



Education and Housing Equity Project Records.

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METRO URBAN STUDIES FALL 1998
STUDENTS/COMMUNITY CIRCLE
ON SESSION IV - EDUCATION SESSION

Completed discussion report forms - November 1998

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St. Paul, MN 55106*

DISCUSSION REPORT FORM

What do you think?

The Education and Housing Equity Project will assemble a document, entitled "Choices for Community: Creating an Agenda for Building Inclusive Communities and Successful Schools in the Twin Cities and Metropolitan Region." This document will represent some of the views of study circle participants and the results of the Action Forum; it will also be used to inform public policy making.

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Recall:

The Task of the Community Circles

Keeping the conversations centered on the following two questions:

- What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic, and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?
- What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults in the Twin cities area?

What were some issues of common concern within your group?

- 1) We discussed at length the problem of multiracial attendance in schools - the group was divided among supporters of culturally specific schools for the sake of students of color or integrated schools for fear of reverting into historical references to segregation pre-civil rights era.
- 2) White privilege; ethnocentrism among white students and teachers was an area of concern - how to remedy w/o compounding exploitation of students of color.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

Agree that current curriculum & racial distribution are damaging to students of color & equal opportunity.

~~Disagree~~ on solutions - is affirmation of each student's identity most important? or numerical distribution of students by class, race per school? (i.e., integration)

Did your group have any action ideas?

Yes, but conflicting. Mostly dealt w/ systemic changes. How should school system be restructured to meet goal of equal opportunity. D/N discuss individual level changes.

Other comments:

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Our group was concerned with many aspects of inequality in our schools, especially dealing with true integration in the schools, not just by numbers. Everyone agreed they had different experiences to form their perception of education, some it came from HECA too... A basic concern with the roots of inequality was the result of this circle conversation, and that was when the conversation became really engaging for all.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

The main area of disagreement came in the debate over funding. Specifically perspective number five was examined. One faction said that funding really needed to be completely equalized before any of the other changes

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* The lack of equity in funding - many of us felt that before any other solution could go forward it was important to address the financial inequity. No school can begin to correct its problems without the financial backing. Above and beyond the fiscal aspects, * the group felt quality teachers were most important. Low-income and minority students have needs than can only be addressed by quality and dedicated teachers.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* There was little disagreement in the group. Some were concerned with the ramifications of cultural schools and charter and magnet schools - these schools may perpetuate the inequalities that already exist. Any * solution must be a combination of different solutions and must involve the teachers and administration taking an active role in change the students (over) * chances for the better. Policy, the group felt, can only

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- Quality education
- Safety among students
- Creating an "fairness" of opportunity for all students.

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Yes I agree with these issues but also so recognize that it (the problem of unfair education among urban/suburban/rural schools) is a structural problem that far extends each classroom teacher. it goes back to govt & policy.

(over)

Did your group have any action ideas?

* Not really because we recognized the situation goes deeper than tax base and diversity for students

Other comments:

* Do the "one black person" who was in my group I had to bare the weight of the Urban/Black/OTTER" perspective - this was old hat for me BUT it is very annoying to persons of color to be "the pursuing color" that is an issue.

* This was kinda Bullshitty - ~~the~~ I don't feel this conversation will make a difference.

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

-segregated schools
-race
-education

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

-race
-segregation + whether there should be schools like this.

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

We were concerned about racial segregation in schools. We were concerned about charter schools & magnet schools vs. neighborhoods.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

We disagreed about whether or not schools should be segregated, whether charter & magnet schools should exist.

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

* THAT THE ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED IN THE GUIDE FOR EDUCATION
WERE NOT VERY FEASIBLE. THAT PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION ARE
COMPLEX AND THAT SMALL CHANGES ARE NEEDED FIRST SUCH
AS QUALITY TEACHERS.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* AREAS OF AGREEMENT INCLUDED THAT MAJOR CHANGES NEED TO
OCCUR IN EDUCATION AND THAT THEY NEED TO BE PUBLIC RATHER THAN
* PRIVATE. AREA OF DISAGREEMENT WERE IF THE ALTERNATIVES
WERE FEASIBLE AT ALL. ~~AND~~ POLITICALLY. DISAGREED ABOUT

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

- * • gap of education systems - hidden 2 systems that track different students to different success rates.
- perpetuated inequality through institution of education.
- the fact that in general, teachers do not seem to care about this and do not take any initiative to do anything about it.
- no one is being held accountable for this problem.
- * • so many components are involved in unequal education (affordable housing opportunities, job possibilities in area, etc...) that it seems very difficult to see solutions!

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* - There weren't many areas of disagreement. We agreed that culturally-specific schools were not a good solution. We thought they are a cop-out that leads to idea that system cannot get stuff done right w/ everyone (races) together. We talked about why people are tracked

to be successful - agreed its all about \$ and agreed this is sick!

Did your group have any action ideas?

* Unfortunately, we did not come up with any concrete plans. We mentioned it would be nice (in a perfect world) if not so much emphasis would be put on success linked w/ \$ and if menial jobs (McDonalds, janitors, etc...) would not be looked down upon. The attitude in our society is one which people that work at McDonalds (for example) have failed somehow. As we see it, education tracks students towards different paths. We would like to see students having more choice w/ their paths rather than being forced into them.

* -We think the lack of affordable housing + jobs in certain areas is a link w/ inequality in education. Something needs to be done about this!

Other comments:

* This is a really great idea. It gets people thinking at least and hopefully some will act. Unfortunately, these problems take time and energy and I don't know how many people are willing to take that time + energy, especially if the problems do not directly affect them.

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* Issues of concern were what are the positive + negative sides of integration. We discussed if segregation is really a bad thing for kids - it might give ^{kids of color} ~~them~~ a chance to learn about the world in a way that values people of color + their history. We also examined how integration sometimes only benefits the white kids who are "exposed" to other cultures, + still taught the status quo education.

* Another concern involved school choice - not all parents + families are able to take advantage of school choice, so its not really equal.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* We disagreed on the issue of segregated schools. One person hated the idea of culture specific schools so that marginalized groups can learn from a perspective that values them, ~~near~~ which could foster

self-esteem. However, others believed that since we live in a multi-cultural society in which races interact together everyday, that schools should not be segregated by culture or race. That only intensifies separation + lack of connection between the races.

Did your group have any action ideas?

I don't know if we came up w/ actual actions. I suppose to even out property tax ^{distribution} across the state or metro area. Some districts have higher tax base, but that shouldn't entitle their kids to better education. Another proposed action was to create a metro-wide school district.

Other comments:

Having the discussion really got me thinking. I thought I had processed all the viewpoints + come up w/ my solutions, but hearing other people's ideas made me consider new things, + taught me about barriers some families have, + just made me see a lot more deeply into the issues.

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

* The issue of greatest concern was that of inequality in the school system. People sited that what made them the most angry was the huge amount of benefits and amenities experienced by white children. Another issue that was brought up was that many of us had gone to good schools, experienced white privilege, and at the time felt as though we were entitled to these things. Children who attend schools in the suburbs seem to take for granted and expect preferential treatment.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* We all basically agreed that the educational system needs to drastically change. There was disagreement, however, on exactly what should change the most. Some people thought the teachers didn't invest enough

in the children in terms of time and encouragement.
Some people thought the resources the teachers
had access to needed to be ~~help~~ improved.

Did your group have any action ideas?

* Mainly what our group expressed was
frustration at not knowing what to do.

Other comments:

* Through talking w/ the group,
it seemed we all gained a better &
understanding of why things are the way
they are. Almost ~~more~~ importantly,
many of us discovered why it never
occurred to us to mind.

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- 2) White privilege & ethnocentrism among white students and teachers was an area of concern - how to remedy w/o compounding exploitation of students of color.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

Agree that current curriculum & racial distribution are damaging to students of color & equal opportunity.

~~Disagree~~ on solutions - is affirmation of each student's identity most important? or numerical distribution of students by class; race per school? (i.e., integration)

Did your group have any action ideas?

Yes, but conflicting. Mostly dealt w/ systemic changes. How should school system be restructured to meet goal of equal opportunity. D/N discuss individual level changes

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What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* The main area of disagreement came in the debate over funding. Specifically perspective number one was examined. One faction said that funding really needed to be completely equalized before any of the other changes

(over)

could be made. Others in the group disagreed with
a focus on "more money".

Did your group have any action ideas?

* Our group discussed policy action ideas that are
* possibilities, but never really had a concrete plan. We
did spend a while discussing the idea of equalizing school
funding, by not relying on property-tax base as its main
source. Other action ideas we discussed were much more
dealing with improving teacher quality, teacher qualifications,
and their salaries.

Other comments:

Our discussion went off to discuss the source of
inequalities and the power struggle there. White privilege,
male privilege, and what can be lost to them
through true equality was a focus. This was an
awesome discussion, however, and I was really glad it
went the way it did. Our facilitator helped contribute
a lot to making it a very comfortable environment
where this discussion could flourish. :)

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* There was little disagreement in the group. Some were concerned with the ramifications of cultural schools and charter and magnet schools - these schools may perpetuate the inequalities that already exist. Any * solution must be a combination of different solutions and must involve the teachers and administration taking an active role in change the students (over) * chances for the better. Policy - the group felt, can only go so far to change the problem.

* Another concern was how the results of this information collected today will ultimately be used. No good will have been accomplished if there is not an overall realization of the flaws within the structure and that there needs to be careful consideration of whether this info will only prop up the status quo or create real change.

* Use a combination of the solutions. No one solution will ever be the "magic bullet" answer nor is any one solution going to be politically possible. Cultural biases must be addressed, lack of integration in the classroom on a social + educational level must be accomplished. The fear of creating opportunity for marginalized students needs to be reconciled.

* If I were to create an action plan from our group it would be one that confronts administrative malaise, teacher disillusionment and greater understanding between schools. ~~Children see schools as a safe haven, and this quality needs to be restored~~

Other comments:

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Other comments:

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What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

Did your group have any action ideas?

* INCREASE THE THINKING BEHIND WHAT EDUCATION
* REALLY IS. TEACHERS ARE A MARGINALIZED
GROUP IN OUR SOCIETY. SET A STANDARD LEVEL
OF EDUCATION AND A MINIMUM SALARY, SOMETHING
HIGHER THAN WHAT IT IS RIGHT NOW. MAKE
IT A DESIRABLE PROFESSION BUT ALSO MAKE THE
QUALIFICATIONS TOUGHER.

Other comments:

* THE INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION ARE REFLECTIVE
OF THE INEQUITIES OF THE REST OF THE SOCIETY.
THE POWER BASE OF THE UNITED STATES IS
COMPOSED OF EURO-AMERICAN MALES, THE
HIERARCHICAL MADE OF OPERATION DETERMINES
OUR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS. UNTIL THIS DIVERSIFIES,
NOT ONLY IN SKIN TONE BUT IN COMMUNICATION
STYLES, INFORMATION AND IDEAS, THINGS WILL NOT
CHANGE.

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Recall:

The Task of the Community Circles

Keeping the conversations centered on the following two questions:

- *What are the impacts of existing patterns of residential, economic, and racial segregation on the educational achievement and life opportunities of Twin Cities area children and families?*
- *What can or should we do, as individuals and as a community, to enhance the educational, housing, and economic opportunities of all children and adults in the Twin cities area?*

What were some issues of common concern within your group?

-segregated schools
-race
-education

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

-race
-segregation + whether there should ^{be} schools like this.

Did your group have any action ideas?

We got caught up in talking about race.

Other comments:

In Part 4, define Option ~~9~~ 5 better.

DISCUSSION REPORT FORM

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

We were concerned about racial segregation in schools. We were concerned about charter schools & magnet schools vs. neighborhoods.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

We disagreed about whether or not schools should be segregated, whether charter & magnet schools should exist.

Did your group have any action ideas?

*

We thought of a plan to have segregated elementary schools & integrate them after 3rd or 4th grade.

Other comments:

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

* THAT THE ALTERNATIVES PRESENTED IN THE GUIDE FOR EDUCATION
WERE NOT VERY FEASIBLE. THAT PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION ARE
COMPLEX AND THAT SMALL CHANGES ARE NEEDED FIRST SUCH
AS QUALITY TEACHERS.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* AREAS OF AGREEMENT INCLUDED THAT MAJOR CHANGES NEED TO
OCCUR IN EDUCATION AND THAT THEY NEED TO BE PUBLIC RATHER THAN
* PRIVATE. AREA OF DISAGREEMENT WERE IF THE ALTERNATIVES
WERE FEASIBLE AT ALL. ~~AND~~ POLITICALLY. DISAGREED ABOUT

- * THE BENEFITS OF LARGER SUMS OF MONEY GOING INTO INNER-CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN MINNESOTA. (IF IT WAS BENEFICIAL OR NOT)
- * AGREED THAT OTHER MEASURES WERE NEEDED IF LARGER SUMS OF MONEY WERE DISPERSED INTO INNER CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Did your group have any action ideas?

- * TO FIND STRATEGIES TO ENSURE QUALITY TEACHING IN ALL SCHOOLS.

~~PA~~

Other comments:

DID NOT KNOW THE DIFFERENCES IN MONIES GOING TO SUBURBAN AND URBAN SCHOOLS IN MINNESOTA.
CITED WEACRY SCHOOL IN PARK RAPIDS AND SOME STRUCTURE DEFICIENCIES AT CENTRAL H.S.

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

- * *• gap of education systems - hidden 2 systems that track different students to different success rates.*
- perpetuated inequality through institution of education.*
- the fact that in general, teachers do not seem to care about this and do not take any initiative to do anything about it.*
- no one is being held accountable for this problem.*
- * *• so many components are involved in unequal education (affordable housing opportunities, job possibilities in area, etc...) that it seems very difficult to see solutions!*

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

- * *- There weren't many areas of disagreement. We agreed that culturally-specific schools were not a good solution. We thought they are a cop-out that lends to idea that system cannot get stuff done right w/ everyone (races) together. We talked about why people are tracked.*

(over)

to be successful - agreed its all about \$ and agreed this is sick!

Did your group have any action ideas?

Unfortunately, we did not come up with any concrete plans. We mentioned it would be nice (in a perfect world) if not so much emphasis would be put on success linked w/ \$ and if menial jobs (McDonalds, janitors, etc...) would not be looked down upon. The attitude in our society is one which people that work at McDonalds (for example) have failed somehow. As we see it, education tracks students towards different paths. We would like to see students having more choice w/ their paths rather than being forced into them.

* -We think the lack of affordable housing + jobs in certain areas is a link w/ inequality in education. Something needs to be done about this!

Other comments:

* This is a really great idea. It gets people thinking at least and hopefully some will act. Unfortunately, these problems take time and energy and I don't know how many people are willing to take that time + energy; especially if the problems do not directly affect them.

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

* Issues of concern were what are the positive + negative sides of integration. We discussed if segregation is really a bad thing for kids - it might give ^{kids of color} ~~them~~ a chance to learn about the world in a way that values people of color + their history. We also examined how integration

* sometimes only benefits the white kids who are "exposed" to other cultures, + still taught the status quo education.

* Another concern involved school choice - not all parents + families are able to take advantage of school choice, so its not really equal.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* We disagreed on the issue of segregated schools. One person backed the idea of culture specific schools so that marginalized groups can learn from a perspective that values them, ~~also~~ which could foster

(over)

* self-esteem. However, others believed that since we live in a multi-cultural society in which races interact together everyday, that schools should not be segregated by culture or race. That only intensifies separation & lack of connection between the races.

Did your group have any action ideas?

* I don't know if we came up w/ actual actions. I suppose to even out property tax ^{distribution} across the state or metro area. Some districts have higher tax base, but that shouldn't entitle their kids to better education.
* Another proposed action was to create a metro-wide school district.

Other comments:

Having the discussion really got me thinking. I thought I had processed all the viewpoints + come up w/ my solutions, but hearing other people's ideas made me consider new things, + taught me about barriers some families have, + just made me see a lot more deeply into the issues.

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What were some issues of common concern within your group?

* The issue of greatest concern was that of inequality in the school system. People sited that what made them the most angry was the huge amount of benefits and amenities experienced by white children. Another issue that was brought up was that many of us had gone to good schools, experienced white privilege, and at the time felt as though we were entitled to those things.

* Children who attend schools in the suburbs seem to take for granted and expect preferential treatment.

What were some areas of agreement and disagreement?

* We all basically agreed that the educational system needs to drastically change. There was disagreement, however, on exactly WHAT should change the most. Some people thought the teachers didn't invest enough

in the children in terms of time and encouragement.
Some people thought the resources the teachers
had access to needed to be ~~the~~ improved.

Did your group have any action ideas?

* Mainly what our group expressed was
frustration at not knowing what to do.

Other comments:

* Through talking w/ the group,
it seemed we all gained a better &
understanding of why things are the way
they are. Almost immediately,
many of us discovered why it never
occurred to us to mind.

Negar

• The 1950s were a time of rapid growth and development in the Middle East. This was due to a combination of factors, including the discovery of oil, the end of colonial rule, and the implementation of modernization programs.

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METRO URBAN STUDIES FALL 1998
STUDENTS / COMMUNITY CIRCLE
ON SESSION IV - EDUCATION SESSION

COMPLETED
DISCUSSION
REPORT
FORMS

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