

INTRODUCTION

The Context of School Desegregation Policy

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Few issues in the history of American education have engendered more intense or protracted debate than school desegregation policy. Debates have raged at the local, state and national level regarding the policy's meaning, its methods and its outcomes, as well as the appropriate role of the federal government in its formulation and implementation. The debates have engaged presidents and parents, policymakers and practitioners, advocates and scholars, and an array of others, all of whom have contributed to the character and contours of school desegregation policy as it has evolved over the past half century and to the context in which we find it at the threshold of the 1990s. Even as the past shapes the policy, so too do contemporary forces that are at work in the larger society, including powerful demographic and technological forces that are changing the face of American public education and reshaping society, the schools and the economy in which today's children will live, learn and work.

The past decade has been a period of relative calm in the tumultuous history of school desegregation policy, but one which Prager, Longshore, and Seemon (1986) suggest may simply represent a lull before a new storm of controversy brought on by the growing separateness and inequality that characterize many aspects of the education of Black and White children and by the rapidly growing diversity that promises to challenge our public institutions in the future. Given this relative calm, it seems like an advantageous time to pause and examine the policy of school desegregation, assess the lessons we have learned over the last 35 years and explore, in light of

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new realities, the implications of these lessons on the course of race and educational policy in the 1990s and beyond.

This edition of *Education and Urban Society* explores a constellation of interrelated issues with a significant bearing on the future course of school desegregation policy. These issues include the nature of the federal role in education and school desegregation, the interrelationship between housing segregation and school desegregation policy, alternative approaches for reducing racial isolation in urban areas, and the compatibility of the schools-of-choice movement and educational improvement strategies with the policy of desegregation. The implications of the new federalism and funding mechanisms on the level of financial assistance available to desegregating districts, and the significance of organizational processes and federal program features in promoting effective implementation at the district level and school level, are also addressed.

The balance of this article provides an introduction to the contemporary context for discussions of federal school desegregation policy. It is divided into two principal sections. The first provides an overview of the federal role in education and a status report on contemporary segregation and educational inequalities. The second section synthesizes some of the literature in which the research and policy proposals reported in this special edition are nested, providing the reader with a general appreciation of the broader context of desegregation policy research that helps shape the contemporary debate.

OVERVIEW OF THE FEDERAL ROLE AND CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS

The national concern about and commitment to education are longstanding. As early as 1787, in enacting the Northwest Ordinance, Congress provided a plot of land in each township, the revenues from which were to be used toward the support of a common school. The Morrill Act passed in 1852 established a system of land-grant colleges to foster agricultural training necessary to feed a growing nation. And in 1917 Congress appropriated monies through the Smith-Hughes Act to promote vocational education and ensure a steady supply of trained manpower for an increasingly industrialized nation.

Yet since education is not a power expressly conferred on the federal government in the U.S. Constitution, the responsibility for it and the authority over it are reserved to the states by the operation of the Tenth Amendment. As a result, as recently as 35 years ago, the federal role in education,

particularly elementary and secondary education, was considered limited, if not largely irrelevant.

In the 1950s, however, the federal government's long-standing, but largely nascent constitutional role in guaranteeing the rights of individuals against arbitrary governmental action was awakened with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). In declaring state-sanctioned segregation in public education "inherently unequal," the Court gave a new reading to the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause and a new meaning to the concept of equal educational opportunity. From this seed, the concept of equal educational opportunity took root and grew over the ensuing decades, first in a long line of school desegregation decisions in which Blacks sought the meaningful enforcement of the promises of *Brown*. These cases were followed by a series of court actions initiated by groups representing national origin minorities, females and handicapped students, in which each group sought recognition of corollary educational rights unique to its situation and needs.

During this period federal aid to education also grew dramatically, from a handful of programs with a cost of \$600 million in 1960 to more than 150 separate programs costing in excess of \$8 billion annually in 1980 (Kearney, 1981, p.v). Many of these programs, including the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, grew out of a concern for equal educational opportunity and were characterized by their redistributive nature, focusing resources on populations with the greatest educational needs, needs that states and localities lacked either the commitment or the capacity to address, or both. Thus, even though federal aid remained a relatively small fraction of all monies spent on education, it represented a substantial proportion of the monies spent to provide supplemental educational resources for students identified as having special and largely unmet educational needs (Rothberg, 1981).

The late 1970s saw the federal role in education come under increasing criticism from individuals of varying political persuasions both within and outside government. In calling for a reexamination of the federal role in the 1980s, some, including those who generally favored a robust federal role, cited the increasingly fragmentary, overly complex and cumbersome nature of federal education policy (Halperin, 1981). The Heritage Foundation lamented the lack of a clear concept of a federal role and argued for a substantially reduced one (Heatherly, 1981). While some commentators decried erroneous assumptions about educational problems and the capacity of the schools to resolve them (Jencks & Corcoran, 1979), others criticized the role of the courts in public policy-making, questioning their legitimacy

and capacity in mandating sweeping institutional reforms (Glazer, 1975; Horowitz, 1977). The lack of federal understanding of local implementation processes and schools as organizations also was cited frequently by observers who found many social policy outcomes wanting (Blumberg, 1980; Elmore, 1978, 1980). Still other observers suggested that it was because of the very effectiveness of some federal policies that the federal role was coming under attack. Kastle and Smith (1982) observed:

it was not the magnitude of the federal role that was controversial, but . . . the particular reforms the federal government supported, the pace at which several reforms were attempted simultaneously, and the generally complex nature of social change. (p. 302)

Some analysts encouraged the development of a conceptual framework for rethinking and clarifying the federal role generally, as well as in the field of education (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1977, 1981; Beebe & Evans, 1981; Kastle & Smith, 1982). Beebe and Evans (1981) argued that only by developing such a conceptual role would it be possible to make other than ad hoc judgments about whether the federal rather than state or local government should be responsible for various educational programs and functions.

Along with others, Beebe and Evans (1981) suggested that "absent compelling reasons to the contrary, the provision of basic educational services is a state and local responsibility" (p. 44). On the other hand, they contended that the federal government has a unique responsibility for assessing the status and progress of American education and improving its quality and relevance through research, development and evaluation efforts. Other areas of unique federal responsibility, according to this analysis, include "preserving individuals' fundamental rights to equitable participation in the educational system" and intervening to address "critical educational problems which have serious national consequences and are beyond the ability or willingness of state and local governments to resolve." Even within these uniquely federal spheres of educational policy interest, such a paradigm would call for the federal government to exercise disciplined judgment in selecting the appropriate strategy for federal intervention. Preferences would be given to federal support in the form of catalytic, capacity-building, or demonstration projects as contrasted to the purchase of supplementary services, and to the purchase of such services, rather than the direct provision of services by the federal government.

When the Reagan administration assumed the mantle of government in 1981, it moved vigorously to limit the role of the federal government and

return control over education to the states and local communities. The federal role was cut back through a series of budget rescissions, the revocation of regulations governing educational programs and civil rights compliance, and a general devolution of responsibility back to the states and localities (Clark & Astuto, 1983). In place of its prior orientation, the federal role came to be symbolized by the president and his secretary of education mounting the bullypulpit in an attempt to foster state and local educational reform through a campaign of moral suasion, rather than legal persuasion. The redefinition of the federal role and the emergence of excellence rather than equity as its principal focus seemed based more on political ideology than on principled analysis, or so many would argue, including those in the civil rights establishment (Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, 1982). As it had with the growth of the federal role, desegregation policy figured prominently in its dismantlement.

Some implied that the war against discrimination had been effectively won, making continued federal involvement a lesser priority than in the past. Others, including the administration's top-ranking civil rights official, declared the national policy of school desegregation a failure, using it to exemplify what was wrong with federal involvement in education, as well as in other social programs that rely on coercive methods and results-oriented standards to bring about change (Reynolds, 1981a, 1981b, 1985).

Partly in response to such official postures, as well as broader questions about social policy and its implementation and impact, a considerable body of research was marshaled during the 1980s, with an appreciable portion focusing on race and education and the interrelated issues of employment and housing (Farley, 1984; Farley & Allen, 1987; Goering, 1986; Hawley et al., 1983; National Research Council, 1989; Prager et al., 1986; Rossell, 1982). Much of that research is described and analyzed in the National Research Council's definitive work *A Common Destiny: The Status of Blacks in American Society*. Three particularly salient findings emerge from the council's scholarly analysis of this body of social science research. First, while substantial progress has been made since World War II with respect to some indicators of equality of participation, achievement and rewards for Blacks in American society, significant discrepancies persist, "with many Black Americans remaining separated from the mainstream of national life under conditions of great inequality" (National Research Council, 1989, p. 4). Second, although a variety of factors contribute to gaps between the levels of education, employment and housing enjoyed by Whites and Blacks, an appreciable measure of such differences is attributable to continuing public and private discrimination. And finally, the council's analysis con-

cludes that a great deal of the progress made in closing the gaps between Whites and Blacks over the past five decades has been the result of "purposeful actions and policies by government and private institutions," and that "further progress is unlikely" without such actions, including national policy initiatives (p. 9).

In terms of housing, Taeuber (1983) and Farley (1984) report that the greatest decline in residential segregation in this century occurred in the 1970s. Nevertheless they found that segregation levels in central cities and entire metropolitan areas still hover around 80, using a scale on which 100 represents completely segregated living patterns. Taeuber estimates that at the rate of decline reported in the 1970s, it will be 30 years, or the year 2020, before the level of Black-White segregation falls to a score of 50. By contrast, Farley and Allen (1987, pp. 144-145) found that levels of White-Hispanic and White-Asian segregation had reached a low of 45 by 1980, even though these groups tended to be more recent arrivals than Blacks to the metropolitan areas studied. That discrimination is implicated in these patterns is substantiated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) study of 40 metropolitan areas; it found that 70% of renters and 90% of home-seekers experience steering or other forms of discrimination in securing shelter (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1979).

In the field of education, Blacks have also made substantial strides in gaining access to public schools formerly closed to them as a matter of law, but not necessarily to educational programs comparable to those enjoyed by Whites. As evidence of the gains made, Orfield (1983) reports that the proportion of Black students in 90% to 100% minority schools fell sharply between 1968 and 1972, from 64.3% to 38.7%, while the proportion of Blacks in predominantly minority schools declined as well, from 76.6% to 63.6%.

The largest decreases in segregation came in the southern and border states which had required or permitted segregation as a matter of law at the time of *Brown* and which therefore were under a legal obligation to desegregate. In the 11 states of the old Confederacy, the proportion of Black students in 90% to 100% minority schools dropped by 55%, from nearly 8 in 10 students to fewer than 3 in 10 students, according to Orfield's (1983) analysis. By contrast, he found that between 1968 and 1972, the proportion of Blacks in virtually all-minority or predominantly minority schools actually increased in the Northeast and decreased only negligibly in the Midwest and West, where the commands of *Brown* did not immediately apply and the federal role was consequently circumscribed. This was attributable largely to a legalism rooted in the Fourteenth Amendment, requiring that intentional segregation must be demonstrated on a community-by-community basis in

the absence of explicit state segregation statutes such as those in the South at the time of *Brown*.

Although scores of school districts scattered across the northern and western states have desegregated since 1972, little additional progress has been made on a national level in the absence of a concerted federal initiative. As a consequence, nearly two out of every three Black students were enrolled in predominantly minority schools in 1984, and one out of every three in virtually all-minority schools. Notwithstanding this national picture, Orfield and Monfort (1988) discovered that the levels of segregation experienced by Black students varied considerably, not only by region but also by state, something they attribute to "factors such as degree of urbanization, fragmentation of school districts in metropolitan areas, the existence and scope of federal desegregation orders or state enforcement activity, and the size of the minority population in the state" (p. 19). Using selected states and communities to illustrate the case, it can be argued that the states and federal government possess the policy instruments to substantially reduce the remaining levels of segregation, if to do so becomes an important governmental priority.

The pervasive pattern of residential segregation both within communities and across metropolitan areas, when coupled with the fragmented nature of school boundaries outside of the South and little governmental initiative, contributes to the continuing segregation of a substantial number of Blacks in schools isolated from the mainstream of America and the opportunities, services and associations it affords White children. These minority students often find themselves in substandard educational facilities, frequently in economically depressed cities or neighborhoods and beyond the sight and concern of White Americans and the political leverage and economic resources they command (Farley & Allen, 1987; National Research Council, 1989).

While much of the early research on the impact of desegregation programs proved less conclusive and positive than advocates had anticipated (St. John, 1975), more recent studies have shed light on the nature and characteristics of programs that enhance educational and social outcomes in desegregated educational environments (Crain & Mahard, 1982; Edmonds, 1979; Hawley et al., 1983; Oakes, 1985; Sagar & Schofield, 1982; Slavin, 1985). In addition, a growing body of research on the long-term effects of desegregated elementary and secondary education suggests that desegregation increases the likelihood of interracial experiences and expanded opportunities later in life, including attendance at integrated four-year colleges, expanded and better paying employment opportunities, and the prospects of

residing in an integrated community during adulthood, thereby reducing the need for school desegregation interventions in the future (Braddock, 1985).

While acknowledging that school desegregation is not a panacea, Hawley et al. (1983) argue that much of the evidence about the gains made and about positive benefits of desegregated education has been purposefully ignored and negative outcomes exaggerated in order to create “a new mythology that desegregation cannot work” (p. 17). Hawley contends that this mythology is designed to turn the nation away from a national policy of quality integrated education and against any appreciable federal role in education. To the contrary, Hawley argues, the evidence suggests it is time to turn from the question of “Does desegregation work?” to the question of “How we can increase the benefits and decrease the costs associated with desegregation?”

This question seems especially pertinent given the rapidly changing demographic characteristics of the nation and the even greater diversity of the children that the public schools will serve in the 1990s and the first quarter of the 21st century (Hodgkinson, 1985). The presence of far greater numbers of racial and ethnic minorities and children residing in families below the poverty line—those traditionally least well served by the schools—poses special challenges, as does the need to educate them to higher levels so that they might participate in an increasingly technologically-oriented job market (National Task Force on Education, 1983). The failure to accomplish these educational goals with minority children, who comprise the majority of all public school students in two states and more than a third of all students in nearly a dozen others (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1984), will have serious consequences on the competitiveness of the United States in the increasingly competitive global economy.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS SPECIAL EDITION: THE POLICY QUESTIONS AND PROPOSALS EXPLORED

Given the convergence of these demographic and technological forces, the question of how the federal government may assist in maximizing the benefits and minimizing the costs of desegregation and quality education in a diverse society takes on added significance at the threshold of the 1990s. What responsibilities might the national government assume consistent with principles of federalism and its traditional role of ensuring equity of participation in educational opportunities and intervening to address national needs that states or localities lack the will or capacity to address? The articles that comprise this edition attempt to provide some perspectives on this question.

DYNAMICS OF DESEGREGATION POLICY AND THE FEDERAL ROLE

The first article in this special edition examines more closely the evolution of desegregation policy and the changing role of the federal government in its formulation and implementation over the past 35 years. Many analysts have documented the central role of the courts as policymakers with respect to school desegregation. Some have been highly critical of their role (Glazer, 1975; Horowitz, 1977), while others have sought to explain the manner in which courts have adapted to the unique demands of institutional reform litigation in ways that expand their capacity and enhance their legitimacy in resolving such public policy disputes (Chayes, 1976; Kirp, 1981). Other writers have focused on Congress's role in the adoption of various civil rights laws (Berman, 1962) or the substance of anti-busing legislation that has come before it over several decades (Bork, 1972; Watson, 1983). Still other researchers have put the leadership of presidents and the executive branch's enforcement activities under a microscope, a particularly common phenomenon during the Reagan years (Amaker, 1988; Citizens' Commission on Civil Rights, 1989; Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, 1982; Selig, 1985).

The federal role, however, is not simply the actions of any one of these institutions. Rather it is a product of their continuing interaction over several decades, during which each at times has played a prominent role in shaping and reshaping both national desegregation policy and the federal role (Orfield, 1978; Salomone, 1986). Charles B. Vergon's article, "School Desegregation: Lessons From Three Decades of Experience," traces the evolution of desegregation policy and principles through four developmental stages and provides an integrated review of the the role of the courts, Congress and the executive branch during periods of policy formulation, consolidation and enforcement, politicalization and fragmentation, and subsequent abandonment and redirection. Through this examination he illustrates the constant tension between constitutional principles and political considerations and suggests some of the implications of both on future efforts to forge a new national policy and federal role in the 1990s.

HOUSING POLICIES AND METROPOLITAN PLANS

Though the link between housing discrimination and school segregation has been recognized for a number of years, cases alleging housing discrimination and school segregation have traveled parallel but almost always separate pathways through the courts. Early attempts to link the two were less than completely satisfactory, a situation that persisted into the 1980s

when a major breakthrough was achieved in the Yonkers housing and school segregation litigation. Michael H. Sussman, the lead counsel for intervening plaintiffs in *U.S. v. Yonkers Board of Education* (1987) describes this breakthrough in his article examining the interrelationship between housing and school segregation and the precedent-setting relief won in that case, relief requiring a coordinated program of public housing construction and public school desegregation. In addition to examining the political interplay between school assignment practices and city and federal housing policies, his article, "Nondiscrimination in Housing and Education: Toward A Coordinated Federal Policy," explores and proposes ways in which federal housing policy and its administration can and should reinforce school desegregation in the 1990s.

While this litigation and the coordination of housing and school policy may be expected to have a substantial impact on segregation within the boundaries of cities like Yonkers, metropolitanwide residential and school segregation will require plans and approaches of an equally inclusive scope. Such metropolitanwide solutions that would address the central city districts, where a large proportion of the remaining segregation in American education is concentrated, have been the subject of some experimentation and considerable controversy over the past two decades.

Although pioneering programs were instituted on a small and voluntary basis as early as the mid-1960s, more expansive and mandatory plans outside the South were stalled in 1974 when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a metropolitan plan for the City of Detroit and 54 neighboring suburbs. In that case, *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974), the Court held in a 5-4 decision that the scope of the remedy is limited by the scope of the violation and that unless state actions with interdistrict segregatory effects can be demonstrated, desegregation plans must be limited to a single district. Nevertheless, the case posed more of a detour than an insurmountable roadblock to metropolitan forms of relief in subsequent cases.

Much of the literature on interdistrict or metropolitanwide approaches has been in the form of richly detailed case studies of the legal history, political controversies, and plan formulation and implementation processes in a given community (Green, 1985; La Pierre, 1988; Raffel, 1980). With the exception of a few works, such as Levine and Eubanks (1986), little effort has been made to look across the metropolitan desegregation landscape to compare the nature and characteristics of plans operating in different localities. Even where this has been done on a limited basis, no appreciable consideration has been focused on either whether or how the federal government might play a meaningful role in breaking down barriers and building bridges between city

and suburban schools and reducing racial segregation and educational inequality.

Leonard B. Stevens, a longtime and widely respected desegregation expert, describes the basic models of metropolitanwide desegregation currently being implemented in various localities across the country in his article entitled, "The Dilemma of Metropolitan School Desegregation." The models he describes vary considerably from loose collaborative arrangements of a wholly voluntary nature to plans involving the court-mandated consolidation of more than a dozen formerly independent school districts. Stevens focuses on four examples of interdistrict transfer programs in particular, providing a more detailed description of their most salient features. Arguing that the federal government has an interest in promoting interracial education, Stevens outlines several policy alternatives and a federal role that would encourage metropolitanwide desegregation without relying on means antithetical to traditional principles of local control and family choice.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PLANS THAT WORK

Bringing students of different races together in common school settings, whether on a metropolitan- or districtwide basis, involves a host of issues. They range from the method of pupil assignment to the nature, structure, quality and characteristics of the program and school environment in which the reassigned students will be educated, as well as the manner in which they are treated, and the expectations held of them by school staff (Crain & Mahard, 1982; Hawley et al., 1983; Rossell, 1982; Sagar & Schofield, 1982; Slavin, 1985; Willie, 1984). Yet frequently, desegregation is reduced by parents, and too often by school districts as well, simply to the issue of student assignment and whether voluntary or mandatory approaches should be employed.

This question has posed a dilemma for policymakers and practitioners alike, since what has proven the most effective in the short-term has also contributed to unintended and undesirable long-term consequences in some districts. While most districts initially attempt to desegregate using a voluntary approach such as freedom of choice or magnet school plans, a number of studies demonstrate quite conclusively that mandatory desegregation plans involving techniques such as rezoning and the pairing or clustering of schools are not only more effective, but in many instances the only way to overcome segregation (Rossell, 1982; Smylie, 1983). For example, in his study of 52 large school districts, Smylie found that mandatory approaches achieved three times more desegregation and that districts using mandatory

plans eliminated 89% of the racially identifiable buildings compared to just 2% of the buildings in districts that relied on voluntary methods.

While effective in bring about meaningful levels of desegregation, these mandatory methods have also frequently contributed to some increase in the level of White flight to either private schools or suburban districts beyond the scope of the plan and the effective reach of the courts. Early research on the phenomenon lead to contentious debates about the existence or magnitude of the problem (Coleman, Kelly, & Moore, 1975; Green & Pettigrew, 1976). More recent research tends to conclude that elevated levels of White flight are associated with desegregation, particularly in the year preceding and the initial year of plan implementation. The level, however, varies depending on factors such as district size and school racial composition, student grade level, and whether the plan is phased in or implemented in a single year (Rossell, 1982; Smylie, 1983). Declines in White enrollment tend to be most pronounced in large central city districts with substantial minority enrollments, the same settings in which only mandatory plans have demonstrated any consistent effectiveness in overcoming pupil segregation (Smylie, 1983).

To mediate the ineffectiveness of exclusively voluntary approaches in achieving systemwide desegregation and to minimize White or middle-class flight, a strategic approach emerged in the early 1980s. This approach promised parental choice, a self-regulating program of school improvement and systemwide diversity that would be durable over time (Alves & Willie, 1987). One of the architects and advocates of this approach is Charles V. Willie, an urban sociologist and professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. In his article, "Diversity, School Improvement, and Choice: Research Agenda Items for the 1990s," Willie describes the operation of controlled choice along with its properties that foster school improvement and diversity, all components he argues must characterize desegregation programs in the 1990s. He calls for a larger federal role in research to evaluate the efficacy of such multifaceted desegregation approaches and to guide the future course of national policy.

As White enrollment declined dramatically in virtually all central city districts during the 1970s, federal courts faced school systems with increasing proportions of minority students with greater and greater educational needs and fewer and fewer resources to meet them. In an attempt to address these realities, redress discriminatory school practices, and enhance the perception of the remaining Whites that the school system could still provide them a quality education, federal courts embraced and ordered comprehensive remedial plans. These plans, such as one introduced in Detroit, empha-

sized educational components designed to foster school improvement as much as pupil desegregation, frequently leaving some all-Black or minority schools. In *Milliken v. Bradley* (1977) the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed the authority of federal courts to order such comprehensive remedial regimes where necessary to overcome the effects of prior unlawful segregation or discrimination and to prevent resegregation. This ruling and the scope of the changes it foreshadowed for urban districts gave rise to additional debates regarding the financing and implementing of such remedies and the appropriate role of the federal government.

FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTING COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The introduction of educational quality components as well as pupil reassignment into the school desegregation policy equation raised new issues regarding the fiscal capacity of urban systems to fund the broad reforms called for in the name of desegregation. Integral to the satisfaction of the remedial obligations inherent in such comprehensive orders was the availability of additional resources. The U.S. Supreme Court unlocked the door to the state treasury in *Milliken II*, holding that a guilty state co-defendant may be held financially liable for a share of the costs of implementing the prescribed remedial plan. Local districts, however, were still responsible for the majority of the costs associated with such reform measures, measures that in some large districts carried price tags in the tens of millions of dollars annually (Colton & Berg, 1981; Vergon, 1985).

Because of deteriorating tax bases in many urban areas and the fiscal inequities that eluded redress in *San Antonio School District v. Rodriguez* (1973), districts were faced with either a dramatic reallocation of existing budgets or a substantial infusion of new funds in addition to those available from the state. One such source of funds was the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA), a categorical aid program adopted by Congress in 1972 to help defray costs associated with overcoming minority group isolation in newly desegregated settings.

Concern regarding the proliferation of federal aid programs, however, was mounting in the late 1970s and a movement was under way both to cut the cost and reduce the complexity of federal aid by replacing categorical programs with block grants. While criticism of the lack of clarity and the attendant complexity of federal programs was widespread, the issue of whether the national interests and goals would be adequately addressed by states and localities if block grants were substituted for categorical programs remained a source of contention. Fear was expressed that federal programs

for important national goals that had not been traditionally shared by state and local governments would suffer. Concern was expressed for the fate of equity programs in general and school desegregation programs in particular.

For an administration that placed little value on school desegregation and considerable importance on lessening the federal role and controls, block grants represented an attractive alternative to categorical aid programs. Consequently, the Reagan administration proposed the consolidation of some 28 separate categorical programs into a single block grant as part of the Educational Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1982 (ECIA). ESAA was the single largest program incorporated into the block grant, lacking the strong institutional and professional support of compensatory education and special education, which were spared from consolidation (Peterson, Rabe, & Wong, 1986).

The winners and losers under ECIA were predictable. Urban schools lost federal resources as allocation formulas hammered out in rural-dominated state capitals tended to have a distributive effect, spreading resources more broadly among rural and suburban districts than the antecedent categorical programs, which had a largely redistributive orientation of placing resources where educational needs were greatest (Gittell, 1986). Kearney's (1984) examination of the impact of ECIA on a sample of districts demonstrated the double jeopardy that desegregating districts faced. He found that Detroit, which qualified for \$3.3 million under ECIA, had received \$4.9 million under the antecedent categorical aid programs the prior year, including an ESAA grant that itself exceeded the total received under ECIA. Districts such as Detroit experienced a type of double jeopardy, he theorized, not only because their ECIA allocation was less than they had received under ESAA and other antecedent categorical programs, but because they were nevertheless obligated to carryout the court-ordered reform program that had been substantially funded with ESAA aid.

In his article, "Shifting National Values: The Education Block Grant and School Desegregation," C. Philip Kearney steps back from some of his empirical studies of the impact of the block grant program to describe a framework for analyzing the values associated with federal policy-making and to illustrate how these values influence not only support for federal programs but the mechanisms used to fund the programs.

Even with the benefit of substantial supplemental resources such as ESAA, translating the complex and often controversial federal policy of school desegregation into practice at the district, building, and classroom levels has proven difficult in many districts. The past two decades have witnessed an explosion in research related to such public-policy implemen-

tation problems (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1979; van Horn & van Meter, 1976). The more we understand about public policy-making, the more we appreciate the need to address what happens after policies are promulgated, when key individuals and organizations attempt to put such policies into practice.

While there is a growing body of literature in this area of policy research, some of which focuses on organizational responses, several common limitations characterize much of the work in the field. Among these are: (a) a focus on a singular policy without regard to the larger political process and context of which it is a part; (b) a focus on the relationship between policy as input and behavior as outcome, rather than on the organizational and personal processes intervening between input and outcome; and (c) a lack of attention to the organizational realities and community contexts in which policy is implemented.

As a result of these limitations, and not withstanding the substantial body of research on effective desegregation strategies completed in the early 1980s, we know more about what programs should be part of desegregation plans than about how to introduce and institutionalize these programs in complex school organizations. Only recently has some research suggested some progress in moving beyond intergovernmental conflict and confusion into an era of mutual adaptation and even the local institutionalization of some federally assisted innovations (McLaughlin, 1987; Peterson, Rabe, & Wong, 1986).

The final article in this issue focuses on this link between the macropolicy of desegregation and microstudies of outcomes for children by examining the implementation processes that go on at the organizational and community level. In her article, "Equity in the Schools: From Policy to Practice," Marjorie Checkoway draws on a comparative case study approach to explore federal policy characteristics and local organizational processes and community features associated with effective equity policy implementation and institutionalization at the local school district level.

CONCLUSION

In the articles that comprise this issue, we have attempted to illuminate the development of the federal policy of school desegregation and the interactive nature of judicial, legislative and executive involvement in forging and continuously reshaping it. We have attempted to identify the interaction of different institutional forces that contribute to segregation and explore

how greater federal enforcement and policy coordination involving housing and education may pay substantial dividends in reducing segregation in both schools and communities. We have attempted to describe how the federal government can help promote metropolitan desegregation initiatives consistent with its appropriately limited role in educational matters and the contemporary importance assigned to the value of parental choice. We have attempted to examine the significance of federal funding mechanisms on levels of aid for school desegregation and how values of efficiency, choice, and equity shape national policy and the instrumentalities through which it is funded. We have attempted to illuminate the difficult and complex task of implementing federal policy in a local school district and community and suggest the significance of certain organizational processes and program features on policy implementation, and presumably outcomes.

Finally, in accomplishing the above, we have attempted to distill some lessons from experience that will contribute to a renewed policy debate regarding the future direction of school desegregation and race and education policy in the United States in light of the new realities and challenges facing the country and its public schools.

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