

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: A SUBURBAN CASE

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1: How Racially Diverse Schools and Classrooms Can Benefit All Students

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Howard Schools that experience rapid demographic shifts can meet the challenge by implementing five phases of professional development. Many school districts nationwide are experiencing rapid growth in the number of students of color, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and students from low-income families. From my work with education leaders in some of these diversity-enhanced school districts, I know they are places of vibrant opportunity—places that call us to meaningful and exciting work. The Need for Growth All is not well, however, in these rapidly transitioning schools. In a high school outside Washington, D. It only started getting better when I finally figured out that I had to reexamine everything I was doing. Continuing with business as usual will mean failure or mediocrity for too many of our students, as the data related to racial, cultural, linguistic, and economic achievement gaps demonstrate National Center for Education Statistics, Rapidly changing demographics demand that we engage in a vigorous, ongoing, and systemic process of professional development to prepare all educators in the school to function effectively in a highly diverse environment. Many education leaders in diversity-enhanced schools are moving beyond blame and befuddlement and working to transform themselves and their schools to serve all their students well. From observing and collaborating with them, I have learned that this transformative work proceeds best in five phases: Building Trust Ninety percent of U. Thus, many white educators simply have not acquired the experiential and education background that would prepare them for the growing diversity of their students Ladson-Billings, ; Vavrus, The first priority in the trust phase is to acknowledge this challenge in a positive, inclusive, and honest way. School leaders should base initial discussions on the following assumptions: Inequities in diverse schools are not, for the most part, a function of intentional discrimination. Educators of all racial and cultural groups need to develop new competencies and pedagogies to successfully engage our changing populations. White teachers have their own cultural connections and unique personal narratives that are legitimate aspects of the overall mix of school diversity. School leaders should also model for their colleagues inclusive and nonjudgmental discussion, reflection, and engagement strategies that teachers can use to establish positive learning communities in their classrooms. For example, school leaders in the Apple Valley Unified School District in Southern California, where racial, cultural, and linguistic diversity is rapidly increasing, have invested considerable time and resources in creating a climate of openness and trust. They recently implemented four days of intensive work with teams from each school, including principals, teacher leaders, union representatives, parents, clergy, business leaders, and community activists from the NAACP and other organizations. One essential outcome in this initial phase of the conversation is to establish that racial, cultural, and economic differences are real—and that they make a difference in education outcomes. Engaging Personal Culture Change has to start with educators before it can realistically begin to take place with students. Young people, particularly those from historically marginalized groups, have sensitive antennae for authenticity. I recently asked a group of racially and culturally diverse high school students to name the teachers in their school who really cared about them, respected them, and enjoyed getting to know them as people. Forty students pooling their answers could name only 10 teachers from a faculty of , which may be one reason this high school has a 50 percent dropout rate for students of color. This research suggests that the capacity of adults in the school to form trusting relationships with and supportive learning environments for their students can greatly influence achievement outcomes. Leaders in the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township, outside Indianapolis, have taken this perspective seriously. Clear data showed gaps among ethnic groups in achievement, participation in higher-level courses, discipline referrals, and dropout rates. In response, district teachers and administrators engaged in a vigorous and ongoing process of self-examination and personal growth related to cultural competence. Central-office and building

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administrators started with themselves. Confronting Social Dominance and Social Justice When we look at school outcome data, the history of racism, classism, and exclusion in the United States stares us in the face. Systems of privilege and preference often create enclaves of exclusivity in schools, in which certain demographic groups are served well while others languish in failure or mediocrity. As diversity grows in rapidly transitioning school districts, demographic gaps become increasingly apparent. In phase three, educators directly confront the current and historical inequities that affect education. The central purpose of this phase is to construct a compelling narrative of social justice that will inform, inspire, and sustain educators in their work, without falling into the rhetoric of shame and blame. School leaders and teachers engage in a lively conversation about race, class, gender, sexual orientation, immigration, and other dimensions of diversity and social dominance. Roseville is in the midst of a rapid demographic shift. One of the workshop activities engaged participants in a forced-choice simulation requiring them to choose which aspects of their identity they would give up or deny for the sake of personal survival in a hostile environment. Choosing from such identities as race, ethnicity, language, religion, values, and vocation, many white educators were quick to give up race. I think if we are honest with ourselves, few would choose to lose the privilege and power that come with being white in the United States. The Equity Vision now headlines all opening-of-school events each year and is publicly displayed in district offices and schools. It reads, Roseville Area Schools is committed to ensuring an equitable and respectful educational experience for every student, family, and staff member, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, home or first language, religion, national origin, or age. As a result of the increased consciousness about issues of dominance and social justice, several schools have formed Equity Teams of teachers and students, and an Equity Parent Group has begun to meet. The district is looking seriously at how many students from dominant and subordinate groups are in its gifted and AP classes and is conscientiously working for more balance.

Transforming Instructional Practices In this phase, schools assess and, where necessary, transform the way they carry out instruction to become more responsive to diversity. For teachers, this means examining pedagogy and curriculum, as well as expectations and interaction patterns with students. It means looking honestly at outcome data and creating new strategies designed to serve the students whom current instruction is not reaching. For school leaders, this often means facing the limits of their own knowledge and skills and becoming colearners with teachers to find ways to transform classroom practices. One of the fastest-growing school systems in the United States, Loudoun County is experiencing rapid increases in racial, cultural, linguistic, and economic diversity on its eastern edge, closer to the city, while remaining more monocultural to the west. Forming authentic and caring relationships with students. Shifting instructional strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students. Holding consistent and high expectations for all learners. In addition to engaging deeply in the phases outlined above, these teams have begun to work with their broader school faculties to transform instruction. They selected individual students from their most academically challenged demographic groups and then used the principles of CRT to plan new interventions to engage these students and track their progress. She built a personal connection with the student, learned about his family culture and interests a fascination with monkeys was a major access point , and used this relationship to reinforce his academic development. The student responded to her high expectations and passed his 5th grade writing assessment. And after missing its No Child Left Behind compliance goals in past years, Sugarland recently achieved adequate yearly progress for all subgroups in its highly diverse student population. This phase requires a crucial paradigm shift, in which teachers and other school professionals stop blaming students and their families for gaps in academic achievement. Instead of pointing fingers, educators in Loudoun schools are placing their energies where they will have the most impactâ€”in changing their own attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and practices. Engaging the Entire School Community Changing demographics have profound implications for all levels and functions of the school system. To create welcoming and equitable learning environments for diverse students and their families, school leaders must engage the entire school community. The school district, which lies across the Tappan Zee Bridge from New York City, has experienced a dramatic

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shift in student population in the past 15 years as low-income Haitian, Jamaican, Dominican, Latino, and black families from the city have moved into the community and middle-class white families have, unfortunately but predictably, fled to private schools or other less diverse districts. For example, the district has provided workshops to help classified employees acknowledge their powerful role in setting a welcoming tone and creating an inclusive climate for students, parents, and colleagues in school offices, lunchrooms, hallways, and on the playground. For bus drivers, this work has meant gaining cultural competence skills for managing their immense safety responsibilities while communicating clearly and compassionately across many languages and cultures on their buses. The district has convened regular community forums focusing on student achievement and creating conversations across many diverse cultures. White parents who have kept their children in the public schools because they see the value of diversity in their education have been significant participants in these conversations. In the six years since the district consciously began implementing the professional development model discussed here, the pass rate for black and Hispanic students combined on the New York State elementary language arts test increased from 43 percent in to 54 percent in ; on the math test, the pass rate increased from 40 percent to 61 percent. During that same period, the gap between black and Hispanic students combined and white and Asian students combined decreased by 6 percentage points in language arts and 23 percentage points in math. The achievement gap between low-income elementary students and the general population decreased by 10 points in language arts and 6 points in math—results that are particularly impressive, given that the proportion of economically disadvantaged students grew from 51 percent in to 72 percent in .

A Journey Toward Awareness Professional development for creating inclusive, equitable, and excellent schools is a long-term process. The school districts described here are at various stages in the process. Everyone involved would agree that the work is messier and more complex than can be communicated in this brief overview. However, one central leadership commitment is clear in all of these rapidly transitioning districts: When diversity comes to town, we are all challenged to grow. Stereotypes and the fragility of human competence, motivation, and self-concept. Theory, research, and practice. The presence and performance of teachers of color in the profession. White teachers in multiracial schools 2nd ed. Successful teachers of African American students. Crossing over to Canaan: The journey of new teachers in diverse classrooms. Culturally responsive teaching and learning. National Center for Education Statistics. Creating culturally responsive classrooms. Transforming the multicultural education of teachers: Theory, research and practice. Turning to one another: Simple conversations to restore hope to the future.

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2: Can Public Schools Learn From Private Schools? (EPI book) | Economic Policy Institute

Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public www.enganchecubano.com This guide is not intended to render legal advice on specific legal questions; it is designed to provide general information on the subject of religion and public schools.

To explore these widespread beliefs about differences between private and public school practices, we conducted case studies of eight public and eight private elementary schools in California. We conducted extensive interviews with principals, other administrators, teachers, parents, and in the case of some eighth graders students. The schools were selected to typify a range of socioeconomic characteristics and included both sectarian and nonsectarian private schools. However, we make no claim that the sample of schools was scientifically chosen, or that the impressions we record here are statistically valid. The depth with which we probed each of these schools precluded a large enough sample to generate statistical conclusions. Nonetheless, insights from these case studies tend to challenge widely held assumptions about differences between public and private schools. Inner-city private schools shared more characteristics with public schools in low-income communities than with affluent suburban private schools. Likewise, suburban public schools had more in common with suburban private schools than with urban public schools. The most important variations between schools may be between schools of all types in different communities, not between public and private schools in the same community. Among the 16 schools in this sample, private schools were not noticeably more accountable to parents than public schools. In low-income schools, public and private, teachers and administrators complained of the lack of parental involvement. But an opposite phenomenon characterized both public and private schools in very affluent communities: Policy makers often posit that private schools are more successfully organized around academic achievement objectives and are more successful in emphasizing behavioral goals. These case studies, however, include private schools organized around principles other than academic outcomes, such as religious beliefs, safety, or discipline; in some cases, academic achievement was a relatively low priority. The studies also found some public schools that were as successful as private ones in aligning themselves with academic goals, and some public schools that also emphasized behavioral or value objectives. Many believe that an important public-private difference is laxity of teacher standards stimulated by public employee protections and unionization. Yet these case studies found no school, public or private, where formal evaluation, supervision, or mentoring of teachers was meaningful. Indeed, Catholic school procedures for terminating poorly performing teachers were nearly as cumbersome as public school procedures. Moreover, private schools in this sample were no more selective in teacher personnel policies than were public schools serving students of similar socioeconomic backgrounds. We observed both high- and low-quality classroom management and academic instruction in both public and private schools. Within particular communities, similarities between schools and the problems they confronted overwhelmed the differences. These may be good policies for all schools to follow, but public schools are as likely or unlikely to be accountable to parents as private schools serving similar student and parent populations. Introduction Private school outcomes are generally superior to public school outcomes. Private school students score higher on standardized tests than do public school students, and private school students are more likely to graduate and attend college. But why is this the case? Do private school practices differ from practices of public schools? Or do private schools get better outcomes because they enroll students from more advantaged backgrounds? Even if private schools generate superior outcomes when student background characteristics are controlled, are these outcomes caused by practices that are transferable to public schools, or are they idiosyncratic to private schooling? For example, improved outcomes for disadvantaged students in private schools that spring from their association with more advantaged classmates would not be a transferable private school effect. Similarly, a private school advantage that derives from a sense of religious community or shared communal values may not be transferable to a secular public school. Scholars differ on whether

private schools should behave differently than public schools. Sociologists Richard Scott and John Meyer argue that the institution of public schooling has a different function than that of a private school, and so the two should have different organizational structures. A public school takes in all comers. Teachers and the school principal are accountable to multiple constituencies, represented by the varying capabilities of their students and their needs. It also can appear incoherent because it tries to do so many things at once. Private schools are more likely to have a single objective, and select and be selected by the parents and their children who are in accord with that objective. Sociologist Joan Talbert also argues for significant organizational differences between public, religious private, and nonreligious private schools on similar grounds. But economist Byron Brown theorizes that private and public schools should not differ significantly. If a school chooses to differ radically from other schools, it increases the risk to parents that they have made the wrong choice. Whether by voice or exit, parents will push the school to behave much like other schools. Much of the debate around differences between nonprofit public and private schools has revolved around statistical analyses that purport to control for student background characteristics, thus leading to the identification of a private school effect that demands explanation. Because controls for background characteristics are so difficult to implement, it is unlikely that this debate will soon be resolved. Yet public policy does not wait for econometricians to achieve consensus. Controversy regarding the relative advantages of public or private schooling proceeds, and policies to shift resources from public to private schools, based on assumptions about private school superiority, gain increasing support. Ethnographic data may help shed light on this debate by giving us the opportunity to study in detail the principles and practices around which schools organize themselves. In the pages that follow, we report on case studies of eight public and eight private elementary schools in California. It is true that our sample is neither random nor large, but the small number we chose to work with enabled us to observe instruction in classrooms and interview teachers, administrators, and parents. Time and resources did not permit such an observational and interview-based case study approach for more than 16 schools. And 16 is too few a number of schools to assure a representative sample had we selected it randomly. Schools also have too many varying characteristics to assure a representative sample of 16 if we had stratified all public and private schools prior to randomization. Rather, we drew the sample to mirror the characteristics of important types of schools that might shed light on how nonprofit public and private schools differ. Private schools in our sample include both parochial and independent schools. We also targeted schools within each nonprofit sector private or public that served different social class populations poor, working class, middle income, and affluent and that varied by urbanicity and racial composition. We believe, despite the nonrepresentative character of the sample, that by visiting a reasonable number of public and private schools in two major metropolitan areas “schools catering to students of varied racial and ethnic backgrounds and from families both higher and lower in socioeconomic characteristics” we should be able to find differences. The widely repeated claim, after all, is that market-driven behavior is observably and significantly different from bureaucratically driven behavior. If that is the case, such differences should be observable in a sample of 16 schools. Because interview respondents were assured anonymity, we use pseudonyms as school names, and we do not specify the California community in which each school is located. Appendix A provides a brief description of each school studied, along with a table that classifies each school both by the socioeconomic level of its clientele and by type, i. The reader should refer to Appendix A when considering each of the sections below. Our interviews were organized around a relatively simple working theory of school accountability. We expect that schools must solve problems of accountability in some way in order to function, and that how schools solve them is reflected in the way teachers, administrators, students, and parents talk about the fundamental issues of schooling. In schools at the other extreme, there may be a high degree of incoherence among formal and informal mechanisms and individual notions, leading to a relatively weak or even dysfunctional internal accountability system. We make no effort to draw conclusions from our case studies about the relative effectiveness of the schools we studied, and we did not select the schools to be statistically representative of broader school groupings. Rather, our purpose is

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descriptive and suggestive: Our most striking finding from these cases is that, to the extent patterns are generalizable, the most important distinctions among these schools did not separate public from private institutions. Rather, we found, for example, that private schools in inner-city communities were more similar in many respects to public schools in these communities than they were to private schools in suburban communities. Likewise, we found that the suburban public schools we observed had more in common in many respects with suburban private schools than they had with urban public schools. While these patterns were not uniform, they suggest that policy debates about education may be missing the most important issues if they focus on whether the quality of schools can be deduced from their public or private organization. We came to this conclusion by organizing our observations around the following commonly held generalizations about the superiority of nonprofit private schools: Private elementary school personnel tend to be more accountable to parents than are public elementary school personnel. Private school outputs and expectations for students tend to be more clearly defined than are public school outputs and expectations. Private elementary schools tend to produce higher nonachievement outputs — behavior and values, for example — than do public elementary schools. Moreover, private schools allocate a higher proportion of resources to these nonacademic objectives than do public schools. Teacher selection and retention practices at private schools are more efficient than are the selection and retention practices for teachers at public schools. Private school innovations stimulate improved practices at the public schools with which they compete. With respect to each of these generalizations about the superiority of private over public schools, our interviews and observations suggest differences between the schools we observed, but the differences did not arrange themselves along a public-private divide. Rather, we found both public and private schools that had greater or lesser parent accountability, more or less well-defined expectations and student outcome goals, more or less emphasis on nonacademic goals, traditional or less traditional curricular materials, more or less rigorous teacher selection and retention policies. We found evidence that schools learn from each other, whether they are public or private. We discuss our observations with regard to each of these generalizations in turn.

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3: 10 important Supreme Court cases about education - National Constitution Center

The next time DuPage County was in a religion story of The Chicago Tribune, DIRN was featured as a how-to model for conflict resolution, religious diversity, and cross-cultural communication.

Download While there are a handful of studies that challenge the link between school desegregation policy and positive academic outcomes, they represent only a small slice of the literature. Furthermore, these positive academic outcomes, particularly the closing of the achievement gap, make sense given that integrating schools leads to more equitable access to important resources such as structural facilities, highly qualified teachers, challenging courses, private and public funding, and social and cultural capital. The gap in SAT scores between black and white students is larger in segregated districts, and one study showed that change from complete segregation to complete integration in a district would reduce as much as one quarter of the SAT score disparity. This can be largely connected to an overall improved school climate in racially integrated schools. There has been no distinction drawn as to how different student outcomes were related to the various ways in which students experienced desegregation in their schools and communities. Thus, the degree to which all students were treated equally or had teachers with high expectations for them was not a factor, despite the impact of such factors on student achievement data. Further, this early literature failed to calculate the prevalence of segregation within individual schools via tracking, or the extent to which black and white students were exposed to the same curriculum. A growing body of research suggests that the benefits of K-12 school diversity indeed flow in all directions—to white and middle-class students as well as to minority and low-income pupils. For instance, we know that diverse classrooms, in which students learn cooperatively alongside those whose perspectives and backgrounds are different from their own, are beneficial to all students, including middle-class white students, because they promote creativity, motivation, deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. It allows for positive academic outcomes for all students exposed to these diverse viewpoints. For instance, evidence on how the persistence of implicit bias toward members of minority racial groups can interfere with the educational process by disrupting cognitive functioning for members of both the majority and minority could certainly apply to elementary and secondary students as well. In short, the better overall learning outcomes that take place in diverse classrooms—for example, critical thinking, perspective-taking—would no doubt apply in high schools as well. It showed that while racial segregation and isolation can perpetuate racial fear, prejudice, and stereotypes, intergroup contact and critical cross-racial dialogue can help to ameliorate these problems. Still, as with the higher education research, we need to more fully explore not only the what of K-12 school diversity, but also the how—how do elementary and secondary school educators create classrooms that facilitate the development of these educational benefits of diversity for all students? To answer this critical question, we need to look at yet another body of K-12 research from the desegregation era and beyond. How Public Schools Can Help Foster the Educational Benefit of Diversity Perhaps the ultimate irony of the current lack of focus on the educational benefits of diversity within racially and ethnically diverse public schools is that prior to the rise of the accountability movement in K-12 education, there had been an intentional focus on multicultural education that explored curricular improvements and teaching issues within racially diverse schools. They raised important issues about how school desegregation policies should be implemented to create successful desegregated schools. This research was also methodologically distinct—consisting mainly of qualitative, in-depth case studies that focused on the process of school desegregation and the context in which it unfolded. Public schools, therefore, are the natural setting in which such contact can occur. Few other institutions have the potential to bring students together across racial, ethnic, and social class lines to facilitate active learning to reduce prejudice. They tend to be inconclusive, because they imply a relationship between the particular conditions established within racially mixed schools and the ways in which children come to see themselves vis-a-vis students of other racial groups. Tracking and ability grouping in desegregated schools often

perpetuated within-school segregation across race and class lines. Again, identified as second-generation desegregation issues, this was starting to be addressed in schools across the country and drawing more attention from researchers by the s and early s. That came from yet another body of related work in the area of multicultural education. Multicultural Education and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Critical work on the democratic goals of education echoes not only the concept of multicultural education, but also issues of democracy and pedagogy on racially diverse college campuses. Research documents positive academic outcomes for students exposed to these diverse viewpoints. While CRP does focus on the importance of culture in schooling, it always focuses directly on race, in part, perhaps, because it is so often adapted in all-black, one-race schools and classrooms. Another critique of CRP is that its more recent application is far from what was theorized early at its inception. In fact, some scholars have advocated for different pedagogical models since the inception of CRP that seek to address social and cultural factors in classrooms. Many of these models focus on the home-to-school connection as CRP does, while others expand on the application of even earlier concepts of critical pedagogy aimed at promoting concepts such as civic consciousness and identity formation. The next step in utilizing these more culturally based understandings of schools and curricula is to apply this thinking to diverse schools and classrooms more specifically. Educators in schools across the country—some isolated in single classrooms and some working on a school-wide set of pedagogical reforms—are starting to grapple with these issues in racially and ethnically diverse classrooms. But as we highlight in Figure 1, there are several reasons why issues related to the educational benefits of diversity appear to have fallen off the K-12 research radar screen in the last twenty-five years. This includes, most notably, a highly fragmented and segregated K-12 educational system of entrenched between-district segregation that cannot be easily addressed after *Milliken v. Milliken*. Meanwhile, this fragmented and segregated educational system is governed by accountability and legal mandates that give no credence to the educational benefits of learning in diverse contexts. As noted above, several areas of research on the sociocultural issues related to teaching students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds that could help inform our understanding of the pedagogical approaches that foster educational benefits of diversity in the K-12 system are disconnected, often designed to address the needs of students in the racially segregated school system they attend. In this section, we highlight the demographic, educational, and political forces that we think may have the potential to shift the system in that direction. Even more notably, this transition is happening much more quickly amid our younger population. Rapid growth in the Hispanic and Asian populations, coupled with a black population that has remained constant and a decline in the percentage of whites, has led to a total K-12 enrollment of 49 percent white, 26 percent Hispanic, 15 percent black; and 5 percent Asian for the 2015 school year. Download Coinciding with the changing racial makeup of the country and our public schools is a profound shift in who lives where. In many contexts, our post-World War II paradigm of all-white suburbs and cities as the places where blacks and Hispanics live has been turned on its head. Black suburbanization rates were even lower—about 12%—in the Northeast. Beginning slowly in the s and increasing in the s and s, when federal policies and regulations or lack thereof promoted home ownership among moderate-income families, growing numbers of black, Latino, and Asian families were moving to suburbs such as Ferguson, Missouri see Figure 5. By 2000, nearly 40 percent of blacks were living in the suburbs. Suburbanization has also increased among immigrant families—mostly Latino and Asian—and by 2000, 48 percent of immigrants were residing in suburban areas. Download In the s, journalists and researchers were increasingly reporting on the growing number of distressed suburbs that were coming to resemble poor inner-city communities. But the author was quick to note that declining suburban neighborhoods did not begin with the mortgage crisis, and they would not end with it as more people with high incomes move into the cities. The percentage of whites in Manhattan increased 28 percent between 1990 and 2000, while it declined in nearby suburban Nassau County. During the same six-year period, the Hispanic population declined by 2 percent in Manhattan, but increased by 20 percent in Nassau. In fact, today, in the fifty-largest metropolitan areas, 44 percent of residents live in racially and ethnically diverse suburbs, defined as between

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20 and 60 percent non-white. Indeed, it is increasingly clear that contemporary urban and suburban communities each contain pockets of both poverty and affluence, often functioning as racially and ethnically distinct spaces. In fact, by , one million more poor people lived in suburban compared to urban areas. In Brooklyn, New York, for instance, a growing number of communities that were, only ten years ago, almost entirely minority and low-income are now becoming or have already become predominantly white and affluent. Ironically, in in-depth interviews we are conducting, white gentrifiers state that one reason they moved into the city was to live in neighborhoods more diverse than the homogeneous suburbs where many grew up. Similarly, they note that they want their children to attend public schools with other children of different backgrounds. There is much hard work to be done at the school level to assure that all students enrolled have the opportunity to achieve to high levels. In public schools with a growing population of more affluent students, educators often seek assistance in meeting the needs of a wide range of students. In the last decade, a small but growing body of literature has documented the impact of urban gentrification on the enrollment and culture in public schools. There is also an emerging focus on the impact of changing demographics on suburban public schools. In other suburbs, further from the New York City boundary, the white, non-Hispanic population has stabilized at about 50 percent. In both contexts, educators and students are grappling with racial, ethnic, and cultural differences that many of them had not encountered before. When we think of education policies and practices to support and sustain the increasingly diverse public schools in both urban and suburban contexts, it is clear that K educators and educational researchers have much to learn from the higher education research on the educational benefits of diversity in efforts to both close racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps while helping all students succeed. And just as fair-housing advocacy has increasingly prioritized the stabilization and sustainability of diverse communities, education policy needs to follow suit. Unfortunately, too few policy makers see the need for such programs, even as a growing number of educators in diverse schools are clamoring for help to close those gaps and teach diverse groups of students. The current mismatch between the policies and the needs of an increasingly racially and ethnically diverse society inspire us to fill the void with compelling success stories of public schools working toward a greater public good.

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4: The Case for Educational Pluralism by Ashley Rogers Berner | Articles | First Things

The study involved case studies of four public schools in the greater Sydney region that were characterised by differing degrees of cultural homogeneity: a primary school in the inner west; a high school in the south; and a high school and a small primary school in northern Sydney.

Award-winning author, Editor-in-Chief of American Diversity Report *The Why and How of Religious Diversity Training* Before embarking on the information modules, a philosophic overview of religious diversity training should be considered. There will be people who are skeptical, or hostile, to anything labeled as interfaith. Yet, there is a black hole of information on diverse religions. The silence is surely not due to a lack of interest or visibility. Turn on the TV, open a newspaper, or check the internet and religion pops out as a major issue across the planet. Look at the growing number of EEOC complaints based on religious expression. Yet, the vacuum of expertise in religious diversity exists in most relationship-oriented sectors of our society: As a result, too few professionals understand how to avoid clashes involving belief systems. How can their often paralyzing sense of being overwhelmed and under-prepared be managed? The challenge of religious diversity is not new. Hundreds of students took to the streets joined by a thousand citizens, police, and reporters. I was finishing up an international interfaith project in my Chicago office when I saw the scene captured in technicolor above the fold on the front page of *The Chicago Tribune*. I lived in Downers Grove and could see my future flash before me. My next project was the creation of a trouble-shooting pilot project for a religiously diverse community in distress. Anonymous death threats were received by various civic leaders. Ultimately, I wrote a book with suggested guidelines and Quick Reference Religious Diversity Cards outlining five information modules recommended for basic religious diversity training. Before embarking on the information modules, a philosophic overview of religious diversity training should be considered. At one end of the spectrum, there will be traditionalists who may not want to be lumped together with other religions, considering such a situation as insulting and demeaning. At the other end of the spectrum, there will be spiritualists, who may demand to be lumped together with traditional religions, considering such a situation as legitimate inclusion. How can a training event encompass such disparate participants without imploding? Religious diversity training should not aim for a Kumbaya moment in which world peace is achieved. Rather, the training should be designed to achieved two major objectives: Improve service customers and clients 2. Improve relationships with diverse markets. There is a third objective of avoiding costly internal conflicts over religious expression. That objective is primarily addressed through the policies and their implementation according to federal EEOC guidelines. However, internal religious diversity issues can be indirectly impacted when training provides strategic information. A key element of their usefulness is a structure organized by cross-cultural themes rather than an in-depth analysis of religions. The DuPage community leaders were not equipped to deal with a theological approach. Rather, easy access, condensed information, and immediate applicability. Through research and field-testing with these participants, five themes emerged as central to religious diversity training. The result was five easily digestible charts with the following themes: Each chart is a matrix of terminology, religious practices, and taboos for more than a dozen faith traditions. Know the geography, terminology, and choreography of religious practices. Where are the headquarters, or central authority? What is the house of worship called and what are the practices for entering? Who is the leader and what is the term for this person? In its absence, law enforcement officers created distance between themselves and the community by referring to all religious leaders as priests. Know the religious diversity of calendars. What are the weekly times for worship? When are the annual holy days? Do the dates change yearly with the different liturgical calendar? Are there seasonal celebrations? The meeting was canceled but the incident was spread widely online. Know how to refer to the sacred writings of each religion. What are they called, who wrote it and in what language? Who are the major prophets and how do they refer to God? What are the followers of each religion called? In the absence of this information, public speeches were made about

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diversity using biblical quotes that were not relevant to many audience members, excluding them a full understanding of the presentation. Know how the meaning of death and the rituals surrounding it. What happens to the soul after death? What are the funeral and mourning practices that should be honored? Healthcare workers need to know how to deal with dying patients and families, but so do employees, colleagues, vendors, and leaders across sectors. Responses can provide an opportunity to connect, but a lack of information can lead to an unintended, and possibly long-term, disengagement. Know the basics of dietary laws attached to religious traditions. What is allowed to be eaten and when is it eaten? What is forbidden and should not be served? What food is used to celebrate and when is fasting practiced? In the absence of this information, a conference planner can make a meal taboo by lack of proper oversight. Stress the practical applications of these cards. Use them to avoid scheduling mistakes. Use them to plan the food for celebrations and gifts. Use them when marketing to a cultural community that is known to embrace a specific religion. The information can mean the difference between inclusion and exclusion in the social services and healthcare environments. The Cards are the culmination of years of concentrated effort to overcome its religious diversity conflicts. The next time DuPage County was in a religion story of The Chicago Tribune, DIRN was featured as a how-to model for conflict resolution, religious diversity, and cross-cultural communication. If there are problems, they are more likely to intensify than go away. If there is calm, make plans now for religious diversity training, and tackle challenges, and there will be challenges, before they end up on the front page of your local newspaper.

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5: The Why and How of Religious Diversity Training | HuffPost

While the U.S. Constitution prohibits teacher-led devotional expression of religion in public schools, Moore said the new religious studies resources are designed to represent the academic study.

Sign Up Follow us 1. When socioeconomic diversity policies are well implemented, they appear to produce strong academic outcomes for students and better prepare them for living in a diverse society. Almost all of the districts studied that have had socioeconomic integration plans in place long enough to have an effect are seeing positive student outcomes. For example, in Cambridge, which has had a socioeconomic integration plan in place since 1970, students outperform those in demographically similar districts in Massachusetts on state English, math, and science exams. That compares to a 73 percent black student graduation rate and 82 percent overall graduation rate nationally in the 2014 school year, the most recent year for which data are available. The achievement differences are smaller not because white students do worse, but because all subgroups of students perform better. Of course, high performance might be explained by the fact that only the most motivated students apply to magnets, but careful research comparing magnet school lottery winners and losers has found positive results for student achievement. In Stamford, too, low-income students perform above the state average and gaps in graduation rates between disadvantaged and advantaged students have fallen substantially. In Jefferson County, the proportion of students deemed College and Career Ready nearly doubled between 2000 and 2010. While school integration is often politically challenging, key steps—such as the use of choice and incentives—can smooth the path to community support. Most of the districts profiled use public school choice and incentives such as magnet schools, rather than compulsory busing, to achieve integration. Many districts are able to marry choice and integration quite successfully. In Champaign, close to 90 percent of kindergartners receive their first choice school. In Jefferson County Louisville, the first choice placement rate is also 90 percent. The reliance on choice rather than compulsory busing in Louisville may be one explanation for the dramatic uptick in community support over the years. For example, Hartford is able to draw suburban students into one of the poorest cities in the country using a system of forty-five magnet schools. The proportion of Hartford students attending integrated schools has increased from 11 percent a decade ago to a projected 46 percent in 2015. In order to ensure that choice plans are equitable, family information centers have been established to ensure that all parents make informed choices. And successful districts also provide free transportation. This led to a political backlash and the resignation of the superintendent there. But even here, students became used to integrated schools and the newly drawn boundary lines remain in effect. Several New York City community school districts are working to design controlled choice admissions policies, efforts which might not have continued in the absence of funding. Setting clear system-wide goals for integration increases the likelihood of achieving success. Not surprisingly, setting clear goals to integrate all schools in a district leads to much broader integration than programs focused on a small subset of schools. Cambridge, Champaign, Jefferson County, and Stamford all have system-wide goals that all schools should be within a range of the district-wide average for disadvantaged student populations and all have been quite successful in achieving integration. In Stamford, for example, eighteen or twenty schools fall within plus or minus 10 percentage points of the district average for socioeconomic diversity. Some higher-poverty districts, such as Dallas and Chicago, have, by contrast, addressed socioeconomic integration within only a small subset of schools, leaving many students in segregated environments. High-poverty districts might appear to have no choice in the matter, but, as Lesson 4 below suggests, they do have other options. Policies that break down artificial walls between city and suburb can have greater impact than those limited to existing district lines. Earlier Century Foundation research explored the benefits of eight inter-district programs in jurisdictions ranging from metropolitan St. Louis to Boston and Rochester to Minneapolis. Either approach offers up significant new opportunities for moving beyond separate and unequal schooling. Socioeconomic diversity policies can often lead to racial diversity. In practice, however, socioeconomic integration programs in many

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communities have led to vibrant levels of racial diversity. In 2014, the selective enrollment population was 22 percent white, nearly 30 percent Hispanic, 35 percent African-American and 9 percent Asian. Districts have grown more sophisticated in defining disadvantage. When socioeconomic integration programs first began, most districts adopted eligibility for free and reduced price lunch percent of the poverty line as an indicator of economic disadvantage because the data are readily available. But that the measure is not ideal. It only looks at family income, not parental education, so the children of temporarily low-income graduate students are counted as disadvantaged. The measure also splits the world into two categories—those receiving subsidized lunch and those not—which fails to capture the full spectrum of educational disadvantage and advantage running from poor to working class to middle class, and upper class. Finally, subsidized meals data has become less reliable as a measure of disadvantage as more districts take advantage of the ability to grant all students in higher poverty schools free lunch, whether or not individual students meet income guidelines. In response to these realities, districts have created a number of new, more sophisticated measures of disadvantage. Chicago examines several factors by student Census tract: These data are combined to create a composite figure for socioeconomic status and then Census tracts are divided into four economic tiers. I helped Chicago develop this system. Dallas now uses a version of the Chicago system. Jefferson County, meanwhile, looks at three Census tract measures income, education, and race, and divides geographic areas into three tiers. Districts are more likely to be successful when they ensure integration not only in school buildings but also in school classrooms. A final lesson from the case studies is that integrating school buildings is only a first step; to promote equity, schools should also seek to reduce economic and racial segregation at the classroom level. Two districts illustrate this point nicely. On the one hand, Champaign has done a very good job at integrating schools, but there is still a fair amount of stratification within schools. Perhaps as a result, Champaign still struggles with large racial achievement gaps. Stamford, by contrast, has been successful not only in creating socioeconomically integrated schools but also pushing for diversity within classrooms. Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of black students taking AP classes nearly tripled and the proportion of Hispanics doing so doubled. Conclusion Socioeconomic integration is important but complicated work. As the number of districts taking on such integration efforts continues to grow, it is critical that best practices be shared and worst practices avoided. In the past, districts have mostly come to this work on their own and have not had the opportunity to learn from one another. That is beginning to change. Secretary of Education John King Jr. These case studies below are an important aid in that effort—and to support the larger goal of reviving *Brown v. Board of Education* for a new century. From this point thereafter, unless otherwise stated, all data referenced in this paper is derived from the accompanying District Case Study profiles. Century Foundation Press,

6: Multicultural Education - Case Studies & Scenarios

A final lesson from the case studies is that integrating school buildings is only a first step; to promote equity, schools should also seek to reduce economic and racial segregation at the classroom level.

National Center on Response to Intervention This is the first article in a three-part series. In this three-part series, we present an overview of the issues most relevant to the development and implementation of Response to Intervention RtI models in contemporary urban schools. This first article focuses on describing the broad challenges faced by and within urban school systems in effectively educating students. These issues, we contend, should be well considered—and addressed when possible—prior to implementing an RtI framework. The second article in the series focuses on how RtI frameworks in urban schools should be designed to consider the cultural dimensions of racialization and linguistic hegemony that limit equitable opportunities to learn. The third article seeks to present promising examples of how RTI practices that consider cultural dimensions operate in urban schools. As such, it is designed as a model for the prevention of long-term academic failure and thus, is a potentially powerful tool for addressing the needs of all students in all contexts.

Urban School Challenges It is important to note that the challenges facing urban school systems are not entirely unique to metropolitan areas, nor are all urban school systems confronted with the same challenges. Urban schools do, however, share some unique physical and demographic characteristics that differentiate them from suburban and rural school districts. Unlike suburban and rural school districts, urban school districts operate in densely populated areas serving significantly more students. In comparison to suburban and rural districts, urban school districts are frequently marked by higher concentrations of poverty, greater racial and ethnic diversity, larger concentrations of immigrant populations and linguistic diversity, and more frequent rates of student mobility Kincheloe, , While sociodemographics are not themselves the challenge of urban school systems, they speak to the broader social and economic inequities facing such populations that invariably frame the work of urban schools. As Orfield explained, segregation and poverty underlie grander issues in urban education systems: It is wrong to assume that segregation is irrelevant, and policies that ignore that fact simply punish the victims of segregation because they fail to take into account many of the causes of the inequality—Current policy built on [this assumption] cannot produce the desired results and may even compound the existing inequalities. The challenges of urban education cannot be divorced from its sociodemographic context. Structural Challenges Urban school systems tend to have specific structural challenges that impede their ability to effectively educate the most vulnerable students. While these structural challenges may be evidenced across all types of educational contexts, they are perhaps most potent in urban settings. They include 1 persistently low student achievement, 2 a lack of instructional coherence, 3 inexperienced teaching staff, 4 poorly functioning business operations, and 5 low expectations of students Kincheloe, , ; MDRC, We discuss each briefly below and provide suggestions for addressing these structural challenges. Low Student Achievement Even in the midst of tremendous political attention, low student performance persists. This is often exemplified by a large number of students performing poorly on achievement tests and not performing at grade level, as well as high rates of high school noncompletion and special education classification. The vast majority of students want to succeed in school and view school as important to being successful in life, but structural barriers both inside and outside school often stand in the way of the realization of this Theoharis, A Lack of Instructional Coherence Urban schools are bombarded with so many instructional initiatives and approaches that they can become fragmented, or indeed contradict one another. Moreover, urban school initiatives should be carefully chosen, with attention paid to what is already being implemented within the school district. Urban school initiatives should utilize expertise within the schools for coaching and program building so that institutional knowledge can be passed on to new and novice teachers who have perhaps the greatest need for professional learning supports. Inexperienced Teaching Staff The issue of teacher quality is considered central to growing efforts to understand and reduce

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performance gaps in achievement between students of color and their White and Asian peers Ferguson, , Students in schools with high concentrations of low-income Black and Latino students are more likely to have inexperienced or unqualified teachers, fewer demanding college preparatory courses, more remedial courses, and higher teacher turnover Lee, Aside from the school building itself, teachers are perhaps the most visible school resource. Extensive research has demonstrated that teachers have a significant impact on student achievement e. Teachers become more effective the longer they teach. In his review of teacher research, Goldhaber highlighted studies that consistently demonstrate teachers becoming increasingly more effective in the first 3 to 5 years of teaching. Thus, it can be inferred that teachers with fewer than 3 years of teaching experience are less effective than those with 3 or more years of teaching experience. Experienced teachers, however, are not equally distributed across low- and high-poverty schools. Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff demonstrated that teachers are drawn to schools with low concentrations of poverty, low minority populations, and high levels of student achievement, thus framing the problem of teacher quality as one related to professional mobility. Teachers who perform better on the general knowledge certification exam are significantly more likely to leave schools having the lowest achieving students, leading to high teacher turnover rates in lower performing schools. This high turnover rate makes it harder for low-performing schools to build an experienced teaching core, thus creating an unequal distribution of experienced teachers. To address the needs of struggling learners, urban school districts need to consider their teachers as valuable and strategic resources and systemically assign academically underperforming students to effective teachers. Urban school districts tend to have ineffective or underutilized data management systems MDRC, , making it difficult for them to identify student needs and monitor student progress. While much of the budgetary and resource challenges are deeply embedded in other political and economic factors outside the reach of a school system, urban school districts need to develop data systems and promote their use in critical analysis and examination of their own practices. This entails a commitment to data analysis as a continuous process, with clearly stated questions or problem statements, a readiness to question assumptions, and the capacity to go beyond the numbers Reeves, As such, data analysis can occur at the district level with improved data collection and monitoring systems. With improved systems, data analysis can also be implemented at the school level with data walks, inquiry groups, and critical friends groups. Low Expectations of Students Urban schools often fail to provide environments of high academic expectations Griffith, ; Matute-Bianchi, ; Noguera, ; Valencia, ; Valenzuela, While also a persistent cultural challenge, urban school districts have structural challenges that either produce or perpetuate low expectations of students. Structurally, this is exemplified in the absence of demanding and high level courses and programs such as advanced placement courses and gifted and talented programs, as well as school systems that council students out of school Fine, Research has shown that given the opportunity and appropriate support, students will live up to the high expectations set forth for them. Of course, it is not as simple as setting a high bar. The students themselves need to feel, understand, and interpret the structures and culture of the school as requiring their best effort and expecting excellence of them. Urban school districts need to provide access to rigorous courses and increase academic support to struggling studentsâ€™ through programs such as AVID advancement via individual determination , MESA mathematics, engineering, science achievement , double period classes, extended learning time, after school sessions but not just more of the same , and summer schoolâ€™ to support struggling students and help them reach high expectations set for them. Moreover, urban schools must employ early intervention systems to identify struggling students, which are a critical component of any RtI framework. Cultural Challenges Along with the structural challenges faced by urban schools, there are also critical cultural challenges that stand in the way of the successful implementation of RtI models. We identify these cultural beliefs generally as cultural dissonance that manifests itself in policies, practices, beliefs, and outcomes in myriad interconnected ways. Taken together, these elements of cultural dissonance constitute a prevailing pattern that includes but is not limited to: We discuss each of these briefly below followed by some of the practices we suggest for meeting these challenges that are being implemented in some of the more successful

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urban schools. In fact, such perspectives can be found in many suburban and rural districts as well. To effectively combat these beliefs, we find school districts engage in some form of continued dialogue regarding these beliefs through year-long reading groups, attendance in continuous diversity dialogue seminars, and opportunities to operationalize their new thinking such as in PLCs, grade level and content meetings, staff meetings, collegial circles, and data inquiry groups. Lack of Cultural Responsiveness in Current Policies and Practices

The principles of culturally responsive pedagogy recognize that culture is central to learning and pivotal not only in communicating and receiving information but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals Ladson-Billings, A pedagogy that acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates knowledge, information, and processes as culturally bound offers fuller and more equitable access to education for CLD student groups Gay, ; Nieto, Reflective practitioners regularly contend with the question of why certain school practices work well for some students and not for others. Too often, schools make policy, curricular, and pedagogical decisions without careful consideration of the racial, ethnic, and cultural realities of the students and communities they serve. For instance, schools with high concentrations of children who are homeless need to construct homework as in-school reinforcement and not as an activity for a home environment that is not universally available for all children. The dearth of culturally responsive practices leads to a lack of student trust in the school setting Steele, Students may interpret the school environment as unwelcoming and thus unworthy of a meaningful, personal investment, making their academic achievement much more unlikely Cushman, ; Valenzuela, Good Practices for Addressing Issues of Cultural Dissonance

Cultural dissonance and the beliefs relative to the limited abilities of urban students distract practitioners from engaging in conversations about how teaching matters in learning outcomes. That is, we find practitioners are frequently willing to cite the family and community i. Cultural dissonance can be profoundly impactful, however, to the school experiences of urban students. It shapes and colors the expectations for achievement and sends critical messages to students about how much or little their cultural selves are valued by the school and larger society. To address these issues of cultural dissonance in the preparation of the implementation of an effective RtI model, urban schools must develop the capacity for these critical components of policy, practice, and belief: Achieve clarity of institutional mission that focuses on cultivating talent, confidence, and competence in all students. Embrace immigrant students and their culture. Build strong relationships between teachers and students to improve behavior and achievement. Build partnerships with parents and critical stakeholders. Achieve Clarity of Institutional Mission That Focuses on Cultivating Talent, Confidence, and Competence in All Students

The first task in developing clarity around mission in urban schools involves securing the appropriate buy-in from all staff regarding expectations and norms. Any notions, however subtle they may be, that accept the normalization of failure must be deliberately and directly challenged. School teams should attempt to define explicitly what equity means in the specific context of the school building. In the course of defining equity, schools should identify and implement strategies that support the most vulnerable student populations and that also address the social and emotional needs of students as well as the underlying causes of behavior problems. These normed academic and social expectations need to be regularly clarifiedâ€”particularly at critical transition points in the education pipeline. Embrace Immigrant Students and Their Culture

Increasingly, the children of recently arrived immigrants are enrolling in large numbers at urban public schools. These first-generation and 1. Contrary to the politicized stereotypes that might suggest otherwise, some immigrants do enter the country with a great deal of education and other professional training. The families of the formally educated as well as others with limited levels of formal education invest heavily in the notion that American schools will provide the goods and services that will give their children access to critical social, educational, and economic opportunities. The academic success of immigrant students is largely contingent on how they and their families are treated. Schools serving large numbers of immigrant students must be increasingly vigilant in their commitment to the principles and practices of culturally responsive education CRE. The school practitioners must be especially aware of the ways in which the acculturation process may produce cultural conflict for recent immigrants. To mitigate the

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potential for conflict, the school must redouble its efforts to develop both cultural and language competence among staff. **Build Strong Relationships Between Teachers and Students to Improve Behavior and Achievement** Young people who are particularly vulnerable to school failure are most benefited by both good pedagogy that is supported by a carefully planned, rigorous curriculum as well as strong relationships between practitioners and students. Good teaching in urban schools is often a function of leveraging trust and relationships to challenge students to meet the high expectations for learning. In this way, extracurricular activities can be utilized as tools to engage students, and these activities should be designed to develop skill sets beyond athletics that create opportunities for youth leadership and civic engagement. Good schools produce students who feel they can present their intellectual selves authentically in a way that does not conflict with the cultural ways of being that are also important to their social and cultural selves. **Build Partnerships With Parents and Critical Stakeholders** Trust and relationships between students and school practitioners are also facilitated by the careful coordination of services with community partners to meet specific nutrition, health care, and counseling needs. Effective urban schools should seek to build relationships with social service agencies and other community-based organizations. Urban schools should see these other agencies as not having outside interests but, rather, being equal stakeholders in the long-term goals of the school. To this end, urban schools should offer training for staff on effective strategies for communicating with parents. The interactions that parents have with the school should be considered thoughtfully so that they do not send conflicting messages. In partnering with parents, schools should work to provide clear guidance on what they can do to support children. Work with parents should be based on the assumption that all parents want the best for their children and would like to partner effectively with the school. In considering the structures for incorporating the cooperation of parents, schools should remember that the most critical forms of parental support occur at home. **Conclusion** As previously stated, it is important to recognize the complex realities facing urban school systems that challenge the effective development and implementation of RtI. The structural concerns of persistent low achievement, limited teacher and leader capacity, poor data and data inquiry infrastructures, and low expectations of students are not new phenomena but, rather, are historic conditions in urban schools.

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7: Q&A: Can teaching about religion reduce intolerance? | PBS NewsHour

Schempp case, banning teacher-led prayer, in which he wrote: "It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and.

October 30, by Jonathan Stahl credit: Here are 10 Supreme Court cases related to education that impacted both constitutional law and the public school experience. Board of Education Arguably the most well-known ruling of the 20th century, Brown overturned Plessy v. While the Brown decision marked only the beginning of a prolonged struggle to achieve actual integration, its impact cannot be understated. Vitale and 8. Abington School District v. Schempp This pair of cases shaped the modern understanding of how the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment constrains prayer in public schools. In Engel, the Court struck down a New York State rule that allowed public schools to hold a short, nondenominational prayer at the beginning of the school day. Kurtzman This case adjudicated a different sort of Establishment Clause challenge, where the controversy dealt with a statute providing financial support for teacher salaries and textbooks in parochial schools. The Burger Court unanimously decided that this financial aid scheme violated the Establishment Clause and delineated the governing precedent for Establishment Clause cases known as the Lemon test. Yoder Among the litany of public school cases from the Warren and Burger eras is the landmark Free Exercise Clause decision in Yoder. Wisconsin mandated that all children attend public school until age 16, but Jonas Yoder, a devoutly religious Amish man, refused to send his children to school past eighth grade. San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez Like most U. The District sued the state on behalf of the students in its district, arguing that since property taxes were relatively low in the area, students at the public schools were being underserved due to the lack of funding compared to wealthier districts. They argued that the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment mandates equal funding among school districts, but the Court ultimately rejected their claim. The district passed a rule prohibiting the armbands as part of a larger dress code, and students challenged the ban as a violation of the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment. This case is notable for its impact on First Amendment jurisprudence regarding distinctions between conduct and speech, as well as for its extension of free speech protections to students. The vice principal then searched her purse, found drug paraphernalia and called the police; the student was eventually charged with multiple crimes and expelled from the school. The Supreme Court decided that the Fourth Amendment does constrain the actions of school officials, and that students have a legitimate expectation of privacy when in school. Lopez In , President George H. Bush signed the Gun-Free School Zones Act, which prohibited the possession of firearms in designated school zones. Lopez, a 12th-grade student at a Texas high school, was caught carrying a gun at his school and was charged under the statute. He challenged his conviction and the Gun-Free School Zones Act, saying that Congress did not have the constitutional authority to ban guns in school zones. In one of the narrowest readings of the Commerce Clause since the Lochner era , the Court struck down the law and ruled that Congress had exceeded its authority. They explained that the possession of a gun does not have a substantial effect on interstate commerce, and that these sorts of regulations could only be passed by state governments. Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle In , the Supreme Court ruled in Gratz v. Bollinger and Grutter v. In light of this, the Seattle School District established a tiebreaker scheme for admission to competitive public schools in the district, in which racial diversity played a role in the ultimate decision. The policy was challenged, and the Supreme Court was tasked with deciding if the Equal Protection Clause had any bearing on the case. It determined that its earlier decisions for college affirmative action do not apply to public schools and that racial diversity is not a compelling government interest for public school admission. California Teachers Association Pending The Court made the decision to hear this case in June, and will hear oral arguments this term. Friedrichs is a First Amendment challenge to the practices of public unions. The Court will determine whether requiring teachers to pay for union activities that are not explicitly political speech violates the First Amendment. If they rule that the scheme is permissible, the Court must also

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decide whether an opt-out system for political activities is constitutional. Jonathan Stahl is an intern at the National Constitution Center. He is also a senior at the University of Pennsylvania, majoring in politics, philosophy and economics. Recent Stories on Constitution Daily.

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8: Chicago Tribune - We are currently unavailable in your region

This case study reports 1 Texas suburban school district's efforts to promote cultural proficiency after leadership trainings and explores how and in what ways this may or may not have improved school leaders' understanding of Islam.

The Case for Educational Pluralism Alternatives to the state-funded educational monopoly by Ashley Rogers Berner December Public education means different things in different countries. In the United States, it means government-funded and government-delivered schooling—schooling that is supposedly ideologically neutral but in fact reflects a progressive tradition strongly committed to beliefs and to an educational philosophy rejected by many Americans. Not surprisingly, we now fight a great deal about public education. Once bitterly contested on grounds of religious liberty, this belief in the uniform common school, and its ability to create citizens out of disparate groups, is now so embedded in our consciousness that we cannot imagine public education otherwise. Other liberal democracies took a different view. Beginning in the nineteenth century, most Western countries established centralized standards and funding that supported a variety of institutions with diverse philosophies of education, religious and cultural commitments, and student populations. Today, the Netherlands supports more than thirty types of schools on equal footing, and in England over 60 percent of Jewish children attend Jewish day school at state expense. Educational diversity is increasing exponentially in places such as Australia and Sweden, and India is introducing vouchers in some of its provinces. What binds the diverse groups and their schools together in most cases is commitment to a national or regional curriculum and assessments, so that children in quite different classrooms engage in a common civic and academic project. These curricula tend to prescribe general rather than specific goals such as demonstrating knowledge of a particular genre of English literature rather than studying particular sonnets and are often negotiated between national and local governments. Recent American educational innovation—charter schools, vouchers, cyber-education, Teach for America—are encouraging educational diversity, but they can only go so far. This in turn requires a different political philosophy, a turn to a model of education based on civil society rather than state control. It is important to note that educational pluralism is not a proxy for religious education, although it does embrace religious as well as secular, philosophical, and pedagogical variety. However, it offers an honest acknowledgement of the myriad value judgments inherent in any education and generously accommodates a variety of beliefs? While some people fear that such pluralism would produce division and harm the students educationally, evidence suggests that, in fact, pluralism often yields superior civic and academic results. Educational pluralism is also more honest than the current model, because it acknowledges that education always rests upon particular views about what education is for, who the child is, what role the teacher and school play, and how the atmosphere of the school reflects those beliefs. No aspect of schooling can be truly neutral. The variety that has played out in American education is instructive. The first difference to be addressed is that over the question: What is education for? Educational theorists have advocated education for citizenship, for survival, for vocation, for social adjustment, for self-expression, for social reform, and for spiritual development—to name a few of the goals they have offered over the last century. Although these emphases are not necessarily mutually exclusive, in practice one tends to dominate others. Educational leaders in the early republic thought education existed to equalize opportunity and to form wise citizens by popularizing an aristocratic, humanistic curriculum. Even if Americans agreed about the purposes of education, however, the ways we think about the nature of the child and the role of teachers lead to other difficult differences. Two conflicts over these questions have had particular force in American education: Both conflicts began early in the last century and continue today as strongly as ever. Traditionalists view the child as the recipient of knowledge that introduces him into the great human conversation and opens doors to the widest possible life opportunities. They are likely to support a core curriculum taught in chronological order, high academic standards for all students, and subject rather than education degrees for teachers. Progressives, in contrast, view the child as the creator of knowledge, not the recipient of information

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deemed important by others. They shy away from the traditional curriculum in favor of studies that attempt to foster social development or creative expression. They believe that a more open-ended classroom trains students to think critically in a way that traditional education does not. Secularists view the child primarily as an autonomous individual who must, therefore, be entirely uncoerced in decisions as personal as religious belief. Religious people assert that children are spiritual as well as intellectual and emotional beings and that omitting questions of belief is itself indoctrination of another kind. Progressive approaches have dominated colleges of education and school districts since the s. The current debate over academic standards needs to be seen in this light: This has caused a struggle in nearly every state. Educational pluralism offers a way out of these conflictsâ€”over what education is for, who the child is, and what role teachers and schools should playâ€”since it refuses to privilege one view over another. Instead of progressive and traditionalist educators competing for ideological dominance, they can populate and influence schools that want their particular approach. In short, educational pluralism opens up this conversation in a way that purported neutrality and uniformity cannot. Educational pluralism is not only more honest about the formational nature of education and the deep differences between pedagogical approaches, but the political philosophy that supports it and the institutions it generates are more democratic than our present system. Some education reformers speak the language of the market, as if educational choice were akin to buying a car or a house, but educational pluralism recognizes that education is a public good, not merely an individual choice. It attempts to balance parental commitments with common standards and goals. It reflects an understanding of civil society that views the state as the guarantor of a rich social ecology, not its chief actor. This is the philosophy in force in many liberal democracies. In contrast, the United States has adopted a state-control model for education, in which the government ensures its own version of the good above all others. The republican version, seen in the educational systems of the United States and to some extent France, favors a common civic identity shorn of sectarian particularity. The liberal-pluralist version, which informs education in most other democracies, allows distinctive beliefs in the public square or public education as long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others or place undue burdens upon public institutions. The institutions created by educational pluralism reduce the risk of majority domination and foster democratic accountability. Pluralism, in contrast, makes everyone aware of the variety of viewpoints. Some advocates for the current American model worry that pluralism would reduce accountability. The political philosopher Amy Gutmann, for instance, admits that American public schooling is imperfect but insists that it nevertheless achieves the optimal balance between the interests of the state, parents, and educators. This is a dubious claim. Circuit courts generally rule in favor of school districts, not parental conscience, in matters concerning curricula. A further benefit of educational pluralism is that it fosters democratic citizenship better than does uniformity, at least in contemporary America. That is a counterintuitive claim, given that the justification for uniform schooling has been that only a common educational experience could make one people out of many. Political scientists use a number of metrics to examine civic engagement, in particular civic knowledge an understanding of political history and institutions ; civic skills the ability to think and write clearly, to speak in public, and to analyze complex arguments ; community service engagement in community ; and political tolerance especially for those whose views one dislikes intensely. Americans fall alarmingly short in each. There are many reasons why Americans are not democratically engaged. The hundred-year resistance within public education to a traditional curriculum that would have required in-depth knowledge of history, philosophy, and culture is part of the problem: Americans simply do not know why our institutions developed as they did, or how important it is to participate in the ongoing struggle to align our institutions with our ideals. More broadly, though, American institutions, including public schooling, tend to reinforce individual autonomy and to discourage the habit of commitment. Citizenship is many things, but at its core it is an intellectual, emotional, and behavioral commitment to something greater than the self. We can see why many public schools have difficulty engendering this kind of democratic attachment and praxis. An educational philosophy whose aim is self-expression is ill-equipped to foster attachment to liberal democracy. Many public school teachers hesitate

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to allow classroom discussions about beliefs or truth claims. Schools with a distinctive flavor religious or secular, in contrast, can engage such claims at many levels. In 1997, political scientist David Campbell published his study on school sectors and citizenship, using the four measures mentioned above: the habit of community service, skills adequate to political participation, historical and political knowledge, and tolerance of difference. He compared these outcomes in students from Catholic, religious non-Catholic, secular-private, assigned public, and selective magnet schools. After accounting for family factors such as parental community service, education and income levels, and religiosity and school-level factors such as size, mandatory community service, or student governments, he found that students in non-state, particularly Catholic schools, evidence civic preparation at statistically higher levels than did their public-school peers. Another study, this one by Cardus, found that graduates of American Christian schools are active participants in their communities, not siloed separatists. Not only do non-state schools foster stronger preparation for citizenship, they also do a better job than traditional public schools of closing the academic achievement gap, even when social and family factors are removed. William Jeynes, a professor of education at California State University, recently analyzed multiple studies and data sets exploring the link between religious schooling and attainment and concluded that religious education helps all children academically, but particularly helps minority and low-socioeconomic-status students close the achievement gap. It is, rather, to make the point that two primary goals of American education, citizenship and academic attainment, are at least as well, if not better, accomplished by diverse, nonstate schools. Given the value of diversity, not just to children and their families but also to American society, how far might American education move toward what citizens in Switzerland, Ireland, and Hong Kong take for granted? The trajectory is already promising. Charter schools can have a unique pedagogical mission and be culturally focused for example, Hebrew or Turkish, but not Jewish or Muslim and govern themselves without union contracts. Online learning, such as Florida Virtual Schools, offers students access to academic subjects that their neighborhood schools may not provide, catering to a variety of special needs and family preferences. A few states allow vouchers or tax credits that parents can take to alternative schools. This arrangement is less common, but it comes closest to the educational pluralism in other nations. There are state and federal barriers to extending diversity, however. Thirty-seven state constitutions include a version of the Blaine Amendment, a Reconstruction-era attempt to prohibit states from funding religious institutions. The amendment failed in Congress in 1875 but was passed in many state legislatures. The state Blaine amendments as they are known vary considerably. The degree of state flexibility therefore depends upon the wording of any Blaine Amendment, as well as upon local political will. The Board of Education defined the establishment of religion to include any kind of intrusive support for religious institutions. The ruling was refined in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, which created a three-pronged test to determine whether government action inappropriately establishes religion. Educational pluralism is supported by international treaties. Educational pluralism effectively accomplishes the proper ends of public education without imposing the uniformity created by the present American system. However, it also raises specific concerns that need to be addressed in our own constitutional and cultural context. First, educators, parents, and legal scholars will have to collaborate to balance two principles: The experiences of other nations suggest that there will be all sorts of conflicts over curricula, admissions protocols, and even staffing. We can look to them for foresight about protections and compromises. Quebec is currently experiencing a quite troubling conflict between the mandates of educational authorities and religious education in Catholic schools. Second, the fact of plural institutions does not ensure a commensurate diversity in pedagogy. Again, the experience of other nations is illustrative. England and Wales began to support pluralistic schools and teacher-training institutes in the 19th century. By the 1960s, however, the philosophy of education that aspiring teachers imbibed had become thoroughly homogenized in all but Catholic settings it came to them in the 19th century. University-based colleges of education set the tone for the entire educational domain, and there was little diversity of thought and consequently of pedagogy.

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9: As Diversity Grows, So Must We - Educational Leadership

In other words, in the past few decades, prominent higher educational leaders, lawyers, and researchers have worked together to support race-conscious admissions policies, allowing college campuses to remain more racially and culturally diverse than most of the public schools their students attended prior to attending college.

Education Dec 26, 1: But while the courts banned schools from preaching about religion decades ago, most school districts in the U. Such instruction has not come without some controversy. Eighty-nine percent of Americans know that a public school teacher cannot lead a class in prayer. Only 36 percent know that a public school teacher can legally teach a comparative religions class. How young is too young to talk to your kids about religion? Only 23 percent know that a public school teacher can read from the Bible as an example of literature. How long has teaching about world religions been a part of public school education? Schools have had [a world religions elective] for many, many years. Depending on the state, they may have to begin it in sixth or seventh grade or not until high school. So when I give talks to audiences, if the average is 50 and up, most of them are really shocked that schools are dealing with anything to do with religion, because they think that violates the separation of church and state. Why did you set out to write this book? One was a very, very personal reason. When I was 9, my family moved from western New York State to a small town in Ohio, and that very first week of school, this woman came in and she started preaching to us about Jesus. It was clearly a violation of the separation of church and state, but my school system was representing the mores of the community. We sometimes had assemblies on Easter or Christmas where the pastors would give prayers, and that sort of left a question in my head. Or was it ignorance? Also what if instead of promoting just one religion, Christianity, in our public schools, our teachers had tried to teach about many religions? A parent chaperone came and secretly videotaped what had happened. A handful of boys on the trip were asked to join the line of worshipers. I then spent a lot of time investigating what actually happened, what were they learning and what difference was it making. What happens when they do lead to controversy? What are some of the great ways to do it? What should they avoid? How young should you go? So there were a lot of different questions that I wanted to pursue. A boy attends the afternoon prayer at a mosque in Sterling, Virginia. Do incidents like the one you had growing up in Ohio still happen today? It is legal for students to have clubs, but where it can get sort of touchy is if a teacher is the adviser for a religiously Christian club and actively participates and helps lead prayers or things like that. In terms of what I experienced growing up in Ohio, that kind of practice was declared illegal in in the *McCollum v. Board of Education* case. But then in , there was another case, *Zorach v. That* practice continues in many places around the country. In the Core Knowledge curriculum, which stems from the research of E. They learn the story of how these religions are created. Who are the key figures in the religion? And this unit might be taught in October because this is when they are teaching their world religion unit. Are teachers afraid of getting into trouble? What I found in the elementary school was a lot more nervousness about it, particularly around Islam. It was not a religion they were familiar with. Some of them were fearful themselves in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. They wanted to do a good job teaching about it. Middle and high school levels, I found less of that nervousness. If a controversy happened in their school, then yes, they were a little more gun-shy, but not gun-shy about teaching about it; gun-shy about how they would teach about it. Wellesley Middle School is a good model for school districts that are willing to push the envelope. Wellesley does take the sixth graders every year on a field trip to a mosque and a Jewish temple. They bring in guest speakers of all sorts, and there can be some issues with how you do that. What people can learn from Modesto is, how do you develop a course like this, and how do you engage your community so that you have buy in into the course. One of the things that Modesto did was that teachers took field trips to several houses of worship in the area, so they know that background. They also had religion scholars and First Amendment experts also come and talk to the teachers. Students in Modesto would tell me if they were Sikh or Muslim or Hindu that this course made them feel a little more accepted among their peers

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and a little prouder of who they were. At the same time they and some of their Christian peers talked about how the course taught them to stand up for the rights of the smallest minorities. One student told me that he heard someone at a family function say something that he knew was totally wrong about Hinduism, so he stuck up and said this is what I learned in high school class, and he immediately dispelled their stereotype. There was a boy in Wellesley, Massachusetts, whose story really stuck with me. His name was Zain Tirmizi, and I met him when he was 12 in the sixth grade. I interviewed Zain again in eighth grade and asked him if he thought the class really made a difference and he said yes. An ultra-orthodox Jewish family lights a candle on the first night of the holiday of Hanukkah in Jerusalem. Is this in response to September 11th? It comes into the schools through kids who will tease a Muslim boy. It comes into the schools in the form of parents who see their child bring home a worksheet on Islam and freak out. Does this stem from a fear of people losing their view of what they think America should look like or what they experienced growing up? I think this is a continuation of the culture wars that have been going on a long time. It kind of ebbs and flows. You are teaching about a topic that is so near and dear to many people. And everyone has an opinion about it.

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