

- December 15, 2009: "We have other schools that need improvement, but we're putting the intensive care at Roosevelt" (Lazerus, p. 10).

- January 21, 2010: "Governor's initiative: State K-12 overhaul needed" (Lazerus, p. 1).

- January 29, 2010: "State flunks education 101: Delivering Well Prepared Teachers: D; Expanding the Teacher Pool: D+; Identifying Effective New Teachers: D; Retaining Effective New Teachers: D+; Exiting Ineffective New Teachers: F" (Lazerus, p. 1).

- January 29, 2010: "Report: Teacher quality in state comes up short" (Lazerus, p. 2).

- March 16, 2009: "State: Six area schools failing" (Lazerus, p. 5).

Ironically, the positive publicity has featured private, government, or external solutions to the very public problem:

- January, 21, 2010: "Indiana compete for federal education money: Strings tied to grant" (Lazurus & Spivek, p. 3).

- February 19, 2010: "Mission to nurture: Gary charter school plans to expand with help from grant" (Deneal, p. 18).

- March 2, 2010: "Obama plan targets schools with low graduation rates" (Kirk, p. 9).

- March 30, 2010: "Deadline looms for stimulus education grants" (Kirk, p. 8).

- March 31, 2010: "Daniels approves bold reforms for education" (Kirk, p. 14).

School board president, Ken Stalling commented, "When you're in a community where you see charter schools popping up all around you, whether you agree with it or not, change is happening, and there's success in those changes" (Kirk, 2010b, p. 8). The Gary School Community Corporation tooted its own horn, so to speak, on January 28, 2010 with a full-page ad that read: "Graduation Rates Are Up!" I argue, however, that the tone of these articles does little to build confidence in public education. To the contrary, public schools are portrayed as sinking ships, outdated, effective, failing, and inefficient. It is difficult to see how such attitudes will improve public education. It is difficult for Roosevelt staff and students to remain positive.

Marcus Upshaw, currently the new Dean of Students, shared his thoughts about the impact on staff and students of working in a school that has been tagged as failing. Upshaw said they many of the students no longer care about the test:

> Some don't care one way or the other—they've been made to believe that it doesn't matter. They know people who don't perform well on tests who they're proud of, they look up to them. So they don't have an incentive to pass it when, let's say, a cousin or brother or a friend didn't pass it and they're living the life that they want to live one day. . . . When they say, I'm not going to pass the test anyway, so why should I study for it? (personal communication, March 4, 2010)

According to Upshaw, the pressure from tests has aggravated an already complicated and difficult situation. He described the challenges the staff faces with students who come from what he called "non-traditional" families:

> We have a lot of non-traditional families . . . . Parents are not working, living with grandparents, auntie, or living in of foster care, not knowing who the parents are, not having any ties to the city beyond your parents. . . . In the late 90s, when I started

working here, the kids parents went here, grandparents went here. Then in the 2000s, you started seeing the influx of people coming from outside the city. A lot of parents I come in contact with don't like school, didn't like school. . . . So, they come in with a grudge and the same thing with teachers too, [they say], "I had a problem with your mama. I know how you are." So, that's part of the problem as well. (personal communication, March 4, 2010)

The pressure of testing and change has had a negative effect on the morale and commitment

of some of the teachers. While he acknowledged "it takes a lot of dedication just to come

into work these days" (personal communication, March 4, 2010), he sees more resignation

among the staff. It is evident in the relaxed attire of some teachers.

> I would listen to people talk about how when Tatum was the principal, and how male teachers had to wear a shirt and tie, or blazers with jackets, and now you have teachers who may wear cutoff jeans and sandals. So when you try to impress upon the students the model of excellence that was once set you can't do that anymore because it is not being modeled for them. (personal communication, March 4, 2010)

> Changing the subject a bit, I asked Upshaw about safety issues in and around the

building. Having been an assistant principal in a large urban high school, I knew that the

dean is often expected to handle the bulk of security and discipline concerns. Upshaw

explained, "We have six [security guards]. These are police officers that work for the school

corporation. They're also police officers on the street and the schools" (personal

communication, March 4, 2010). Fighting has been an issue. Upshaw said a lot of the

problem is caused by territorial conflicts between students and with the meshing of three

schools, children are coming from rival territories. According to Upshaw, increasingly

students are pushing their limits. He thinks it is because students are "used to people not

caring about them" (personal communication, March 4, 2010). It as though they are testing

the adults. Upshaw elaborated:

> As soon as you show them that you don't (care), they say, "I knew you were just here for the money. I know ya'll don't care about us. Ya'll just trying to us out," and some use that as an excuse, but in some cases whether we realize it or not, it's true. We want to get rid of the problem children, no one wants to deal with the ones who

won't do right. We can't make them do right anyway, you got to go somewhere else, but where do you go? (personal communication, March 4, 2010)

The district no longer has an alternative school so when students are suspended, Upshaw said, "they stay home or [go to] some supplementary educational service. But, in most cases, they're just home" (personal communication, March 4, 2010). According to Upshaw:

> I really don't know too many that will accept them if they were expelled from Gary and for some reason, Roosevelt appears to be the bottom of the barrel when it comes to student achievement or student conduct and when they get expelled out of here, there's just no options for them. (personal communication, March 4, 2010)

In fact, Roosevelt, as a school, is running out of options. Dr. Booth and his staff have also been receiving a steady dose of sobering and incriminating, but necessary, information. An overview of performance accountability for a turnaround plan was compiled by the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (2010). Clearly reflected in the report is the vernacular of Effective Schools reform. Reiterated in the report are the seven correlates of Effective Schools and questions are raised about how the degree to which those correlates are evident at Roosevelt. The report gives Roosevelt's dismal trend data and then lists short-term and long-term goals for improvement (Department of Secondary and Elementary Education, 2010). Currently, school officials and the state are weighing options outlined in President Obama's educational reform plan targeted at schools with low graduation rates. Funding for the $900 million plan is in addition to the $35 million marked for low-performing schools within the federal government's economic stimulus package. In order for schools to receive the money, they must select one of four performance models (Kirk, 2010a, p. 9). The choices are:

- Turnaround: the school district replaces the building principal and at least 50% of the faculty. A new governance structure is also required. Themed academies are permissible within this model.

- Transformational: the school is required to address four key areas of reform including replacing the principal, implementing instructional reform strategies, extending learning and teacher planning time, and providing ongoing support.

- Restart: the school would close and reopen as a charter school.

- Closure: the school district would close the school and place all students in a higher achieving school in the district.

I spoke to Superintendent Campbell about Roosevelt's current predicament and its future in light of these options. Having been in the district for a number of years, she noted that Roosevelt's demise has been gradual and is indicative of a disturbing national crisis:

> We have students that are not achieving, and it's basically at the secondary level. I think a lot of it has to do with how we look at learning, and how we work with children as it relates to learning. We are not changing in education, and how we deliver instruction to children, based on how the world is changing and children learn. (M. Campbell, personal communication, July 2, 2010)

As I listened to Dr. Campbell, I remembered Payne's (2008) observation—so much reform, so little change. Campbell also attributed some of the problem at Roosevelt to low expectations and a lack of accountability among critical stakeholders. Campbell recalled:

> At one time, I know at Roosevelt as I've talked with the different administrators that have been there, and some of the teachers, the expectations are not there anymore for children or for teachers. The accountability is not there: the monitoring, the follow through, to insure that what we are teaching is actually getting to the children, and we can only do that by planning, rechecking, retooling teachers. . . . And then, I'm going to the home as well because I think we need parental involvement. (personal communication, July 2, 2010)

Campbell was reluctant, however, to blame any one group of stakeholders:

> I still go back to everything happens at the school level. . . . It's all of us, we can't blame just one person, but I think it has to do with, as I said, the issue of how we're teaching students, and the relevance, the rigor, and the expectations. (personal communication, July 2, 2010)

I inquired about the degree of support the Gary School Corporation is receiving from the state. Campbell indicated that she has "not had any issues working with them" (personal communication, July 2, 2010). She is withholding judgment. Wary of using lack of support as an excuse, Campbell's position is that her job is:

> To hold the state's feet to the fire in the sense that I'm going to say, "you came in, you met with us, and you indicated that you would support and help us." Then, I can make some decisions later about whether or not they are actually helping. Right now, they are saying whatever you need, we will provide it for you. (personal communication, July 2, 2010)

She has been pleased with the financial support the district received from Title I and stimulus monies. According to Campbell, she was disappointed that, unlike the districts surrounding Gary, the Gary School Corporation received no discretionary dollars from the state for the upgrading of schools:

> My big concern is that we have not gotten the dollars that other districts have received right around us. They received dollars to upgrade their schools. We have not and what we asked for were dollars for roof [repairs]. Everything leaks because our buildings are old. We didn't ask for new buildings. We asked for renovations of buildings. (personal communication, July 2, 2010)

In terms of Roosevelt's four options, the district may adopt the transformation model, pending the approval of their application for a school improvement grant. The only other model being seriously debated is the turnaround model, but in order to implement that model, the teacher's union must agree. Thus far, the union has refused to sanction the plan. Campbell and I discussed the relationship of race and education, as well as the responsibility of the Black community to embrace and teach African American heritage. Campbell elaborated:

> We have, as African Americans, and I'm just not talking about here, I'm talking about throughout the nation, we have to learn to work together, and we have to learn to keep history and heritage alive. We don't do a good job of that, because you can learn from that, and it can also strengthen the minds and bodies and spirits of our students, if they understand from whence they came and the achievements that have been made within their race. We need to learn how to do that with our race because it is important to us. That's a good way for you to start understanding self, and what you are about, and that's not to say that you don't work within the world, the diverse world that you're in, but you still have to understand your own heritage. It's critical. (personal communication, July 2, 2010)

At the time of this interview, Roosevelt's fate remained undecided, but Campbell assured me that "we're going to give all of the support that we can to Roosevelt" (personal communication, July 2, 2010).

In May of 2010, the full Quality Review Final Report, known as the Cambridge Report, the result of a two-day site visit in October of 2009, was released on the IDOE website. Based on a four-point scale that ranged from unacceptable (no evidence) to acceptable (routine and consistent), the Cambridge Education Group evaluated three broad areas: readiness to teach, readiness to learn, and readiness to act. Within each broad area, schools are rated on specific qualities. Roosevelt received poor ratings (the next to the worst rating, meaning minimal evidence) in every specific quality, except one—"the faculty works together, incessantly and naturally to help each other improve their practice" (Cambridge Group, 2010). I view this as a glimmer of hope in a sea of darkness. I saw the spark at work when, at Dr. Booth's invitation, I attended an eighth grade orientation for the Roosevelt Career and Technical Academy. Eighth grade students and their parents were presented with an idea of the educational plan for next school year. Students will be encouraged to select a career pathway from a variety of state-approved career clusters. Access to advanced technology and a close partnership with the Gary Career Center are central elements of the plan. The influence of tracking remains evident as the four diploma tracks play heavily into

student choices. I wondered how many eighth grade students are really capable of making

wise choices for their future. To what extent would their choices be influenced by test

performance and teacher bias? I remembered that when I was in middle school at Bailly

Junior High School, I was trying to convince myself that I was as smart as the White

children in my class. The program went very well. The band wooed the crowd with a

medley of Michael Jackson's hits and the dance group performed to the Negro spiritual,

"Wade in the Water." A lovely reception with bacon, sausage, biscuits, and grits was held in

the Community Room afterward. It was obvious that a lot of effort was put into making the

event a success. Clearly, there is a core group of teachers committed to positive change.

> Cheryl Ramsey is one. Ramsey explained that this is her second stint at Roosevelt:
>
> I actually began my teaching career in 1992 and I was assigned to Roosevelt. I was
> here for about 10 years. I went to another high school . . . and now, I'm back at
> Roosevelt for the 2009-2010 school year. (personal communication, January 25,
> 2009)

Ramsey teaches Algebra I students with learning disabilities or as she put it, "the mildly

mentally handicapped" (personal communication, January 25, 2009). Because of my

undergraduate background in special education, I was curious about the impact of ISTEP on

the special education population. Ramsey explained that in Indiana special education

students are required to pass ISTEP+ in order to receive a diploma. Generally speaking,

special education students who do not pass ISTEP must seek a waiver, the same as any other

child. If the waiver is denied, the child receives only a certificate of completion for their 13

years of schooling. "That's why," explained Ramsey, "we're always pushing. I start telling

students, 'Watch your attendance, go to remediation every time it's offered, take the test

every time it's offered, finish the test,' so they will be eligible for the waiver" (personal

communication, January 25, 2009). In the past, some of her students have passed the test:

I had some students that I've actually put on the list for the math coach to work with, because I think their math skills are just that good where they could be pushed over. And not that I ignore my other students, but those that I see that can do more, I give them more. Just like for Core 40, I run off material so they can take it home and start working on the Core 40 for the end of year assessment because they have strong math skills. (personal communication, January 25, 2009)

Ramsey is also dedicated to Roosevelt's success and senses a similar commitment from the other teachers who attend the action planning meetings. "When I sit in the action plan committee meetings, I see a group of teachers that are very committed, very dedicated to doing what needs to be done to assist in turning things around" (personal communication, January 25, 2009). She believed that a positive school-community relationship is an important factor in turning the school around:

> I have a good relationship with parents. I communicate with them at the beginning of the year by letter. And if I do have to call with something negative, I balance it with something positive, because I am a parent. Parents, they're sending you the best they have. They don't have some prized possession at home that they're holding back on you. And I really try to bend over backwards to work with children. I don't write a lot of referrals. If someone starts to tell me what they're not going to do, I write a referral, but pretty much I try to work with students, talk to them, counsel them. It's sidewalk counseling, because I'm not a counselor, but things I do with my own children to encourage, to motivate, to work with them, because I am not a proponent of suspension. I think some children need to go home, but there needs to be some viable options for discipline other than suspension. To me, it's just like if you whip a child, and if that doesn't correct the behavior, what do you do next time, whip longer and harder? To me, suspension should be a last resort, but now they're immune to it. (personal communication, January 25, 2009)

I began wondering if students are not also immune to ISTEP, especially in an environment where success is rare. Before parting, Ramsey expressed a gnawing observation about the ISTEP and racial awareness:

> I don't think race is considered because I believe there is such a thing as environmentally handicapped, where children just don't have the exposure that their White or non-minority counterparts have. And I can remember one year looking at ISTEP, and it talks about a vacation in Europe or somewhere. And I looked at it and my heart just dropped, because that let me know that that was not considerate of everybody. Some people don't go on vacations at all, and then to talk about a

vacation in Europe . . . and then trying to read that and plug through an get your answers. So I really think race is not considered. Cultural differences are not considered. I go all the way to what's served in the cafeteria for lunch. We all are in the state of Indiana, but I look at Merrillville High School . . . our kids get pizza and fries everyday. And right now, I just think, with the Republican governor, it's just like what we further do to destroy Gary? Dr. Williams [former Roosevelt principal and now school board vice-president] said it at the board meeting. We're considered the weak links. Isn't that who you go after? (personal communication, January 25, 2009)

Before I turned the recorder off, Ramsey added, "Our babies . . . they are no different than a kid in Munster, Valparaiso, or Carmel, Indiana" (personal communication, January 25, 2009). I pondered that statement. Did she mean that literally or did she mean that our babies deserve the same advantages Whites children have or both? I did not think to ask her, but it seems that Black educators express conflicting views.

On the one hand, we (and I use "we" because I am a Black educator) vehemently deny that Black children are different, but on the other hand, we acknowledge that there are cultural differences. Can we have it both ways? How does one teach any child and ignore the child's culture? I do not think it can or should be done. Many scholars agree (Gordon, 1990; Ladson-Billings, 1994; McLaren, 2007; Perry et al., 2003; Sizemore, 2008; Woodson, 1993). It occurred to me that the reason for the conflict may be explained by the fact that ever since the beginning of Black existence in America, Whiteness has been the norm. It is no different today. To be different from the norm is to be inferior. Despite all of the rhetoric about diversity and multiculturalism, Whiteness is still the norm. It is not OK to be different. Being Black has always been a problem of some sort, a dilemma. If you are Black, poor, come from a single-parent home, and live in public housing, you are really a problem. What does this do to Black children? Du Bois (1994) asked: "how does it feel to be a problem? . . . Being a problem is a strange experience, peculiar even for one who has never been anything else" (p. 1). Furthermore, Black students often labor under the

misconception that they are intellectually inferior (Sizemore, 2008, p. 288). It occurred to me that the culminating effect of these lived experiences is what makes Black children different. It is what makes learning for African American children a distinctive task. Color-blind reform, in refusing to acknowledge the significance of race, makes no attempt to consider the challenge of being Black in America or the challenges unique learning challenges that complicate Black achievement. "In a context where many believe that to talk of race fosters racism, equality allegedly lies in treating everyone the same" (Hill Collins, 2000, p. 23). Yet as Kimberle Crenshaw (1997) reminded us, "it is fairly obvious that treating different things the same can generate as much inequality as treating the same things differently" (p. 285).

The next time I went to Roosevelt, I think the security guard recognized me. As usual, I went through the metal detector, signed in, wrote down my destination, and received a visitor's pass, as does everyone who enters the school. I went to the office where I had become a very familiar face. Security directed me to the Parent Resource Room where I met Gregory McCullum, one of the parental assistants. The room, formerly a classroom, is a decent size. The makings for coffee sat on a small round table. Various brochures and information for parents were displayed on a longer table. Several key terms and acronyms related to ISTEP, the GQE, and NCLB were written on a blackboard. McCullum, a member of Dads Doing Something (DADS) for eight years, a group of fathers who voluntarily lend support to teachers and students, agreed to talk about his role as a parent assistant:

> As a parent assistant, we're like a liaison between the teacher and the parent. We've been contacting quite a few parents, trying to get them to come out to the parent involvement meetings. The first meeting that we had, we had 30 parents for that, but the second meeting we only had one. But, we're still calling parents and enlightening them on the Title I programming that they have for their kids. A lot of them weren't aware that there was tutoring going on to help them. . . . With Title I

now, they even have things set up where the parents, themselves, can take tutoring classes. (personal communication, February 23, 2010)

Parent participation has not been what McCullum hoped it would be. He blamed some of the low response on the fact that "sometimes we get last minute faxes about meetings that are going to happen tomorrow, and there's no way we can involve parents in that short a time" (personal communication, February 23, 2010). McCullum's co-worker, Kendra Johnson, also addressed the problem of effective communication and several other concerns.

Johnson has been actively involved with the district and Roosevelt for some time. "I've grown a love for Roosevelt. There's a strong family base, a historical family base at Roosevelt. So I wanted all of my children to go here" (personal communication, March 2, 2010). A resident of Dorie Miller Public Housing Development, Johnson considers herself an activist for children who live in public housing. She wanted to work at Roosevelt because it serves children from three housing projects: Dorie Miller, Delaney, and East Point. "With my background," Johnson said, "I wanted to try and help my public housing youth" (personal communication, February 23, 2010). Johnson also took the job because of her ability to relate to parents:

> One of the biggest things I see is if a parent doesn't think you understand them, they're not gonna want to relate to you. What can you tell me if your child's never been pregnant? You're raising one child and I'm raising six? Parents want to have somebody that's not going to patronize them. (personal communication, February 23, 2010)

However, like McCullum, Johnson was concerned about poor parent-school communication regarding the school's future. Too often, she said she is told at the last minute (less than 48 hours in advance) of meetings and expected to contact parents. When only a few parents attend, the conclusion drawn is that they do not care. In her view, this is unfair to parents. Indeed, miscommunication and lack of trust and rapport with parents

seems to have been aggravated by the emphasis on testing and the sanctions that accompany low performing schools like Roosevelt. It has resulted in a pervasive and unproductive blame game. As best I can tell, finger pointing is rampant. Some teachers blame Dr. Booth. Others blame parents. Even though attendance data reflects rates over 90%, teachers blame low scores on poor attendance. Parents blame teachers. People in the community blame the reorganization plan. Many blame the troubles on the Chicago immigrants and negative elements within the Black community. One school official told the *Post Tribune* that getting parents involved is the key to success. "We know the problems at Roosevelt are systemic," he said, "and they are leaking in from the streets" (Lazerus, 2009c, p. 5). It occurred to me that speaking of community influences in such terms would hardly improve school-community relations. Some interviewees expressed the sentiment that the Black middle class has abandoned Gary. Others disagree. I posit that there has been a growing disinvestment in Gary's youth, particularly as they appear to be somewhat foreign, different, and more oppositional. Black people in Gary must remain invested in the quality of life and education in Gary. If Black people give up on Black people, who else will care? Those who are more fortunate than others can ill afford to buy into the grand narrative and view the less fortunate and less educated as unworthy, intellectually inferior, and hopeless because, at the end of the day, race is still a primary determinant of one's life chances. America is not color-blind. No Black person is above or beyond the reach of racism. Unintended or not, the pressures imposed by the color-blind, high-stakes, coercive accountability educational agenda have exacerbated hopelessness in low-income, high poverty, predominantly African American communities and schools like Gary and Roosevelt. Contrary to the assumptions that belie NCLB, negative consequences are not always motivating.

Try telling that to Tony Bennett, the new Superintendent of the Indiana Department of Education. Thanks to Dr. Booth, I had the good fortune to able to attend an important town hall meeting where Bennett spoke to the Roosevelt community and Gary citizens. I would not have known about the meeting had I not called Dr. Booth about another matter. During the conversation, Booth told me that he had already been informed that he would not be the principal at Roosevelt next year:

> I've only been here seven months so do I think it's unfair? Yes, I do but I realize the fact that, and I realized this after being here about six weeks that I was basically placed here to be the sacrificial lamb and I can live with that. (personal communication, April 27, 2010)

I thanked him for telling me about the meeting and wished him the best.

The town hall meeting was really quite interesting. Bennett opened the meeting with the words in the opening epigraph. I was struck by how strikingly similar his rationale was to the panic that dominated the school crisis ignited by *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence, 1983) more than 20 years ago and the thinking of racial realists like Thernstrom and Thernstrom (1997, 2003). With respect to the matter of schools being in crisis, I have suggested that the sense of urgency had more to do with the preservation of White privilege and Western Anglo world superiority than uplifting poor African Americans. The example of Asian success involves a different thought process. Proponents of color-blind reform often use the success of other minorities, especially Asians to promote cultural difference and inequality. Because they posit that race no longer matters and racism is not a significant factor in the determination of one's life chances, it is easy to equate the Asian American experience with the African American experience when, in reality, they bear stark differences. In *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning*, Thernstrom and

Thernstrom (2003) concluded "some groups are more academically advantageous than others" (p. 271). They wrote:

> Asian parents typically expect their children to work extraordinarily hard in school. . . . As a result, on some math tests, the White-Asian gap is actually larger than the Black-White achievement gap. But Whites can learn to work as hard as Asian students do, and so, obviously, can Blacks and Hispanics. The values, habits, and skills that we call "culture" are not impervious to change. Indeed, they are shaped and reshaped by the social environment, and schools can play in an invaluable part in that process. (p. 271)

Bennett clarified his reason for sharing the story of William Zhou, saying that he wanted "to put William Zhou's lesson of fierce urgency into the school community of Gary" (Bennett, 2010). Intricately woven into his Bennett's anecdotal story and Thernstrom and Thernstrom's pronouncement are two age-old American ideals. The first is that everyone can be successful in America, if they just work hard enough, also known as the postulate of meritocracy. The second is that poverty is a character flaw, meaning it is self-induced by cultural pathology and laziness. Both provide powerful justifications for a color-blind ideology that effectively camouflage racism. Like Thernstrom and Thernstrom, Bennett accepted no excuses. Before accepting questions and comments, Bennett made his position very clear:

> Now I'd like to bring the discussion this evening with a couple of ground rules and the ground rules are this. . . . I'm not really here tonight to hear excuses or questions that we have poor kids, we have minority kids, we have kids from broken or dysfunctional homes. Okay? I don't have a lot of time for that. Frankly, I don't think the children of this school have time for that. And, I think that we have to understand this—if this community succumbs to the soft bigotry of low expectations, our children will lose.

The audience liked the phrase—the soft bigotry of low expectations. I recognized it right away. George Bush used those words in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention on September 2, 2004. Bush had nothing but praise for NCLB:

Tonight, I remind every parent and every teacher, I say every child: no matter what your circumstance, no matter where you live, your school will be the path to the promise of America. We are transforming our schools by raising standards and focusing on results. We are insisting on accountability, empowering parents and teachers, and making sure that local people are in charge of their schools. By testing every child, we are identifying those who need help, and we're providing a record level of funding to get them that help. In northeast Georgia, Gainesville Elementary School is mostly Hispanic and 90% poor. And this year, 90% of its students passed state tests in reading and math. The principal expresses the philosophy of the school this way: "we don't focus on what we can't do at this school; we focus on what we can do. And we do whatever it takes to get kids across the line." This principal is challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. And that is the spirit of our education reform and the commitment of the country: No dejaremos a ningun ninpo atras. We will leave no child behind. (Bush, 2004, paras. 66-70)

I began to wonder—are people listening with critical minds? Will they leave enlightened or hoodwinked? In the search of finding their way—saving Roosevelt, if you will, I wondered if the audience would experience an epiphany or would reality be eclipsed by the rhetoric? The rhetoric associated with NCLB and color-blind reform is attractively deceptive. I do not quibble with the fact that low expectations contribute to the problem of racial stereotype, underachievement, bigotry, and racism. I also have no disagreement with focusing on what children can do as opposed to what they cannot do. There is, however, something terribly wrong with holding children to a standard and then punishing them when they do not meet the standard. All children deserve the opportunity to get to the finish line but, in order for that to happen inherent inequities endemic to American society must be addressed, head on. Racism is a primary source of such inequity. Bennett spoke about a chess game and the need to be concerned about "them (the Indians and the Chinese) getting us" (Bennett, 2010). I wondered how many poor Black children care? Do they feel as though they are part of the "us" of which Bennett's speaks? I think perhaps not. I continued to listen.

Bennett noted three accurate observations: (a) Roosevelt has a culture of low expectations, (b) instruction is inadequate, and (c) instructional leadership is poor. He

rightly stated that Roosevelt did not get where it is today overnight and said, in so many

words, that Roosevelt has been given ample opportunity to improve. Change is imminent.

Bennett (2010) promised:

> I will not blink. I will make a decision regarding the future of Roosevelt High
> School. And that decision is will the state run it. And I assure you that if I have to
> make the decision, I will not blink. . . . That's not tough talk. That is a promise. . . .
> Who do you want to run Gary Schools?

"Don't think we're just going to give you another year of happiness and say that we hope

we've scared you into teaching children differently," Bennett warned, "My expectation is

that this school becomes a high achieving school." He sounded like a father scolding his

children and threatening them with severe punishment if they do not get their act together. I

knew the threat was serious, but wondered if his tone was meant to enrage and inspire, or if

he unaware of how condescending he sounded. I also wondered where he got the idea that

the Roosevelt had spent the last few years in happiness. To the contrary, my research shows

that no one has been happy about the demise of Roosevelt and many have attempted to

change things for the better.

Following his opening remarks, Bennett (2010) opened up the floor for comments.

Apparently, people did not take Bennett's warning about not being in the mood for listening

to excuses seriously because a couple of people tried to blame the problem on parents.

Bennett rightly responded, "we can't legislate good parenting." Someone else tried to blame

the problem on poor attendance. He was a little more tolerant of that excuse. Then a student

asked:

> What if the people you put in place don't do any better? What if there is still no
> improvement? What happens then with your transformational plan? I want the
> logistics of the takeover. What happens then? (anonymous student as cited in
> Bennett, 2010)

Bennett quickly responded:

> When I look at your scores, I am confident I can do better, okay? Now that sounds arrogant and you know what? We know across the country it can be done and we know it can be done with the right combination, which is high expectations, great instruction, and great leadership. . . I will have a teacher's union contract that comes with these features: I can set the school year, I can set the hours, can set the instructional program to serve the kids. So I don't have a lot of the parameters that handcuff us today. I'm telling you that we can deliver a system that does not have the barriers to it to deliver the instruction that is needed for children of this school community.

What happened to NCLB's pledge of "empowering parents and teachers, and making sure that local people are in charge of their schools?" Bennett's notion of improvement sounded more like taking control away from the local community, presumably for their own sake, while simultaneously implying that public education handcuffs educators. This is the proverbial sales pitch for charter schools and choice, both key elements of NCLB. There I sat in my seat, adjusting the volume of my recorder trying to make sure I was catching everything and wondering how many people in the audience were able to read between the lines of Bennett's response.

One gentleman did read between the lines. He stood up and gave an impassioned plea for people to read Diane Ravitch's (2010) latest book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*. For several minutes, he spoke about the ills of NCLB and its unintended consequences, especially the obsession with high-stakes testing as the primary means of measuring the quality of education and achieving accountability. Bennett (2010) thanked the gentleman for briefing everyone and gave Ravitch some credit for being as scholar but stated, "There are many other scholarly people who take opposite positions." He then said something that I found very telling: "I will just tell you that that I know this; this city finds itself in the middle of the nation academically in a nation that is in the middle of the pack, academically, internally. That's not acceptable." Here we have the race analogy

once more and Bennett was using the same phrase that the governor of Michigan had used to

describe the state of the nation standards in 1996—middle of the pack. His words slightly

jumbled, it appeared that he was referencing the global race for world dominance as well as

the internal threat of mediocrity in the nation's schools. Is this the purpose our schools

serve? I fear, in the current age of neoliberalism, that it may very well be that, as a nation,

education is more concerned about capitalist, material gain, than the uplifting to the human

spirit, developing human capabilities, or equalizing life chances and opportunities for all

Americans. I also wondered what the young student thought about Bennett's ideas and how

the message would resonate with other African American youth. Poor and Black American

children may sometimes feel like they and everyone they know are not even in the race to

the top in their own country. What interest do they have in America being in the middle of

the pack?

Bennett (2010) continued to rebut the gentleman's comments as he defended high-

stakes testing:

> We are going to continue to push very hard for reforms. We are going to continue to
> push for accountability, flexibility in the system and whether you like it or not, we
> have doctors who take boards, we have nurses who take boards, we had to see the
> educators take boards. And you know what? They are all very successful. So, let's
> go to the next question.

A few questions later, a mother with three daughters who attend Roosevelt approached the

microphone. She had several concerns about what she perceived to be a lack of

opportunities for students in Gary to learn and succeed. She began to speak calmly at first,

but as she continued, she became increasingly agitated:

> We don't have computers. Our kids are good, but we have to have some help . . . it
> can't be security that teach our kids. I have two young ladies at home that I have to
> get home tutoring for. They gave me one hour a week. What can I do with one
> hour? . . . What else could a parent ask for? We need help . . . so what I am saying is

like every school that is in the suburbs that has a night school. Give us night schools so our kids can qualify. Give us opportunities. . . . What's wrong with our kids? Our kids are talented. . . . Our kids can succeed . . . I came from a family of nine . . . I grew up in Delaney Projects . . . I am talented . . . I had a couple of teachers that's here tonight who taught me. I got my Master's. There is nothing wrong with me. Please give us night school so our kids can succeed. (parent as cited in Bennett, 2010)

For a moment, a testy exchange ensued as the woman complained about more learning opportunities being offered in suburban school districts. Frustrated, Bennett replied, "Tony Bennett is not the person who can get you a night school, okay?"—explaining that the decision to offer night school was a choice the district would have to make. Reiterating a lesson he learned from his father, Bennett said:

The lesson is if you want to see where a person's priorities are, open up their checkbook . . . I will submit to you ma'am that one of the things this board is going to have to do is evaluate its priorities.

The meeting ended soon after that.

I thought about Bennett's (2010) tone and position throughout the meeting and the mother's plea. Bennett was right about not being able to provide night school and about the district needing to set its own priorities. He cannot and will not give that parent or any of the parents in Gary or at Roosevelt what they want for their children or what Gary's children really need. I thought about the fact that although the Gary Community School Corporation has requested financial assistance from the state for much needed renovations to decaying school buildings, they have yet to receive it. I thought about the lack of technology at Roosevelt. I thought about all of the accumulated disadvantages that confront the larger community of Gary, many of which can be traced to the pervasive impact of long-standing racism and oppression. As far as Bennett is concerned, however, issues of race, the legacy of racism, and the extant institutionalization of racism are irrelevant, if not non-existent.

Bennett's comments should have been a wake-up call for the Roosevelt community, but were they? Indeed, Roosevelt is at a crossroads: epiphany or eclipse? It seemed clear to me that Bennett and other proponents of color-blind educational reform do not know nor do they care to learn what African American children need. Roosevelt used to be a good school largely because Black educators understood and addressed the needs of African American children and the Black community. Black people in Gary are going to have to figure out how Roosevelt can be a good school again.

Chapter IX: Emancipatory Education—A Race-Critical 21st Century Conscientization

"The new generation must learn that the object of the world is not profit, but service and happiness" (Du Bois as cited in Gates & West, 1996, p. 176). "But, can you expect teachers to revolutionize the social order for the good of the community? Indeed, we must expect this very thing. The educational system of a country is worthless unless it accomplishes this task" (Woodson, 1993, p. 145).

I have spent the last several hundred pages critically analyzing the central question of how have allegedly race-less, color-blind educational reform agendas in the post-*Brown* era, intentionally or unintentionally, affected racial inequality of educational opportunities and outcomes in America's public schools? Using critical race theory as a theoretical framework, I chose to take a race-critical view of the impact of color-blind educational reform on inequality in education. My purpose was to clarify the context and conflicts of historical events and their consequences by exposing nuanced motives, hidden outcomes, and subaltern, marginalized perspectives. Unexpectedly, I began to second-guess the appropriateness of word "allegedly" in the central question. Allegedly implies that something is not yet proven; that it is presumed or suspect. Yet, as I became more familiar with the ideology of color-blind reform and how it functions, it was clear to me that the current reform agenda undoubtedly, as opposed to allegedly, is rooted within the largely obscure pathology of color-blindness. After careful consideration, I concluded, however, that the term "allegedly" was indeed fitting because of the suspect agenda that is integral to the ideology and language of color-blindness. Lest we forget, it will not hurt to restate just how the ideology of color-blindness operates.

Color-blindness is a cleverly deceptive concept and a misleading and inept term. When taken literally, the term would be understood as not seeing the color of a person's skin. The literal interpretation, as far as I know, is highly improbable, if not impossible; thus, the word "allegedly" is certainly an appropriate descriptor in this instance. When the concept of color-blindness is taken more figuratively, it suggests a position of being race-neutral or uninfluenced by race. Conservative racial realists frequently exploit the words of Martin Luther King (1963) in his famous "I Have a Dream" speech to bolster the claim that color-blindness is synonymous with "judging a person by the content of their character, not the color of their skin," that is, being impervious to skin color. I would argue that it is highly unlikely that many Americans are truly unaffected by and oblivious to race and that most people, more often than not, make judgments based on first impressions that have little or nothing to do with the other person's largely unknown character. These first impressions are frequently colored by race and racialized assumptions. Hence, color-blindness, as defined in the figurative sense, is an alleged assertion. A third interpretation of color-blindness, and the one I have argued in this research, suggests that it is an ideology that denies the explanatory or causal relationship between racism and the persistence of racial inequality in school and society. This definition is neither race-less, race-blind, nor devoid of racial awareness; it is a conscious and deliberate choice to ignore the significance of race and systemic racism as major factors in the determination of one's life chances. The claim of color-blindness in this view, like the others, is also an illusion, an alleged unconsciousness of race. I concluded, therefore, that even with all of the evidence I have gathered on the meaning of color-blindness and its influence on educational reform, the ideology of color-blindness is a chimera. Couched in egalitarian rhetoric, color-blind educational reform functions as an

undercover racism—a wolf in sheep's clothing. The ideology of color-blindness has exacerbated racism and racial inequality in America's public schools by protecting White privilege. Whether or not these consequences were intentional is debatable.

On its face, color-blindness seems like an appealing idea. The United States has struggled with the dilemma of race since colonial days. It has been an embarrassing and ugly brand on the history of the nation. Images of slavery, Whites only and colored only signs, Black men hanging from trees, dogs and water hoses hurled at African Americans protesting for their civil rights, burning churches with little Black girls charred inside, the murdered bodies of Emmet Till, Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King, and others, angry race riots, neighborhoods set ablaze, Rodney King, and O. J. Simpson haunt the conscience of America and call into question the integrity of the nation. It stands to reason that Whites and Blacks would embrace the idea of a post-racial America, meaning an America that has overcome the problem of race. It is certainly easier to just bury the hatchet and move on than it is to acknowledge and address the lasting effects of racism on our society and the ongoing manifestation of a less overt racism. Furthermore, the case made to support the belief that America is post-racial, at least to the uncritical mind, seems quite logical.

Consider the likely arguments. The *Brown* decision of 1954 ended de jure racial segregation. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 guaranteed Blacks formal equal rights under the law. A year later, the Voting Rights Act ensured every U.S. citizen the right to vote. The poor and minorities have public assistance and public housing, welfare, Head Start, Title I, and countless other entitlements under the law to help them better their life circumstances. For a while, there were even strong affirmative action policies that put Blacks and other minorities in an advantageous position. The rise of the Black middle class is proof that

social and economic mobility has significantly increased for African Americans. Racism is illegal. Even some prominent Blacks like Ward Connelly, John McWhorter, Clarence Thomas, and Bill Cosby, to name a few, support the notion of the declining significance of race and think Blacks use race either as an unfair means of acquiring special privileges or an excuse for their own self-inflicted inequities. Perhaps, the strongest argument for the belief that Americans are beyond race is the fact that we elected an African American president. These views, coupled with the American beliefs in the fairness of meritocracy, bootstrap ideology, rugged individualism, and the gospel of capitalism, support the premise that Americans have gotten past race. To follow this rationale, it stands to reason that anyone who remains in poverty is inherently lazy, culturally deprived, lacking in personal character and strong Christian family values, or has simply made poor life choices. America is post-racial. My research has proven otherwise.

In reality, racism continues to thrive in schools and society. The state, "already and always racial [is] defined by racial (and gendered) formation" (Goldberg as cited in Giroux, 2006, p. 12) and has the power to, categorize, heirarchalize, restrict, access, exclude, include, privilege, and marginalize. Hegemony finds a safe haven in the marriage of a political and civil society that constitutes the state (Gramsci, 2008, p. 263). A review of the literature has shown that three racial paradigms have dominated the construction of racial theory in the U.S. since the turn of the century: ethnicity, class, and nation. Over the course of the last 50 years, the ethnicity paradigm has prevailed, but not without modification (Omi & Winant, 1994). The structuration of racism and its manifestations have been altered from a liberal conception to first a conservative, then neoconservative, and now, a neoliberal construction that radically assaults group rights. Racism has become privatized (Bonilla-Silva, 2003;

Goldberg, 2002, 2009) creating a clear path for the ideology of color-blindness, which, in its denial of history, asserts that the problem of systemic, institutionalized racism no longer exists. The projects of color-blindness and neoliberalism (a term as deceptive as color-blindness) are hopelessly interwoven and conterminously committed to protecting individual preferences and freedoms that make it possible to discriminate, segregate, privilege, and exclude without reproach. In the privatized neoliberal racial state, racism is presumed to have no relation to "choices that are structured by social arrangement, by predefined state possibilities and impossibilities" (Goldberg as cited in Giroux, 2006, p. 57). This modern racism, difficult to see in a tangible form, is a "color-blind racism" (Bonilla-Silva, 2003, p. 3), a "born-again racism, [a] racism without racists," (Goldberg, 2009, p. 23). The new color-blind racism conceives success as individual or cultural consequently:

> We are responsible for our own lot, not in the sense that we have to take inventory of our bad decisions (which everyone has), but in the sense that structural obstacles to mobility, like slavery and Jim Crow, have been lifted. (Leonardo, 2009, p. 132)

This postulation underscores the color-blind educational reform agenda for the 21st century racism.

I have argued that, throughout the history of the U.S., the catalyst for educational reform can be directly linked to the threat of race and culture (Goldberg, 2009) and the loss of White privilege abroad and here at home. "This new racism does not just represent the fear of difference, but the *intensification of racial difference while masking as its obliteration*" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 133). The literature has shown that, historically, urgent cries for educational reform have followed a pattern. Discontentment with public education has appeared most often amid a White backlash catapulted by two factors: economic peril and a period of advancement in power and influence of traditionally marginalized non-White

Americans. The pattern first appeared after Reconstruction. It reappeared in defiance to the

Brown decision and came back in the form of neoconservatism after the passage of Civil

Rights and the end of the war on poverty. We saw it with the counterattack on affirmative

action and the slow resegregation of the nation's schools and cities. It is happening now in

the aftermath of the election of President Barack Obama. In spite of all the rhetoric of color-

blindness, there is no end to racism in sight.

In this chapter, I summarize my findings on the impact of color-blind educational

reform in the post-*Brown* era, specifically over the past 40 years, and offer recommendations

for how educators might better approach the problem of racial inequality of educational

opportunity and outcomes in America's public schools. The discussion is divided into three

parts. First, I review my research on the impact of color-blind reform on education on a

macro level, meaning across the country. Next, I discuss my research findings on the impact

of color-blind reform on a micro level, in the case study of Theodore Roosevelt High

School. Lastly, I offer suggestions for how educators and educational leadership across the

nation and at Roosevelt might better address racial inequality in American education.

High-Stakes Reform: The License to Oppress

> In an educational system where the consumer is king. . . . Education is a private good
> that only benefits the owner, an investment in my future, not yours, in my children,
> not other people's children. For such an educational system to work effectively, it
> needs to focus a lot of attention on grading, sorting, and selecting students. It needs
> to provide a variety of ways for individuals to distinguish themselves from others—
> such as by placing themselves in a more prestigious college, a higher curriculum
> track, the top reading program, or the gifted program. (Larabee, 1997, p. 48)

"America still eats her young" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 77). Before going any

further, I want to make three points very clear. I love my country. I am proud to be African

American. I neither wish to live in a different country nor to be White. There must be some

reason why I instinctively ordered those declarations as I did. My gut tells me that it probably has something to do with double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1994, p. 2), that is the two-ness of being Black and American and, by necessity, viewing oneself authentically, as well as through the judgmental eyes of others, but the limits of this dissertation prohibit me from fully conducting such an analysis. I will say that what I do not wish for is a color-blind, race-less, race-neutral, homogenized society. What I want is for my race, meaning the color of my skin, to not be a problem. My research has helped me feel somewhat comfortable with these personal affirmations, but very disturbed by the history of American education and educational reform. Like members of a family who see the best and worst in one another, I see what is laudable and despicable in the ongoing history of educational reform and racial inequality in this my country—America.

In the course of the last 40 years, the discourse about what children need and public schools should be doing has gone from one of compassionate liberalism to insensitive conservatism. The change reflects a shift in the sentiments and attitudes of traditionally privileged, White, middle-class Americans. During the Johnson era, Americans bought into the idea, quite literally, that education could fight and win the war on poverty. Unprecedented federal dollars were appropriated for social and educational programs aimed at giving the poor in America a hand up out of poverty. Former President Lyndon Johnson reminded the nation of its responsibility to help those it has oppressed:

> You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him to the starting line of a race, and then say, "You are free to compete with all the others," and still justly believe you have been completely fair. Thus, it is not enough just to open the gates of opportunity. All of our citizens must have the ability to walk through those gates. (Johnson, 1965, para. 12)

Liberal optimists thought that programs like Head Start coupled with the passage of federal legislation that guaranteed formal equality in the areas of voting, housing, and civil rights, in general, would resolve the country's ills. They were wrong. By the end of the 1960s, optimism turned to disillusionment. I contend that, even then, there was an inclination to pretend that the heart of the problem was not the color line (Du Bois, 1994). Few Americans seemed to realize that the river of racism runs deep, far deeper than meets the eye. Today, many people argue that the problems confronting education lie in the mismanagement of schools or negative influences of misplaced values and cultural deficits within the larger society and that race is, at best, an ancillary issue. What's race got to do with it? Based on my research, the answer is: everything! It is impossible to have a meaningful conversation about education and educational reform in America without talking about race. My research revealed that racism and racist attitudes have either directly or indirectly thwarted the nation's overall educational progress and the success of educational reform. The only difference in the plight of educational reform in the 21st century and reform 200 years ago is that the impact of race and racism has been rendered almost invisible by the doctrine of neoliberalism and the ideology of color-blindness.

How we ended up mired in color-blind educational reform is worth reiterating. I shall do so briefly. Before the passage of *Brown* (1954), few would deny that racism caused many segregated Black schools to be inferior to segregated White schools by depriving them of necessary resources, both human and material. The research also showed that, in spite of and maybe even because of the injustices imposed on them, some all-Black schools managed to educate Black children so successfully that their accomplishments are envied by significantly more advantaged segregated Black school communities today. The sense of

community and family, and the quality of education in those segregated Black schools have been well documented. However, many, if not most, segregated schools did not fare as well. After *Brown,* for many years, racism slowed the implementation of integrated schools. By the time Nixon became president in 1968, integration was still a pipedream in many cities. Although very much against de jure busing and integration, Nixon was determined that states and local municipalities would not disobey the law by forcing children to attend segregated schools. As pointed out in the research, between 1968 and 1974, significant progress was made toward the integration of schools (Orfield & Eaton, 1996, p. xiv). Nixon, sympathetic to the concept of affirmative action in employment opportunities, opened the door for liberal affirmative action policies in higher education. But, many African Americans began to notice that, even after getting an education (and sometimes, a good job) and playing by the rules, there was still a racial barrier that stood between them and equality (Cose, 1993). Less fortunate African Americans, many of whom had enjoyed little or no prosperity and had no reason to expect that they would see a positive change in their circumstances, rose up in anger and violent protest. Whites, in turn, grew frustrated and made two key decisions:

- Those who could, decided to leave the cities to the have-nots and moved to the suburbs.

- Fed up with dealing with the race problem as a public concern, conservatives decided to privatize race and racism and leave the issue to the courts. Since formal equality was guaranteed, as far as they were concerned, race should be removed from the public venue.

Poof! The end of racism! It took awhile for the term color-blindness to catch on, but pretty soon racial realists, conservatives, and the newly emerging neoliberals had made color-blindness the new American ideal.

The evidence suggests, however, that while race was removed from public and political vernacular, racism continued to thrive in schools and society. Racism is invigorated by the perceived or real loss of White privilege. As mentioned previously, when White privilege is threatened, two things typically occur. There is, first, a mobilization of the privileged race that might best be described as a political backlash. Almost always, the threat is fueled by a fear of economic vulnerability. The backlash results in a resurgence of conservativism. Second, the threat is translated into an educational crisis. Paradoxically, schools become both the cause and the solution. Invariably, the quick fix in education has been to start testing because testing is an effective means of sorting, categorizing, classifying, privileging, de-privileging, and, ultimately, managing and determining life opportunities and outcomes. Consider the history of testing in educational reform since the late 1960s:

- Throughout America's history, traditionally privileged Americans have assumed that as the schools became more inclusive and democratic, the quality of education was compromised (Reese, 2005, p. 219). Hence, following the Civil Rights movement and desegregation, Americans began worrying that schools were becoming mediocre. In 1969, the NAEP was founded.

- Dismal NAEP scores in the early 1970s, especially among African Americans, were alarming to Blacks and Whites. The response to the problem of low scores was to institute competency testing. Oregon was the first to do so in 1973.

- In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence) was released. Reagan and a host of right-wing conservatives, many of whom had been long-time critics of public education, successfully promoted the report. Americas were told the nation faced two threats: the external (espoused) threat was that the U.S. was losing its superior status in the world, and the internal (implied) threat was that the country was becoming Blacker, browner, and poorer. Again, schools were the cause and the solution to the threat. The answer was a call for excellence: higher standards and more testing for students and teachers.

- The next two presidents, George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, pushed for national goals, higher standards, and more testing and accountability. The Clinton administration favored a liberal, tough-love approach to reform that called for systemic change, standards-based education, charter schools, increased vocational education, and increased accountability in the form of high stakes testing.

- In 2002, the George W. Bush administration passed NCLB and education was well on its way to becoming consumed with accountability, testing, and a complex system of measurement, punishment, and reward. Despite the modest gains in the NAEP, the racial achievement gap persists and a host of alleged unintended negative consequences have surfaced.

Before enumerating the negative consequences, I want to acknowledge the good that has come from recent reform efforts and there have been some positive outcomes. Standards-based reform has forced educators to give more serious consideration to what students should know and be able to do. It has made it possible to more clearly articulate to

students what is expected of them. Consistency in the curriculum within district and states and the alignment of what is taught and what students are held accountable for knowing has contributed to the ability to measure student learning and academic progress. Because teaching is a profession as well as a craft, raising teacher qualifications and professional standards has enhanced the credibility of the profession. It is only right that there should be some professional accountability for teachers and what they do. The threat of educational crisis, real or manufactured, has encouraged educational research into what effective teaching is: what works and what does not. The opening of charter schools has inspired innovation and creativity in many public schools that had become complacent. As a result, some reform programs have seen unprecedented success. NCLB has forced the lid off of the racial achievement gap and made it impossible for schools to write off whole segments of their population. It has also encouraged schools and districts to get rid of ineffective and negligent teachers and principals. Parents and the general public have always had a right to know how the schools they pay for are performing. Because of NCLB, the genie is out of the bottle, so to speak, as school districts are now mandated to publish the report card data of every district and every school. To be sure, some elements of the current reform agenda make sense. The problem is that far too many more do not.

NCLB, the culmination of a color-blind educational reform movement that has been 40 years in the making, ignores the significance of race and is, therefore, doomed to fail. A major claim of NCLB is that underachievement is caused by the "soft bigotry of low expectations" (Bush, 2004, paras. 66-70), along with poor teaching and incompetent leadership. I agree, but when supporters of NCLB talk about the need to get rid of the soft bigotry of low expectations and, in the same breath, ascribe to the pathology of color-

blindness, they are showing how out of touch they are with one crucial reality: racism, racial

stereotypes, and the age-old assumption of Black intellectual inferiority are the cause of low

expectations. The bigotry of which they speak is racial and, my research has shown that it is

not limited to White on Black racism. Internalized racism within the African American

community plays a pivotal role as well. Hence, to say that educators need to expect more of

all students and not deal with racism and racialized assumptions makes no sense. I will

discuss this point more fully a bit later. For now, I want to enumerate the negative

consequences of NCLB, the poster child of educational color-blind reform. Based on the

evidence, I have compiled the following list of some of the more egregious consequences of

NCLB at the macro level.

- Racism has been exacerbated by the pathology of color-blindness inherent to the

  logic behind NCLB, or "the idea that race has all but disappeared as a factor in

  shaping the life chances of people in the United States" (Rossato, Allen, & Pruvn,

  2006, p. 30). NCLB has occluded the legacy of racism and the accumulated

  disadvantage it caused which has resulted in unfairly punishing America's most

  vulnerable citizens, meaning African Americans and other minorities.

- The color-blind marketplace mentality of NCLB has subjugated the humanitarian

  ethos of education to the insensitive, bottom-line practices typical of the

  corporate world. Lou Gertsner, Chairman of IBM and a key player in the NGA

  Summits, has described school children as "human capital, teachers as sellers in a

  marketplace, and the public school system as a monopoly" (Giroux, 2004, p. 77).

- Budget shortfalls have forced school districts to divert the meager funds available

  to them that might have paid for smaller class sizes, increased technology,

renovated buildings, and better trained teachers and principals to test production, outside consultant firms, and private supplemental service agencies.

- Instead of expanding the curriculum and increasing rigor, the curriculum in the schools most in need of improvement has been reduced to test preparation; instead of improving instructional delivery, the mode of instruction has been minimized to monotonous pattern of lecture, drill, and measure.

- In the struggling schools, the ones NCLB purports to want to deliver from mediocrity or worse, the focus on research-based best practices in education and data-driven instruction has been pimped into the use of data for the purpose of tracking, labeling, and sorting out which group of children should receive the most attention, or which children are the most likely to pass the test and help the school make AYP. Schools, like businesses, now try to get the biggest bang for their buck.

- In spite of the talk about rigor, relevance, and relationships, teachers have become de-skilled (Giroux, 1988); their role diminished to diagnostic technicians.

- The denial of racial factors and the no-excuses attitude that follows has led to a zero-tolerance of youth. Children have become the enemy and schools have become far too willing to suspend, expel, and dismiss the very youngsters who need to be in school the most (Ayers et al., 2001).

A primary responsibility of educators is to do what is in the best interests of students. I would argue, as did Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005), that doing so is an ethical endeavor, one that requires a commitment to balancing multiple ethical paradigms, namely the ethic of

care (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984, 2002), the ethic of justice (Delgado, 1995; Kohlberg, 1981; Sergiovanni, 1992), and the ethic of critique (Apple, 1986, 2003; Foucault, 1995; Freire, 1998; Giroux, 1988, 2004, 2005; McLaren, 2007). Color-blind reform in education violates each of these paradigms. In the opening epigraph to this chapter, the disturbing statement—"America still eats her young" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 77) refers to a protest lodged by Gil Scott Heron, an African American protest singer in the 1970s. Heron was talking about the nation sending its innocent to the war in Vietnam. Ladson-Billings (2001) used the phrase to accentuate the wrongs of zero tolerance policies in the nation's schools. I use the term to describe how, in spite of all the rhetoric about leaving no child behind and living in a post-racial society, America continues to discard the weakest and most defenseless of its young. It is not surprising that the unethical practices of color-blind reform have resulted in unprecedented collateral damage to what should be one of the most ethical vocations—education. For Theodore Roosevelt High School, the damage has been life threatening. Indeed, America still eats her young.

Left Behind: Theodore Roosevelt High School, Gary, Indiana—1930 to ?

> One of the great tragedies of Black civic culture has been the paucity of formal opportunities for young Black people to learn and think critically about social issues. It is as if Black adults somehow decided, yes, there is racism, but, no, Black youngsters don't need any particular guidance to negotiate and understand how to navigate and understand that society. Let them work it out. (Payne & Strickland, 2008, p. 2)

I shall begin my assessment of Roosevelt's story with a brief tour of the neighborhood and school. Roosevelt sits on the corner of 25th Avenue and Harrison Street in the section of Gary called Midtown at 725 West 25th Avenue. The front of the school is bordered by 25th Avenue on the south; Harrison Street on the west; 21st Avenue on the north, and a side street that runs parallel to the school on the east. On 25th sits Van Buren

Baptist Church, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, and several privately-owned Black

businesses: an adult day care, Accents of Beauty salon, Power Lunch (a small restaurant

known for its turkey burgers, gyros, hot dogs, wings, shrimp, and regular burgers), and a

barber shop. A photo of Gary's own Michael Jackson is propped up in the window of the

barbershop. On the west corner is a Shop 'N Go mini mart and gas station and the Delaney

housing projects. The gas station has changed names over the years, but Delaney has been

there for as long as I can remember. Behind the school going north is the John D. Smith

athletic complex, named after former Coach John D. Smith, the gymnasium named after

Coach Louis "Bo" Mallard, and the football stadium, which bears the name of Coach

Leonard B. Douglas. There are basketball courts. Some have rims with nets; others do not.

The Midtown little league and pavilion are also behind the school. Both look neglected and

unkempt. Facing the school and the baseball field on the north is First Baptist Church and

Means Manor Homes, a Black middle-class neighborhood that has been there as long as I

can remember, just like the Delaney projects. To the east of the school is Jackson Street,

home of the Jackson Five. The school that the Jacksons attended, Garnett, is now closed, but

the building has been put to good use. It is now home to the Images of Hope, an educational

and community center devoted to engaging, restoring, and empowering the Gary

community. The Jackson family home, just a couple of blocks away, sits on the corner at

2300 Jackson Street. Even the Jackson Five had a thing for Roosevelt: "I'm going back to

Indiana, Indiana here I come," they sang, "I'm coming home . . . ha ha sis boom bah, One

more time for Roosevelt High!" (*I'm Goin Back to Indiana,* Jackson Five, 1977). East of

Roosevelt, on the corner of Jackson Street and 25th Avenue is a boarded up building that

was once the Carter G. Woodson Branch Library and, later, the Panther Den, a popular
hang-out for students before high schools in Gary adopted closed lunch policies.

The exterior entrance to the stately original main building is now closed. Visitors
must use the east entrance with the metal detector. Beyond the metal director sits a security
guard with a sign-in sheet and numbered passes. Behind the desk is a courtyard now
overrun with weeds. On the right is the staircase leading up to the main office where
Panther Pride and black and gold colors adorn the walls. Large posters of the Academic
Superbowl winners are proudly displayed. NAACP Life Memberships of a variety of school
clubs hang on the walls. Walking through the building, there are students in the halls and on
stairwells who should be in class. Showcases that should be filled with a student work are
empty and unkempt. The halls are littered. Black and gold posters of former "Superstars"
from previous school years and proclamations of Panther Pride decorate the halls. Remnants
of the slogan "Failure is not an option" remain. Very little celebrates the present.

Life-size posters of former state basketball championship teams and the very
impressive championship record of former track teams adorn the walls of the gymnasium.
The cafeteria and auditorium are beginning to wear, but that is to be expected. In the main
hallway near the auditorium and main entrance, are portraits of all of the former principals:

- F. C. McFarlane, 1931-1933
- H. Theo Tatum, 1933-1961
- Warren M. Anderson, 1961- 1970
- Robert E. Jones, 1970-1990
- David Williams, 1990-1992
- William Reese, 1992-1997

- Edward Lumpkin, 1997-1999

- Marion Williams, 1999-2005

- Leotis Swopes, 2005-2006

- Charlotte Wright, 2006-2009

Lloyd Booth is not yet pictured. As I stood in the main hallway, a security guard showed me where Mr. Tatum's office had been. Above the now closed main entrance is a banner celebrating African and African American Infusion that reads "A people without knowledge is like a tree without roots" (Garvey, 2007, p. 1).

To the west of the auditorium is where the old Longfellow building (where the Whites went to school) used to be. Paradoxically, it no longer exists because of the collapsed 1970 addition in 2000. I think it only fitting that the old Longfellow has fallen by the wayside, but that is just my opinion. As I stand in the hall, I wonder about Roosevelt's fate—would it be next? I watch the students, all dressed alike because of the uniform attire, and am struck by an eerie feeling—as though I am standing in the shadows of a forgotten or unknown greatness. How many students even know about Longfellow or who Mr. Tatum was? How many care if Roosevelt survives? How many know they should care? Marcus Garvey was right, "A people without knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture is like a tree without roots" (2007, p. 1).

On the front lawn of Roosevelt sits a huge crane that goes all the way up to the third floor. During the winter, it sat east of the main entrance. The last time I saw it in late spring, it had been moved west of the main entrance. I have never seen the crane at work and wondered if its presence was a sign of hope or despair, progress or destruction. I have since discovered that the crane is there because the roof is being fixed. Hallelujah!

Roosevelt is still under construction. God is not through with Roosevelt yet. Roosevelt symbolizes the struggle and historical legacy of Gary's Black community. Saving Roosevelt and restoring its integrity would symbolize hope and determination for a very troubled and struggling community. It would symbolize a victory over the legacy of racism in Gary.

My research has shown that racism was as much a part of Gary's history as U.S. Steel. From the very beginning, city planners did all they could to maintain racial segregation in Gary. William A. Wirt, the first school superintendent, famous the world over for his progressive view of education and platoon school system, defended and promoted racial segregation and racist practices in the Gary schools. Roosevelt was founded because Whites did not want their children to go to high school with Black children. It was the bedrock of education for African Americans in Gary. Determined to give their children the gift of a quality education, African Americans took the racism from which Roosevelt was borne and transformed it into victory. Roosevelt became a bastion of excellence and a tribute to not only Black achievement, but human accomplishment and triumph. Roosevelt held a position of honor and respect that was unprecedented. Blacks and Whites all over Indiana held Roosevelt High School in high regard. Some of the most learned African American teachers in the nation taught at Roosevelt. They built a culture of excellence, achievement, and pride that lasted through the 1970s and into the 1980s. Many of Roosevelt's graduates went on to accomplish great things. I would argue, however, that it was not the extraordinary accomplishments of a select few that caused such Roosevelt to command such stature in the Black community. Every Roosevelt graduate did not become famous or attain astonishing success. What made Roosevelt great was that the culture within

the school made everybody feel valued, capable, and worthy of success. It was a culture that defied the grand narrative about what African Americans could do.

Teachers created a counterhegemonic culture that went against the grain. Storied accounts of school life at Roosevelt through the early to mid-1980s suggest that the culture was high in interpersonal caring typical of the "good segregated school" (Siddle Walker, 1993). Students and staff were subjected to reported racist practices and inequalities, like not being able to be members of White only athletic leagues and having to settle for used textbooks, and numerous other instances of "everyday racism" (Essed, 1991, p. 52), but the "as-if, figured world" (Perry as cited in Perry et al., 2003, p. 93) created by teachers at Roosevelt enabled the school excel and prevail over adversity. Teachers knew about racism; they told their students about it; and everybody resolved that Roosevelt would contradict conventional wisdom, the common sense assumption of Black intellectual and cultural inferiority. In fact, interview data indicated that there was a real determination to be better than White people academically, athletically, and culturally. Roosevelt staff and students carried themselves with dignity and pride.

When asked about school life at Roosevelt and what made it so special, the people who shared their stories spoke almost entirely of school-related factors. They talked about what their teachers did for and with them. They remembered the high standards modeled and set by the adults in the building. They recalled teachers and principals going the extra mile, tasking the time to mentor as well as challenge students. Many spoke of a caring, family-like school atmosphere. They remembered teachers who reminded students that they needed to always do their best. Students were made to feel that they when they went out into the world, they represented their teachers, their school, and their race. Virtually no one

I interviewed attributed what made Roosevelt unique to external factors. They did not speak about packed PTA meetings or their parents visiting the school on a regular basis. It seems to me that most parents were probably like Mrs. Jackson, they sent their children to school to learn, expected them to behave and graduate from high school, supported their participation in the myriad of extra-curricular activities the school offered, and assumed that teachers were doing their jobs. High school parents, then as now, tend to come to school out of necessity, when something is either very wrong or very right. In short, it was the deliberate effort of educators and principals to create a race-conscious culture of excellence that made the difference.

Somewhere in the course of change that some refer to as progress, the awareness of and effort to maintain that counterhegemonic culture diminished. Integration had a great deal to do with the waning counterculture, but not in the manner one would expect, at least not at Roosevelt. Roosevelt acquired some White teachers, but the vast majority of the faculty remained African American. Even though Roosevelt was not affected by a massive turnover of staff, the Gary community felt the positive and negative effects of desegregation. With desegregation, came great change. Black people became more mobile. Several Blacks who could afford to leave Gary and its dying economy left just like the Whites did. Many of those who stayed grew less invested in the community. Information from interviews and archival data gathered from yearbooks and other school mementos suggest that as time went on, the rhetoric of Black pride remained, but the conscious day-to-day effort to sustain a collective racial identity and counter culture waned. It was as though people thought tradition and the legacy would survive on their own, but the legacy needed to be nurtured. Integration did not lessen the need for a counterhegemonic culture. Racism was still alive.

Much has been written recently about the merit of segregated all-Black schools and the traditional role of African American teachers as caring role models, mentors, cultural bearers, and even community leaders (Dempsey & Noblit, 1993; Foster, 1990, 1991; Kelly, 2010; King, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Payne & Strickland, 2008; Perry et al., 2003; Siddle Walker, 1993, 1996). African American teachers promoted the development of what Kelly (2010) defined as educational capital:

> Black teachers in segregated schools prepared and motivated disadvantaged Black children to achieve academically and to aspire for occupational and social mobility. They taught the state-mandated curricula, but they also sought ways to penetrate the power structure by equipping Black youth with capital that could be used to access other forms of capital (social, cultural, and economics). (p. 68)

In short, in the pre-*Brown* era, Black teachers seemed to know what Black children needed. As was the case at Roosevelt, they created a counterhegemonic school culture that encouraged a collective sense of success and desire to achieve. Black teachers knew the value of sharing their stories and testimonies, even their faith in God (Payne, 2008, p. 4). In spite of the long-held laws that separate church from state, Black folks, even today, are rarely offended by the mention of God. Faith in God is what got African Americans through the worst of times. African American teachers demonstrated the ethic of caring (Noddings, 1984) before the formal term even existed. Students at Roosevelt, as at other good segregated all-Black schools, benefited from having caring teachers. Dempsey and Noblit (1993) described three levels of caring exemplified in segregated Black schools from which Black students greatly benefited:

> First and foremost, caring seems to nurture and sustain students. . . . Second, caring builds the interconnective tissue of community by promoting and valuing relationships. . . . Third, caring gave each person more than an identity and a set of relationships. It gave a sense of continuity. Identity was more than just a sense of oneself; it defined one as a part of a larger cultural and historical movement. (p. 60)

Desegregation (i.e., the opening up of opportunities outside of the Black community) not only changed priorities in schools and society, but also altered the priorities of many African Americans. Irvine and Irvine (1983) hypothesized that desegregation brought about a "transformation from the concept of the collective whole, and the collective will [to] the individual achievement value position whereby the individual is perceived as the entity who achieves success through effort and merit" (p. 420). The evidence suggests that the same phenomenon occurred at Roosevelt.

Information gathered from interviews, archival data, yearbooks, and other school mementos suggest that the rhetoric of Black pride remained, but the conscious day-to-day effort to sustain a collective racial identity and counter culture waned. It was as though people thought tradition and the legacy would survive on their own. I posit that, when opportunities opened up for Blacks in Gary during the 1970s and early 1980s, as they did for Blacks all over the nation, the Black middle class took advantage of those opportunities, and why not? The problem is that African Americans began to forget their collective identity, as the ideology of color-blindness would have them do. In "The Talented Tenth Memorial Address," Du Bois wrote:

> I assumed that with knowledge, sacrifice would follow. In my youth and idealism, I did not realize that selfishness is even more natural than sacrifice. . . . It was from experience that I assumed easily that educated people, in most cases, were going out into life to see how far they could better the world. (as cited in Gates & West, 1996, p. 161)

Du Bois failed to take into account, as did many other African Americans, the extensive impact that class difference would have on the Black community (Gates & West, 1996, p. 121). Woodson (1993) was more realistic. He foresaw the outcomes of the mis-education of the Negro, that is, the lasting effects of racism and intellectual oppression. "The

difficulty," Woodson wrote, "is that the 'educated Negro' is compelled to live and move among his own people whom he has been taught to despise" (p. xiii). Integration allowed Blacks to escape their own community. Escape is not always physical; it is possible to exit or abandon a community and still live in it. I would suggest that this is what occurred to some degree in Gary and at Roosevelt.

Increasingly, Blacks with the most educational capital (Kelly, 2010, p. 67), bought into the individualistic mindset and the dominant common sense narrative of meritocracy—the bootstrap ideology. Some of the teachers interviewed said, during the late 1970s, they began to notice their co-workers adopting attitudes with students like, "I got mine, now you get yours." This was around the same time that the testing craze began all over the nation. It began with minimum competency-based testing. Often promoted as a way to identify the weakest students in order to build their skills, testing frequently became a way to privilege the already privileged, good students. It also intensified the individualization of the school culture. Terms like the *academically-able*, and the *gifted and talented* began to slowly erode the collective culture of success. I do not think it was obvious at first. In fact, based on the evidence, I posit that Roosevelt managed to maintain a mantra of excellence for as long as it did in large part because, in the 1970s and 1980s, many of the teachers' own children attended the school. They were teaching their own. Other teachers harbored the feeling that these are our children, in both a literal and figurative sense. The adults in the building were personally invested in Roosevelt's success, but their motivation appears to have grown less and less about advancing the race and more about making sure that individual students, meaning the really smart students, were given the opportunities they deserved. Some of the teachers I interviewed remembered the start of animosity among students.

This is interesting because Roosevelt has always tracked students academically and the evidence suggests that there was an undercurrent of classism as far back as the 1960s. What caused the heightened animosity in the mid-1980s? I posit that the expansion of opportunity for Blacks and the rise of the Black middle-class that accompanied integration and even affirmative action led many Blacks to buy into the grand narrative, even to some degree, into the pathology of color-blindness. Economically advantaged Blacks and those with social and educational capital began to think that perhaps, race was no longer a significant factor and that success is only about effort; it is economics, not race that is the culprit. Blacks with the most to offer youngsters at Roosevelt began to disinvest in the children and in a collective identity. Students no longer felt a shared sense of success or excellence. Everybody did not feel like they were part of the "the Best."

My research indicated that when the Gifted and Talented Program was moved into one high school in the 1980s, teacher attitudes changed drastically at Roosevelt. Some teachers no longer believed that Roosevelt was "the Best." This marked the real onset of the "soft bigotry of low expectations" (Bush, 2004, paras. 66-70) and declining academic achievement at Roosevelt. Some African Americans educators bought into the racial stereotype of Black intellectual and cultural inferiority but, in the spirit of color-blindness, refused to acknowledge that race had anything to do with it. Like the mainstream press and other presumed experts, many teachers blamed the declining student achievement on poverty, drugs, family culture, single female-headed households, or a lack of a desire on the students' part to learn and achieve. Of course, social and economic factors do influence school achievement, but I posit that the unspoken culprit for some of the declining achievement was the negative force of internalized racism.

As discussed in chapter 2, internalized racism is manifested in many different ways. It is the primary means by which African Americans perpetuate their own oppression. Those who bought into the grand narrative about poor Black children, their values, capabilities, and culture during the mid-1980s could not have chosen a worse time because it was right on the heels of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission of Excellence, 1983), the beginning of the color-blind ideology, the onset of political neoconservatism and economic neoliberalism, and the start of increased standards, more testing, and the accountability movement—all of which deemphasized the history of racial oppression and downplayed, if not outright rejected, group rights, group identity, and racial pride.

I should point out, however, that even though standards-based reform helped move the color-blind agenda forward, the movement resulted in some positive outcomes. Many teachers at Roosevelt found merit in the movement. Establishing uniform academic content standards, aligning curricula with those standards, and clearly defining expectations of teachers and students made sense to a lot of teachers. All of the planning and professional development gave interested teachers at Roosevelt an opportunity to work collaboratively with their peers. Examining best practices and determining what constitutes an effective school were worthwhile endeavors. Unfortunately, leadership issues within the district and the turnover in building leadership after Mr. Jones retired made the transition to standards-based education challenging for some of the Roosevelt faculty. The growing pressure to raise test scores impeded the quality and success of school-based change. Gradually, the mantra of excellence began to lose its credibility. What little meaning and vitality Roosevelt had left was highjacked by test-based accountability. Roosevelt was only as good as its test scores and they were pretty horrible. In-house school achievement, as reflected by the

number of honor roll students during the 1990s, dropped sharply with the onset of ISTEP. Extra-curricular activities steadily declined. By the end of the 1990s, it was debatable whether people truly believed that Roosevelt was still "the Best." Only a few teachers at Roosevelt still opted to send their children there. In fact, virtually no one I interviewed said they would send their child to Roosevelt today.

By the year 2000, after more than a decade of embarrassing academic performance, Roosevelt was hardly prepared for the whammy imposed by NCLB, color-blind reform par excellence. The impact of NCLB has been devastating. Even though NCLB only measures success by test scores, my assessment of the impact of NCLB at Roosevelt is qualitative. It is based on 10 conclusions drawn from my research:

- The school culture is demoralized and in crisis mode. People feel discouraged and desperate. They busy themselves doing what they feel they can do (e.g., working on the SIP, creating brochures for next school year's Career and Technical Academy, handing out worksheets, and doing perfunctory chores), but their heart does not seem to be in it. Teachers frequently engage in "Happy Talk" (Payne, 2008, p. 30), rarely getting down to the nub of anything. Rarely does anyone speak openly and constructively about legitimate areas in need of improvement.

- Color-blind reforms, by virtue of their ahistorical assumptions and emphasis on getting ahead (or in Roosevelt's case, catching up), stifle visionary and transformational leadership. There is no time for such things. Struggling schools like Roosevelt, who began the race behind the starting line, are almost paralyzed by impending sanctions under P.L. 221 and NCLB interventions under Title I.

Because a principal's tenure is directly tied to test scores and test scores determine success, it does not matter whether a principal is effectively working toward change or not. If test scores do not improve, the principal is ousted. Clearly, negative pressure has not served Roosevelt well.

- Color-blind reform has done the opposite of what it was allegedly intended to do. The pressure to win and get ahead has prohibited the inclination to "spare much compassion for those who fall behind. If the contest were racially fair, it would at least be true to its own principle of assessing all individuals solely on talent and effort" (Hacker, 2003, p. 40). Instead, in a school like Roosevelt with a population of students that society has historically left behind, the emphasis on high stakes testing mandated by NCLB makes sure they stay behind the starting line. Most of the outcomes of the testing are racially foreordained—a reality that color-blindness ignores or attributes to cultural inferiority, not racism.

- Classroom instruction is narrow and test-driven. Teachers feel pressed to teach only what is on the test. Lectures, worksheets, and packets are the order of the day. The focus is not on educating for life. "Pedagogy as a critical practice in which students learn to be attentive and responsible to the memories and narratives of others disappears within corporate and test-development learning" (Giroux, 2004, p. 87). As a result, students are taught "there is only one right answer, that the objective is to find the right answer, that the right answer is in the mind of the test drafter" (Giroux, 2004, p. 87).

- Children have become the enemy. The no excuses, zero-tolerance environment that has accompanied NCLB has resulted in the increased criminalization of

student behavior and an inordinate number of suspensions, most of which are for insubordination which depend a great deal on intangible variables. The high rate of suspensions suggests that, instead of trying to minimize the risks to children, adults have decided that the children are the risk. With the exception of more serious offenses such as possession or use of firearms, weapons, or drugs, in most instances, the student code of conduct gives school administrators a great deal of leeway in determining the behaviors that warrant suspension (Ayers et al., 2001, p. 189). Roosevelt's suspension data suggests that some students have a revolving door, such that the tolerance level of adults is so low and the leash is so short for some students that children who need to be in school the most are on a cycle of suspension.

- Almost 400 children have been deprived of a high school diploma because they failed the exit examination. The life chances of these students have been severely diminished. Depriving students of a high school diploma based on a test score does not raise standards; it raises barriers (Orfield & Kornbacher, 2001). Not much more needs to be said.

- Roosevelt's staff has become "deskilled" (Giroux, 1988, p. 122). Creativity and pedagogy have taken a back seat to technocracy, juggling data, and zeroing in on specific skills. The craft of teaching is de-valued. Teachers and students pay the price. Simply put, it makes for a boring, routine, soul-less learning environment. Such an environment increases the likelihood of disruptive behavior (Ayers et al., 2001).

- People have come to feel as though they are victims. The atmosphere in the building suggests that no one feels responsible; everybody and everything else is to blame. Such an atmosphere creates animosity, mistrust, and dishonesty, all of which are counterproductive to improving teaching and learning. Increasingly, school-community relations have become estranged. Too many parents feel disrespected and disenfranchised. Insulting comments from school officials have aggravated the problem. At the same time, parents are told they are the key to their children's success. The school cannot have it both ways.

- The pressure of testing appears to have zapped the life out of Roosevelt. There are few school rituals, traditions, or ceremonies that create a unique and positive school culture. "Ritual and ceremony are culture what the movie is to the script, the concert is to the score, or the dance is to values difficult to express in any other way" (Deal & Petersen, 1999, p. 31).

- Roosevelt has always had a fairly stringent tracking system, but ISTEP and interventions mandated by Title I have given tracking a life of its own. Targeted assistance, aimed presumably at providing additional assistance to the most needy of children, often fails to serve some of the children identified but successfully labels all of them as deficient. If Roosevelt is not careful, the themed academy focus may backfire. Although billed as a means of serving students' interests and providing choice, themed academies often become little more than a glorified version of the old tracking system—a system designed to classify and predetermine the value of certain individuals and the contribution they may make to the larger society. Educators continue to use tracking in spite

of the evidence that indicates consistent tracking and homogeneous grouping has not proven to benefit any group of students (Oakes, 2005).

- Absent is any semblance of a counterhegemonic culture. Too many teachers have bought into the color-blind grand narrative about the children they teach. Many have become culturally insensitive and judgmental. Expectations are low. The children are referred to as "those" or "their" children, not "our" children. Some wish they taught different children—children who could pass the test. Many do not really hold much hope for the children they teach. Likewise, students seem content to live by and acquiesce to the grand narrative. They readily, but unknowingly, participate in their own oppression (Freire, 2007).

In a sense, Roosevelt has lost its soul. By that I mean Roosevelt has lost that which brought life and meaning to the school, those immeasurable and intangible qualities that made it a good high school and a pinnacle of success in the Black community. My assessment sounds dismal, but I do not think the situation is hopeless or irreversible. To the contrary, I believe Roosevelt can be saved and revitalized. I think, however, that the turnaround or transformation needed at Roosevelt will require something that few people are discussing. It will require, above all else, a repurposing of education and the creation of a liberating counterideology—a 21st century counterhegemonic school culture.

Imagine

The end of color-blindness—
and the beginning of race-critical morality and decision-making;
Teachers acknowledging and denouncing their
own racist beliefs, attitudes, and actions and students doing the same.
African American children recognizing and articulating,
that which oppresses them and puts them at risk;
Creating strategies to negotiate and counteract racism,
debunking racialized stereotypes and myths.

> Schools actively being anti-racist,
> revealing and rejecting unfairness and injustice.
> Fighting for intellectualism and a new common sense,
> critiquing "what is" and asking "what ought to be."
> African American youth loving themselves from the inside out,
> confident in their abilities and self-worth.
> Creating a counterhegemonic school ethos and
> a collective sense of race-conscious social responsibility.
> Schools teaching freedom, hope, respect, and critical consciousness.
> Emancipatory education—a 21st Century Conscientization!
> (Drakeford, personal reflection, 2010)

Imagination is a powerful thing. The capacity to imagine opens the door to endless new and hopeful possibilities. It is nearly impossible to effect real change or improvement without imagining what might be. However, imagining what might be and thinking in terms of what if, is vastly different from denying or willfully ignoring what is. True imagination springs first from coming to grips with reality. The reality is that color-blind educational reform distorts, denies, and ignores the reality and legacy of racism in America. We cannot continue to marginalize the significance of race. To do so marginalizes the significance of African Americans and their lived experiences of being Black in America. I have resolved that the ideology of color-blindness has led the nation's public schools down a road of destruction. We must begin to imagine a race-critical solution to inequity and inequality in education. I argue that no specific plan, process, agenda, or process of educational reform will effectively reduce racial inequality in the nation's schools as long as we remain hell-bent on denying the significance of race.

If educators are serious about bringing racial inequality to our public schools, then we must: (a) acknowledge the ways in which we, individually and collectively, contribute to racial oppression, (b) embrace a critical pedagogy of freedom that teaches African American youth and other oppressed groups how to recognize racial oppression, and (c) guide

oppressed youth in developing counterideologies, counterhegemonic strategies that will enable them to navigate racist terrain and counteract racism. A pedagogy of hope must prevail. Being hopeful, however, does not mean sugarcoating reality. That is probably the last thing African American youth need in the 21st century. To the contrary, creating a counterhegemonic school culture will necessitate the development of critical consciousness. It will mean reframing the very purpose of education from the current neoliberal focus to a more political agenda. I believe that a 21st century conscientization, meaning a critical consciousness (Freire, 2007), will require educators to locate a balance between an "existential commitment to an ethical ideal [and resignation to] historical inevitability" (Aronowitz as cited in Freire, 1998, p. 6). Finding that balance will require teachers to engage in critical self-examination and courageous conversations about race, something they may not know how to do. It is not easy for Whites to be open and honest about race, but I posit that it may be even more difficult for African American teachers. I have already alluded to the distinctive task of achievement for African American students (Perry as cited in Perry et al., 2003). What I am suggesting now is that the task of teaching African American students in the 21st century, particularly those encumbered by accumulated disadvantages, is a distinctive task for many African American teachers. I posit that teaching freedom and building a contemporary counterhegemonic school culture will require African American teachers to rediscover their cultural voice and reexamine the effect integration and the color-blind ideology has had on their worldviews.

Unlike the multitude of research on the negative impact of White racism, racial stigmas, and racial stereotypes imposed on Black children by White teachers, significantly less has been written about the impact integration has had on the attitudes of African

American teachers toward Black children in the segregated all-Black public school. While I

am not comfortable making comparisons, I daresay that the most negative outcome of

integration may not have been the racism Blacks incurred from White teachers, but the

maltreatment they experienced from African American teachers. I would suggest that an

unintended consequence of integration was internalized racism. Some African Americans,

fortunate enough to benefit socially, economically, and educationally from the opportunity

and mobility that integration afforded, began to buy into the grand narrative and even the

ideology of color-blindness. Admitting to being a victim of internalized racism is difficult,

but I posit that few native-born African Americans escape being afflicted by some form of

internalized racism. It is the hideous consequence of racism and the nagging phenomenon of

double-consciousness:

> This sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring
> one's soul by the tape of the world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One
> ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two
> unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one body, whose dogged strength alone
> keeps it from being torn asunder. (Du Bois, 1994, p. 2)

Just as Black children are frequently affected by racial stigma, racial stereotypes, and

defensiveness, so too are African American adults. African Americans should bear no

shame about the effects of internalized racism; the shame comes in denying those effects and

doing nothing to counteract them. African American educators who, consciously or

unconsciously, have bought into the color-blind narrative that underscores NCLB and the

stigma of Black intellectual and cultural inferiority contribute to their own oppression and

the oppression of lesser-advantaged African Americans. I daresay that African American

educators teaching in the modern-day segregated all-Black school will benefit just as much

as the children from the creation of a race-critical 21st century conscientization.

So what exactly is race-critical conscientization? The term *conscientization* refers to "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 2007, p. 35). I define the concept of race-critical conscientization as critical consciousness that acknowledges the persistence of racism and racial oppression and consciously evaluates their effects on people of color when making and implementing political, economic, educational, and social decisions and policies. I imagine race-critical conscientization as a liberating experience because its primary, but not exclusive, aim is to expose and arrest racial oppression. In predominantly African American schools like Roosevelt, I assert that it is imperative that children become critically conscious of that which oppresses them and the forces in society that put them at risk. They need to examine how they contribute to their own oppression and then determine how they can counter that oppression. To be sure, there are other forms of oppression (e.g., sexism, homophobism, classism, and so on). I would argue, however, that the discussion of oppression among African Americans must begin with race. It is the elephant in the room. Honest dialogue and critical discourse about racial oppression will lead to the recognition of other oppressions. Once the pedagogy of oppression is understood and analyzed, I believe children will be able to identify and combat oppression on a number of fronts. Recognizing oppression will enable African American children to be able to imagine a different world—a counterhegemonic world. They need to believe in the possibility of real freedom; not be afraid of it. Freire (2007) explained, "the oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of oppression. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility" (p. 47). Schools can help put many of these fears to rest.

Critical pedagogy, framed within a race-critical lens, has the potential to make schooling and learning a liberating experience. "Critical pedagogy is based on the premise that emancipation can be realized when people have an adequate understanding of their own oppressive situations" (Cho as cited in Rossato et al., 2006, p. 133). I do not mean to imply that once children (or anyone for that matter) see the real truth, they are instantly transformed. If we think of Gramsci's (2008) concept of hegemony, we are reminded that "people conform to the system not because they do not see their 'real' interest (false consciousness), but because the ruling class gains consent from dominated groups by making concessions" (p. 134), in this case, granting waivers, providing tutoring, and offering school choice. Hence, the critical educator's task is a difficult one. The real task for critical pedagogues is:

> To create the social structures that will allow individuals to change and grow. Rather than focusing on reforming individuals per se, critical pedagogy should explore alternative visions of social structures and conditions so that ordinary teachers and students can practice, experience, and live pedagogy of hope, love, equality, and social justice. (p. 135)

By creating a counterhegemonic culture and sense of an in-school community identity, one in which the stigmas associated with being Black are confronted and cast aside and replaced with opportunities to write and demonstrate a counternarrative, African American children can hold out hope—they can imagine and create a freer existence for themselves. What I am talking about extends way beyond simply raising the self-esteem of Black youth. What I am referring to is raising critical awareness. From that heightened consciousness, comes power. Predominantly Black schools in the 21st century are in a prime position to enact their power to revitalize public schools as critical sites of learning for political literacy and intellectual freedom. By creating a race-critical counterhegemonic culture, schools can put into practice

Dewey's theory of intelligent social action as a means of bringing about a more humane society. Black teachers in all-Black schools, in particular, are in a position to enliven Gramsci's (2008) philosophy of the organic intellectualism, or the belief that subordinated or oppressed groups are capable of generating their own intellectuals who then can create a counter, alternative culture and understanding. I do not mean to suggest that White teachers cannot be a part of this intellectual becoming, but in schools like Roosevelt and in communities like Gary, African Americans must take the lead. Ironically, NCLB and the ideology of colorblindness have given African Americans a golden opportunity to repurpose schooling, but it can only be done by making schools counterhegemonic sites of learning aimed at a race-critical conscientization.

Unfortunately, it looks like high-stakes testing, neoliberalism, and the callous market mentality about life may be with us for some time, but they do not have be in us. African American students need to understand such things are objects of oppression over which they can and must prevail. The approach to teaching and learning needs to be grounded in critical pedagogy and knowledge forms. Imagine this:

> Critical knowledge would instruct students and teachers alike about their status as a group situated within a society with specific relations of dominance and subordination. Critical knowledge would help illuminate how such groups could develop a language and a discourse released from their own partially distorted cultural inheritance. The organizing question here would be: what is it that this society has made of me that I no longer want to be? Put another way, a critical mode of knowledge would illuminate for teachers and students how to appropriate the most radical and affirmative aspects of the dominant and subordinate culture. Finally, such knowledge would have to provide a motivational connection to action itself, it would have to link a critical decoding of history to a vision of the future that not only exploded the myths of the existing society, but also reached into those pockets of desires and needs that harbored a longing for a new society and new forms of social relations, relations free from the pathology of racism, sexism, and class domination. (Giroux, 1988, p. 8)

I think that if Roosevelt and other schools like it all over the United States can find a way to turn the current oppression of NCLB and color-blindness into an inspiration to create a counterhegemonic school culture that prioritizes freedom and intellectualism as critically thinking, learning, and problem-solving through race-critical conscientization, the hopeful possibilities ahead are endless. Imagine that!

Chapter X: Methodology

This dissertation was a historical inquiry designed to answer qualitative questions about the impact of color-blind educational reform in the post-*Brown* era on racial inequality in American public schools. Critical race theory served as the theoretical framework for interpreting the data. The study, largely narrative and descriptive in nature, juxtaposed an in-depth critical analysis of extant literature and empirical data on a macro-level with empirical data gathered from an atypical instrumental case, Theodore Roosevelt High School in my hometown of Gary, Indiana. I used a multi-tiered, interactive process that involved multiple sets of data including interviews, documentation and archival records, school observations, and an ongoing review of extant literature on the history of educational reform in the post-*Brown* era. (See Appendices B and C for the IRB review letter and the approval letter from Gary Community School Corporation.)

Interview Process

Accessing quality research liaisons was essential to the research. Because I was somewhat familiar with the social and geopolitical terrain of Gary and the colloquial history of Roosevelt High School, I was able to tap into a network of valuable school and community connections. A retired 42-year veteran teacher at Roosevelt and long-time Gary resident agreed to serve as my primary liaison. My objective was to gather a core group of research participants through purposive sampling. "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore, one needs to select a sample form which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1988, p. 48). The objective in purposeful sampling is to select individuals who "*information-rich* [people or sites] from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the

research" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). To achieve a varied sampling of participants and diversity of experiences, I asked the primary liaison to identify teachers, parents, school administrators, and community members with intimate knowledge, formal or informal influence, and a keen interest in education at Roosevelt over the course of the last 40 years. She contacted approximately 16 potential interviewees, explained in very general terms the nature of my research, and obtained their permission to give me their contact information. The information gathered in these interviews snowballed into additional interviews. In some cases, the snowballing process was guided by direct reference; in other instances, the process was more intuitive. "Snowball, chain, or network sampling is perhaps the most common form of purposeful sampling" (Merriam, 1998, p. 63). It involves "identifying participants or 'cases of interest from people who know people who know people who know cases what cases are information-rich, that is, good examples for study, good interview subjects" (Patton, 1990, p. 182). I use the term *intuitive snowballing* to refer to spontaneous revelations that occurred during the research process when I realized, based on information shared by others, that I needed to speak with additional people. I actively sought to interview a diverse group of critical stakeholders in education at Roosevelt. Participants varied in role, age and gender. All but one of the respondents was African American. I found that because Gary is a close-knit community with a relatively small nucleus of involved and influential decision-makers, many of the people I interviewed fulfilled multiple interview categories. In total, I conducted 40 formal interviews (see Appendix D for a list of interviewees and contributors).

By necessity, the interview process for the initial group of interviewees identified by the liaison differed from the process for the latter, more spontaneous interviews. I sent the

first 16 participants a letter via U.S. mail thanking them for agreeing to assist me with my research (see Appendix E for the interview request form). The letter also contained an abbreviated explanation of my research purpose, an appointment sign-up sheet for, whenever possible, an in-person preliminary interview conversation (see Appendix F for the response form), and a stamped return envelope for them to mail their appointment time preference. I held pre-interview conversations with all but two of the recommended participants in person; the others were telephone conversations. The purpose of the pre-interview discussions was three-fold. First, I wanted to make sure participants understood the nature of my research. Second, I wanted to give them the opportunity to ask questions and express concerns. Lastly, I secured signed consent for them to formally participate in the research (see Appendices G and H for the preliminary interview form and signature page). Within a week of each preliminary interview, I mailed or emailed, depending upon each individual's personal preference, a summary of the pre-interview conversation and a tentative date for the formal interview (see Appendix I for a sample follow-up letter for the interview). In contrast, the preliminary interview process was procedurally truncated for the remaining 26 interviews. In every case, I approached each person either in person, telephone, or email; secured verbal consent to interview them; and set an appointment time. At the scheduled interview time, I reiterated the purpose and goals of my research and addressed any concerns they may have had prior to obtaining their signature on the formal letter of consent.

Most interviews were unstructured and open-ended to encourage the telling of remembered stories and lived experiences. My intent was to ask questions that invited interviewees to share their stories about their lived experiences or their observations and interpretations of the experiences of others. Respondents in the open-ended interviews were

given the opportunity to tell their own history on their own terms and, in effect, "name their own reality" (Delgado, 1989b, p. 2073). I avoided asking questions that elicited "yes" or "no" responses and "why" questions that implied causality or put the informant on the defensive. I wanted participants to freely share what they thought was important for me to know and understand about the impact of school reform on school life at Roosevelt from whatever perspective they uniquely represented. "The purpose of open-ended interviewing is not to put things in someone's mind (e.g., the interviewer's preconceived categories for organizing the world), but to access the perspective of the person's interviewed" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). It was very important to communicate to each person how much I valued their contribution to my research. Frequent and careful redirection of interviews, however, was necessary to maintain the focus on the central question and issues in the study. Hence, I designed the interview questions to elicit specific insights into four significant dimensions of lived experiences related to color-blind educational reform agendas: memories, values, observations, and emotive/psychological reactions. Sample prompts and questions were: "Tell me about . . . ", "What do you recall . . . ", "How did you feel about . . . ", "Are you able to describe . . . ", and "Can you tell me more about . . .". A few of the interviews were semi-structured. These tended to the interviews with central office personnel or formal past or current authority figures. In these instances, I posed more pointed questions, but still left plenty of room for participants to speak candidly and spontaneously. In some cases, people were interviewed more than once. All interviewees received a copy of their interview transcript and were given the option to revise and edit as they saw fit.

In order to achieve a varied sampling of participants and diversity of experiences, I sought to interview a variety of critical stakeholders within several categories: teachers,

principals, counselors, parents, alumni, and school district officials. I interviewed one

formal public community-political official. Participants varied in age and gender. All but

one of the respondents was African American. I found that because Gary is a close-knit

community with a relatively small active citizenry, many of the people I interviewed played

overlapping roles in the politics of life and education in Gary.

Interview Data Analysis

Within the framework of critical race theory, I explored interview analysis as

bricolage, "generating meaning through a multiplicity of ad hoc methods and conceptual

approaches" (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 233). Approaches included various forms of an

alternative narrative analysis known as antenarrative analysis, specifically grand narrative,

microstoria, and counter-story/narrative analysis. Whenever possible, the interviewee was

encouraged to tell a story. "In a narrative interview, the interviewer can ask directly for

stories, and perhaps together with the interviewee attempt to structure the different

happenings recounted into coherent stories" (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 155).

Antenarrative analysis is both intriguing and ambiguous and often exposes unique and

polysemous understandings. Boje (2001) defined antenarrative "as being before and as a

bet" (p. 1). A story that precedes narrative, antenarrative is non-linear, speculative, and

likened to a kind of "collective memory" (p. 4) that seeks to make sense out of lived

experiences without the strict confines of a traditional plot bound by a beginning, middle,

and end.

Grand narrative and microstoria are two kinds of antenarrative analyses. Boje (2001)

explained:

> Grand narrative is antenarrative in how one story can be told in ways that erase a
> prior way of telling the story. The ambition is to shatter grand narrative into many

> stories and to problematize any linear mono-voiced grand narrative of the past by replacing it with an open polysemous (many-meanings) and multi-vocal (many-voiced) web of little stories. (p. 10)

Grand narrative analysis juxtaposes local stories with an official narrative. In this study, the official macro-story of educational reform was juxtaposed with the micro-antenarratives (micro-stories) of school reform. Microstoria is antenarrative because it "calls into question the grand narratives of macrohistory" (p. 45) and focuses on recovering "forgotten and marginalized history through quantitative and qualitative study" (p. 52):

> The focus of microhistorians is on grounded emergent micro-aspects of stories, they also situate those stories within the grander narrative schemes of time, such as class, race, and socioeconomic moorings. Microstoria is sensitive to the micropolitics of power, the middle ground between local and grand narrative, and treats the material as real. (p. 52)

> Counter-storytelling serves as an analytical framework for educational research in critical race methodology (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Critical race theory and counter-storytelling "can inform a critical race methodology in education" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 23). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) asserted:

> Counter-storytelling challenges the intercentricity of racism with other forms of subordination and exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies of people of color. Although social scientists tell stories under the guise of "objective" research, these stories actually uphold deficit, racialized notions about people of color. Critical race methodology provides a tool to "counter" deficit storytelling. Specifically, a critical race methodology offers space to conduct present research grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of color. (p. 23)

I spoke with as many people as time and financial resources would allow and ended the interview process when I reached the point of saturation, meaning when the interview data ceased to yield new or different insights (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Interview transcripts were extensively reviewed to identify a variety of interpretations and thematic concepts, and "work out metaphors or capture key understandings" (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 234). I actively sought disconfirming data to test my own assumptions about the unfolding

narrative. The interview evidence was put together with other data sources including documentation and archival data, school observations, and extant literature to complete the historical analysis and create the story of educational reform at the high school.

Document and Archival Data Analysis

Holsti (1969) defined documents "in the broad sense of any communication that include, as examples, novels, newspapers, diaries, love songs, and the like" (p. 1). Several sets of document data informed my research. A primary source of archival evidence were the insights I gleaned from an extensive and ongoing review of scholarly literature on the history and impact of educational reform, particularly as it related to African Americans and racial inequality of educational opportunities and outcomes. These data were vital to my research on both the macro and micro levels because they enabled me to balance, compare, and evaluate competing narratives and diverse theories as well as juxtapose theory with practice. Additionally, document evidence gathered from school records, yearbooks, commencement programs, speeches given by former valedictorians and salutatorians, newspaper articles, School board minutes, state reports, administrative documents, newspaper clippings proved very useful in corroborating data and shaping the larger narrative. I located most of the archival data at the school, the Gary CSC Public Information Office, the Indiana Room at the Gary Public Library, and the Indiana University Northwest Calumet Regional Archives (see Appendices J, K, & L for the research request, request for disclosure of public records, and letter requesting ISTEP data).

The use of multiple pieces of documentation "allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues" (Yin, 2003, p. 98). Typically, the most powerful reason for tapping a variety of data sources is "the development of

converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation" (Yin, 2003, p. 98). Triangulation helps produce a "chain of evidence" (Yin, 2003, p. 35) that adds to the construct validity of the study. In this project, however, my aim was not so much to create a single narrative, or one best truth, but to expose a myriad of truths and stories based not only on the lived experiences expressed in the stories of those whose realities have been unclaimed, unvoiced, or silenced but also on events and perspectives documented in archival school and public records and school artifacts. I was especially cognizant of archival data that confirmed or disconfirmed the stories that participants shared. These data informed my research in much the same way as the traditional literature review. They provided valuable background information and a point of departure from which I was able to flesh out stories from interviewees as well as acquire ideas for deeper avenues of research. While I did not use all of the archival data I collected, my understandings, interpretations, and analysis were fashioned and refashioned by what I read and learned. The richness of the data and the enriching experience of corroborating the evidence enabled me to experience a depth and breadth of learning that far exceeded my expectations.

School Observations

I visited the school frequently and conducted several informal observations of school life at Roosevelt. I was very fortunate to be treated consistently with kindness and warmth. Because my father graduated from and taught at the school and my siblings also graduated Roosevelt, I had the advantage of being somewhat of an insider. Yet, I was enough of an outsider to be perceived as fair-minded. I did not want to risk causing anyone to feel intimidated or jeopardize the cooperative and open reception I received from the Roosevelt family; consequently, I did not conduct formal observations of classroom instruction. I did

not walk around the building with pen in hand taking notes. Instead, I gathered informal

observation data. I also took note of the surrounding community. My purpose for doing so

was to be able to gain a sense of the school and community culture and climate. Data from

these observations were juxtaposed with storied memories of research participants and

document/archival data.

Process of Data Management

Given the immense amount of data collected during the research process, it was

essential that I identify a process of data reduction. I amassed hundreds of pages of School

board minutes since the late 1980s, newspaper clippings and Internet articles, more than 30

yearbooks, 40 commencement programs, numerous school reports, official accreditation

documents, informal school newsletters, district communiqué, public state records, reports,

guidelines, and policy papers, notes from the ongoing literature review, professional journal

articles, speeches, transcripts from more than 40 in-depth personal interviews, and a wealth

of document evidence retrieved from the Internet. Although I embraced an eclectic data

collection and analysis process that was essentially structured as *bricolage*, defined by Kvale

and Brinkman (2009) as "something put together using whatever tools happen to be

available, even if the tools were not designed for the task at hand" (p. 233), a defined method

of data reduction, so that managing, tracking, analyzing, corroborating, and correlating the

diverse data sets was crucial.

The ongoing data management process required preliminary categorization of

possible themes noted in each the four data sets: interviews and stories, documents and

archival records, informal observation, and the review of extant literature. I did not formally

code the interviews nor did I conduct an extensive thematic analysis of the data; instead I

created units of data shaped by both obvious factors (who, what, when, where) and intuitive

assessments (conceptual categories and explanatory themes). I continued this process until I

reached the point of saturation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined four indicators of when a

satisfactory level of saturation has been reached:

> *Exhaustion of sources* (although sources may be cycled and tapped multiple times;
> *saturation of categories* (continuing data collection produces tiny increments of new
> information in comparison to the effort expanded to get them); *emergence of
> regularities*—the sense of "integration" (although care must be exercised to avoid a
> false conclusion occasioned by regularities occurring at a more simplistic level than
> the inquirer should accept); and *over-extension*—the sense that new information
> being unearthed is very far removed from the core of any of the viable categories that
> have emerged (and does not contribute usefully to the emergence of additional viable
> categories). (p. 350)

Once I had determined that a reasonable level of saturation had been reached, all of the data

were compiled in four case records organized by decade.

> The case record pulls together and organizes the voluminous case data into a
> comprehensive primary resource package. The case record includes all the major
> information that will be used in doing the case analysis and case study. Information
> is edited, redundancies are sorted out, parts are fitted together, and the case record is
> organized for ready access either chronologically or topically. (Patton, 1980, p. 303)

 Each case record was juxtaposed alongside the macro level data obtained from the extensive

and ongoing review of related historical literature.

I employed an adbuctive process to analyze and connect the data. "Abduction stands

between induction and deduction" (Boje, 2001, p. 10). Microhistorian and post-modern

research theorist Charles Sanders Pierce (1955) described abduction as "an ongoing inquiry

situation where scientists have a more spontaneous creative insight they speculate may be

tied to their data, or they select one among several plausible hypotheses" (Pierce as cited in

Boje, 2001, pp. 51-52). This process maximized my ability to weave an accurate and

compelling narrative that renders a respectful account of the impact of color-blind

educational reform in the post-*Brown* era has affected racial inequality of educational

opportunity and outcomes at Roosevelt as seen from the perspective of Rooseveltians and

the Gary community and then to compare the dynamics of that particular case to the impact

of color-blind reform across the nation.

Reliability and Validity Threats

Reliability and validity threats can seriously compromise the integrity of the

evidence collected in research; therefore, an important concern in any study is determining

how to assess and reasonably ensure the quality and credibility of the evidence. Each of the

primary data sources in this research had the potential to threaten the reliability and validity

of the research findings.

Interview Data

Interviews are often a major source of vital information about phenomena in

qualitative case study research. It is incumbent upon the researcher to take specific

measures to assess and reasonably ensure the quality of data collected through interviews.

"Although it is impossible to escape the human factor in the interview situation, the

interviewer can minimize gross distortion" (Merriam, 1988, p.75). Several cautionary

measures were taken in this study to assess and maintain quality interview data.

First, to establish a substantive knowledge base about the central research topic on a

macro and micro level and feel competent and comfortable talking with research participants

and eliciting rich stories from interviewees, I conducted an extensive review of the literature

and an expansive mining of document and archival data. Second, I asked open-ended

questions that allowed me to get out of the way of the respondents' natural inclinations to

share what they remembered and wanted me to know. Third, when necessary, I maintained

the integrity of each interview by simultaneously refocusing the conversation and preserving the power of the participant. Fourth, in order to protect the authenticity and quality of the storied data, I listened intently to each participant and took great care to follow up with probing questions and frequently paraphrased their responses for accuracy. I exhibited respect for the participants' perspective. Fifth, I immediately reviewed each interview to sharpen my interpretation and revelatory learning. Sixth, I compared the professionally transcribed verbatim interview transcripts with the original unedited interview tapes to ensure accuracy and validity of the data. Seventh, I honored all requests to exclude comments that were made off the record. I remained open to a multiplicity of interpretations of the storied data, which led to a rich and thorough analysis (Merriam, 1998). I grew increasingly committed to telling their stories.

One threat imposed by interview data, particularly in historical inquiry, is the influence of what Robert Thompson (as cited in Merriam, 1988) referred to as "nostalgia or euphoric recall . . . the pervasive tendency of people to recall with fondness the 'goodness' of a previous time period in their lives" (p. 233). I found that the best way to counteract the influence of euphoric recall was to corroborate interview data with documentation and archival data.

Document and Archival Data

Documents and archival data in historical case study research can be very useful research tools in case study research designs when used wisely. To ensure the quality of these data, I conducted a credibility audit of the data by asking the following questions:

- What is the history of the document?
- How did it come into my hands?
- What guarantee is there that it is what it pretends to be?
- Is the document complete, as originally constructed?

- Has it been tampered with or edited?
- If the document is genuine, under what circumstances and for what purposes was it produced?
- Who was/is the author?
- What was he trying to accomplish? For whom was the document intended?
- What were the maker's sources of information? Does the document represent an eyewitness account, a second-hand account, a reconstruction of an event log prior to the writing, an interpretation?
- What was or is the maker's bias?
- Does the document represent an eyewitness account, a reconstruction of an event long prior to the writing, an interpretation?
- To what extent was the writer likely to want to tell the truth?
- Do other documents exist that might shed additional light on the same story, event, project, program, context? If so, are they available, accessible? Who holds them? (Guba & Lincoln as cited in Merriam, 1988, pp. 107-108)

Observation

Observation data added quality to the research by providing contextual and cultural information about the case. It helped "establish an empathetic understanding" by "conveying to the reader what experience itself would convey" (Stake, 1995, p. 39). It also helped me put life at Roosevelt into perspective.

Extant Literature

Historical dissertations differ from dissertations in other disciplines. Unlike most dissertations in which the literature review is completed prior to the start of the actual research project, the literature review in historical dissertations is ongoing. The review of the literature was a critical data source and is deserving of an independent discussion with respect to reliability and validity. I used the following suggestions proffered by Stephen Toulmin (as cited in Hart, 1998) to enhance the quality of the literature review:

- Use a reliable structure that is explicit.

- Clarify terms with clear examples and explanations.

- Provide a rationale for anything included in the review for support.

- Substantiate assumptions.

- Discuss key landmark research.

- Be reflexive, critical, analytical, and evaluative.

- Avoid fabrication, plagiarism, falsification, and nepotism.

The methodology was well suited to the research. The bricolage approach to analyzing the storied accounts of teachers, parents, graduates, administrators, and other people in the school-community led to powerful learning about how the relationships among individual perception, awareness, and interpretation, race-consciousness, change dynamics, and leadership influence affects teaching and learning. Early on in the research, I realized the immeasurable value the storied accounts of the people most intimately connected to teaching and learning at the Roosevelt would bring to my research. The multifarious data sets that informed my research added credibility, validity, meaning, and revelatory understanding that no one set of data could have provided. Using critical race theory as the framework for a historical inquiry allowed me to illuminate nuanced consequences of color-blind educational reform in the post-*Brown* era that applied not only to the particular case study, but also other schools with in similar communities across the nation. It is my hope that the lessons learned from this research will help other schools like Roosevelt overcome the rising tide of color-blind educational reform.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Roosevelt High School Annual Performance 2000-2009

2000

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Average
	'96-97	'97-98	'98-99	'99-00		
Graduation Rate	84	90	76			89
Percent of Seniors Passing Graduation Qualifying Exam						*NA
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard		10	13	11		63
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard		31	38	29		70
SAT Average Score	777	773	747			994
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	47	41	52			54
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	4	1	5			21
Percent Core 40 Diplomas		28	40			49
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	38	61	54			64
Attendance Rate	90.3	88.3	89.5			95.6
Number of Suspensions	530	578	510			
Number of Expulsions	75	97	54			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	25	23	14			

2001

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Average
	'97-98	'98-99	'99-00	'00-01		
Graduation Rate	90	76	95			89
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE			85			95
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE			15			5
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard		13	11	27		67
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard		38	29	33		69
SAT Average Score	773	747	743			999
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	41	52	35			54
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	1	5	3			23
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	28	40	37			54
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	61	54	41			66
Attendance Rate	88.3	89.5	96.7			95.8
Number of Suspensions	578	510	147			
Number of Expulsions	97	54	30			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	23	14	38			

2002

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Average
	'98-99	'99-00	'00-01	'01-02		
Graduation Rate	76	95	97			90
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE		85	98			95
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE		15	2			5
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard		11	27	25		65
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard		29	33	33		68
SAT Average Score	747	743	729			1000
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	52	35	43			54
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	5	3	1			26
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	40	37	37			57
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	54	41	67			68
Attendance Rate	89.5	96.7	93.4			95.8
Number of Suspensions	510	147	236			
Number of Expulsions	54	30	9			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	14	38	6			

2003

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Results
	'99-00	'00-01	'01-02	'02-03		
Student Enrollment	1009	904	877	914		
Graduation Rate	95	97	83	81		91
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE	85	98	80	73		95
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE	15	2	20	27		5
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard	11	27	25	23		68
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard	29	33	33	33		69
Grade 10 Percent Passing Both GQE Standards	9	21	19	18		60
SAT Average Score	743	729	727	742		1004
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	35	43	42	33		55
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	3	1	4	4		29
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	37	37	31	36		63
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	41	67	30	78		71
Attendance Rate	96.7	93.4	96.0	96.2		95.7
Number of Suspensions	147	236	337	622		
Number of Expulsions	30	10	25	15		
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	38	6	14	19		

2004

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Results
	'01-02	'02-03	'03-04	'04-05		
Student Enrollment	877	914	856	937		
Graduation Rate	83	81	85			89
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE	80	73	69			95
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE	20	27	31			5
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard	25	23	18			67
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard	33	33	35			69
Grade 10 Percent Passing Both GQE Standards	19	18	14			60
SAT Average Score	727	742	732			1007
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	42	33	37			54
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	4	4	0			29
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	31	36	36			64
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	30	78	62			71
Attendance Rate	96.0	96.1	96.5			95.9
Number of Students with More Than 10 Unexcused Days Absent			148			
Number of Suspensions	337	622	885			
Number of Expulsions	25	15	30			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	14	19	19			

2005

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Results
	'02-03	'03-04	'04-05	'05-06		
Student Enrollment	914	856	937	892		
Grade 9 Percent Passing ISTEP+ Math Standard			12	14		70
Grade 9 Percent Passing ISTEP+ Language Arts Standard			20	20		67
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard	23	18	16	12		64
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard	33	35	39	30		68
Grade 10 Percent Passing Both GQE Standards	18	14	14	10		57
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE	73	74	79			94
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE	27	26	21			6
Percent of 11th and 12th Graders Taking Adv Placement Tests			2			12
Percent of AP Tests with Score of 3, 4, or 5			0			48
SAT Average Score	742	732	751			1012
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	33	37	46			55
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	4	2	7			31
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	36	41	59			67
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	78	78	84			72
Graduation Rate	81	85	76			90
Attendance Rate	96.1	96.5	97.5			95.8
Number of Students with More Than 10 Unexcused Days Absent		148	97			
Number of Suspensions	622	885	749			
Number of Expulsions	15	30	97			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	19	19	41			

2006

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Results
	'03-04	'04-05	'05-06	'06-07		
Student Enrollment	856	937	893	811		
Grade 9 Percent Passing ISTEP+ Math Standard		12	14	12		67
Grade 9 Percent Passing ISTEP+ Language Arts Standard		20	20	27		67
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard	18	16	12	13		65
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard	35	39	30	21		66
Grade 10 Percent Passing Both GQE Standards	14	14	10	8		57
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE	74	79	71			94
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE	26	21	29			6
Percent of 11th and 12th Graders Taking Adv Placement Tests		2	4			12
Percent of AP Tests with Score of 3, 4, or 5		0	0			51
SAT Average Score	732	751	757			1007
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	37	46	30			53
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	2	7	12			30
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	41	59	28			67
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	78	83	78			74
Graduation Rate			42			76
Attendance Rate	96.5	97.5	97.7			95.9
Number of Students with More Than 10 Unexcused Days Absent	148	97	62			
Number of Students Retained in 9th Grade	7	124	74			
Number of Students who have Dropped Out	33	59	43			
Number of Students Suspended	408	389	369			
Number of Students Expelled	29	88	47			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	19	41	21			

2007

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Results
	'04-05	'05-06	'06-07	'07-08		
Student Enrollment	937	893	811	786		
Grade 9 Percent Passing ISTEP+ Math Standard	12	14	12	16		70
Grade 9 Percent Passing ISTEP+ Language Arts Standard	20	20	27	18		66
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard	16	12	13	11		66
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard	39	30	21	23		67
Grade 10 Percent Passing Both GQE Standards	14	10	8	9		58
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE	79	71	58			92
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE	21	29	42			8
Percent of 11th and 12th Graders Taking Adv Placement Tests	2	4	1			13
Percent of AP Tests with Score of 3, 4, or 5	0	0	*			51
SAT Average Score	751	757	782			1004
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	46	30	23			54
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	7	12	13			31
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	59	28	50			70
Number of International Baccalaureate Diplomas						51
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	83	78	81			75
Graduation Rate			41			76
Attendance Rate	97.5	97.7	92.9			95.8
Number of Students with More Than 10 Unexcused Days Absent	97	62	335			
Number of Students Retained in 9th Grade	124	74	29			
Number of Students who have Dropped Out	59	43	34			
Number of Students Suspended	389	369	266			
Number of Students Expelled	88	47	0			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	41	21	13			

* Data is not reported, less than 5 students were tested

2008

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Results
	'05-06	'06-07	'07-08	'08-09		
Student Enrollment	893	811	786	721		
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard	12	13	11	14		65
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard	30	21	24	22		67
Grade 10 Percent Passing Both GQE Standards	10	8	9	9		57
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE	71	58	58			92
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE	29	42	42			8
Percent of AP Tests with Score of 3, 4, or 5	0	0	0			50
SAT Average Score	757	782	712			1004
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	30	23	39			51
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	12	13	13			31
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	29	60	55			72
Number of International Baccalaureate Diplomas						55
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	78	81	91			75
Graduation Rate		39.4 *	42.4			78
Attendance Rate	97.7	92.9	91.8			95.9
Number of Students with More Than 10 Unexcused Days Absent	62	335	0			
Number of Students Retained in 9th Grade	74	29	15			
Number of Students who have Dropped Out	43	34	7			
Number of Students Suspended	369	266	294			
Number of Students Expelled	47	0	14			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	21	13	25			

*Graduation rate is corrected because school corporation did not document student transfers out of the corporation.

2009

Theodore Roosevelt High Sch, Gary 4033

INDICATOR	School Results					State Results
	'06-07	'07-08	'08-09	'09-10		
Student Enrollment	811	786	721	1587		
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Math Standard	13	11	15			65
Grade 10 Percent Passing GQE Language Arts Standard	21	24	23			68
Grade 10 Percent Passing Both GQE Standards	8	9	9			58
Percent of graduates who have passed Indiana's GQE	58	58	49			93
Percent of graduates granted waivers for the GQE	42	42	51			7
Percent of 11th and 12th Graders Taking Adv Placement Tests	1	4	5			17
Percent of AP Tests with Score of 3, 4, or 5	0	0	0			46
SAT Average Score	782	712	728			1003
Percent of 12th Graders Taking SAT	23	39	28			49
Percent Academic Honors Diplomas	13	13	4			31
Percent Core 40 Diplomas	60	55	49			74
Number of International Baccalaureate Diplomas						79
Percent of Graduates Pursuing College Education	81	91	81			76
Graduation Rate	39.4	42.4	44.4			81.5
Attendance Rate	92.9	91.8	94.3			96.1
Number of Students with More Than 10 Unexcused Days Absent	335	0	155			
Number of Students Retained in 9th Grade	29	15	9			
Number of Students who have Dropped Out	34	7	16			
Number of Students Suspended	266	294	297			
Number of Students Expelled	0	14	15			
Number of Expulsions and Suspensions Involving Drugs, Weapons, or Alcohol	13	25	7			

Appendix B: IRB Review Letter

Antioch University
PhD in Leadership & Change
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
Human Participant Research Review

Participant Informed Consent Statement

Participation in Dissertation Research for <u>Lillian D. Drakeford,</u> doctoral candidate in the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program at Antioch University

Your consent is requested for participation in research associated with my dissertation entitled: What's Race Got to Do with It?: A Historical Inquiry into the Impact of Color-blind Educational Reform on Racial Inequality in America's Public Schools. As part of my research, I am conducting a case study of Gary Roosevelt from 1970 to the present.

There are no known risks to participants in this study. Your participation will involve, at minimum, one conversational interview which will be arranged at your convenience. The interview will take 90 minutes or less. The interview will be taped and professionally transcribed by a third party. I will share a copy of the transcription for your review. A storied account of the interview may be written. You will have an opportunity to review and edit the storied account. The total time involved in conversational interviews and follow-up should be no more than two to three hours. If there are any follow-up questions, a second and final interview, with your approval, will be scheduled following the same process.

Your name will be kept confidential unless you give written permission for me to use your name in my report. You will also have the opportunity to remove any quotations from the transcribed interview. In addition, the tapes and all related research materials including the Informed Consent Forms will be archived in a secure facility. Some of the content of the interviews may be incorporated into my doctoral dissertation. The data and results of my dissertation study may also be used in future scholarly presentations and publications. I will make every reasonable attempt to inform you of future use of the information you provide. If, at any time, you wish to terminate your involvement with the research project or withdraw the input you have provided from the reported results, you have the absolute right to do so.

I anticipate learning a great deal from you and hope that you will find the experience of participating in this study personally rewarding. There is no financial remuneration for participating in this study, however, your participation is greatly valued and appreciated. A copy of the final report will be made available per your request.

As principal investigator, I welcome you to contact me at any time with questions or concerns. My contact information is provided below:

Lillian D. Drakeford
305 W. Monument Avenue
Dayton, OH 45402
Work: (937) 542-3533
Home: (937) 723-8423
Mobile: (937) 657-0909
Gary: (219) 885-2475
Professional email: ldrakefo@dps.k12.oh.us
Personal email: ldrakeford@gmail.com

If you have additional questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, you may also contact:

Carolyn Kenny, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board
Ph.D. in Leadership & Change
150 E. South College Road
Yellow Springs, OH 45387
805-565-7535
ckenny@phd.antioch.edu

Two copies of this informed consent form are provided. Please sign both, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this research. Please return one to me and keep the other for records.

Respectfully,

Lillian D. Drakeford, Principal Investigator

Appendix C: Approval Letter from Gary Community School Corporation

**GARY COMMUNITY
SCHOOL CORPORATION**
Department of Planning/Evaluation
Research & Accountability
620 East 10th Place, Gary, IN 46402

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE:
Creating 21st Century Schools
(219) 881-5472 • Fax (219) 886-9376

Juanita Lyons, PhD, Director
jlyons@garycsc.k12.in.us

November 5, 2009

Dear Ms Drakeford:

On behalf of the Gary Community School Corporation (Gary CSC), the Department of Planning/Evaluation Research & Accountability (PERA) has reviewed your research proposal file no. R1021D00001,

"What's Race Got to Do with It?: A Historical Inquiry into the Impact of Color-blind Reform on Racial Inequality in America's Public Schools".

It is my pleasure to inform you that your research project has been approved. We believe that your research will benefit the Gary CSC staff and students. Keep in mind that upon completion of your study, a copy of the final report must be sent to the PERA department. If your project lasts for more than one year, at the end of each project year, a progress summary report will be due. Failure to comply with the above stipulations places your project at risk for continuing to conduct research within the Gary CSC or approval of future projects.

A copy of this letter and a copy of your Gary CSC completed application must be forwarded to your University's IRB (Institutional Review Board), if applicable. Once your project is approved by your IRB, you can use this letter as verification that your request to begin conducting research has been granted. A copy of the IRB approval letter must be forwarded to the PERA Department. Letters of approval from your IRB must be kept current and remain in PERA files for the duration of your project. If your study should require any modifications, our office should be made aware of it by submitting a study modification proposal addendum. We wish you the best in your endeavors and look forward to reviewing your progress and final report in the near future. Thank you for your interest in the Gary Community School Corporation.

Sincerely,

Juanita M. Lyons, PhD
Director of Planning/Evaluation Research &
Accountability (PERA)
Office: (219) 881-5472/ Fax: (219) 886-6432
Email:jlyons@garycsc.k12.in.us

Appendix D: Interviewees and Contributors

The following individuals contributed to research. They are categorized by the perspective they brought to the research. Some of the participants' contributed multiple perspectives. Their names are delineated by an asterisk.

Former Students
Ms. Amanda Bryant
*Mrs. JoAnn Sams
Ms. Delia Akins
Roland Walker, M.D.
*Steve Simpson, M.D.
*Mrs. Mary Young
Ms. Carmen Williams
Tracey Benford-Price, M.D.
*Ms. Verl Shaffer
*Dr. Marion Williams
*Mr. Loranzo Anderson

Principals/Asst. Principals
Mr. David Williams
Mr. William Reese, Jr.
Mr. Edward Lumpkin
*Dr. Marion Williams
Mrs. Diane Rouse
Ms. Charlotte Wright
Dr. Lloyd Booth
Dr. Ella Bush
Mr. Clifton Gooden
Mrs. Faye Barnes

Non-teaching School Positions
*Mrs. Mary Young, school nurse
*Dr. Marsha Sullivan, counselor
Mrs. Barbara Banks, counselor
Mrs. Maxine Miller, counselor
*Mr. Joseph Winfrey, Dean of Students
*Mr. Marcus Upshaw, Dean of Students
*Ms. Kendra Johnson, parental assistant
Mr. Gregory McCullum, parental assistant

School Board
Attorney Karen Pulliam

Background/Historical Contributors
Clarence W. Boone, M.D., Froebel history
Dr. Theodore Thompson III, Columbus Africentric Early College
Mr. Victor Thornton, Gary School Board history

Teachers
*Mr. Marcus Upshaw
Mrs. Carol Smith
*Mrs. Lucretia Tolliver
*Ms. Verl Shaffer
*Mrs. Vertelle Staton
Mrs. Ruth Hoyle
Mrs. Cheryl Ramsey
Mrs. Barbara Taliaferro
Mr. Martin Henrichs

Parents
*Mrs. Lucretia Tolliver
*Mrs. JoAnn Sams
* Dr. Marsha Sullivan
Mrs. Sadie Jackson
Mr. Lorenzo Anderson
Mrs. Phyllis Anderson
Ms. Kendra Johnson

Central Office
Dr. Myrtle V. Campbell, Superintendent
Mr. George Comer, Assistant to the Superintendent
Dr. Juanita Lyons, Director of Planning, Evaluation, Research & Accountability

Community
Attorney Richard G. Hatcher, Former Mayor of Gary, IN
*Steve Simpson, M. D

Appendix E: Interview Request Form

October 28, 2009

Dear _____,

As the principal researcher in the dissertation project entitled "What's Race Got to Do with it?: A Hhistorical Inquiry into the Impact of Color-blind Educational Reform on Racial Inequality in America's Public Schools", I want take this opportunity to thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview process.

Mrs. Barbara Taliaferro has been very instrumental in identifying potential interviewees for my study. I am confident in her recommendation of you.

As you know, a large part of my research involves a historical case study of Roosevelt High School. I am focusing on the impact of large-scale school reform on education, culture, and climate at Roosevelt in the post-Civil Rights Era, specifically from 1970 to the present.

I have sincere respect for Roosevelt as an honorable institution of learning. My father, James Dowdell, Jr., graduated with the Class of 1942 from Roosevelt and taught at Roosevelt for more than 40 years. I want to understand how teaching and learning at Roosevelt has changed over the years. I believe one way to do this is to gather stories from teachers, administrators, parents, and former students about their lived experiences at Roosevelt. I value the contribution you will make to my research.

I will be in Gary on November 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th (Saturday through Tuesday) and would like to make arrangements to discuss my research with you and give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. I also have a formal letter of informed consent for you to sign. The preliminary conversation will not take more than 30 minutes of your time.

The actual interview will not take place until late December or after the first of the year. Because there are several people with whom I need to meet, it would be very helpful if you would indicate to me which day and time works best for you. After I have received a response from everyone, I will contact you with a proposed appointment time. I will do my best to accommodate your schedule. A response form and return envelope are enclosed. Please mail and return to me at your earliest convenience.
Lillian Dowdell Drakeford

(937) 723-8423

Appendix F: Response Form

Response Form

Name _____ Phone _____

Email Address _____

From the times below, please select three appointment dates and times that will work well for you. Please return this form in the enclosed return envelope.

Saturday, November 7th
10:00 – 10:30 AM
11:00 – 11:30 AM
1:00 – 1:30 PM
2:00 – 2:30 PM
3:00 – 3:30 PM
4:00 – 4:30 PM

Sunday, November 8th
3:00 – 3: 30 PM
4:00 – 4:30 PM
6:00 – 6:30 PM
7:00 – 7:30 PM

Monday, November 9th
10:00 – 10:30 AM
11:00 – 11:30 PM
1:00 – 1:30 PM
2:00 – 2:30 PM
3:00 – 3:30 PM
4:00 – 4:30 PM
6:00 – 6:30 PM
7:00 – 7:30 PM

Tuesday, November 10th
10:00 – 10:30 PM
11:00 – 11:30 PM
1:00 – 1: 30 PM
2:00 – 2:30 PM
3:00 – 3:30 PM
4:00 – 4:30 PM
6:00 – 6:30 PM
7:00 – 7:30 PM

Appendix G: Preliminary Interview Form

Name _____

Date _____

1. How long were or have you been affiliated with Roosevelt High School?

From _____ to _____

2. In what capacity did you serve at Roosevelt?

3. Would you prefer to remain anonymous?

4. Do you have any questions?

5. Best time to contact you.

6. Tentative date for first interview

Appendix H: Signature Page

_____
Printed Name of Participant   Date

_____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____

_____
Printed Name of Researcher   Date

_____
Signature of researcher   Date

_____

Appendix I: Sample Follow-Up Letter for Interview

November 20, 2009

Thank you again for agreeing to be a part of my research. I enjoyed our brief conversation.

Based on our discussion, the following points are likely to be revisited during the upcoming interview:

- Impact of busing for integration on student population in the 1970s ("creaming the population)
- Influence of high stakes testing on teachers and students (morale, performance, achievement)

*Any anecdotal stories, especially from the 1980s, that you would like to share will be most helpful.

I will be in contact with you in mid-December to schedule a formal interview during the last two weeks of January.

Take care and have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Best,

Lillian Dowdell Drakeford

Appendix J: Research Request

DATE: 10/21/09   # R1021D00001

Research Request

Name _Lillian D. Drakeford_

Organization _Dayton Bd. of Education_

Department _Curriculum & Instruction/Employee Development_ Education and

Address _305 W. Monument Ave._ _Dayton, OH_ _45402_
Street   City/State   Zip

Telephone
Number _(937) 723-8423_

E-mail
Address _ldrakeford@gmail.com_
ldrakefo@dps.k12.oh.us

Fax Number _(937) 542-3555_

Is this study part of your work
for a degree?   ✓ Yes   _____ No

If Yes, check the following:
✓ Ph.D.   _____ Ed.D.   _____ M.A./M.S   _____ Undergraduate   _____ Other

University or College _ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY_

Advisor's Name _Jon Wergin, Ph.D._

Advisor Telephone Number _(804) 269-3826_

Date of IRB Approval _10/16/2009_
OR
If approval is pending,
date of IRB application _____

RECEIVED G.C.S.C.
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
2009 NOV -2

Lillian D. Drakeford   Date _10/6/2009_
Your Signature

Date _____

Gary CSC School   Superintendant's Signature

See attached email   Date _10/22/09_
Advisor's Signature(s) - For All Students

→ see email from Advisor (attached)

Dr. Lloyd Booth - DR. LLOYD BOOTH   Date
Principal Signature (and Print Name/Location) ROOSEVELT-PRINCIPAL
11-2-09

: Dr. Lloyd Booth
Principal, Roosevelt High School

Revised: 10/20/09   7   GARY CSC Research Approval Process

Appendix K: Request for Disclosure of Public Records

226

THE GARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
REQUEST FOR DISCLOSURE OF PUBLIC RECORDS

Please Print Clearly

Your Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone No.: _____

Date of Request: _____ Time of Request: _____

Please identify with reasonable particularity the record being

requested: _____

_____

This is a request for _____ you to allow me to inspect the record.

_____ you to provide me with a copy of the
record at twenty-five (25) cents per page.

_____ I understand that I must pay the copy
fee before the record will be copied.

Signature: _____

- -

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE: FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date and time request received: _____

Name of person receiving request: _____

Disposition of request: _____

_____

You will be allowed to inspect the records on _____ at _____.
                                              Date   Location

RECEIPT FOR REQUESTED DOCUMENTS

This is to acknowledge receipt of the documents requested this _____ day
of _____, 20___, and my payment of $ _____ for the cost
thereof. .

Signature: _____

IN HOUSE COUNSEL _____ APPROVED _____ DENIED

Note: If the request is denied, you have the right to appeal.

BOST 227-94A

Page 5 of 7

Appendix L: Letter Requesting Roosevelt ISTEP Data

April 15, 2010

Office of Legal Affairs
Indiana Department of Education
Statehouse, Room 225
Indianapolis, IN 46204

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a student in the PhD in Leadership and Change Program at Antioch University and am conducting doctoral research on Theodore Roosevelt High School in Gary, Indiana. My research has been approved by Antioch University and the Chair of my doctoral committee, Jon F. Wergin, PhD, the Director of the Planning, Evaluation, Research, and Accountability Department, Juanita Lyons, PhD of the Gary Community Schools, and the principal of Theodore Roosevelt High School, Lloyd Booth. The approval letters are included in this fax. My research proposal is available upon request.

I am requesting a copy of all of Roosevelt's Annual State School Report Cards (ISTEP data) through 2009. One copy of each report card will suffice.

I live in Dayton, Ohio but will be more than happy to retrieve these records in person. I understand there is fee per page. Please advise me of when the records will be ready and I will make arrangements to retrieve them. I will be happy to send payment via a cashier's check or money order in advance if necessary.

If possible, I would like to have these records by no later than May 1st, 2010. Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lillian D. Drakeford

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