

The Impact of Housing Segregations on Educational Achievement:

A Champaign Community School District Unit 4 Case Study

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Abstract

Although the year is 2019 and the world of institutionalized housing segregation is thought to be a thing of the past, the residuals effects are still prevalent in our backyards. Housing markets – by design – still favor White families of middle to high socioeconomic status, over lower-income non-White, families (Bayer, McMillian, & Rueben, 2003). This creates areas that see high concentrations of specific ethnic groups and disproportion wealth distributions. What does this mean for the public-school systems in the areas? It means disproportionate funding that leads to resource scarce schools and a lack of classroom diversity, both of which are vital to student success (Rivkin, 1994). It also leads to a widened achievement gap amongst students in the district and opens up opportunity for in-school discrimination.

This is evident in the Champaign School District Unit 4 (CSDU4) located in Champaign City, IL. Beginning in the 1940s, Champaign implemented local housing policy that restricted Black residents to the North End of town. As population increased through the 1970s, city segregation divided Black, low-income families around the North End and White families on the southern side of the city. The housing segregation led to school segregation and despite actions taken by the district to integrate, educational disparities were prevalent. These disparities resulted in a federally mandated consent decree in 2002 following the ruling in favor of the plaintiff in *Johnson v. Board of Education of Champaign Unit 4*. The Consent Decree required the district to reevaluate their zoning practices and implement a choice system for K-8th grade.

Champaign, IL, is a smaller scale area to utilize as a case study for this research. However, the requirements that the local district faced due to the consent decree allow for an opportunity to examine the extent school districts are independently capable to handle the impact housing has on access to education. Researchers have found that there does need to be methodological intervening

to assist in the dismantling of how the choices for school attendance are made and that it should start at the intersection of housing and educational policy (Mathur, 2017; Rhodes & Warkentien, 2017; Rivkin, 1994; Turner & Rawlings, 2017; Whitehurst, Reeves, Rodrigue 2016). In this research, the ability of school districts to accomplish this level of intervening is explored. The conclusions focus on a need for more collaborative efforts amongst school districts and local planners who are capable of providing reviews of the housing markets in respective areas.

Introduction:

There has been at least one instance where we all have been in an organized classroom setting with the expectation for us to leave that room somewhat more knowledgeable than when we entered. Over time, what that looks like has shifted in America with the creation of federally mandated public-school systems, creation of charter schools, private schools, and homeschool options (Fraser, 2014). At its core, however, the educational system in the United States was designed to create a way to distribute common knowledge with the hopes of promoting more civic engagement amongst generations to come. Intending to create a comprehensively educated United States of America, policies deciding how we would access these resources were required. The most efficient way that we have achieved this is through a 5-number configuration: zip code. A child's zip code or neighborhood defines what type of public educational opportunities they will be eligible for.

I come from a middle class, Black family in Columbia, SC. It's where I was not only raised but where I received my K-12 education. I lived on the outskirts of the city and had the privilege to attend schools in one of the better districts in the state. As a student, my understanding is that I went to the school that I was supposed to. The understanding that where I lived determined not only which school I would attend but what type of school did not occur until the rezoning that occurred in 2012. With an increase in families moving to the area, a new high school was expected to open at the beginning of the next school year, and decisions needed to be made about who was going where. This was the first time I realized that I attended the 'Black' school of the district. Something difficult for me to understand, considering in all of my magnet classes, I was one of four in classes of twenty-two. The more I heard the district officials explain away the racial differences in the schools, the more I noticed how almost all of the White students at my current

high school had been placed into one of the four magnet programs. This showed me that the small communities they advertised as creating, which drew my parents to make me apply to them really was code for communities away from the understood school reputation: Black.

I started to notice multiple new facts about the school I had grown to adore: all the AP/Honors class were predominantly filled with White students, Black students seemed to be the main ones cited for behavioral issues that resulted in serving detention after school, sports teams outside of cross-country and soccer were predominantly Black while quiz bowl teams and our award winning Model UN team was predominantly White, and Black students filled the bus lines while White students filled the car rider line. Some of these observations sound like the results of decisions made independently of race. However, the fact is starting in the first-grade students are tracked on what sort of educational path they will take and that follows them until the twelfth grade (Croft, 2007) and Black students are rarely granted a reevaluation as opposed to White. Also, if you had to spend time on your high school campus voluntarily, would it be in a space with those who did not look like you? For the first time, I saw the segregation that people felt granted them the authority to refer to my school as the 'Black' one.

There were multiple school district meetings where affluent families made threats about what would occur if their neighborhoods were rezoned to this new school. There were no magnets readily available to create the same communities they were accustomed to and the school's address was closer to low-income, predominately Black neighborhoods than many were comfortable with. Lines were drawn, redrawn, and then drawn again. Even at the age of sixteen, I could feel the tension over an issue that I could not clearly understand. We were all the same district, why was this debate so heated? When rezoning was complete, I found myself attending a new school where the students in my advanced placement and honors courses, in the hallways, and on the sports

teams I played on all looked like me. As exciting as it felt – being in a space where I could be one hundred percent myself in every aspect of my school life – I could not ignore the new understanding of my new school, only being referred to as the new ‘Black’ school. We had the best facilities in the district and were selected to pilot programs seen as the future of the district, but Black was always the first word used to describe a school I was excited to attend. Why? That can be credited to the schools expected low achievement threshold, high percentage of free and reduced lunch recipients, and the actual Black bodies that almost haunted the school before it could open its doors. In an age where K-12 students are expected comprehensive access to quality education, what does a predominantly Black, low socioeconomic status school mean?

In the case of Champaign School District Unit 4 (CSDU4) located in Champaign, IL, it led to a racially based achievement gap that resulted in a Consent Decree following the ruling in favor of the plaintiff in the 1991 Johnson v. Board of Education of Champaign Unit 4 court case. The case cited specific examples of an overrepresentation of Black students receiving special education classifications as well as their exclusion from gifted classrooms and accelerated programs. The evidence provided showed how Black students were not receiving access to the same sort of resources that their white counterparts were getting in order to obtain academic success.

It is easy to find someone to blame for this problem. We could start with district officials who fail to create equity across their districts, principals who do not create schools where all their students are set up for success, or teachers who fail to cater to the needs of all their students. Historically, that is who is held responsible, and the ruling in the CSDU4 case said just that, but to what extent can we expect institutions to be responsible for a bigger problem that they inherit: housing segregation. District officials do not create the living conditions of their students; they divide them to the best of their abilities among their schools. They might have power over the

creation of district zoning lines that determine the schools each household will attend, but they are not in charge of determining the type of housing that will fall within their jurisdiction. This restraint, accompanied by the preference to send students to neighborhood schools, are all contributing factors to the educational disparities seen among Black and White students. Education achievement gaps between Black and White students are visible throughout the United States because this phenomenon happens everywhere a school district is present.

The public education system in the U.S. was designed to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are used to grant their children access to education. With the residual effects of a comprehensive history of segregation still prevalent on the state of housing markets and the distribution of wealth, it is important to reevaluate what our traditional system of funding public education means for different communities. An argument can be made that planners have a responsibility to make visible the relationship between housing segregation and access to education. If planners are a part of the critical groundwork that leads to more equitable living, there should be more involvement in examining education – the constant key to socioeconomic climbing. By examining the history of housing, public education, and how residential makeups impact achievement gaps in schools as seen in the Consent Decree of CCSDU4, I hope to produce support for the importance of a collaborative relationship between civil organizations, planners, and school district officials that will result in access to quality education for all

Literary Review

The history of housing segregation in the United States can be traced back to 1865 with the abolishment of slavery. For the first time in the history of their presence in this country, African Americans gained autonomy over any decision that concerned their lives. As African Americans

sought to have equal opportunity, they exposed themselves to the harsh reality of restrictions still associated with the color of their skin, especially in their search for housing. In 1917, fifty-two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans received what was perceived as a ‘win’ in the U.S. Supreme Court Case *Buchanan v. Warley*, which found publicly enacted racial zoning ordinances unconstitutional. As every action provokes a reaction, there was a nationwide rise in “privately established racially restrictive covenants” (Petty, 2013, p. 211). For the next twenty years, African Americans, along with other racial and ethnic minorities, were locked out of access to homeownership. A tool which has been a key to creating generational wealth among families in this country. With the Housing Act of 1937, more funds were available to build housing for low-income families, which theoretically could mean more housing opportunities for these marginalized communities. As white individuals still dominated property development, the continuous segregation and the pocketing of low-income families in strategically placed locations outside of middle and upper-class housing locations prevailed. This intentional design created two Americas in the housing realm. Although this was not the clear intent, this led to a private housing market catering to the needs of wealthier families who received assistance to purchase their homes, and the construction of public housing for more impoverished families to rent.

Even though this would mean housing opportunities for all, it sets a precedent for the type of housing various income groups would receive due to the lack of inclusion of policy that would assist more impoverished families in transitioning from renters to homeowners. Another Housing Act was passed in 1949, which ultimately furthered the exclusion of low-income individuals in free-market housing. This act had the intentions of creating decent housing for everyone with providing funds for the rapid construction of housing units, but also included ‘slum clearance’ that displaced many of their African American residents (Goetz, 2013). In the process of creating

housing more accessible, new policies stripped many African Americans of their neighborhood ties.

Although more funds were provided for housing authorities around the country to build fair housing, African American families faced challenges with accessing various housing units. Housing accessing challenges led to segregated housing in the public and private markets that defined the distribution – or lack thereof – of African American families across various American cities. Ultimately resulting in the Supreme Court Case in 1976, *Gautreaux v. Hills*, which found that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was responsible for the discriminatory practices of the Chicago Housing Authority. HUD was established almost ten years before the case and holding them responsible for the discrimination claims set a precedent for the legality of public housing practices that produce concentrated areas filled with minority and low socioeconomic status individuals.

The history of public housing in the United States has an apparent influence on the ability of minorities to access resources. The same is true for higher-earning minority population who reside in free-market housing. Due to the history of redlining and white flight throughout the beginning of the 20th century, minority groups who could afford free-market housing still struggled to qualify for loans and find desirable housing opportunities.

Considering housing is the determining factor in one's access to resources necessary for achieving a quality of life high in opportunity, it is essential to review the restricting factors that mitigate the opportunities for specific groups of people. One resource that housing plays an influential role in determining access to is education. As housing developments and public schools are constructed, individuals who exist at the intersection between race and poverty are the most vulnerable (Rhodes & Warkentien, 2017). These groups have minimal access to mobility due to

the influences of segregation and their lack of capital that allows them to take advantage of institutions like charter schools and school choice (Makris, 2016).

As trends in low-quality education started to correlate to high poverty areas, the question of students' threshold for learning was called into question with the need to gain a better understanding of how the conditions they were learning in varied from their typically suburban, white counterparts (Deluca, Rhodes, & Garboden 2014). Although the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, KS* decision in 1954 made school segregation illegal, it did nothing to address the current housing practices that still restricted access to public schools. For the rest of the century, low-income individuals, mainly African Americans, were sent to schools that foster a cycle of minimal opportunities for growth. In the 2003 work *American Apartheid*, Massey and Denton said, "By concentrating low-achieving students in certain schools, segregation creates a social context within which poor performance is standard and low expectations predominate," (p. 141). Although it was unlawful to separate schools in a manner that fostered segregation, housing policy was able to accomplish this and created a standard that constricted future generations from being able to access the opportunities a public education in this country is accountable for.

At the beginning of the 21st century, there is an uptrend in more minority populations moving into suburban areas and becoming homeowners. However, the history of segregation did not disappear as inequities were still present (Dwyer, 2007). It can be inferred that as minority populations move into more affluent neighborhoods, they are opening themselves up to improved educational opportunities. However, how can moving into high performing school districts protect families from the pattern of demographic shifts that often follow minorities? As waves of individuals move to resource-rich areas, disinvestment starts to occur along with families moving

away due to fear of low property values associated with a high volume of minorities, furthering the patterns of segregation (Lloyd, Shuttleworth, & Wong 2014).

When working towards equity and creating opportunities for all to succeed, starting with education is a strategy that can impact the next generation, allowing hope for a more desirable future. There can be no real education reform, however, without simultaneously examining the impact housing, specifically housing segregation, has had on creating access to quality education. Therefore, a comprehensive review of the history of housing segregation and the residual effects on today's market is needed. By doing so, a new understanding of the scope planners and educational professionals would need to work within in order to achieve something that has proven to be nothing beyond a myth: quality education for all.

Housing Influences on Quality of Life

Shelter is one of the basic needs of a human being. However, the policy created in the United States to address the housing needs seems to continually waver around the debate of whether or not housing is an actual human right. To what extent is it the government's responsibility to ensure that all citizens have adequate housing? Some believe that minimal government intervention is the best approach, but this leaves several vulnerable populations to the mercy of landlords and realtors. There is enough historical evidence to show how the laissez-faire approach to housing practices does nothing besides further social and economic disparities.

Before World War II, most Americans were renters and city dwellers who lived in conditions that were considered a threat to public health (Schwartz, 2015). With the conclusion of the war and a rebirth of patriotism and family values, there was an influx of families that moved to more suburban areas. This trend reshaped the housing market, as there was an increase in single-

family units. The dichotomy between the living conditions of suburban areas and overcrowded cities led to Congress's 1949 National Housing Goal: "The implementation as soon as feasible of a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family," (Hartman, p. 237).

The 'suitable living environment' that Congress proposed primarily focused on the physical conditions of an individual's housing, but they failed to concern themselves with the location as well. Galster & Sharkey's research on space and inequality says,

...various dimensions of inequality are organized in space. The spatial organization of inequality is, in part, merely a manifestation of inequality occurring at the level of individuals, families, and groups that is mapped on to spaces. However, spatial inequality also is due to intentional efforts to organize physical space in ways that maintain or reinforce inequality. (2017, p. 2)

Their study found that although there has been a steady decline in Black-White segregation since 1970, the segregation of Blacks from Whites in urban areas is still extremely high. This segregation can translate into inequalities across all aspects of life impacted by housing.

The framework created for understanding the effects of housing is broken down under four rubrics that examine fifteen mechanisms of neighborhood effects. The four rubrics are social-interactive mechanisms, environmental mechanisms, geographical mechanisms, and institutional mechanisms (Galster, 2010). These rubrics create an intersection between the study of urban planning and its impact on the expected residents.

The social-interactive mechanisms examine the socialization that occurs within a neighborhood. Although socialization mainly occurs during the adolescent stages, the influence of neighborhood can cause this to reoccur with every residential change. Neighborhood interactions

is where values and behaviors are established. If a neighborhood values streets being empty when the street lights come on, but a family who has recently moved in is used to hosting company on their porch, there is a strong chance that they will change their behavior to fit in with the social norms of their new neighborhood. This is also where social networks are created, which are often vital to access to resources. For example, if one resident is searching for childcare services and there is a neighbor who works from home or runs a small daycare in their house, this becomes an easily accessible and predictably more affordable option. Another aspect is competition. Living in close quarters to others lays out an understanding of the limited access to resources causing competition that can disrupt the residents. The most important process is, arguably, parental mediation. Depending on the impact of all the other mechanisms broken down, a parent's health can suffer and negatively impact the home environment, creating a harsh environment for children (Galster, 2010).

Environmental mechanisms refer to exposure to violence, the physical aspects of housing, and exposure to the environment. Although environmental mechanisms are not as comprehensive as social-interactive ones, they are just as influential. The more one is exposed to crime, the higher the chance for them to "suffer increased stress and declines in mental health" (Galster, 2011 p. 12) as well as links to poorer educational outcomes. The physical aspects of housing can impact the health of residents, but it also has a psychological impact on their understanding of their value. Although research does not provide clear links, there is a theoretical between neighborhood appearance and the prevalence of deviant behaviors. To put this into context, if one is living in a neighborhood where there is trash on the streets that seems never to be picked up and multiple vacant houses with boarded windows, there is an assertion that the neighborhood itself is a dump and has minimal value. Housing is often seen as a reflection of its residents, creating a possible

subconscious, reactionary belief among individuals that there is not a need to behave in proper ways while in the neighborhood (Galster, 2010).

The geographical mechanisms are what determine residents' access to resources. It examines how the implications of space affect residents' life course outside of their actions due to their relation to larger forces. While Galster utilizes the example of being in proximity to job opportunities that suit the skills of the neighborhood residents, the spatial distribution also applies to resources such as grocery stores with fresh produce or health facilities. Galster also focuses on access to public services in this category, noting how some neighborhoods are located in areas that provide inferior public service facilities due to their, "limited tax base resources, incompetence, corruption, or other operational challenges," (p. 3). These limitations have a direct impact on the quality of education specific neighborhoods have access to.

The last category, institutional mechanisms, is one that focuses primarily on the actions of outsiders who can control vital resources and interactions neighborhood residents share with critical markets. The local institutional resources define how some neighborhoods can have access to beneficial organizations like charities, daycares, medical clinics, schools, and other community center programs. All of these resources contribute to the personal development opportunities of residents, and their absence can adversely impact them. Local market actors fall under this classification as various private markets such as liquor stores, fast food restaurants, and drug markets can influence the behaviors of neighborhood residents (Galster, 2010). If one walks outside their house and the closest thing to them are two liquor stores and a McDonald's, these locations are where they will spend a vast majority of their leisure time and money due to proximity. A diet consisting of large amounts of fast foods and alcohol can lead to health and behavioral issues, and due to their embedment into the community, this is a trend that will have

generational impacts. Another part of the institutional mechanisms is stigmatization. Stigmatization is arguably the most toxic aspect to neighborhoods due to the stereotypes that get created and perpetuated while creating an understanding of various neighborhoods. Galster finds that, “Such stigma may reduce the opportunities and perceptions of residents of stigmatized areas in a variety of ways, such as job opportunities and self-esteem,” (p. 3).

Galster outlines the importance housing has on quality of life outside of the infrastructure. His review of location, social learning experiences, and created identity is vital to the foundational understanding of how quality housing needs to reference more than physical space.

Educational Importance

Although the modern-day public-school system in the United States was fine-tuned throughout the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the creation of a shared learning space can be traced back to 1635 (Fraser,2014). Public Schools at this time were expected to teach young children religious-based morals and basic knowledge needed for survival. Young men were taught math in order to handle the family finances, while young women were taught life skills needed to nurture their families. Historically, schooling was designed in order to benefit specific demographics, specifically white males. White women faced gender-based curriculum designs along with discrimination preventing their access to specific educational programs. With the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, African Americans were granted access to education. They took advantage of this opportunity and started schools in the South that laid the foundation of today’s public school system (Fraser,2014).

The reasoning behind the creation of a unified public education system was to ensure that the United States was producing generations of knowledgeable, civic-minded individuals. Until

1954, the segregation of public schools followed the standard of separate but equal and provided state funding of schools for Black and White students. The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision saw an end to that standard by ruling that separate was not equal. Over the next decade, school boards across the country were charged with implementing different systems to ensure that their schools had classroom diversity (Fraser, 2014). Classroom diversity has been proven to have a direct influence on student achievement in schools (Wilson, Rodkin, & Ryan, 2014). Attending classrooms that provide a comprehensive representation of society is vital to adolescents' ability to access the benefits of education outside of the necessary knowledge provided in textbooks.

The main benefit outside of the focused purpose of education is the ability to image opportunities outside of those visible in their neighborhoods and respective social circles. If a student from a predominantly low socioeconomic neighborhood attends a school that is filled with students of their same demographic, they are robbed of the exposure to the characteristics of higher socioeconomic classes. Data reports show that low socioeconomic students typically are from households where their parents/guardians obtained some high school to a high school degree or equivalent with the possibility of some college. On the other end of the spectrum are higher socioeconomic students whose households are made up of parents/guardians who obtain some college to professional degrees. Low-income families tend to focus more on immediately beneficial returns influencing youth to search for job opportunities as opposed to educational ones after finishing a K-12 education, while higher-income families have the luxury of exploring higher education (Massey 2003). Putting these children in the shared spaces exposes them to a magnitude of possibilities for their future. While most research shows that low-income students benefit the most from being exposed to classrooms with students from various socioeconomic backgrounds

in terms of expected educational outcomes, higher-income students also report more class satisfaction (DeLuca, et. al., 2014).

When students are more invested in their education, they report better education outcomes. There are higher scores in math and English proficiency for lower grades, higher passing rates for high school exit exams and end of term testing, and more reports of higher education pursuits (Makris, 2016). Positive educational outcomes have a direct linkage to socioeconomic mobility; the more educated one is, the higher their threshold for job opportunities along with expected salary (Massey, 2003). By giving students access to a quality, diverse education inside and outside of classroom experiences, they are also provided with the best possible chance at reaching economic success.

Intersection of Housing and Education

The accomplishments of the urban renewal movement that swept the nation's cities from the 1940s to the 1960s were physically visible as there was an evident spike in available housing units closer to the outer, suburban area of cities. African American/Black families were not granted the same access as their White counterparts regardless of socioeconomic status due to the various discriminatory practices. Among these were redlining, steering, and white flight. Redlining refers to the banks denying or limiting loans that had the intention of building in predominantly Black inhabited areas while simultaneously preventing Black families from being approved for loans to move to other areas. Steering was practiced by real estate agencies and led to potential homebuyers only being shown housing in neighborhoods that reflected their racial makeup. White flight occurred when White families would leave urban areas as the neighborhoods became home to more populations of color and retreated toward the suburban outskirts.

The events of this time led to the highly segregated neighborhoods that are still present in today's society. Housing practices were used to generate spaces that would keep the various populations separate. However, for a nation coping with the new realities laid out by the Civil Rights movement, the weaponization of space is unsurprising. Space has always been the primary weapon in supporting status quo inequalities throughout societies in the United States (Galster & Sharkey, 2017). Spatial creation of inequalities mainly translates to the intersection of housing and education, two staple spaces found in every American city. While various laws were ruled unconstitutional and various policy interventions were introduced from 1950 to early 2000s in order to end housing and public-school segregation, the lingering historical impacts continue to shape how adolescents are granted access to public education.

Neighborhood Segregation

The history of segregation still defines housing opportunities today. Higher earning families are able to move to more suburban areas while low-income families are limited to their access to affordable housing units that are typically focused near city centers. Rachel Dwyer attributes this to the attempts at meeting the expectations of a rising social class saying, "Given the rising fortunes of the affluent at the end of the twentieth century, it should be expected that new housing would be produced in more lavish styles to suit their increasing incomes, making new housing less affordable for lower income groups" (Dwyer, 2007, p.27).

Low-income families saw the possibilities of gaining access to better housing and neighborhoods due to the 1993 HOPE VI program. The goal was to change the entire scope of public housing. The primary focus was on improving the physical and locational challenges of public housing. By redesigning blighted neighborhoods and rebuilding mixed-income residential

units, there will be a reduction in the concentration of poverty and crime as well as an improved quality of life for residents (Swartz, 2015). As positive as the intentions of these interventions were, it led to displacement during construction, and often times resulted in complete demographic shifts as the mixed-income residential units no longer had enough space to house the previous tenants. As a result, the previous residents would seek other housing opportunities and ended up in a dominantly minority neighborhoods located somewhere else in the city (Swartz, 2015).

A 2018 evaluation of the HOPE VI program found that young residents who were displaced due to the initiative had various classroom performance changes (Comrie, 2018). For families who did move to mixed-income residential areas with assistance, their school aged children showed minimal improvements of class performance. However, there were also reports of discrimination in their new schools which will have negative effects on learning outcomes (Jacob 2004). For residents who ended up moving to dominantly minority neighborhoods in a different location, there were no educational gains. In some instances, there were actual drops in academic performance because the new residential areas had schools facing more challenges than their original institutions (Comrie 2018).

Housing initiatives such as HOPE IV furthers the presence of de facto segregation initiated by steering practices originating in the 1940s. De facto segregation is defined as segregation that occurs due to individuals and their families seeking housing opportunities among people with shared demographics. This takes the place of de jure segregation which is defined as law based demographically determined segregation (Frankenberg & Taylor, 2019). As demolition and neighborhood revitalizing happens, people are forced to research new housing opportunities. For high income families this is considered an autonomous choice, however, low-income families are essentially forced to take advantage of the best housing opportunities they can find and that has

historically required them to live in areas with high concentrations of poverty (Abravanel, Smith, & Cove, 2006).

The existence of neighborhood segregation has a direct impact on the public education system in America due to the establishment of neighborhood schools. A key factor in the layout of public education since its origination, is ensuring that schools were able to serve as a foundation for community involvement (Fraser, 2014). This meant physically building schools within the proximity of the homes of their students. The pro is the community gain from residents having the opportunity to utilize school relations as a unifying factor among themselves, but the con refers to schools placed in a highly segregated areas reflecting that in the classroom composition. For low-income students, this has a direct negative impact on their educational achievement. A seven-year study conducted by Heather Schwartz of students in Montgomery County, Maryland found that low-income students who attend schools with students from higher socioeconomic status were able to cut the achievement gap in half when compared to those who stayed in the low-income schools (2010). With educational achievement being influential in prospective opportunities for social mobility, low income students need to be in classrooms where they have the opportunity for success. Neighborhood segregation is a factor that has historically restrained success for minority populations (Tegler, Herskind, & Poverty and Race Research Action Council, 2018) and continues to do so.

Flaws in Zoning System

School Boards have complete autonomy on how they draw the lines dividing students among the schools in their system. After the Brown v. Board of Education decision, policy outlining federal regulations of public schools prevented district officials from intentionally

drawing lines that will create segregated schools. Districts will typically hire consultants to create reviews of what their expected growth rates will be along with reviews of changing demographics. Although this information assist in the zoning system process, to a certain extent they are at the mercy of the current state of housing.

For example, say there are be two affordable housing units located within one mile of each other, but are equidistant from an elementary school in the district. When district officials examine these housing units' demographics and the number of students they will receive from each development, the findings will probably be concerning. Affordable housing units are home to low-income typically minority populations. Sending all the students in question to their local elementary school could create a predominantly minority, low socioeconomic school. The district must make a choice: send all these students to this school because it's the closest or pay to bus students to other schools in the district. This decision is completely left up to the discretion of the school board and often goes unchallenged. Due to the 1974 *Milliken v. Bradley* decision that found no constitutional support for a required racial balance amongst schools in a school district along with emphasizing the importance of local control, it can be inferred that the district in question would send all the students to their local school.

As previously mentioned, this is expected to produce negative educational outcomes for these students in this scenario and create an achievement gap among this school and other expectedly diverse schools in the district. While the district made the conscious decision to send these students to this one school, they were not involved in the decision to develop these affordable housing units in close proximity to each other. That can be attributed to outdated urban planning practices of grouping affordable housing in the same areas. *Brown v. Board of Education*

desegregated schools, but it did nothing to address the housing segregation that directly influences the parameters in which zoning practices operate.

Tax Supported Systems

The current school funding design utilizes property tax dollars from residents in their respective districts. Considering schools receive funds based off of local property taxes and any third-party donations, schools concentrated in areas with higher renter occupied housing rates rather than owner occupied housing are at an immediate disadvantage. Rental property in residential areas are often granted tax exemptions that decrease the amount of money owed to the state resulting in less funds for the public-school system. Rental property is often occupied by transient populations or low-income families, providing the understanding that there should be minimal expectations of these families making donations to their local schools.

This translates into overcrowded classrooms due to inability to hire more teachers, curriculum limitations preventing students from being exposed to nontraditional subject matter, no social services provided on school grounds – counselors, nurses, career specialists, etc. – and restraints on after school programming opportunities. According to Rhodes & Warkentien 2017 study that reviews race, class and school access, these limitations create the perfect storm that leads to creating a disconnect between students and their schooling which is a common contributor to achievement gaps.

Champaign Community School District Unit 4 Case Study

Champaign, Illinois, is a medium-sized city of over 80,000 people. According to the 2017 American Community Survey report, an estimated 65% of residents are white, Black residents

make up the next largest demographic at 16%, and the remaining 18% consist of other non-white minorities. The median family income is below the state average, at roughly \$42,000 compared to \$57,000 statewide. The city is split into three areas colloquially known as: the North End, Southwest Best, and University. The North End was the only area Black residents were allowed to live in prior to discriminatory housing policy being ruled unconstitutional and is still where the highest concentration of Black and low socioeconomic residents are. Southwest Best is a majority white area with the highest socioeconomic status in the city. The University area is home to more rental properties as the main population are the students of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UofI).

The local school district is the Champaign Community School District Unit 4 (CCSDU4). The district serves over 10,000 students and is comprised of twelve elementary schools, three middle schools, and 2 high schools. Since the early 1960s, the school district has faced challenges with integrating their schools, which is expected considering the high percentages of racial concentration in opposite sides of the city. This history along with their previous interventions to challenge it makes them a prime candidate for a review of how housing influences educational achievement.

Methodology

Data collection for this case study included archival research that examined the history of segregation in Champaign as well as documentation of the Johnson v. Board of Education of Champaign court case that led to the consent decree. These archives were accessed through internet research. This archival research is expected to provide a better understanding of what historical factors led to the need for federal intervention in the pursuit of educational equity.

Interviews to obtain eye-witness accounts were conducted with vice principals from the elementary, middle, and high school level, as well as ones with parents of students who are currently enrolled for in the CCSDU4. These interviews were conducted after receiving responses to questions about the state of the district. All interviewees were renamed and given identifiers based off of their district position or race and age of child in the district. Multiple interviews with the Assistant Superintendent for Achievement and Equity, Angela Ward, was also conducted. The intentions of these interviews were to create a picture of how school officials and district residents understand how the achievement gap within the district became racially distinctive and what has their experiences with access to housing been like.

Quantitative data collected about the demographic makeup of the Champaign city residential community and the housing market was retrieved from census data produced from 2000, 2010, and 2017. Utilizing data within this timeline allows for a review of housing trends that occur at the same time of the consent decree of CCSDU4, the year directly following its resolution, and the most recent data. It is important to note that the City of Champaign is located in Champaign County. CCSDU4 is concentrated in the city of Champaign, therefore, all quantitative data collected for the purpose of this study reflects the demographics of the city of Champaign rather than the county as a whole.

History of Housing Segregation

Champaign, IL was not exempt from the segregated housing practices that dominated the country's housing market from the 1940s to the early 1960s. During the early years of Champaign, the city was geographically split between the North End and the South End. The North End was – and still is – home to most of the Black residents and is where majority of the affordable housing

units were placed while the South End was home to wealthier, White families. In a January 2016 article written for The Public i – a community based non-profit newspaper – Champaign native, Natalie Prochaska said,

It was not the personal preferences of local African American residents. Instead, white CU residents, whether acting as individuals or as members of institutions, deliberately confined black residents to a tiny parcel of space in the North End of Champaign-Urbana. The residential segregation that exists today in CU was originally created by a combination of racially restrictive covenants, university housing policy, and local white residents' racism. (p.1)

The racially restricted covenants Prochaska is referring to prevented Black individuals from buying, leasing, or occupying housing throughout Champaign. In 1958, the U. S. Supreme court ruled these covenants unconstitutional, but between 1941 to 1950, eighteen covenants of this stature were written into subdivision deeds that impacted over 587 parcels of land in Champaign and its sister city, Urbana (Prochaska, 2016 January). This required the growing population of Black individuals to live on northern outskirts of town. Residents of the 'North End' faced housing conditions that included: no sewage or garbage disposal system, minimal access to in home running water and bathrooms, and poor physical infrastructures. During this time period, Champaign's population experienced an increase of around 30%, and without a housing market equip to handle this influx living conditions of Black individuals were not a concern of city officials.

It was not until 1951 that housing was built for Black residents. Champaign built 70 public housing units for Blacks and 70 for whites. They were constructed with the expectation of separate but equal, however, the 70 Black units only received 21% of the \$1,470,000 budget allotted for the completion of all the housing units (Prochaska, 2016 March). The Housing Association of Champaign County (HACC) not only promoted segregation in these new affordable housing units, but also created subjective criteria that exposed Black potential residents to further discrimination.

The criteria examined character, ability to pay rent, and the possibility of being a nuisance to the neighborhood. Poorer Black families were denied because their incomes were not high or consistent enough to afford the rent along with wealthier families who saw this as the best housing opportunity due to racial restrictions outside of the North End due to their high incomes making them ineligible. Ultimately, Black families from high and low socioeconomic backgrounds reaped minimal benefits from the construction of these housing units.

In 1961, the League of Women Voters found that Champaign had the worst housing segregation in the state of Illinois (Rexroat, 1961). Their report came right along the time that urban renewal made its way to Champaign as the local municipality created a Citizens Advisory Committee on Urban Renewal (CAC). The CAC along with the Champaign community debated the issue of the desegregation of housing in the area, lack of city code enforcement, concentration of public housing in the North End, and no equal opportunity for local minority contracting. All of which influenced Black residents' access to housing. Although urban renewal could mean better housing units on the North End of town, Black residents' distrust in the HACC prevented their immediate support of the proposal. White residents were concerned with the displacement of Black residents due to the fear of them being relocated to neighborhoods closer to their own. For them urban renewal meant integration and the racial separation of Champaign was something they valued more than the prescience of the blight across the North End (Prochaska, 2016 March). After continues debate and reevaluation of local housing policy along with the future placement of public housing, urban renewal in Champaign produced new housing projects throughout the end of the 20th century.

Champaign Housing Market in Recent Times

The process of continued urban renewal was a response to the influx of people that continued into the early 2000s. Most of the new housing developments were funded through renewal grants and resulted in the demolition and reconstruction of housing units focused in the North End area. This did produce better living conditions for the predominantly black residential area, but the continual construction of public housing units contributed to the concentration of residents who were Black and low-income. There were also negative impacts on Black families who owned their houses and sold them to the city in order for them to construct these public housing units. A majority of these families went from homeowners to renters, putting them further behind the goal of achieving generational wealth.

Housing units were not built only in the North End. There were also housing developments built in the southwest area of the city in response to expansion happening at the UofI. Although the restrictive covenants were no longer dictating who had access to where, the southwest area became home to a majority of the city's White population.

As seen in Figure 1, Champaign experienced major population increases from 2000 to 2010. This trend did not continue throughout the next decade, but there were still some population increases up until 2017. As expected, household growth occurred at lower rates but in similar fashion as increases occurred from 2000 to 2010 and then a drop in those increases from 2010 to 2017.

Figure 1: Population and Household Growth in Champaign from 2000 to 2017

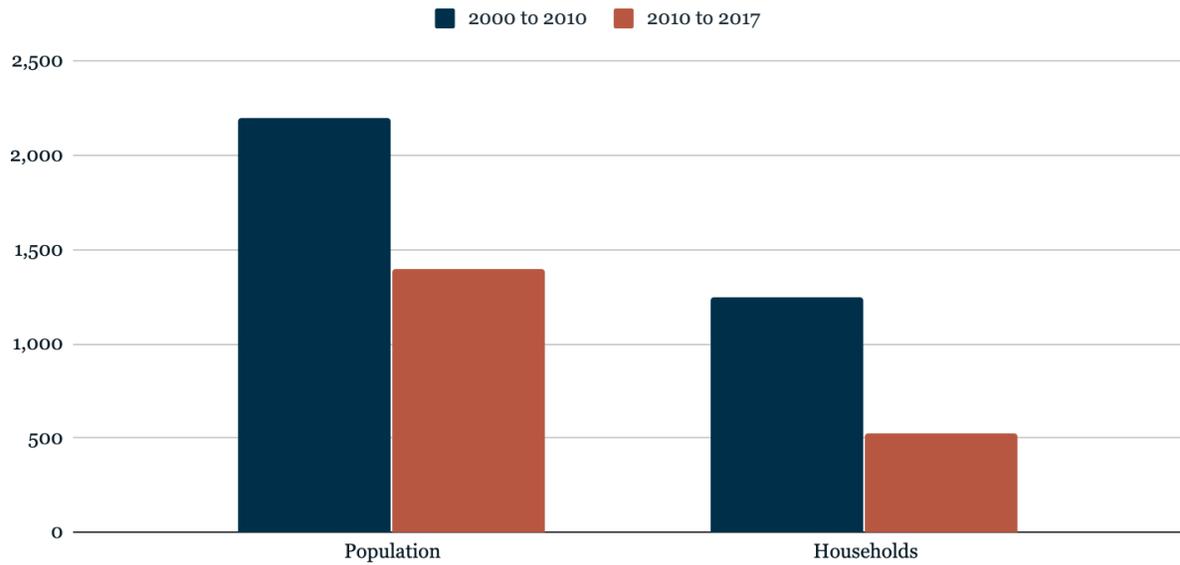
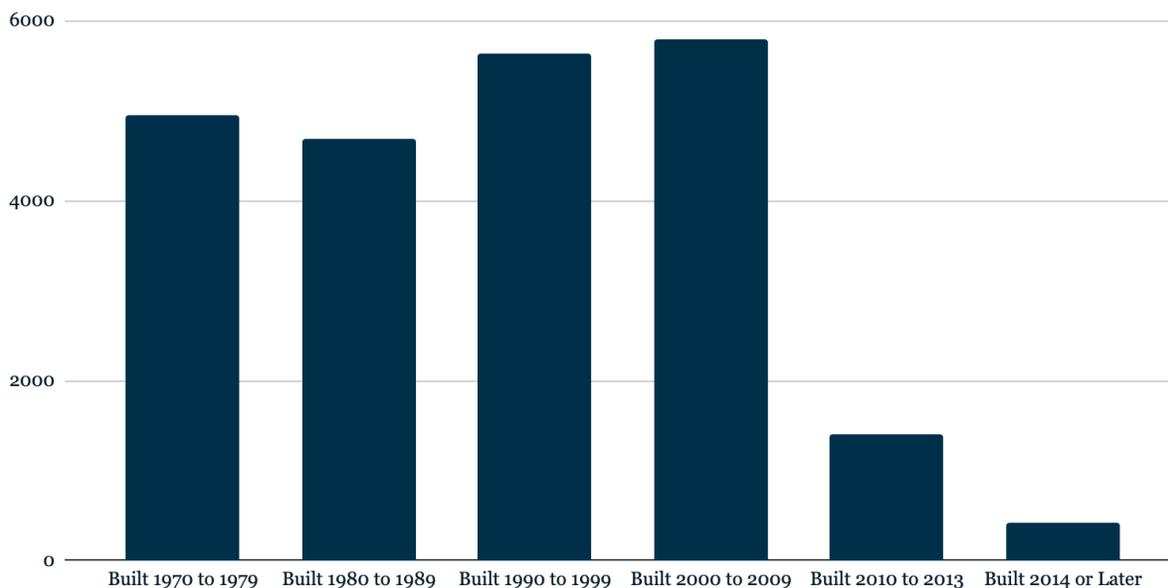


Figure 2 shows the number of housing units being built from 1970 to 2014 or later. From 1990 to 2009 over 11,000 homes were built to accommodate the needs of the population. The construct patterns of housing units follow the national housing trends of this time period where there was a housing market boom as more people were buying homes and moving into neighborhoods and subdivisions outside of the city center. The drop in the number of houses built from 2010 to 2014 or later reflects the influence of the housing market crash of 2008 and the Great Recession that followed.

Figure 2: Year Housing Structure Built in Champaign, IL from 1970 to 2014 or Later



The constant development of new houses in Champaign from 1990 to 2009 resulted in a spike in vacancies around the cities. Figure 3 breaks down the amount of total housing units as well as how many are owner vs. renter occupied in 2000, 2010, and 2017. It is important to note that students from the UofI are a transit population who benefit from the construction of rental properties. By including this population in housing design, there is a skewed understanding of the housing utilized by permanent residents of Champaign.

Figure 3: Distribution of Housing in Champaign, IL from 2000 to 2017

	2000	2010	2017
Total Housing Units	28,556	34,434	37,743
Renter Occupied Households	14,238	17,485	18,676
Owner Occupied Households	12,833	14,722	15,158

The vacancy rates for rented and owned property consistently increased from 2000 to 2017 (Figures 4 & 5). Following housing trends previously discussed.

Figure 4: Rental Vacancy Rates in Champaign, IL from 2000 to 2017

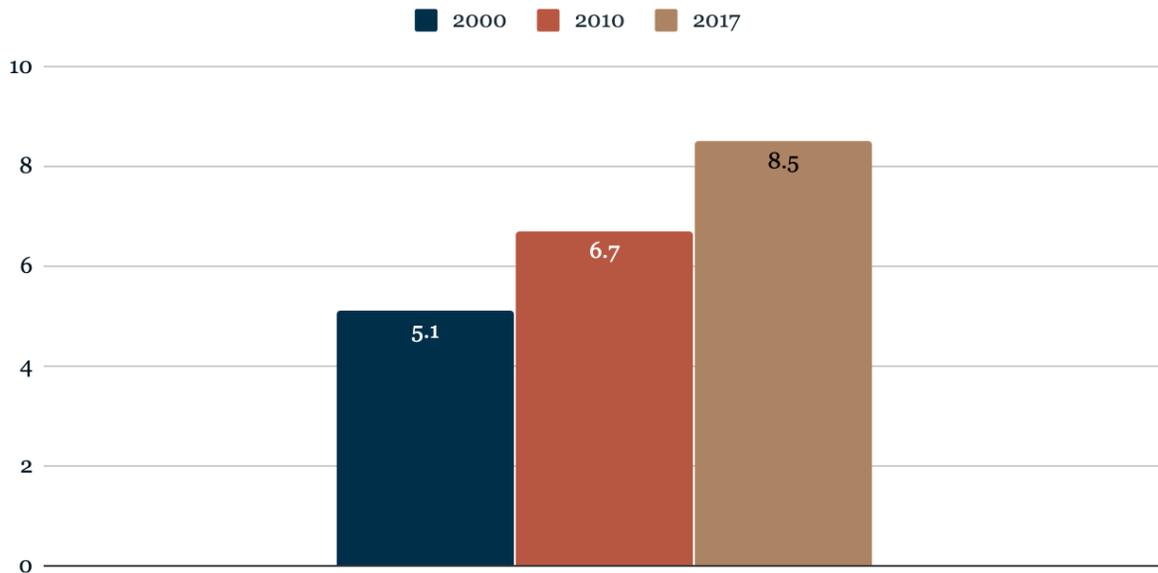
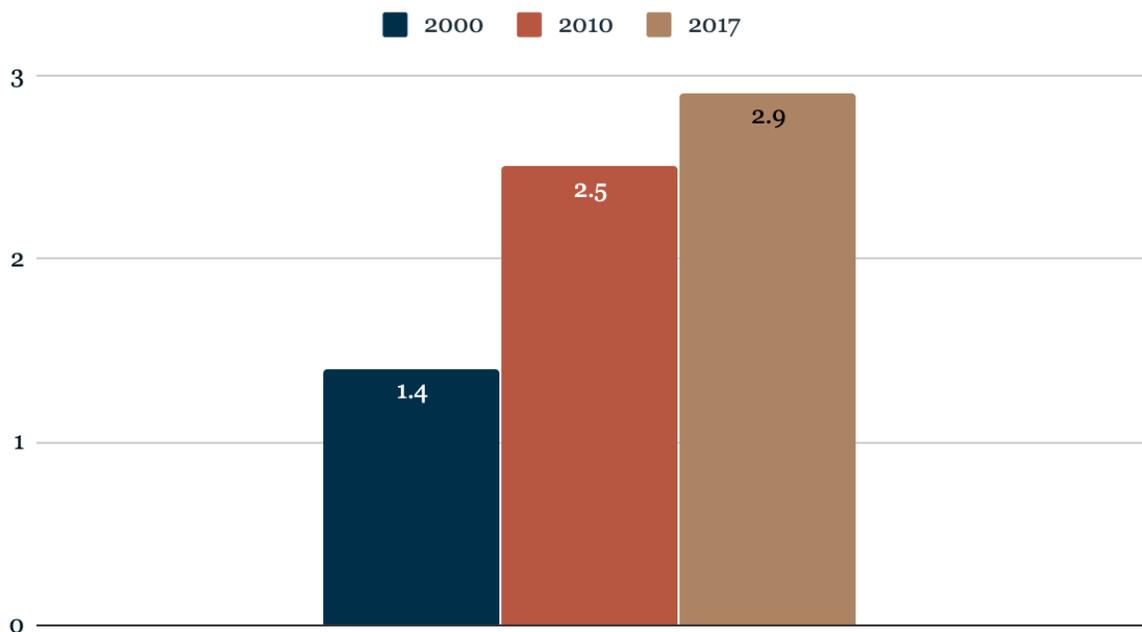


Figure 5: Owner Property Vacancy Rates from 2000 to 2017



Although vacancy rates in the city are up, there are positive housing market predictions as the median family income is expected to rise in the coming years. Increase of income along with the current housing surplus, creates opportunities for residents of various demographics to become homeowners.

Implications for CCSDU4

CCSDU4 has a total of seventeen schools. Out of the seventeen, seven of them are located on the North End of town – four elementary schools, two of the middle schools, and one high school. This leaves seven elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school on the South End of town. The placement of these schools led to highly segregated spaces that remained so even after the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954. Between 1960 and 1970, the district attempted to desegregate the schools by busing Black students from the North End to predominantly White schools in the southern areas. Although the intention was to ensure the district was in compliance with the new policy laid out by Brown, the results were not all positive.

Poverty rates are used to better understand the magnitude of the socioeconomic backdrop for the racial segregation in the district. Due to data limitations, a comprehensive look at the poverty rates of each school in the district was not obtainable, but Figure 6 shows poverty rates for the district and their two largest racial groups. Black students are the poorest demographic to attend schools in the district. They have exactly 6% higher poverty rates than their white counterparts and 5.1% higher poverty rates than the district as a whole.

Figure 6: Poverty Rates across CCSDU4 in 2010

	Totals	Percent Below
District Totals	84,281	22.70%
White Students	13,129	21.80%
Black Students	3,570	27.80%

The high number of poverty rates among Black students along with the historical segregation of Black families into one side of Champaign sets the scene for a predominantly Black, low-income school demographic. Although these percentages are from 2010, the minimal shifts in the job market and racial characteristics of the city before this time period also means minimal shifts in poverty levels among these demographics.

The Consent Decree

In 1996, multiple families filed complaints against the CCSDU4 claiming racial discrimination in the district. The initial focus was on the treatment of the 550 Black students who were mandatorily bused to schools on the southern part of town. The complaint was later amended to address the issues of, “system wide discrimination in student assignment, within-school segregation practices and tracking, discipline, and staff hiring and assignment,” (Johnson v. Board of Education of Champaign (Unit 4) Records, 1991, p. 5) and “the over-representation of minorities in special education and the under-representation of minorities in upper level courses,” (Johnson v. Board of Education of Champaign (Unit 4) Records, 1991, p. 8).

Conversation between district officials and the plaintiffs started after the complaint was filed and continued for two years as comprehensive studies of the district were created. After failure to agree on all parts of a possible resolution an official lawsuit was filed, Johnson v. Board

of Education of Champaign (Unit 4), as well as an official motion for the approval of consent decree in 2000. In 2002 the school district officially entered into the consent decree. Under this agreement, the district had to remove their integration practices of requiring the busing of Black students from their North End homes and replace it with a controlled school choice program. The choice program would dictate the elementary schools all Kindergarten through fifth grade students would have access to, requiring students from the North End and the Southwest city areas to travel outside of their residential areas. The elementary schools served as direct feeders for the middle schools and high school assignments would be determined by the traditional zoning practices.

The hope of these new school assignment practices were to prevent Black students in the district from being the population bused out of their neighborhoods for schooling opportunities, ensure that all students in the district had access to diverse classrooms, and mitigate some of the educational disparities that previous district practices contributed to.

Results from 2009 and 2019

In 2009, the plaintiffs in the case and district signed a settlement ending the consent decree. Over the past seven years, monitoring reports showed progress in closing the achievement gap between Black and White students as well as the elimination of discriminatory practices (Johnson v. Board of Education of Champaign (Unit 4) Records). The settlement ensured the continuance of the controlled school choice program in the district and the creation of communities that would continue to review district practices to ensure that the goal of educational equity among Black and White students in the district is accomplished (Aberg, 2010).

A decade after the lifting of the consent decree, it seems as though students are performing worse than they were before the 2000 conditions that led to its instatement. In December of 2019,

the ACLU & NAACP chapters of Champaign sent a letter to the school district sighting the concerning disparities in achievement among Black and White students. Utilizing data produced by the Educational Opportunity Project at Stanford University, the letter claims that there is a gap of more than three grades among Black and White students. This information is supported by the math and English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency scores. Only 8% of Black children attending Unit 4 schools are proficient in ELA and only 6% of Black children are proficient in math, compared to 47% ELA proficiency and 49% math proficiency for White children. Not only are Black children vastly behind their White counterparts in core subjects, they are still underrepresented in Advanced Placement classes in high school and gifted programs at the elementary level – an issue that was directly addressed in the initial complaint.

Even after district wide interventions to decrease the educational disparities among Black and White students, the CCSDU4 still fosters an environment that does not allow Black students to reach economic success.

Local Attitudes

The first response given by Felicia, a graduate and current parent in CCSDU4 was “They see us as space fillers someone who signs their checks are making them take” (2019). Her understanding as someone who attended grades K-12 in the district and is now a parent to children in the elementary and middle grades shows minimal faith in their ability to solve the concerns of the achievement gap. Felicia’s frustration transcends beyond her children’s in class experiences. Being a third-generation resident of Champaign, she has seen the way Black residents are treated in the city at large. She shared stories of her great grandfather being one of the last community members to sell his house during the period of urban renewal in Champaign. Their family was

relocated to a neighborhood that they later learned was once a wasteland, and she blames that for the health issues her parents are currently facing. “I feel like every year there’s a new diagnosis my parents got, and I see the same thing with [name redacted] who grew up in the house next door. You can’t tell me White people didn’t do that on purpose” (2019). Felicia said that she does everything she can to ensure her family does not deal with the same problems but has had issues approaching teachers about her children’s performance.

I know they got their own problems, but ain’t they supposed to teach my child? My daughter is probably the smartest person in the classrooms she put in, and no college is going to look at her unless she gets into these gifted programs. Every time I bring it up, they only want to talk about how her ADHD might result in her struggling to do the work, but she doesn’t even have an IEP and her grades are good. All that ADHD do is make her talk my head off all day. (2019)

School administration representatives share the same concerns as Felicia. David who has been working in the district as a teacher and now an assistant principal since 2006 says he sees these sorts of concerns from Black parents constantly. When asked about the consent decree’s ability to fix this he gave the following reply,

You know how when your mom is around or even your crush your goal is to impress them? You know, look at me doing good. That’s what the consent decree and all the programs that it brought did. We all had to sit up straight and promise to do better. I mean it brought some good people to the staff and started some conversations that needed to be brought to the front of our future of the district dialogue, but none of the problems have actually been fixed. (2019).

David is not a Champaign native, but his spouse is. He says that there are still businesses his in-laws refuse to support due to the treatment of their mixed-race family. When talking about the housing segregation, he referenced his experience in searching for a new home that he would raise a family in. In trying to find a neighborhood that was diverse, and family oriented he thought his options were strange even for the size of Champaign. “Our realtor gave me three subdivisions to search in and all of them were on the opposite side of my wife’s family. We eventually found a fixer upper closer to her dad, so I guess it worked out” (2019). David says that he can see how housing segregation can play a role in the schools’ respective demographics but believes the issue has more to do with the interactions between teachers and their students.

Conversations with Angela Ward, Assistant Superintendent for Achievement and Equity in CCSDU4, mimicked the those with Felicia and David. She expressed her concerns about the state of the district as well as hope for a better future due to their active commitment towards closing the achievement gap. She was critical of the school choice program that sought to diversify the classrooms saying “...people will find a way to restructure themselves” (2019, November 20). This statement is reflective of the continuous expansion of the achievement gap as the district continuously sees Black students underperforming in classrooms. This has a lot to do with housing which Ward refers to as the “rocks underneath” (2019, October 4) that perpetuate a separation between Black and White students.

The community members interviewed for this study all shared similar concerns for the future of the district. The consensus was that the district was not designed with Black students in mind and that has negatively affected their experiences inside the classroom as well as in other educational spaces. There were various opinions on how this is linked to the residential communities of students, but they agreed on Champaign still being a highly segregated city.

Conclusions

Review of the study of CCSDU4 provides evidence for the power of housing segregation to have over educational achievement. The efforts made by the district to better serve their Black students and make progress towards closing the educational achievement gap are notable but show minimal gains. The introduction of the controlled school-choice program was the only policy implemented to mitigate the impact of segregation around the city, but "...people will find a way to restructure themselves" (Ward, 2019, November 20). All the progress it provided came undone over the next decade.

The judgement of whether or not the district did and continue to do everything in their power to address the disparities in their schools is not the focus of this study, but rather exploring how their failure to include planners in their process is a part of their downfall. There is no documentation of district officials meeting with local planners to review the status of the various communities that reside in their district. With vast amounts of research proving that housing segregation has negative effects on minority children in school districts across the country, the reliance on evaluations of their administration alone led to answers that did not resolve the foundation of the issue of the educational achievement gaps.

The inclusion of planners in the process of implementing policy to decrease the achievement gaps among Black and White students should be the next step. Districts would be able to gain access to information about their students' residential life. Considering low-income students face home challenges that have the ability to impact their school performance, having an understanding of what those challenges look like can influence decision making for next steps. There is no current research about the impacts and results of collaborations between local planners

and school districts, but for CCSDU4 it would be a new place to start to hopefully prevent another decade of Black students being educationally handicapped in Champaign, IL.

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