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A Profile of Inner-city Public School Districts: A Comparative Analysis of U.S. Metropolitan Area Demographics and The Abandonment of Neighborhood Schools

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A Profile of Inner-city Public School Districts: A Comparative Analysis of U.S. Metropolitan Area Demographics and The Abandonment of Neighborhood Schools

A Dissertation submitted in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

ABSTRACT

Most departments of education and school boards do not identify nor compile data reasons for public school abandonments. Public schools are anchors, vital components, and "heartbeats" of communities that contribute to the growth or decline of neighborhoods. Despite the influences that public schools have on the development and sustainability of neighborhoods, public school abandonments are increasing. School systems use abandonments to address challenges of poor academic achievements, decreasing budgets, declining enrollments, and deteriorating and underutilized facilities. However, absent from literature are comprehensive data and analyses that identify the number of public school abandonments, their locations, or the contributing factors for these abandonments. In this dissertation, I argue that this lack of information creates a critical gap to effective urban and school planning and neighborhood preservation. I confirm this gap and provide a foundation for future research. First, I analyze demographic data for ten of the nation's most populous metropolitan areas. Second, I survey inner-city school district administrators to obtain primary data about school abandonments. I confirm through my data analyses that abandonments occur most often in poverty and minority concentrated inner-city neighborhoods. I conclude that the findings of my research support the need for comprehensive data and analyses specific to public school abandonments and the need for urban and school planners to evaluate and incorporate the analyses of these data in strategic neighborhood and school planning and development decisions, thereby, minimizing additional adverse impacts on communities that are already in social, economical, and physical distress.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Over time, the role of public schools[1] has changed to accommodate demographic shifts

and the public service needs of communities.   These shifts and the increasing cost of providing

public services contribute to the depopulation of many inner-city neighborhoods and public

school districts[2]. Public schools play a critical role in sustaining communities, physically,

socially, and economically. Therefore, decisions to close or to abandon public schools,

particularly in poor, inner-city neighborhoods, must be a result of careful and thoughtful

assessments of the potential implications of these abandonments on the needs of the community

as whole.

In the absence of comprehensive data and analyses about public school abandonments

and the critical role that public schools play in sustaining neighborhoods, I seek to better

understand the increasing trend to close or abandoned public schools. The objective of my study

is to identify and evaluate research that is specific to public school abandonments and that

indicates the criteria and supportive data being used to determine when, where, and why public

school abandonments are being implemented and to identify their potential implications on

neighborhood structures. For urban and school planning and neighborhood preservation

purposes, I expect my research to support the need for the establishment of comprehensive data

and analyses about public school abandonments. I also expect my research to serve as a basis for

future research that provides data that would indicate potential implications of public school

abandonments, particularly on poor, inner-city neighborhoods, where additional adverse impacts

[1] Census Bureau defines public schools as schools controlled and supported by local, state, and federal governmental agencies (U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2001.)
[2] A school district is an administrative unit that exists at the local level to assist in the operations of public schools and to contract for school services (National Center for Education Statistics, 2000; School Matters.com/noOfDistricts_infor.shtml, accessed 4/13/2005).

1

may contribute to the destruction of the neighborhoods' physical, social, and economic structures.

In this chapter, I begin my study by examining the role of public schools in an effort to better understand public school planning, development, and abandonment. In this study, I also examine demographic changes that are occurring in many central-city neighborhoods. In so doing, I describe a number of factors that may be influencing these changes and leading directly or indirectly to the increase in the closures or abandonments of neighborhood public schools. These factors include population losses resulting from residential and commercial relocations, shifts in student enrollments and school assignments, as well as steady reductions in government supplements. In many inner-city communities, government subsidies are required to help abate the adverse impacts of concentrated poverty.

In this chapter, I also identify "unintentional consequences" of policies implemented to improve the quality of education and to revitalize declining inner-city neighborhoods. I describe how well-intended policies may be contributing directly or indirectly to the abandonment of neighborhood properties, and as a result, are influencing the increase in the number of abandoned public schools in some of the nation's most physically, socially, and economically challenged neighborhoods. I expect the identification of this information to provide incentive for urban and school planners to collect and establish comprehensive data about the processes that lead to the abandonments of public schools.

Public schools are elements of their neighborhoods and built environment of the cities in which these buildings are located. As such, public school buildings often remain one of the most identifiable landmarks in neighborhoods. However, as a result of population and other demographic changes, many of the once anchors or "heartbeats" of their neighborhoods no

longer provide education or community socialization. Instead, many public school facilities sit vacant in states of escalating disrepair and are being described as neighborhood eyesores (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Johnston, 2001). Steady increases in population mobility and the growing inadequacy of available resources are forcing public school administrators and city leaders to examine more closely the costs associated with the maintenance and utilization of public schools. Quite often the increased scrutiny concludes with school boards and urban planners exercising abandonment as a primary remedy to address the challenges of under-utilized and under-funded schools (Chung, 2002; Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 2009; Howell, 2005).

In many inner-city neighborhoods, declining populations continue to contribute to surplus public schools and to an abundance of deteriorating, vacant and abandoned residential and commercial properties[3]. Yet, in other inner-city neighborhoods, increasing numbers of foreign-born[4] immigrants and other migrant populations are resulting in the increased demands for more affordable housing and additional school facilities and the need for more health and educational program supplements (Downs, 2000). Minority student enrollments in central city-schools increased nine percentage points from 1993 to 2003[5]. Today, minority growth is now prominent in many public school systems (Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 2009) and is creating overcrowded conditions for some school systems. As a result of the negative impacts of overcrowded schools, a surge in families is electing to enroll their students in charter school programs.

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[3] There is no universal definition of abandonment. For purposes of this research, property abandonment is defined as facilities (properties) that are unoccupied for which the owner (public or private) have ceased to maintain or operate (Setterfield, 1997, p.3), and as a result of the properties' prolonged vacancies, the condition of properties often become poor and problematic (Cohen, 2001).

[4] The 2000 Census Bureau uses the term "foreign born" to refer to anyone who is not a U. S. citizen at birth.

[5] U S Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics: Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethic Minorities, 2007, nces.ed.gov

3

Hayasaki (2005) reports that thousands of middle- and low-income minority families are opting to abandon neighborhood schools in support of the growing establishments of publicly supported charter schools.   The increasing demand for charter schools and other federal and state subsidized programs, like education and housing vouchers, are anticipated to continue draw more students from inner-city school districts (Epstein, 2004; Godwin and Kemerer, 2002).   In 2007, there were nearly 4,130 charter schools in the United States that served nearly 1.2 million students.[6]

Research indicates that federal and state housing policies will continue to propel the "escape" of middle- and upper-income families away from central city neighborhoods and students away from central-city public school systems (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Katz, 2000; Rappaport, 2003). For example, first-time federal homeownership programs, coupled with new and improved highway infrastructures, continue to provide easy access between central cities and county subdivisions and public school systems. Improved access to remote and developing suburban areas also creates avenues for businesses to relocate to less congested areas where real estate and tax rates are often less expensive than in most inner-city areas**.**

Research also states that many businesses move away from central cities to county locations to take advantage of benefits afforded them through local policies and special ordinances, particularly tax-reducing incentives and less restrictive zoning requirements (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Gale, Pack and Potter, 2002). Equally as important to relocating commercial businesses is the knowledge that reported crime statistics are generally greater in most inner-city areas than in surrounding counties. For this reason, many corporate leaders

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[6] [6] U S Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics: Numbers and Types of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 2006-2007, nces.ed.gov

4

believe that suburban locations provide safer environments for their employees and for the firm's physical assets (Accordino and Johnson, 2000).

The migration of businesses away from central cities contributes to "*job sprawl* and shifts jobs away from city centers and hurts economic productivity, creates unsustainable and energy inefficient development, and limits access to underemployed workers", states Brookings Senior Fellow, Robert Puentes (2009)[7]. Families who can afford to relocate tend to leave inner cities for many of the same reasons espoused by relocating firms. For similar reasons, some families never consider central cities as residential options (McDaniel, 2006). Consequently, many inner-city public schools continue to be challenged by declining enrollments and surplus spaces, and neighborhoods continue to be riddled with vacant and abandoned properties.

Vacant and abandoned properties are viewed as indicators of area deterioration and disinvestment (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Katz, 2002). In an effort to minimize the adverse impact of vacant and abandoned properties, many city officials explore urban renewal or revitalization strategies. As a result, city officials tend to focus much of their energies and financial resources on redevelopment strategies for their downtown or financial districts. Consequently, the plight of neighborhood structures, to include public school facilities, receives little consideration or is ignore totally. This exclusion is problematic not only because of the vital roles of public schools to their communities, but also because city leaders have significant influence in determining the amount of funding provided to public schools. This influence means that school districts often compete with the ambitions of city leaders for limited fiscal resources (Proscio, 2004).

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[7] Source: Brookings Institution-Metropolitan Policy Program report, "Job Sprawl Revisited: The Changing Geography of Metropolitan Employment" *National League of Cities*, *Brookings*. 4/6/2009, "Job sprawl" is defined as a phenomenon that threatens to undermine the long-term prosperity of the nation's vital economic engines.

Public school resources continue to be based primarily on student enrollment formulas; therefore, reductions in student enrollments equate to funding reductions for declining school districts (Valencia, 1985; Prestige, 2009). Similarly, as a consequence of declining populations, city revenues are decreasing. As result, maintaining adequate levels of public services, including education, often results in the need and solicitation for tax increases. Public outcries against tax increases, coupled with steady reductions in federal and state aids, create daunting challenges as inner-city school administrators attempt to improve the conditions of school buildings and to comply with government mandates to improve academic performances (Howell, 2001).

Shifts in student enrollments also impact the demand for teachers, for educational programs required to provide quality services to students, and for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of public school facilities (Katz, 2000). School boards, local administrators, and urban planners find it difficult to justify the investments required to maintain underutilized, deteriorating facilities. Katz (2000) states that this difficulty is compounded by the escalating need for social programs that have been established to help "level the educational playing field" for low-income and minority students and their families.

As financially strapped governments continue to reduce funding, school districts continue to exercise facility abandonment as a primary means to addressing budget deficiencies and overwhelming facilities maintenance and repair needs (Prestidge, 2009). Despite the potential for school abandonments to negatively impact the physical, economic, and social fabrics of neighborhoods, school administrators continue to support abandonments (Higgs, 2005). Efforts to reduce the problems of school abandonments are often complicated by the political disconnects between school boards and the residents they serve, as well as the political disconnects between city governments and the school districts they support (Proscio, 2004).

6

However, to make central cities more attractive and more competitive, mayors can no longer seek to revitalize only downtown areas, especially since many mayors of large inner cities tend to view the quality of their public schools as poor, and therefore hindrances to economic development and sustainability (Martin, 2007; Prosico, 2004). Mayors, city managers, and school officials, are all policymakers. However, most city mayors, managers, and school officials are not architects; yet, in their job capacities, they have the potential to greatly influence the architectural landscapes of their school divisions and their cities (Ray, 2002).

Case in point, Robin Miller[8], a Richmond, Virginia developer works closely with city and state officials in the revitalization and adaptive reuses of abandoned historic buildings, some include abandoned city schools. Miller uses tax credits and special financing incentives to renovate vacant and abandoned buildings. For most of his inner-city renovation projects, Miller targets college students, young professionals, and empty nesters. He admits that his primary reason for targeting these groups is his belief that the quality of Richmond City Public Schools is too poor to attract families with children to the area (Hazard, 2005). Fewer students mean less demand for classroom spaces and fewer public schools.

Historically, the planning and development of neighborhoods included the construction of public schools in the center of neighborhoods and served as the "hearts" or anchors of the communities. Historically, the planning and development of neighborhoods and public schools were intertwined, so much so that many public schools were named for the neighborhoods or subdivisions in which the schools were located. For example, many inner-city schools were built specifically to support public housing projects, and as a result, were sometimes named for the

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[8] Robin Miller is well known in the Richmond area for his adaptive reuses of vacant and abandoned buildings, including abandoned neighborhood schools. He and his partner, Daniel Gecker, have utilized historical credits and various other government incentives to finance the renovation of many vacant and abandoned buildings.

government-housing complexes. For these reasons, many schools buildings are still considered identification "markers" and icons for some neighborhoods, and as a result of public sentiment, decisions to abandoned schools are often highly resented and resisted.

Despite the roles that public schools are expected to play in building and maintaining the physical and socioeconomic structures of neighborhoods, public schools continue to be abandoned. Despite the value of public school facilities to sustaining their communities, more public schools are being abandoned, and as a consequence, more students are required to attend schools outside their residential neighborhoods. As school populations are consolidated and replacement buildings are constructed on remotely located sites, students are often transported long distances to their newly assigned schools. As a consequence of student reassignments and the resulting increases in travel time and miles, many families choose to relocate, which is causing neighborhood vacancy rates to escalate and student enrollments to decrease.

The escalation of vacancy rate is problematic and exposes inner-city neighborhoods to various social ills as a result of the clustering of vacant and abandoned properties (Accordino and Johnson, 2000). Many of these same neighborhoods also struggle with ills of concentrated poverty and racial segregation and isolation. In addition to providing traditional education services, neighborhood public schools often serve as community centers, where various programs are designed and implemented to mitigate poverty and neighborhood decline in some of the nation's poorest, inner-city areas are housed.

Given the significance of public schools to the support and preservation of community cohesiveness and vitality and to the preparation of students to succeed educationally and socially, the increasing trend to abandoned public schools is particularly alarming. In this study, I explore this trend and seek to determine what data are available and what data exist that are

8

being used to support decisions to abandoned public schools, particularly public schools located in poorer, inner-city neighborhoods.

In this dissertation, I suggest that without the establishment of comprehensive data and analyses specific to public school abandonments and their impacts, public schools will continue to be abandoned most often in poor, inner-city neighborhoods than in other neighborhoods Also, without standardized comprehensive data and analyses, the strategies of urban and school planners may not identify or address the direct or indirect impacts of public school abandonments on the populations residing in some the nation's most physically, socially and economically-challenged areas.

Organization of Dissertation

To better understand the need for comprehensive data and analyses, I structure this dissertation to first provide an in-depth review of literature about public schools, their history, their societal roles and the public policies that influence their design, planning, construction, and abandonments. In Chapter II, I develop the literature review to provide a better understanding of the importance of neighborhood and public school planning and to describe the impacts of demographic shifts on inner-city neighborhoods and public school districts. I review current and historic literature about public schools and identify various elements that may be contributing to the abandonment of public schools in inner-city neighborhoods.

In Chapter III, I describe the details of my research methodology, which includes my data collection processes. I collect demographic data from the US Census Bureau, the National Center of Education Statistics, and various on-line databases. These collections include

9

descriptive data for select combined metropolitan statistical areas (CMSA). In this chapter, I introduce six hypotheses and use basic statistical testing to compare the means of select independent variables that I use describe and the conditions of neighborhoods where public school abandonments exist to neighborhoods without an abandoned public school. Chapter III, I also describe the processes by which I collect primary data from public school districts through the use of an online survey. I present my data analyses in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV includes comparative data analyses of the demographics of ten select CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA. In this chapter, I enhance the description of my research analyses by creating maps, charts, and figures that illustrate the data and analyses of demographics of the select areas, where inner-city neighborhoods (census tracts) have experienced public school abandonments. These supporting data and my survey questionnaire are located in the Appendices section of this report.

In Chapter V, I conclude this dissertation by providing an overall summary of my research findings. In this chapter, I also provide recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Very little data exist that speaks directly to public school abandonments or identifies factors that are contributing to the increases in these abandonments.   Much of the existing data about public school abandonments are incomplete and inconsistent, not only between state boards of education but between local school districts as well. I assert that the lack of comprehensive and standardized data hinders effective comparative analyses and strategic urban and school planning efforts, particularly in poor inner-city neighborhoods.

My research describes the significance of the roles, uses, and sitings of public schools to the stability of neighborhoods. My dissertation confirms that the lack of reliable and specific data about vacant and abandoned school facilities serves as a disadvantage to the planning and maintenance of neighborhood and public school structures. As a result of the gap in data, I begin my study by first exploring the overall impact of vacant properties on neighborhood structures. By identifying the impacts of vacant and abandoned residential and commercial properties on the social, economic, and physical structures of communities, I provide an understanding of why the impacts of vacant and abandoned inner-city public schools may escalate the adverse impacts on these same structures.

Second, I present an overview of the history of public schools and the planning and developments of neighborhoods and the siting of public school facilities. Third, I provide a history of roles of public schools and describe how various factors influence the physical conditions of public schools and their abandonments.   Fourth, I identify policies that present unintentional consequences for public schools and the communities that they serve. Some federal, state, and local policies contribute directly or indirectly to the outward migration of inner-city residents, the decline in student enrollments, and as a result, to the abandonment of

11

public schools.   Fifth, I describe the trend of many public school districts to transition from traditionally operated schools to community schools. I conclude my review of literature by reiterating factors that contribute to school abandonments and by identifying, as alternatives to abandonment, some adaptive reuses of the public schools.

By providing a better understanding of the role of public schools and by identifying factors that are contributing to their abandonments and the resulting impacts, this study gives urban and school planners reasons that support the need for the collection and review of comprehensive data and analyses specific to the abandonment of public schools. My research confirms the lack and the need for these data.   My research also identifies the benefits of these data as vital components in strategic urban planning and neighborhood preservation decision making processes.

I suggest that review and analyses of demographic data for neighborhood and public school environments can provide urban and school planners a means to identify potential impacts of school abandonment during decision-making processes. As a result of development of these data analyses, city and school leaders and urban planners may be better equipped to exercise more thoughtful and care in their decisions to close public schools and to mitigate the negative impacts of school abandonments in a proactive, instead of a reactive manner.

Vacant and Abandoned Properties: Inner-City Blight

> *One of the most visible and demoralizing signs of inner city decline is vacant and abandoned property—houses, apartments, commercial and industrial buildings, and lots—that sit and deteriorate, undermining the appearance and economic value of blocks, neighborhoods, and city districts (Accordino and Johnson, 2000).*

An increasing amount of literature describes the negative effects that vacant and abandoned residential and commercial properties have on neighborhoods. As literature indicates, there is little doubt that the visual impact of deteriorating, abandoned buildings have on any neighborhood is a negative one. Visual signs of deterioration generally convey a message that there is a lack of interest or will to address the maintenance of the physical and social structures of communities (Chung; 2002; Mallach, 2004; Sampson and Raudenbush, 2001). The presence of a vacant and abandoned building located in the center of a neighborhood impacts that neighborhood's growth and development (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Katz, 2002).

Abandoned school buildings often occupy a significant amount of acreage in the heart of neighborhoods and often become "anchoring" eyesores for communities. Many of the same theories (increased criminal activity, neighborhood disinvestment, the "broken window" theory[9], etc.) about abandoned residential housing and commercial properties are applicable to abandoned public school buildings as well (Kennedy, 2001).

As a result of business relocations, population losses and economic declines, major U.S. cities continue to be challenged with an increasing number of abandoned properties (Cohen,

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[9] James Q. Wilson's "broken windows" theory suggests that disorder in the physical environment can influence behavior: "If a broken window is not repaired, other windows will soon be broken because the broken windows indicate that no one cares about neighborhood's physical condition. Special report by Rand Corporation, *Does Neighborhood Deterioration Lead to Poor Health?* 2005.

2001; Mallach, 2004). Images most prevalent in many core inner-city areas include vacant lots that have become makeshift dumps in neighborhoods with an abundance of aged, deteriorating residential units. Many downtown areas are plagued with blighted conditions as well, displaying a surplus of vacant, often overgrown, lots and remnants of commercial establishments that have relocated or have gone out of business. Lucy Meade, director of business development for Richmond Renaissance, a downtown economic development group in Richmond, Virginia, describes vacant land as "missing teeth" in the physical landscape of a neighborhood (Hazard, 2005).

Favro (2006) reports that in 2000, nearly 30,000 residential and commercial properties in Philadelphia had been vacant for 10 years or more and that there were tens of thousands of other properties identified as "short-term vacants". During this same period, Detroit had 36,000 vacant buildings and Baltimore and Cleveland 40,000 and 30,000, respectively. Like many central-city business districts, many inner-city neighborhoods are riddled with "missing teeth" or "decaying teeth" in the forms of vacant land and abandoned, boarded up houses and storefronts sitting idle and in states of disrepair. An increasing number of abandoned public school facilities are exacerbating the decline in the physical character of neighborhoods. Visible signs of blight sometimes referred to as *urban decay* affect adversely opportunities of central cities to attract new businesses and residents (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Cohen, 2001; McDaniel, 2006; Mallach, 2004; Setterfield, 1997). Problems associated with "under investment" in infrastructures contribute to inner-city blight, particularly when dilapidated buildings are not upgraded continually (Garde, 2004).

Inner-city blight is associated with a host of problems, including crime, property abandonment, hazardous environments, economic decline, and racial, social and political

isolation, all of which tends to spread over time (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Setterfield, 1997). There is an increased likelihood of significant building deterioration and increased criminal activities in and around buildings that remain vacant extensively. In poorer neighborhoods, vacant and abandoned buildings are 14 times more likely to be targeted by arsonists than in higher income neighborhoods[10]. Increased criminal activities coupled with the concentration or clustering of vacant properties, intensify neighborhood disinvestment (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Chung, 2002; Meyer, 2007).

The "clustering" of vacant and abandoned properties in one area is often the result of continuous abandonments and disinvestments. Developer, Robin Miller, along with three of his business partners, purchased a cluster of 178 properties in a 12-block area in inner city of Richmond, Virginia. The properties, located on nearly 28 acres, are described by Hazard (2005, p. F3) as "neglected old homes, flophouses, and leveled lots." She contends that many social ills attributed to vacant and abandoned properties plague one Richmond community and contribute to its problematic conditions.

Property abandonments equate to losses of tax revenue, and therefore, create financial losses for neighborhoods, schools, and cities as a whole. As a result of the political and economical fragmentations, the cyclical nature of the housing markets contributes to the degree of abandonment being witnessed in many metropolitan areas. Vacant and abandoned properties become dilapidated and contribute to lower property values, which often perpetuate a continuous cycle of inner-city decline. Blighted areas that remain unchecked and uncontrolled result in rapidly declining property values and fewer investment resources (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Setterfield, 1997).

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[10] Source: US Fire Administration: Topical Research Series. Volume 1, Issue 8. January 2001 (Revised December 2001).

Simril (2002, p.10) asserts that the physical appearance of a neighborhood is critical to its ability to attract private sector investors. According to Cohen (2001), abandoned homes contribute to neighborhood decline and become barriers to revitalization. Families with sufficient resources often move away from or avoid declining neighborhoods. However, the poor, who are often unable to escape their environment, often live "clustered" around rodent infested, toxic containing shelters that are often used for drug trafficking and other illegal activities (Accordino and Johnson, 2000).

As a result of the trend in population mobility, as well as social, financial, and economic changes, there is an expectation of neighborhood changes. One primary goal of city, community, and school leaders is to abate negative impacts of decline by developing effective programs that identify and reduce neighborhood flight, neighborhood blight, and that increase neighborhood investments and wealth. The key to neighborhood sustainability is planning effectively for such changes.

Cohen (2001, p. 417) uses Edgar Hoover and Raymond Vernon's[11] six stages to identify a life cycle of inner-city neighborhoods:

1. Relocation from rural areas to inner cities

2. Development of single-family housing and full neighborhood occupancy

3. Downgrading or *thinning out* of populations (characterized by inner-city flight).

4. Blighted neighborhood conditions (characterized by building deterioration, population decline, vacancy, and abandonment).

5. Elimination of blighted conditions through urban renewal/revitalization projects. The removal of physical blight is fundamental to the redevelopment of the overall economic revitalization of a neighborhood.

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[11] Hoover and Vernon, urban economists, developed the life-cycle theory of neighborhoods as a result of their 1950s study of the New York metropolitan region.

6. Re-population of re-established neighborhoods.

Accordino and Johnson (2000, p.303) suggest that "cities are coming to view property abandonment as, if not a cause, at least a contributing factor in a vicious cycle of neighborhood and business district decline." Economist, Donovan D. Rypkema supports the viewpoints of Accordino and Johnson (2000) and Cohen (2001) by contending that:

> *"Stable residential neighborhoods may not seem to be*
> *central to economic development, but in fact they are critical.*
> *Declining neighborhoods means loss of tax revenues for local*
> *government. Declining neighborhoods mean the departure of*
> *the skilled, the educated, the employed, and the middle class.*
> *Declining neighborhoods see increased crime, declining*
> *property values, underutilized public infrastructure, and*
> *deficient schools. Both the public and private sectors suffer*
> *economically when residential neighborhoods decline."* [12]

Facilitating the reuse of vacant and abandoned properties encourages growth in areas with adequate existing infrastructures and services. The redevelopment of vacant and abandoned properties, including public school facilities, is considered smart-growth strategies. The elimination of blighted facilities improves the stability and quality of life in existing neighborhoods and often results in increased property values and revenue for municipalities (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Mallach, 2004).

Unlike residential housing and commercial facilities, neighborhood schools are generally public-owned and operated buildings that serve as vital components in the educational and social growth of entire communities (CEPFI, 1991; Chung 2002; Graham, 2005). Public school facilities, because of their direct roles and value to community education and neighborhood cohesiveness, are believed to impact neighborhoods more negatively when they are abandoned in comparison to other abandoned structures.

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[12] Excerpt from Rypkema's speech given at National Historic Preservation Conference 2001

To recognize the significance of school abandonment and to better understand the concept of school facility and neighborhood planning, I briefly describe the historical role of public schools, as well as the financial, social, and emotional values associated with the planning, siting, construction, and demolition of neighborhood public schools. The social and financial challenges of most inner cities suggest that public school districts are more likely to experience facility closures than their surrounding county school districts (Gale, Pack, and Potter, 2002). Reduced tax bases and the age and declining conditions of many inner-city schools increase the likelihood that these facilities will become victims of abandonment.

Dwindling political support is also considered one of the major causes of the downward spiral of the conditions of public school facilities (Chung, 2002; Setterfield, 1997). However, there has been a renewed interest in the revitalization and historic preservation of neighborhood public schools.   In May 2001, the National Trust for Historic Preservation celebrated with a theme of "restore, renew, and rediscover your historic neighborhood schools." Most public schools constructed pre-World War II are characterized by their design and detailed craftsmanship. In the past, many inner-city schools were designed and constructed with grandeur, style and structural soundness, and as a result, many of these structures have obtained iconic status.[13]

Their historic value and architectural aesthetic significance add to the emotional value and symbolic statuses associated with neighborhood public schools. Consequently, the increasing trend to demolish what some consider neighborhood icons has historians and preservationists lobbying to protect many existing public school buildings. With much of the emphasis on neighborhood revitalization, the construction quality of older public schools, the

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[13]   CEFPI, "Appraisal Guide for Older and Historic School Facilities. www.cefpi.org.

18

value of neighborhood public schools, and the rising costs of construction have ignited a heighten interest in the maintenance of neighborhood public schools.[14]

To better understand the value of neighborhood schools and the potential implications of their abandonments, I provide a brief history of the development of nation's public education system, to include the design and location of public school facilities.

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[14] National Clearing House for Educational Facilities (NCEF). "Preserving Historic Neighborhood Schools". http://www.edfacilities.org/rl/preservation.cfm.

Background/History of Public Schools

Education has always been an important aspect of American communities. The nation's core educational values date back to the days of the early republic, a predominantly agricultural environment. Prior to government established public school facilities, families were responsible for the education of their children. The nation's education system and the planning and development of its school facilities changed as society changed (Mosher, 1982; Graves, 1993). Accommodating the needs of an ever-changing society established the importance of public education and influenced the design, and siting of public school facilities.

In its early years, America's education system was dominated by religious traditions. The education system was charged with shaping the character of a rising generation (Ravitch, 2005). The first schools in the New England colonies began in the private homes of the rich or in neighborhood churches. Wealthy residents often hired tutors to home school their children. Less-affluent families often sent their children to church schools; many of the poorer families could not afford the cost. Education often took a backseat to the financial survival of the family unit. For this reason, most children from poor families often labored alongside their parents instead of attending school (Graves, 1993; Toma, 2005).

In the mid-nineteen century, populations began to changed, and the need for a separate education facility became evident. A rapidly increasing, more religiously diverse population presented challenges for the predominately Catholic-operated schools. The challenge gave rise to the establishment of private schools. However, publicly funded schools needed to be "religion free", but socially and economically equal (Ravitch, 2005). As a result of population shifts and

20

the impact these shifts had on neighborhoods, city planning[15] and school facilities planning programs were created. With increases in urban area populations, the establishment of government schools (often one-room structures) were planned and constructed to supplement private home and church schooling. The one-room structures represented the new environments for educational instruction and a school facilities design that lasted for more than 150 years (CEFPI, 1991). The "common" schools, as government schools were called, were free and open to all white children. These schools were governed by local school boards and financed by local taxes; therefore, decentralizing the control of the design and placement of public schools to individual states and localities (Holy, 1972).

As the nation embraced revolutionary changes, America's education system was forced to adapt in order to meet the needs of a changing society. Industrialization forever altered the nation's landscape, especially in the inner cities. The development of the nation's public school system came through urban, industrial growth and then through post-industrial decentralization (Holy, 1972; Toma, 2005). Technological advances in areas such as communication, manufacturing, and transportation transformed an agricultural economy in to a thriving industrial society, one that now required more from its education system. One-room schools were soon replaced with public grade schools. In addition to the basic educational needs, these new facilities were designed to programmatically and structurally provide physical and cultural enhancement programs. As a result, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and other interior spaces were incorporated in school planning, siting and design of public schools (CEFPI, 1991).

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[15] As defined by Holy (1972, p.2), city planning is the construction and continuous adaptation primarily of the city's physical framework for the control of city development. This type of planning means the anticipation of the city's development and providing for it, legislatively, socially and financially, before the demands of an increasing population become cost prohibited.

More than any institution of civic life, public educational facilities were and continue to be highly subject to the "ebb and flow" of neighborhood demographics (Holy, 1972; Beaumont, 2002, p.6). Flux and decline in the general population translated into similar changes in the enrollment levels of public schools, as well as economic and social compositions. In the early 1900s, American inner cities experienced global immigration in massive numbers; over 22 million immigrants located to the United States (Holy, 1972; Toma, 2005). During this time, the number of students attending public schools increased from nearly 7 million to nearly 16 million, including nearly 3 million immigrant children. This population explosion and the enactment of state compulsory school attendance laws[16] contributed to the increased need for additional public school facilities (Holy, 1972; Beaumont, 2002).

The lack of public school facilities often meant that newly arriving immigrants were forced to attend over-crowded schools on a part-time basis. The rapid changes in student populations and the legal requirements to provide immigrants with a primary education resulted not only in additional pressures on existing school facilities, but also on the planning and development efforts of future neighborhoods (CEFPI, 1991; Gewertz, 2000; Olson, 2000; Orfield, 2001).

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16 Each state develops and along with local school boards provides oversight to ensure that all school age children receive an education. The Commonwealth of Virginia Code§ 22.1-254: Compulsory attendance required; excuses and waivers; alternative education program attendance; exemptions from article. Except as otherwise provided in this article, every parent, guardian, or other person in the Commonwealth having control or charge of any child who will have reached the fifth birthday on or before September 30 of any school year and who has not passed the eighteenth birthday shall, during the period of each year the public schools are in session and for the same number of days and hours per day as the public schools, send such child to a public school or to a private, denominational or parochial school or have such child taught by a tutor or teacher of qualifications prescribed by the Board of Education and approved by the division superintendent or provide for home instruction of such child as described in § 22.1-254.1. As prescribed in the regulations of the Board of Education, the requirements of this section may also be satisfied by sending a child to an alternative program of study or work/study offered by a public, private, denominational or parochial school or by a public or private degree-granting institution of higher education. Further, in the case of any five-year-old child who is subject to the provisions of this subsection, the requirements of this section may be alternatively satisfied by sending the child to any public educational pre-kindergarten program, including a Head Start program, or in a private, denominational or parochial educational pre-kindergarten program. Instruction in the home of a child or children by the parent, guardian or other person having control or charge of such child or children shall not be classified or defined as a private, denominational or parochial school.

In the following section, I define the concept of a neighborhood and briefly describe the transformation of planning and development of neighborhoods and neighborhood public schools. I also describe social, environmental, and health benefits of the placement of public schools for students and communities as a whole.

23

Neighborhood and Public School Planning

As a physical concept, a neighborhood as defined by CEFPI (1991) is the area in which residents are able to share all of the neighborhood's common spaces, including public school facilities. Planners have generally accepted this definition of a neighborhood as a sound basis for the development of most residential areas. From a planning standpoint, schools represent an integral part of the housing environment. In the early 20th century, architects such as Dwight H. Perkins began the movement to design public schools as the centers of neighborhoods that were tied ultimately to the dense fabric of the inner cities themselves (Haar, 2002).   Holy (1972, p.3) defines public school facility planning as,

> *"an effort to draw up a continuous long-term program in*
> *the light of population trends, growth and expansion of the*
> *city, financial capacity of the community, and growing*
> *conceptions of the place therein—with the end in view*
> *of securing maximum safety and educational possibilities*
> *for children, and providing maximum service to the*
> *community."*

Public schools often constitute the primary, if not the only, public facility located within most neighborhoods. As such, the decisions made as to what programs and services are offered at public school buildings contribute to the integration of school facilities into the fabric of their neighborhoods (Ray, 2002). Throughout this nation's history, educators and community leaders have linked democracy and a healthy civic life with the architectural design, placement, and construction of public schools. Ray (2002) states that an integral part of educational planning includes an analysis of the community—to include a documentation of its history, an assessment of its present status, and a projection of its future character and needs. Each generation continues

to struggle with how best to meet the need to provide adequate, quality learning environments for ever-changing populations.

The construction of public school facilities represents significant outlays of capital, and is a major component of the nation's physical, economic, social, and cultural infrastructures (Chung 2002; Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 2009; Katz, 2002; Kennedy, 2005; Strickland, 2003). Consequently, on-going conversations and debates exist about the importance of educational facilities—their placements, their sizes, their usages, and their societal purposes. Some states exercise greater control over the sizes and standards for classrooms and other educational spaces than do other states. Some states do not have defined standards and may not have final authority over the planning, siting, and construction of public educational facilities (Graham, 2005; Graves, 1993.)

Very often, the local and state school boards determine the size, type, and capacity of school facilities. As the governing bodies, local and state boards are also responsible for obtaining the funding required to design and construction school facilities, as well as for the implementation of education policies (Howell, 2005). Public school buildings tend to be some of the largest and most prominent buildings in their neighborhoods (Chung, 2002). As such, planning, design, and placement are particularly important, especially since many of these facilities often remain in the school district's active inventory for an average of fifty plus years (CEFPI, 2005). Equally important is the fact that the core areas of most inner cities have limited amounts of available acreage and funding. As a result, facility construction (replacement or renovation) may be hindered (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Kennedy, 2005).

Historically, most neighborhoods were planned and developed by the service area of an elementary school. Elementary schools typically served as focal points, and set the tones of

25

individual neighborhoods. School sites were often selected relative to the physical location of the learning environment. Schools were usually small because neighborhoods were usually small, and physical locations of schools were selected with purpose. School planning and construction were based on the premise that school facilities would be "integral and inseparable" parts of their communities (Brodwell and Christopher, 1998; Chung 2002; Ray, 2002). To provide equal access, schools were located near the center of the neighborhood's resident population. For the most part, schools continue to be designed to serve the students and the residents living within a defined neighborhood (CEFPI, 1991).

In urban areas where the use and ownership of automobiles were limited, early neighborhood planners believed that community facilities, especially elementary schools, should be located within walking distance (Springer, 2007; Wirt, Choy, Ronney, Provasnik, Sen, and Tobin, 2004). The construction of "centered" elementary schools (located 1/2-mile walking distance of each dwelling) provides a "walkable" and functional community. A walkable community is one where the centered location of the school facility provides several benefits to neighborhood children and their families (Carlos, 2008; Logan, 2001; Garde, 2004; Petersmarck and Wilkerson, 2003).

Walkable communities, often called neo-traditional or mixed-use development, provide the opportunity for parents to be more closely involved in their child's education. Research suggests that parental involvement increases when children attend neighborhood schools, and this involvement results in higher student performance, improved self-image, and greater independence (Login, 2001). The lack of parental involvement is cited as one of the chief reasons for the academic struggles of a Richmond, Virginia public school slated to be closed in 2009 (Hester, 2009).

26

Logan (2001, p.1) asserts, "A child's walk to school—past friends, neighbors, and familiar merchants—creates a lasting memory. It fosters a sense of place in children, and gives them a feeling of belonging in that place." In 1969, nearly half of all students walked or rode their bikes to schools.[17] Today, fewer than one in eight students walk to school; most children ride school busses or are transported in privately owned vehicles (Logan, 2001; Springer, 2007). According to National Household Travel Survey (2001), less than 15% of students between the ages of five and fifteen walk to or from school and only about one percent bike.[18] In 2006, the Atlanta Public Schools Transportation unit operated 362 buses to transport nearly 20,000 students for total of 12,000 miles per day.[19]

The built environment within communities influences access to physical activity (Oder, 2009). For example, a lack of sidewalks, safe bike paths, and parks in neighborhoods can discourage children from walking or biking to school and from participating in other physical activities.[20] Jackson and Kochtitizky (2002, p. 9) report that children living and attending schools in older neighborhoods generally walk to school. Students are four times more likely to walk to schools that were built before 1983 than those more recently constructed. Most neighborhoods built pre-1983 were designed to include a centrally located elementary school that served as the anchor of the community. Older neighborhoods were generally planned and built with the idea that stores and most public accommodations would be located within walking distance of residences (Jackson and Kochtitzky, 2002).

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[17] US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *Safe Routes to School*, available at http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/.

[18] Bureau of Transportation Statistics, National Household Survey, NHTS Version, released January 2003.

[19] Source: Atlanta Public Schools website: www.atlanta.k12.ga.us

[20] 15. Institute of Medicine. Preventing Childhood Obesity-Health in the Balance. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC; 2005.

27

Today, many newer housing developments tend to discourage walking and biking, which tend to make it necessary to use some form of motorized transportation to travel safely within neighborhoods. The development of neighborhoods absent of sidewalks, biking lanes, and safe crossing intersections encourages vehicular travel. Jackson and Kochtitzky (2002, p. 9) attribute this trend to factors such as fragmented and segregated land use, low-density residential developments, lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructures, and the location of new schools away from neighborhood centers. With many newer public school facilities being constructed in remote areas, large parking lots are often required to accommodate the increased need for vehicular accessibility.

The trend to locate schools outside the central cities is believed to contribute to a host of health and social problems for some students and to a number of environmental and economic problems for area residents. Traffic created as a result of the increased automobile travel to and from schools contributes to congestion and higher levels of auto emissions. These pollutants are believed to be contributing factors in respiratory ailments in children, including the significant rise in the diagnoses of asthma, obesity, and diabetes in children. The CDC reports that over the past 25 years, rates of asthma increased 74% in children between the ages of 5 and 14[21].

Neighborhoods designed for *walkability* and *bikablity* can aid in the fight against obesity. Students with shorter distances to walk to school are more likely to walk. Walking to school can contribute to social development and increase the likelihood that children will grow to be active adults (Petersmarck and Wilkerson, 2003; Smith, 2009). Over the last 20 years, the prevalence of overweight children has tripled. According to Petersmarck and Wilkerson (2003), obesity

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[21] Travel and Environmental Implication of School Siting, Environmental Protection Agency, 2003 and CDC, "Surveillance for Asthma-United States, April 24, 1998.

increases the risks associated with diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Overweight and obesity is also been linked with depression and other psychological disorders.[22].

As a result of being a "car culture", most people tend to drive everywhere (Smith, 2008). Today, automobiles are as important to suburban residents as they are to city dwellers (Kasarda, Appold, Sweeney and Sieff, 1997). The increased amount of time spent traveling by automobiles and by school busses contributes to students becoming more sedentary and results in physicians diagnosing the onset of obesity-related illnesses in children at earlier ages. In 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that nearly 17 percent of the nation's children and teens aged 2-19 were overweight.[23]   In 2008, approximately 30.3 percent of children (6 to 11) were reported to be overweight and 15.3 percent reported to be obese. Among adolescents (ages 12 to 19), 30.4 percent are overweight and 15.5 percent are obese.[24] Such statistics are prompting health officials to partner with government and local school officials to combat childhood overweight and obesity trends.

As a consequence of a growing interest in improving students' ability to walk to school, the U. S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration provided a million dollar grant to the Commonwealth of Virginia to fund an initiative called "Safe Routes to School". The goal of the initiative, as Governor Timothy Kaine asserts, "…encourages alternative means of transportation for Virginians of all ages, and these grants will help ensure

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[22]US Department of Health and Human Services: *Overweight and Obesity: At a Glance* (accessed 23 October, 2007). http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_glance.htm

[23] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Health Statistics, *Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents: United States, 2003-2004. (Accessed 23, October, 2007). http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overweight/overwght_child_03.htm*

[24] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Health Statistics brief by Collins, Janet. *Battling Childhood Obesity – The Difference Between Your Child's Good Health and Unhealthy Body Weight http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/pressroom/PDF/battling_childhood_obesity.pdf*

that our children can get to school safely by foot or bike." Kaine adds, "Walking and biking to school offers a host of benefits to students, communities, and the environment" (Lizama, 2008, p. B5).

Many laws discourage the preservation of neighborhood schools and encourage the construction of large remotely located campuses that require parents and students to use vehicular transportation. As research (Smith, 2008) suggests, the increase in vehicular usages increase the potential dangers of highway and roadway travel, which include congestion, accidents and injuries, as well as longer commute times and air pollution related to car emissions.

Research continues to identify the benefits of preserving neighborhood schools, especially in the urban areas. Anti-segregation laws enacted by the federal government and options of specialty or magnet programs offered by public school districts are believed to be contributors to the transporting of students from their neighborhood (home) schools. Glaser, Denhardt, and Hamilton (2002) state that racial integration laws and choice programs played critical roles in changing the composition of the student populations of most neighborhoods and public schools.

From their inception, public school facilities have been used as places to develop and implement public platforms. Overall changes in educational needs and the conditions of school facilities forced educators and policymakers to develop and implement policies accordingly. Though most policies were and continue to be implemented and evaluated at local levels, state and federal agencies have become more concerned and involved in the investigation of factors that impact education and the social and economic structures that support the health and well being of students and their communities (Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 2009).

30

Developing trends indicate a renewed interest in the walkable urban communities. The development of more walkable communities in urban areas will be attractive to young adults. Many young, well-educated adults, often called the "creative class" prefer walkable places to live and work.[25] Ajay M. Garde (2004) suggests in his research[26] that "walkable communities" and other New Urbanist principles that focus on the development of new neighborhood designs are apt to influence public policy, but may not generate enough support to implement these practices on a regional planning level. As a consequence, the development or redevelopment of neighborhood schools may hinge on the region's preferences toward sprawl and infill developments in central cities and older rings in suburban areas (Howell, 2005). Some projects are likely to be challenged by NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) outcries from residents. Such sentiments which often overshadow the adverse impacts of outward migrations and sprawl on poor, inner-city neighborhoods and school systems.

The following section focuses on the influence of public policies on the maintenance, placement, and sustainability of neighborhood public schools.   In this next section, I identify public policies that continue to have unintentional consequences on inner-city neighborhoods and public schools systems. These consequences, as I describe, are contributing to the increase in student and revenue losses for school districts, and therefore, to the direct or indirect increase in the abandonment of public schools.

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[25] Source: 2008. Lienberger, Christopher. "Dallas Should Walk This Way". Brookings Institute, February 15.
[26] Garde, Ajay M. 2004. "New Urbanism as Sustainable Growth?: A Supply Side Story and Its Implications for Public Policy", *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. Volume 24.: 154-170

> *"Idealized, criticized, and reinvented many times over,*
> *public education continues to play a crucial role in how*
> *we see our nation and our future."[27]* *"…Education is*
> *perhaps the most important function of the state and*
> *local governments. Compulsory school laws and the*
> *great expenditures for education both demonstrate*
> *our recognition of the importance of education to*
> *our democratic society. It is required in the performance*
> *of our basic public responsibilities…It is the very*
> *foundation of citizenship.[28]*

The public school system has, for the most part, been challenged to serve diverse

populations, and has had a key role in the development and implementation of public policy.

Throughout history, many have looked to the public school system as a means to help improve

society. However, public schools have often fallen short of society's overwhelming

expectations. Consequently, the contribution and value of public school system continues to

have its share of criticism, much of which is resulting in a host of reform measures (Ravitch,

2005).

The idea to use public school systems as tools of social reform is not new (Haar, 2002;

Urban and Wagoner, 1999). After the Revolutionary War, America was faced with the challenge

of uniting thirteen independent colonies. Education was believed to be the key to accomplishing

this lofty goal. Thomas Jefferson and many of his contemporaries believed that a democratic

society could not be sustained unless a free public education was available to all citizens

(Rockler, 1996). Horace Mann, the nation's first education secretary, viewed public school as a

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[27] Documentary: **SCHOOL**: The Story of American **Public** Education; http://www.pbs.org/kcet/publicschool/index.html
(2004).

[28] *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,* 347 U.S. 483 (1954). The Supreme Court declared that separate but
equal public education was "inherently" unequal. As a result of this decision, American school systems developed
and implemented desegregation plans.

means to improve and equalize educational opportunities for all. He asserted that education contributed positively to the nation's economy. Mann believed that education would increase the wealth of individuals, communities, the state, and the nation as a whole (<u>SCHOOL: The Story of American Public Education</u> [29], 2004; Ravitch, 2005).   However, the entrenchment of segregation on the nation's education system challenged the values and rights that represented the foundation of democracy and its constitution, and was at the heart of a Supreme Court ruling that would change the education system forever.

***Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* and Public School Abandonments**

In the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* ruling, Chief Justice Earl Warren states that education "is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments."   L. Douglas Wilder (2005), the former mayor of Richmond, Virginia, states that, "The community in which I was raised as a child viewed education as essential to one's being." Expounding on the same opinion, the National Education Association (2005, p. 5) states,

> *"Public schools are one of the vital institutions of American*
> *democracy. They serve two purposes: to give all children the*
> *information and skills they need to make their way through*
> *life, and to prepare all children for the rights and responsibilities*
> *of citizenship….Public schools reflect our democratic society,*
> *preparing future citizens for the rough and tumble debate in a*
> *diverse community in which people must confront other*
> *viewpoints while they strive for consensus."*

In its infancy, the public school system was used as one of the essential instruments to promote assimilation and citizenship, thereby emphasizing the ideology of democracy. Between 1890 and 1930, public schools provided an opportunity for nearly three million immigrant

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[29] Source: http://www.pbs.org/kcet/publicschools

33

children to obtain a free education (Graves, 1993; Toma, 2005). As the flow of immigrants continued to increase, the need for more school buildings increased, and as a result, the federal government was challenged to devise a plan to accommodate this demand in addition to providing a jolt to a declining economy.

During a time of national economic devastation, U. S. troops were at war with European and Asian dictatorships, and the American economy was in a depression. After the war, the federal government initiated and funded programs to create construction jobs. As result of these programs, the 1940s represented an era in which new houses and many government buildings, including public school facilities, were constructed in record numbers.   Once the economy improved, many of these programs were phased out, leaving localities with the primary fiscal responsibility for the operation and maintenance of these newly constructed school facilities (Chung, 2002; Graves, 1993).

During the 1950s, public schools were used as catalysts to help America address its segregation issues. School integration was thought by some to be a remedy for the inequities in education inputs and outcomes between white and black students. The theory was that integrated education programs would help produce better student performances and better human beings (Bok, 1996; Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 209; Philipsen, 1999; Wienberg, 1968). Black students typically attended structurally inferior facilities than most white students, and classroom materials and program curriculum were also comparatively better for children attending white schools. Significantly inferior to the grand facilities built during the federally supported construction era, black schools, as described McKelway (2004), were "tar paper shacks" that sometimes operated without books.

34

The 1954 Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v Board of Education*[30] changed the institution of "separate but equal" facilities for America's public school students. Since this decision, most school districts implemented desegregation plans to mitigate public education disparities (Frankenberg and Lee, 2002; Henderson, 2004; Howell, 2005; Weinberg, 1968). Philipsen (1999, p.1) suggests that even though *Brown v Board of Education* decision's intent was to equalize educational opportunities for all children; however, its implementation defeated its purpose. The court's decision was hailed by many and rejected by many others. While the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) hailed Brown as a "legal and ethical watershed in racial policy", southern states were particularly rebellious; some local school districts refused to respond to the Court's decree (Henderson, 2004, p. 271).

The ruling prompted some school districts to close their facilities in defiance, leaving many school buildings to sit and deteriorate. One of the most notable among these districts was Prince Edward County, Virginia that closed its public schools in 1959 and was forcibly reopened by the Supreme Court in 1964. Upper-and middle-class white families enrolled their children in Prince Edward Academy, leaving poor, black children without a public school system (Gregory, 2004).

Other districts and communities kept their facilities opened but used threats of violence and intimidation against blacks as a means to undermine the law. Families courageous enough to endure the resistance faced challenges with having their children bused outside their neighborhoods to predominately white schools. Many of these children traveled to distinctly

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[30] *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,* 347 U.S. 483 (1954). The Supreme Court declared that separate but equal public education was "inherently" unequal. As a result of this decision, American school systems developed and implemented desegregation plans.

different built environments, where cultures and values often clashed (Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 2009; Ortiz, 1994).

Court ordered integration and busing also caused many communities leaders and planners to look more closely at site selections for future schools, especially since many minorities were attempting to relocate to predominately white neighborhoods (Moser and Rubenstein, 2002; Ortiz, 1994). Martin's (2008) opinion piece, "Battle for the City," asserts that Richmond, Virginia's 1947 Bartholomew Plan was the city's first formal master plan. This plan included the construction of a beltway to be built around Richmond with a broad intent to enhance city living. However, Martin suggests the beltway also served to divide, and in some cases, demolish low-income and minority neighborhoods. As a result, most of the remaining predominately black schools continued to be substandard as well as socially and economically isolated.

Site selections for new education facilities were often closely related to historical trends and future growth of planned neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods and public schools were planned and constructed on the outskirts of central cities. Middle- and upper-income whites relocated to remote areas or chose to enroll their children in inner-city private or parochial schools (Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 2009). Most white families did not want blacks as neighbors or as classmates of their children (McKelway, 2004). Inner-city public schools ultimately lost valuable political and financial support, which contributed to the neglect and closure of facilities and to the resegregation of neighborhoods and student populations comprised of mostly poor minority students (Farmer, 2004; Frankenberg and Lee, 2002; McKelway, 2004; Oritz, 1994).

By the mid 1960s and early 1970s, there was a widespread trend in favor of equal educational opportunities for the social classes. For many school districts, "equality" meant the

36

implementation of policies that would integrate children from school districts that were separated socially by class and race. To comply with anti-segregation laws, many minority students had to be bused long distances to larger, better-equipped facilities in white neighborhoods. In some cases, students were required to travel for over an hour one-way to attend their new schools (Brodwell and Christopher, 1998).   The reassignment of students outside their home neighborhood results not only in fewer students in the schools but also means fewer opportunities for transferred students to socialize and interact with students living in their home neighborhoods.

Public school integration "severed" many community ties created through social interactions that took place in neighborhood schools. Studies indicate that school-aged children feel torn between the schools they attend and the neighborhood in which they live and play (Glaser, Denhardt, and Hamilton, 2002; Henderson, 2004). More students participate in after-school sports and other activities when they attend their neighborhood schools than when they are bused to schools outside their home neighborhoods. For students attending their neighborhood schools, parental involvement is generally the norm rather than the exception (National Neighborhood Coalition, 2002).

Academic Achievements, School Choice and Public School Abandonments

By the late 1980s, education headlines no longer focused primarily on school integration; academic performance became the new topic of public and political scrutiny. Many parents, educators, and political leaders began to recognize how declining academic achievements and changing demographics were creating enormous problems for the nation's education system. As

37

a result, the quality of the nation's public school became a norm of most political platforms. As community leaders and education reform advocates expressed their concerns about the quality of public education, many legislators incorporated these concerns into their own personal political agendas. "We have seen the education of our children become a political football," suggests L. Douglas Wilder, former Governor of Virginia and mayor of its capital city, Richmond (Wilder, 2005).

The education system, like many other public systems, depends upon politics to help accomplish its agendas. Howell (2005, p.1) states that most politicians, to include presidents, judges, legislators, governors, and local boards, propose all sorts of education reforms. Democrats and Republicans tend to agree that education reform is necessary; much of the divisiveness is related to the proposed methods of reformation and the availability of required funding to implement and maintain the needed programs. Mitt Romney, a 2008 Republican presidential candidate from New Hampshire states, "The failure of inner city schools, in my view, is the great civil rights issue of our time." During his campaign, he promised, if elected, to work hard to improve schools but did not elaborate on how he would accomplish the task (Associated Press, 2007).

Even though education policies are developed and implemented at each level, by design most aspects of education continue to remain primarily at the state and local levels, governed by education boards and superintendents. Prior to the "movement" to improve academic achievement in public schools, education policies were often absent of direct interference for mayors, governors, and other politicians. One primary reason for the separation is accountability—political leaders implement policies, but are not accountable for the results (Epstein, 2004, p.5; Howell, 2005). The federal government has typically taken a minor role in

38

funding the educational needs of the K-12, leaving local and state governments to provide the majority of school funding and bear the primary responsibility for setting education policy.

However, in an effort to assess the state of the academic performance of America's public school students, the Reagan Administration conducted a study; the results of which were published in 1983 as "*A Nation at Risk*". [31] These results conclude that public school systems are failing to adequately educate students. This report launched an advocacy for school choice, which supports the theory of "free-market" schools that would introduction competition to an otherwise public monopoly. Consequently, in an effort to address the deficiencies identified in "*A Nation at Risk*", student voucher programs, privatization of education, and charter school initiatives have been implemented in a number of states, while some state and local officials are proposing similar initiatives. The primary intent of the state initiatives is to overhaul public school systems through the anticipated competition generated by the demand of school choices executed by families with children attending failing public schools[32].

Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania have enacted education tax credits into legislation (Keegan, 2001). Cleveland, Ohio, and Utah and Wisconsin have implemented student voucher programs (Argon, 2007). Charter school programs have been established throughout the nation. Since the first charter school opened in Minnesota in 1993, over 3,000 have been started in more than 40 states.[33] Tax credits or "scholarships" for low-income students have been proposed in Newark, New Jersey. New York's former governor,

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[31] Special Report: National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation as Risk: The Imperatives for Educational Reform* (Washington, 1983).

[32] Schools that do not to meet minimum learning standards, which are established by state boards of education, as well as the federal government's 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, are termed as failing schools. In Virginia, as in many other states, schools failing to meet established adequate yearly progress (AYP) benchmarks for two consecutive years are considered failing schools (www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE).

[33] White paper, "Increasing the Supply of Public Schools" by Andrew J. Rotherham was released as part of No Child Left Behind Act policy forum held in Washington, DC: April 9, 2003.

Spitzer pledged his support to increasing the number of charter school programs within the nation's largest school system (Will, 2007).   Recently elected governor of Virginia, Robert McDonnell, supports a change in Virginia's charter school laws to allow more programs to be implemented. Governor McDonnell believes that charter programs would provide education choices and support federal mandates to improve the quality of poor performing schools (Meola, 2010).

Some of the most comprehensive and criticized federal mandates created to improve education quality are included in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Since public school dollars typically follow students, many believe, including Kitty Boitnott, president of the Virginia Education Association, that choice programs like charter schools siphon not only students from public school districts, but funding as well (Kasarda, 1993; Maxwell, 2007; Meola, 2010).   As result of choice programs and the federal mandates of No Child Left Behind, I suggest that the resulting losses of public school students and funding contribute to public school abandonments.   In the following section, I identify the intent of the No Child Left Behind Act and describe some unintentional consequences, to include school abandonments.

No Child Left Behind Act and Public School Abandonments

The federal government has also taken a more proactive stance in setting policy that would hold public school districts accountable for the quality of education provided students. One such program, the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCBL) initiative of the Bush administrations, expands the federal government's role in the reformation of the nation's education system. NCLB has been deemed one of the most sweeping and prominent federal

education laws this decade (Ogletree and Eaton, 2007; Ravitch, 2005). This initiative requires public school systems to satisfy a number of academic performance and safety requirements. For example, between 2013 and 2014, the NCLB Act requires that all public school students achieve the "proficient" level on state standardized tests (Klein, 2007; Quinn, 2007; Walsh-Sarnecki, 2002). As a corrective action, in the interim, school systems are required to offer supplemental remedial services to students who fail to meet proficiency statuses.

School divisions must allow children to transfer from failing schools to schools that are meeting the Act's standards (Johnson and Wermers, 2003). However, the transfer choices in many states are limited to schools within the same school division. Consequently, better-performing schools may become overcrowded, while others in the same district become under populated. NCLB mandates do not include funds to help local school districts build additional facilities; nor, does it provide financial support to renovate existing ones (Kennedy and Argon, 2004).

The federal government subsidizes remedial-related services, and as a consequence, penalizes those school districts that continue to perform below the set standards. Penalties for non-compliance include the withdrawal of all or partial funding, the replacement of teachers or school administrators, changes of curriculum, and the closure or abandonment of failing schools. In addition to federally imposed standards, states are permitted to set their own performance standards and penalties. Some states have implemented performance measurements and accountability standards for teachers.

These standards add to the burdens of many urban school districts where the failure to acquire and retain highly qualified and certified teachers is problematic, particularly those in the fields of math and science (Graham, 2005). This failure contributes to academic the failures of

41

inner-city schools. In 2003, Wermers reports that nearly one in five core academic classes in Richmond Public Schools was taught by teachers who were not qualified to teach the subjects they were assigned. Wermers suggests that urban schools are losing a number of highly qualified teachers because of dysfunctional personnel hiring practices. Wermers (2003, p. A14) states that many urban area school systems have "cumbersome application reviews, poor customer service, inadequate budget and planning processes, and a lack of urgency (to address teacher performance and qualification deficiencies). As a result, many highly qualified teachers, willing to work in some of the most troubled inner-city environments, are lost to other school systems.

Kastner (2007) reports that in Petersburg, Virginia, school division experienced problems hiring and retaining qualified teachers. Kastner states that in 2006, some Petersburg public schools had entire departments where all the assigned teachers were substitutes. This dismal fact may be contributing to the district's significantly poor test scores and its reported failures to meet the state and federal performance standards, to include NCLB.

As a means to avoid federal sanctions associated with NCLB, many states, according to Archibald (2004), underreport the number of schools that are failing to meet the annual yearly progress (AYP) requirements. Consequently, some fear that states with more stringent standards are unfairly penalized when ranked with schools with lower established standards (Walsh-Sarnecki, 2002). In Virginia, Sinclair (2005) reports that all students are required to master the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. She states that in addition to the mastery of the SOL tests, a certain percentage of students in each of various "subgroups" such as blacks, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students must be included in the reported percentages of students who meet the standards. If one subgroup fails, the entire school fails to

42

meet the standard. Walsh-Sarnecki (2002) reported that in Michigan, a school is considered failing if the tests scores fall below the 20th percentile established by the state.

In 2005, Detroit Public Schools 63 schools failed to meet the state's academic standards (Higgins, 2005). Failure to meet state and federal standards may result in withdrawal of all or partial funding linked to the improvement of student academic achievement.

One major criticism of NCLB is the federal government's failure to fully fund the program mandates, causing undue burdens on many public school systems, especially those in poor inner-city areas. Consequently, state and local government must absorb all funding shortfalls, and as a result, some states consider withdrawing from NCLB and forfeiting the federal funding (Kennedy and Argon, 2004). In 2005, the Commonwealth of Virginia contemplated withdrawal from the program. However, over the objections of many school district superintendents, the Virginia Department of Education decided that a partial receipt of nearly $280 million federal dollars was better than the receipt of zero dollars (Hardin, 2007; Klein, 2007; www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE, 2005).

August 22, 2005, in a more rebellious response to funding shortfalls, Richard Blumenthal, Connecticut's Attorney General, filed suit against the U. S. Department of Education over the NCLB Act[34]. Blumenthal's complaint argues that the federal government's funding for its mandates was insufficient to meet its testing and accountability requirements (Archer, 2005; Quinn, 2007). Connecticut's Department of Education reports that from January

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[34] The case is *Connecticut v. Spellings*, U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut, No. 305CV1330.

43

2002 to January 2008 a funding shortage of nearly $41.7 million would be needed to comply with the mandates of NCLB.[35]

Although funding shortfalls are often the primary concerns of most state and local school administrators, many are also concerned about the impacts of NCLB on student enrollments and school facilities. While many believe that choice is a critical element to providing a quality education to all students, others believe that many choice programs "cream" or siphon better performing students from poorer, inner-city school districts. As a result, many inner-city schools have surplus classrooms that are populated with a significant number of students with academic and socio-economic challenges (Associated Press, 2003; Kasarda, 1993, Maxwell, 2007).

Policymakers, educators, city and civic leaders continue to be tasked to create effective programs to combat the economic and social ills of concentrated poverty, conditions that are becoming the norm for many inner-city neighborhoods and public schools (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Katz, 2000). An expected component of any education reform program is that public school districts are held accountable for producing well-educated and marketable students (Martz, 2007; Ravitch, 1999; Setterfield, 1997). Few college instructors and employers feel that inner-city public school graduates are academically prepared to enter college classrooms or the workforce (Graham, 2005; Ruiz-de-Valesco and Fix, 2002). Inadequate achievement at the primary and secondary levels creates ill-prepared college entrants. As the demands of advanced technology and global marketability increase, organizations are requiring that employees are more knowledge-based and more diverse in their skill sets.

Business leaders expect graduates to be innovative, highly motivated, and well-prepared (educated) to function in highly competitive global markets. Bok (1996) suggests that business

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[35] "Cost of Implementing the Federal No Child Left Behind Act in Connecticut." Research by Connecticut State Department of Education. May 4, 2005.

leaders and government officials should be concerned about the impact that a poorly educated

society may have on not only the local environments but on the nation's economic

competitiveness as well. Bok states that,

> *"Government officials, business executives, and*
> *opinion leaders of all kinds now look upon education*
> *as more important than ever, not only for the students*
> *but for the progress of the economy and the welfare of*
> *society as a whole"* (Bok, 1996, p55).

Like Bok, some believe that educational achievement and economic successes are linked,

such that the ability to increase the nation's standard of living begins in the classroom (Schrag,

1999).   Therefore, the environments perceived to be most conducive to higher educational

achievement are believed to be those that contribute positively to the nation's economic wealth.

Graham (2005, p.250) suggests that the goal of education is much broader than preparing

students for employment. She states the education is viewed as a means for older generations to

prepare the youth to assume adult responsibilities by shaping ingenuity, integrity, attitudes, and

the capacities to work hard both individually and collectively. For these reasons, families

without options to relocate to *positive* learning environments are perceived to be disadvantaged

as a result. Education reform efforts to minimize the disadvantages of poorer learning

environments often lead to families abandoning public schools. In many inner-city schools, an

impact of abandonment is poverty and minority concentrated classrooms.

45

Residential Selections, Poverty, Inner-city Flight and Public School Abandonments

A growing body of social science research indicates that residing in distressed, high poverty neighborhoods undermines the long-term life chances of families and children, cutting off access to mainstream social and economic opportunities (Olson, 2000; Turner and Rawlings, 2005). According to Michael Casserly (1993), big city schools systems tend to operate in areas with high concentrations of poverty, homelessness, crime, and drug abuse. He further asserts that in addition to those factors, other influences like declining financial resources, lack of job opportunities, as well as economic, cultural, racial and political isolation contribute to population losses and corporate relocations.

Poor minority students and adults living in distressed communities are also likely to be isolated from job opportunities as result of inadequate public or private transportation and employment resources (Turner and Rawlings, 2005). According to Brookings Senior Fellow, Robert Puentes (2009)[36], "Allowing jobs to shift away from city centers hurts economic productivity, creates unsustainable and energy inefficient development, and limits access to underemployed workers."

Turner and Rawlings (2005, p 5.) suggest that children who grow up in distressed neighborhoods and attend high poverty, poor-performing schools are less likely to succeed academically and are apt to become involved in dangerous and criminal activities. Residential selection is the most common form of school choice available to American families (Gregory, 2004; Howell and Peterson, 2001). While whites and minorities, by law, are able to attend the

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[36] Source: Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program report, "Job Sprawl Has Far-Reaching Economic Effects" *National League of Cities*, *Brookings* 4/6/2009

same schools, residential selection continues to contribute to school segregation. Generally, students are assigned to the schools located in the neighborhoods in which they reside legally.

Ogletree and Eaton (2007) assert that children of all racial backgrounds are typically more segregated in their school environments than adults in their workplaces. White families without school-aged children are more likely to live in integrated neighborhoods when compared to white families with young children. Many middle- and upper-income families with school-age children generally reside in suburban areas. For many families with young children, school quality is the primary consideration in their residential selections. Varady and Raffel (2003) state that one important factor to consider in the quality of life in any neighborhood is the quality of schools.

Poor performing schools are believed to be major contributors to inner-city flight (McKelway, 2004; Moore, 2007; Orfield, 2002; Proscio, 2004). Over the last fifty years, according to Varady and Raffel (2003), there have been disproportionate numbers of middle-income households moving outside of the central cities to the suburbs. Homebuyers' perceptions of inner-city public schools are significant in their determination of which neighborhood to reside, and therefore, contributes to the decline of higher income households in urban neighborhoods. Unless cities leaders are sensitive to the middle classes' search for educational quality for their children, inner-city neighborhoods will continue to lose higher income households and schools will continue to lose students and revenue (Orfield, 2001; Varady and Raffel, 2003, p. 4)

Most middle- and upper-income families have the freedom, through adequate financial resources, to relocate to neighborhoods of choice, and as a result, have the ability to select better-performing schools (Barrow, 2001). However, the learning opportunities for many inner-city

47

students are severely limited by their inability to choose where they reside, and therefore, where they attend school. Since residency requirements offer low-income families little or no recourse as to school preferences, many school systems have begun to offer choice options through federal and state subsidized voucher and charter school programs[37] (Lane, 2001). As more students exercise options to leave their neighborhood schools, school administrators are finding it difficult to forecast effectively student enrollments; and therefore, the maintenance of existing facilities and program requirements is difficult as well (Kennedy, 2007).

In most instances, the increased use of choice options results in the increase of empty desks, empty classrooms, and underutilized school buildings. In other districts, the loss of students transferring out of the district may not be reflected in the reported annual enrollments. In some school systems, total student enrollment remains stable as a result of a steady influx of immigrant children. As a result, reports by school districts that focus on the aggregate totals of student enrollment do not identify demographic indicators that would provide more detailed descriptions of the student populations (Orfield, 2001). According to Orfield (2001) and Johnston (2001), disparate birth rates, immigration, and the construction of new schools in white suburban communities continue to contribute to the increase in losses of whites in inner-city schools.

Despite the causes, inner-city schools have been losing white students for decades, and the results are often concentrations of low-income, minority families with schools that consist primarily of some the city's most disadvantaged children (Cohen, 2001; McDaniel, 2006; Peterson and Greene, 1999; Orfield, 2001). Orfield (2001) reports that although the diversity of

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[37] Charter schools are public schools that are granted a specific amount of autonomy (determined by state law/or the local charter. Depending on the state, charter schools may receive between 85% and 100% of the public funding for each student enrolled.

48

student populations has increased significantly, most children are growing up in separate societies and separate schools. He adds that residential segregation and discrimination remain prominent in metropolitan areas.

Today, while "people sprawl" includes many multi-income families from all race and ethnic backgrounds, the impact of outward migration of whites from central cities has been particularly influential. Inner-city flight, particularly "white flight,"[38] creates more racially and economically segregated neighborhoods. White flight contributes to the understanding of why inner cities are experiencing increased concentrations of low-income minority neighborhoods and schools where students are believed to be more unskilled and less marketable (Turner and Rawlings, 2005).

Over the last decade, many of the nation's largest cities have experienced an "exodus" or flight of white populations. The migration of whites away from central cities often results in the polarization of whites from minorities (Shaw, 1996). **Table 1** identifies ten of American's largest cities that experienced the greatest declines in their overall white populations between 1990 and 2000. Four of the top ten cities included **Table 1** were identified in the state of California. As noted in the table, in 1990, all of the cities included had a majority white population. Between 1990 and 2000, whites migrated away from these cities in numbers significant enough to change the overall populations to ones with white populations representing the minority.[39]

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[38] *White Flight* refers to the relocations of whites from central cities to the suburbs in an effort to avoid school and neighborhood integrations.

[39] Special report: "Racial Change in the Nation's Largest Cities: Evidence from the 2000 Census". Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. April, 2001.

49

Table 1 Top Ten American Cities: Greatest Percent Change of "White Flight" (1990-2000).

City	Percentage of White Population (1990)	Percentage of White Population (2000)	Percentage of Decline in White Population
Anaheim, CA	56.60%	35.90%	20.80%
Riverside, CA	61.30%	45.60%	15.70%
Milwaukee, WI	60.80%	45.40%	15.40%
Rochester, NY	58.30%	44.30%	14.00%
Sacramento, CA	53.40%	40.50%	12.80%
Fort Worth, TX	56.50%	45.80%	10.70%
Augusta-Richmond, GA	54.00%	43.70%	10.30%
Philadelphia, PA	52.10%	42.50%	9.60%
Boston, MA	59.00%	49.50%	9.50%
San Diego, CA	58.70%	49.40%	9.30%

Source: "Racial Change in the Nation's Largest Cities: Evidence from the 2000 Census." The Brookings Institute, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. April, 2001.

The exodus of white, skilled, and professional workers continues to alter the demographics of most central cities. The demographic compositions of segregated communities are often mirrored in their neighborhood schools, where the resulting implications are often magnified. An analysis of the 2000 census data by the Brookings Institute Center on Urban Policy[40] concluded that the overall white population in 100 of the nation's largest cities decreased from nearly 52 percent in 1990 to 44 percent in 2000. At the same time, these same 100 cities experienced an overall 43 percent increase of Hispanic growth over the 1990 levels.

As I illustrate in **Table 2,** between 1993 and 2000, despite the fact that whites continued to maintain the majority in the overall student population nationwide, white students steadily abandoned central city schools. As the table also indicates, in 1993, white students represented 66% of all students enrolled in public schools. By 2003, the representation of white students reduced to 59%. In 1993, minorities represented 56% of the students attending central cities public schools, with whites comprising only 43%. By 2003, nearly 65% of the nation's central

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[40] Analysis using total population and race counts from the 1990-2000 Census Summary Tape File 1(STF-1) and Redistricting Data Summary File (P.L. 94-171).

city public schools were represented by minorities, with Hispanics representing 30% and Blacks 28%.

Table 2 Percent Distribution of Public School Enrollment by Locale and Race/Ethnicity[41]

Year and race/ethnicity	Total	Central city	Urban fringe
1993			
White	**66.0**	**44.3**	**68.8**
Total minority	**34.0**	**55.7**	**31.2**
Black	16.6	28.7	13.6
Hispanic	12.7	21.4	11.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.6	5.0	5.4
2000			
White	**61.0**	**37.0**	**64.8**
Total minority	**39.0**	**63.0**	**35.2**
Black	17.0	29.6	12.9
Hispanic	16.6	26.8	16.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.2	5.7	5.2
2003			
White	**58.7**	**35.2**	**63.5**
Total minority	**41.3**	**64.8**	**36.5**
Black	17.2	27.7	13.3
Hispanic	18.5	29.8	17.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.4	6.6	4.9

Between 1993 and 2003, while the nation's central city public school districts reported whites students in the minority, white students remained in the majority in urban fringe areas. In urban fringe school systems, white students declined between 1993 and 2000 (-4%) and between 2000 and 2003 (-1%). In contrast, the total minority students changed in the urban fringe area schools during this same period. Minority populations increased by 4% between 1993 and 2000.

The migration of whites from central city neighborhoods and public schools has and continues to impact their physical, social, economic and political conditions. In the following

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[41] Analyses - SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, The NCES Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 1993-94, 2000-01, and 2003-04.

51

section, I further describe these conditions and identify where some school abandonments are being implemented.

Inner-City Neighborhoods and Public School Abandonments

Many inner-cities neighborhoods have lost political clout due to continual outward migration. Constituents who are represented by politically strong leadership find that their agendas are often easier to implement. Less political clout often equates to less available resources for communities and their school divisions. The financial and political clout needed to implement changes and create a means to support the continuance of neighborhood schools and many supporting programs decline or cease to exist as inner-city flight continues. Funding for school facility improvements have been extremely limited as a result of population shifts and political declines (Proscio, 2004; Setterfield, 1997).

Like the continuous debates surrounding the best means to improve the academic performances, meeting the financial needs to address the many building deficiencies of aged public schools is apt to be difficult. Most inner cities have an abundance of school-related needs but not enough revenue to meet those needs. A 2005 newspaper article (*Richmond Times Dispatch)* reports that public school districts overall had increased their debt capacity to accommodate school districts' needs. The article also states that the according to a Census Bureau report, the 2002-2003 expenditures for the nation's public K-12 population increased nearly 4 percent, totaling $453 billion and that during this same period, public schools operated nearly $250 billion in the "red".

The financial woes of public school districts are not likely to improve during times of economic difficulties. Such conditions exacerbate the challenges to address the physical and

financial problems associated with the maintenance of aged, underutilized school buildings. The continued decline in the city's population makes Detroit Public Schools a prime example. Detroit's population dropped 4.2 percent from 951,270 in 2000 to 911,402 in 2004. This population decline is the biggest exodus from the city since the "white flight" of the 1960s and 1970s (MacDonald, 2005; Maxwell, 2007). Such a population loss should alarm city officials; a population less than a million would put Detroit at risk of losing federal and state revenues that would impact all city services, including public schools. Projected declines in student enrollments prompted the closure of 33 school buildings during the summer of 2007 (Maxwell, 2007).

According to Ken Burnley, former Chief Executive Officer of Detroit Public School, the closures were required for fiscal reasons; the school system could no longer afford to operate the same number of schools with a steady decline in its student enrollment. During his tenure, he proposed to save $560 million by closing neighborhood schools. These closures, suggest Pratt, Walsh-Sarnecki and Higgins (2005), could trigger additional student losses to charter schools and other school choice programs. More importantly, "… what will this do to community life in Detroit?" asks David Arsen, a professor of educational administration at Michigan State University. "Families generally like neighborhood schools. He added, "Schools are a critical element to sustaining a neighborhood. It (*school closure*) just makes it all the more difficult to revitalize a neighborhood" (MacDonald, 2005, p.1).

Pratt, Walsh-Sarnecki, and Higgins (2005) report that Detroit Public Schools approved the abandonment of 34 of its 252 schools. Many experts, according to MacDonald (2005), believe that the closures would represent the most schools closed by a school district in any one year. Most of the proposed closures are elementary schools; 26 of the 34 potential closures were

53

elementary schools. School officials state that the most daunting problem for the district is the continued decline in city's population and the expectation of closing another 60 to 75 schools by 2010.

The current Chief Financial Officer, Joan McCray, states that Detroit's eroding tax base and student decline have contributed to the district's current funding disparities. Since 2000, according to McCray, the district lost 67,000 funded pupils, 5,000 in FY2009 alone[42]. As anticipated, official student count for FY2010 fell below 90,000. If a school district's student enrollment falls below 100,000, Michigan's law allows for more entities to open and operate charter schools within the school district.[43]

There are roughly 40 charter school programs currently operating in Detroit. Continued student declines in Detroit will no doubt lead to additional debates related the district's deficit reduction strategies and school closures. Steve Wasko, the District's spokesperson, states that there is "absolutely no question" that more neighborhood schools will be closed (Mrozowski and Nichols, 2008, p.1). Jennifer Granholm, Michigan's Governor, states that "the cash-strapped Detroit Public Schools will have to close more school buildings and downsize further in order to make the system viable and attractive to parents" (Mrozowski and Nichols, 2008, p.1).

Like Detroit, the central cities and school systems of Chicago, Richmond (VA), and Philadelphia and the District of Columbia have experienced population declines, and as a result, are also challenged to determine what to do with the resulting abandoned elementary school

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[42] Detroit Public Schools FY2009 Adopted Budget, Letter of Transmittal, page 5.
http://www.detroit.k12.mi.us/data/finance/docs/2008.08.06_FY_2009_Adopted_Budget.pdf
[43] Michigan law: The Revised School Act 451 of 1976 sets a student enrollment of 100,000+ as the first class designation. Detroit Public Schools was the only first class school district in the state.   Should Detroit Public Schools enrollment drop below 100,000, the restriction on the creation charter school programs with the district is lifted. See Michigan State Law: 380.402: First Class School District-Sec. 402.
www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-451-of-1976.pdf.

buildings[44]. While most people, including politicians, educators, and parents, appear

sympathetic to the principle of maintaining neighborhood schools, practical circumstances often

lead to school abandonments and demolitions instead.

In addition to fiscal realities, Weihs (2003, p. 1) asserts that factors such as enrollment

changes, modern technologies, deferred maintenance practices, and curriculum objectives are

key in the determination of educational utility, and very often, the fate of many public school

facilities.

Public School Utility and Facility Conditions

Many inner-city schools that were built during the 1950s are still in use today. Many

believe that most of these facilities have physically outlived their usefulness and that renovations

are not practical or cost feasible (Kennedy, 2002; Kowalski, 1995). Many also perceive newly

constructed schools to be better educational environments than modernized older schools.

Despite their assessed economic values, the social and symbolic values of neighborhood schools

are difficult to translate solely into monetary terms. Historically, older neighborhood schools

have long been termed as the "hearts" of American communities (Logan, 2001; Oritz, 1994;

Simril, 2002).

Neighborhood schools represent a community's identity—its values, its culture, its unity,

and its strength. The nation's public school buildings have been icons in the physical fabric of

their neighborhoods, and have from their inception, played a major role in the economic and

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[44] Detroit Public School division recommended the closure of twenty-six elementary schools. See Appendix A. *Source:* Christine MacDonald, "Detroit announces 34 school closures." *The Detroit News*. Thursday, February 10, 2005

social stability of these areas. Chung (2002) states that public schools can have a profound influence on the quality of neighborhoods. A number of educational theorists and practitioners have begun to look seriously at the importance of educational environments, particularly those of the struggling inner-city schools. As is evident by a number of studies conducted in the 1990s, improving the physical conditions of public schools may help improve student achievement (Ogletree and Eaton, 2007).

Consequently, educators and political leaders at all levels have begun to understand that the environmental conditions of many of the school facilities built in the 1950s are no longer adequate. Having reached their critical ages, many of these facilities required significant upgrades to meet the educational needs of all students. More importantly, local school districts can no longer expect to meet these needs with declining budget allocations (Argon and Kennedy, 2004).

Public schools rely upon political and government organizations for support (AASA, 1976; Howell, 2005). In 1994, Congress introduced a bill, the Education Infrastructure Act of 1994[45], which was sponsored by the U.S. Senator from Illinois, Carol Moseley Braun. The Act's intent was to allocate federal funding to help improve the physical conditions of K-12 school facilities. The bill represented the first partnership of the federal government with local and state education agencies to address the building deficiencies of public schools. Even though The Act was authorized by Congress and created hope for school systems nationwide, funding was not appropriated.

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[45] HR 4316: The Infrastructure Act authorized direct federal grants for repair, renovation, alteration and construction of public elementary and secondary schools, school libraries, and media centers. Grants were authorized for LEAs that lacked fiscal capacity and where school buildings were in urgent need of repair. The initial funding for the Infrastructure Act, Title XII ESEA for FY1995 ($100 million) was rescinded with no subsequent funding. http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/index.html

In 1995, the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) released, "*Condition of America's Schools*". This report estimated that nearly $127 billion was needed to repair or upgrade the nation's public school buildings. Also according to this report, approximately 3.5 million students attended some 60,000 schools where at least one type of building was in poor condition (defined as consistent substandard performance) or needed to be replaced because it was non-operational or showed significantly substandard performance. However, 24 percent or 11 million students attended nearly 19,000 schools that reported that at least one onsite building was in less than adequate condition. **(See Table 3).**

Like the Education Infrastructure Act that preceded it, the significance of the study, *"Condition of America's Schools,"* was minimized by the limited amount of actual appropriations provided to address the required construction and maintenance of school infrastructures. The lack of adequate maintenance leaves school buildings in states of progressive deterioration and little to no oversight or authority for correction (Kennedy and Argon, February 2004). Without adequate oversight, many of these properties will continue to deteriorate, and their assessed values will continue to decline. Consequently, the poor conditions of school facilities will translate to revenue losses and negative impacts on the fiscal stability and sustainability of the governing municipalities.

Table 3 Number and Percentage Distribution of Public Schools and Enrollments: 1999

Condition of All Onsite Building Types	Schools		Students	
	Percentage Distribution	Number	Percentage Distribution	Number
All Public Schools	100	78,300	100	45,000,000
Schools with building types in Adequate or Better Condition[1]	76	59,600	76	34,000,000
Schools with at least one type of building in Less than Adequate Conditon[2]	24	18,700	24	11,000,000
1. Ratings of adequate or better condition encompass the ratings of excellent, good, and adequate.				
2. Ratings of less than adequate encompass the ratings of fair, poor, and replace.				
Source: Fast Response Survey System (FRSS 73) on Conditions of School Facilities, 1999.				

According to Accordino and Johnson (2000) many absentee landlords take advantage of the low purchase prices of dilapidated properties for rental purposes, but these landlords rarely invest the capital needed to repair these buildings or maintain the landscape of the neighborhood. School and city administrators, "public landlords", often abandon school buildings rather than invest in renovations or adaptive reuses. As a result, neighborhoods in which school facilities are located are apt to become victims blight and of disinvestment practices (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Katz and Liu, 2000; Setterfield, 1997).

The poor conditions of some inner-city neighborhoods add risks and additional costs to most revitalization efforts. Consequently, the number of private investors and developers willing to commit resources in declining neighborhoods are limited (Simril, 2002). Developers, who do construct or renovate properties in core inner-city neighborhoods, most often target families without young children. Many developers believe that neighborhoods with poor quality, poor

58

performing schools will not attract the moderate and high income-producing families (McDaniel, 2006; Proscio, 2004).   Paul C. Brophy warns that,

> *While development of housing for households that are unconcerned*
> *with the quality of schools can help populate cities, central cities*
> *cannot thrive without holding and attracting families who want good*
> *public schools for their children. Poor schools continue to lead an*
> *exodus of middle-class families…Poor schools weaken demand life in*
> *central cities, and that loss of demand from middle-income parents*
> *with children further weakens school systems that need revenue and*
> *parental involvement at the school and school-system level.*[46]

Dr. Moeser, an urban-planning scholar, adds "Schools drive more than any single factor where people live, or whether businesses will relocate" (Kollatz, 2008).

As Robin Miller[47], a Richmond, Virginia area developer and city resident affirms that the poor performing schools in the city of Richmond have precluded him from developing family-friendly housing in the core areas. His efforts are focused typically on the construction of high-end condominiums meant to attract young professionals without children and early retirees. Miller believes that families with children will relocate outside the Richmond City area or enroll their children in private schools in lieu of enrollment in Richmond City Schools (Hazard, 2005). Developers working in other inner cities share Miller's philosophy.

Despite the trend of population losses, the downtown areas of Baltimore, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and Chicago have had substantial reinvestment in downtown housing projects that target families without children. Much of this construction is built to attract baby boomers. The

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[46] Paul C. Brophy, *Making the School-Housing Connection Work: A Briefing Paper for the Enterprise Foundation's Real Estate Leadership Council* (Columbia, MD: The Enterprise Foundation, 2004), 3. Referenced by Tony Proscio, *School, Community and Development: Erasing the Boundaries.* The Enterprise Foundation. 2004.

[47] Robin Miller is well known in the Richmond, Virginia area for his adaptive reuses of vacant and abandoned buildings, including abandoned neighborhood schools. He and his partner, Daniel Gecker, have utilized historical credits and various other government incentives to finance the renovation of many vacant and abandoned buildings. Mr. Miller and Mr. Gecker partner to teach a class at Virginia Commonwealth University. The class is specific to the adaptive reuse of inner-city properties.

availability of more "boomer"[48] housing units is contributing to a significant numbers of well educated, childless families returning to many central cities (Zielenbach, 2005). Jo Lord (2007) reports that since they no longer have concerns about the education of their children nor the conditions of schools, many baby boomers relocate back to central cities, seeking to take advantage of the amenities of inner-city living. "I moved to the county for the schools, I don't need them anymore" states Matt Thornhill, a Richmond resident, founder and president of the Boomer Project, a marketing research and consulting firm that specializes in addressing the needs of boomers (Lord, 2007, p. 36). In the District of Columbia, most newly constructed and recently sold housing units (nearly 62%) are high-end condominiums that are typically homes to very few low-income, public school students and their families (McDaniel, 2006). Such "restrictive" housing developments contribute to fewer students for the school district and often lead to more school consolidations and abandonments.

Turner and Rawlings (2005) state that in many inner-city neighborhoods, jobs are scarce, crime and violence are common, and schools are academically and physically poor. Like many of the other physical structures in most inner-city neighborhoods, school facilities are aged, and due to a lack of maintenance and repair, are in poor physical conditions. Despite the fact that some of school facilities are structurally sound, many are often unsafe environmentally. Many aged school buildings contain asbestos and lead, which are costly to abate (Kleinberg, 1995). Very often recommendations for school abandonments are linked to increasing costs associated with the abatement of hazardous materials. In some cases, the overall renovation of school facilities, including the abatements of hazardous materials, is more cost feasible than the construction of new facilities.

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[48] "Boomer" refers to the "baby-boomer" generation as the generation born between 1946 and 1964. Estimated number of baby boomers, as of July 1, 2005 was 78.2 million. <http://www.census.gov/popest/national

In the following section, I discuss policies with mandatory requirements as well as standard practices that directly or indirectly lead to decisions to build new schools in lieu of renovating existing ones. As state defined, requirements often vary.

Public School Facilities: New Constructions or Renovations?

School districts and their communities must determine if the educational adequacy and building conditions warrant the financial investment needed to rehabilitate the facility (Weihs, 2003). Greim (2005) suggests that in some instances the cost of replacing outdated systems, upgrading life and safety deficiencies, and accommodating program expansions may far exceeds the cost of building a new facility. However, there still may be valid reasons to renovate an older building rather than construct a new one.

Generally, the physical conditions of public schools are assessed and measured in terms of building age. As suggested by the NCES (2003) *Facilities Information Management* report*,* the age of a school building is neither an accurate predicator of a facility's condition nor its need to be replaced. According to this report, despite 40 years being reported as the average age of the nation's school facilities, many active schools are over 50 years. Some buildings that have been well maintained have exceeded 100 years. For this reason, many believe that the initial design and construction quality, coupled with a degree of adequate maintenance, make a better predicator of a building's overall condition than the use of age only.

One problem with using age only as the predicator is the fact that many schools have at some point undergone some type of modernization, and the original construction age is often used to indicate the buildings' current condition. As a result of this flaw in the assessment, city

61

and school planners have been encouraged to use the *functional age* of a building as a better predicator. The functional age is used to address the imperfect correlation between the actual age of the school and current condition of the entire facility (CEFPI, 2004). The lack of standardization and lack of education and training of many of those making decisions to close facilities often result in many schools being replaced based on insufficient research (Chung, 2002).

As indicated by a NCES 2003 study, the National Association of College and University Business Officers and the Association of Higher Education Facilities Officers have adopted a "Facility Condition Index (FCI)." The FCI, identified in **Figure 1**, is a standard tool that is used by many architects, engineers, and facility planners to assess the conditions of school facilities and determine whether or not it is more economical to fully modernize the existing buildings or to construct new ones. However, there is no requirement for K-12 education administrators or city planners to apply such a formula. In many school districts, there are no standards to determine the total cost to correct building deficiencies or building replacement costs. More important, there is no assurance of available funding to accommodate the budget shortfalls of most school systems. As a result, many school systems are "fitting" their building needs into a customized formula to meet budgetary constraints.

Figure 1 School Facility Condition Index Formula

Facility Condition Index (FCI)
FCI = $\dfrac{\text{Cost to Correct Building Deficiencies}}{\text{Current Facility Replacement Value}}$

NCES (2003) Facilities Information Management: A Guide for State and Local Education Agencies

Financial resources provided to districts for school maintenance are insufficient at all levels of government.   As a result, in some cases, maintenance is deferred as school districts are forced to cope with the rising costs of new construction (Pearson, 2008). As reflected in planning formulas, funding is more apt to be earmarked for new construction projects than for the maintenance and upkeep of aged, existing facilities. Even when renovation is, from economic and educational perspectives, the better option, many state funding formulas favor new construction in lieu of the renovation (AIA, 1962, Rittner-Heir, 2004; Spector, 2003).

Ohio's "two-third rule," for example, states that if the cost of renovating an older school exceeds 66 percent of the cost of a construction a new school, the state will not help fund the school's renovation. The Commonwealth of Virginia has a 50 percent rule, and Minnesota has a 60 percent rule (Beaumont, 2002). One major problem with the use of arbitrary percentage rules is that these rules minimize, if not totally ignore, the relationship between older, existing schools and their neighborhoods (Ritter-Heir, 2004). For some, schools can represent tangible reminders of their community's history (Philipsen, 1999). Greim (2005) states that the older the school, the more the building may be viewed with greater sentiment, particularly if the school occupies a prominent location in a community and its history.

 The use of mandatory percentages may also ignore many of the costs associated with new construction. Costs for extending the water and sewer lines, building new roads, performing site preparations, installation of new electrical services, or demolishing the abandoned school facility may not be included in new construction proposals. If such costs were incorporated into most state formulas, renovation projects may meet the percentage rules more easily and make renovations viable, more affordable options.

63

Local building codes can also make major renovations prohibited financially (Hawkins and Lilley, 1986). If renovation projects were to be viewed as affordable alternatives, the preservation of existing neighborhood schools may become a part of the community's assessment processes (Beaumont, 2002).

Although state waivers are sometimes granted, the burden of justification of renovation over new construction will rest with the political will of the community—the taxpayers. Local citizens will ultimately make the final decisions by casting their votes for or against special bond referendums to fund their choices. However, architects and financial advisors have the ability to greatly influence decisions about the construction of new schools. Many of these advisors acquire work from school boards by providing "free" feasibility studies in exchange for contract guarantees. Such "concessions" often tilt decision making towards new construction and encourages the abandonment of hundreds of quality neighborhood schools (McClelland, 2004, p. 3).

Budget constraints, sprawl-related issues, and politically active proponents for land and building preservations have some states abandoning arbitrary percentages and are using more subjective criteria, rather than just letting the numbers determine the outcome (Greim, 2005; Rittner-Heir, 2004). Buildings with architectural characters or unique features, such as large formal auditoriums add quality to the building envelopes, and may increase renovation options. Whether or not the interior structures and general layouts are flexible enough to allow for renovations to meet the required building utility is another consideration for planners. School facilities represent a range of investments, each with its own life expectancy.

The structural shell of a school building is a long-term investment, and historically had been expected to remain operational for 50+ years (Weihs, 2003). Many post-war schools have

64

remained active for 100+ years. Sometimes, even with proper maintenance, many mechanical and electrical systems tend to wear out in about 30 years, much in part to deferred maintenance (Greim, 2005; Ritter-Heir, 2004). Therefore, the heating, plumbing, and electrical systems of many older schools are operating with systems that are outdated, inadequate, and energy inefficient. Consequently, school districts pay increased utilities costs over long periods of time.

Adequate funding to replace faulty, aged mechanical and roofing systems may extend the life of older facilities and preserve neighborhood assets. Properly maintained mechanical and roofing systems play key roles in reducing structural and environmental hazards in most buildings, but particularly in older and abandoned facilities (Kennedy, 2005). Building maintenance is but one of the many challenges of inner-city schools. Many older neighborhood schools are small and challenged to comply with current federal, state, and local construction mandates. The hallways and doorframes of older schools are narrow and bathroom facilities and drinking fountains are often not accessible to the physical, visual or hearing impaired. Many older schools have multi-levels without elevators or ramps to allow for transition between levels. Many older schools are also in need of new alarm systems that include new audio and strobe alarms. In addition to funding needs, building square footages and available acreage required to accommodate accessibility in older facilities constitute major financial hurdles for school administrators and structural challenges for school planners (Kennedy, 2005).

School facilities that are 50+ years old and have not been modified, currently do not meet the accessibility codes or most building and site standards (Weihs, 2003). Substantial renovations of older facilities often require compliance with current building codes, as well as with various other state, federal, and local mandates. In most central cities, site and capacity requirements for public schools often restrict building expansions or new constructions. Without

65

some form of local variance, these restrictions make it nearly impossible to renovate or construct replacement facilities on the existing sites. Consequently, remote replacement sites are sought for new construction and older neighborhoods schools become candidates for abandonment (CEFPI, 2004; Chung, 2002).

One of the most widely accepted construction models for school facilities presents additional challenges for school district planners. For new construction projects, many jurisdictions continue to follow a national model. This model recommends one acre of land for every 100 hundred students, plus 10 additional acres for an elementary school; 20 acres for a middle school; and 30 acres for a high school (CEFPI, 2004). The lack of required acreage in most built environments, like those in most central cities, means that new schools are likely to be built in locations outside the existing neighborhoods. A study conducted by the Michigan Land Institute found that in every school construction project reviewed, new construction costs were more than the renovation costs of the existing building. The study also found that building schools on undeveloped sites generated additional expenses for the required infrastructure and public services. These added costs would eventually contribute to higher taxes to businesses and other property owners (McClelland, 2004).

As the need for replacement facilities increases, many land-deprived, inner-city school districts are being forced to make some difficult and unpopular decisions (Sack, 2004). As many of the public policies discussed tend to promote the construction of new facilities instead of the renovation or modernization of smaller neighborhood schools on the existing sites, the abandonment of the neighborhood schools is becoming a primary option.

According to Argon (2004, p.1), districts can address land deficiencies by electing to build up rather than build out. Instead of building smaller schools on multiple sites, some

66

districts opt to consolidate and construct much larger schools with little or no open spaces. Still others exercise the power of eminent domain to confiscate surrounding properties to expand site acreage. The latter option also represents a controversial and debatable option. The acquisition of land through the power of eminent domain can contribute to gentrification, and therefore, the displacement of many low-income families. Oftentimes, dilapidated housing stock in poor neighborhoods is "sacrificed" in the name of eminent domain in order to obtain ample acreage to construct or renovate school facilities. A vast majority of inner-city rental properties becomes the targets of revitalization and reinvestment projects (Kennedy, 2005; Kennedy and Leonard, 2001). As Kennedy and Leonard (2001, p.14) state, gentrification is a double-edged sword. One disadvantage is that this practice can displace many poor families, further reducing student enrollments in neighborhood schools. An upside to gentrification is that the proposals for newly constructed or renovated facilities tend to attract more investors, enhancing the economic growth in these areas.

Despite the fact that sufficient funding levels could make it possible for districts to renovate a greater number of older schools, many feel that *bigger* and *newer* facilities are better. Literature indicates that the renovation and retention of neighborhood schools may be more beneficial to inner-city families than newer, remotely located ones (Chung, 2002; Graham, 2005; Philipsen, 1999). Research (Weiss, 2004) suggests that public school facilities can have a positive economic impact on the development of neighborhoods, especially in poorer, more distressed areas like those in the many central cities. Poorly maintained buildings contribute to neighborhood decline, while newer, better-maintained schools are believed to help revitalize them. School development, according to Simril (2002, p.6) helps to eliminate economic and

67

physical blight. Sitting in the middle of residential areas, abandoned school buildings contribute negatively to the appearances and values of neighborhoods (Gillette, 2003).

Many business and community leaders are recognizing school renovations as a means attract and retain residents. Consequently, many city officials are building new facilities and renovating existing schools as part of their strategies to avert or remedy blighted conditions (Chung, 2002; Maxwell, 2007).   The physical quality of any facility is believed to project its value; therefore, a poorly maintained school building is often perceived to be less valuable—less valuable to its students, its community, and to its city.   Maintaining school facilities helps to retain families. The physical conditions of schools can be seen as an indication to current and potential residents that the neighborhood are either being invested in or being abandoned (Toma, 2004).

Newer, well-maintained schools are perceived to be better than older ones; therefore, are believed to be positive influences on the real estate values of their communities (National Association of Realtors and Local Government Commission, 2002). Locally, higher real estate values represent stronger tax bases and stronger tax bases often equate to increased financial support for public schools.   Most school districts also receive state and federal aid, which is often dependent upon the districts' ability to meet specific qualifications.

In the following section, I identify some of the primary revenue sources for public schools and describe how funding shortfalls are impacting the decisions of city and school administrators and planners. As a consequence of some decisions, school abandonments are increasing in poorer, central city neighborhoods.

Public School Funding, Public Policy, and Public School Abandonments

Politically, the significance of public school facilities, their placements, and their overall maintenance and repair, is apt to continue to receive less attention than the concerns about academic achievement. As a result, despite the fact that public schools are one the nation's largest infrastructure investments, many districts lack the funds to adequately maintain these investments (Chung, 2002, Klauke, 1988; Kennedy, 2005). Consequently, the physical conditions of school facilities will continue to deteriorate, especially in the poverty-laden neighborhoods. The problem, according to McClelland (2004, p.7), is "school deterioration quickens economic disinvestment and increases sprawl-related developments," as more families more to the suburbs. As student enrollments and property values decline, funding for most inner-city public schools equates to smaller per student tax dollars. Such reductions further increase the funding gap between inner-city school districts and their surrounding suburban districts (Katz, 2002).

Although public education is a state responsibility, most public schools in the United States rely on local property taxes for the majority of school funding and seek additional assistance for federal and state governments to subsidize many of the programs and special needs of its students (Benson, 1985; Chung, 2002; Howell, 2005; Kowalski, 1989; Kozol, 1991). Despite aid received from federal and state governments, local governments typically do not have adequate resources to meet the needs of most districts. This lack of resources often leads to re-prioritizing, reducing, or sometimes eliminating services. During times of economic decline and budgetary constraints, federal and state contributions to school districts typically decrease, and as result, the funding responsibilities of the local governments increase.

69

According to a survey conducted by the National League of Cities (NLC), American cities respond to declines in revenue by reducing personnel and government spending (Pagano and Hoene, 2004). As result of a continuum of declining revenue, many central cities are forced to operate with smaller police forces and ignore deteriorating transportation and infrastructure systems. Escalating healthcare and pension costs, as well as uncontrolled sprawl, homeland security responsibilities, and under-funded public schools force most city agencies to compete for limited funding. Martz (2009) reports that the bulk of public services in inner cities are at risk as a result of declining revenues; public schools are included in theses services.

School districts represent one of the primary recipients of government funds, and therefore, are most often impacted by reductions in government spending. Constitutionally, individual states have jurisdiction over the local school systems. However, the majority of the funding for public schools is provided by the individual localities. Local governments generally control and contribute the bulk of the funding for local schools through taxation, generally from property taxes (Chung, 2002; Connell, 1998). Property taxes are tied to the value of homes and local industries (Kozol, 1991). Some argue that the use of property taxes to finance public schools contributes to social and racial segregation in neighborhood schools, particularly in older central cities.

Older central-city communities that have lost a significant number businesses and residents are often victims of low, stagnant or declining growth. Consequently, the lack of sufficient growth contributes to the inability of these communities to provide services, including education at levels needed to attract new residents and investors (Bluestone and Billingham, 2008). The use of property taxes to finance local public schools makes education a function of wealth or concomitantly, race or ethnicity, ruled the California Supreme Court (*Serrano v.*

70

Priest).[49] The inequities in public school funding continue to prompt many to lobby for more assistance from the state and federal governments.

The federal government funds less than seven percent of the cost of primary and secondary education[50]. State and local governments are responsible for the remaining 93 percent (Howell, 2005; Ravitch, 2005).   As indicated in **Figure 2**, created by the Hoover Institute, Stanford University, state governments have increased public school revenue as federal and local funds continue to decline.   To complicate funding shortages for public schools, federal mandates for educational programs and environmental safety are almost never fully funded, further straining the budgets of state and local governments (Kennedy, 2005).

Figure 2 Trend: Percent Public School Funding by Sources, 1920 thru 2000
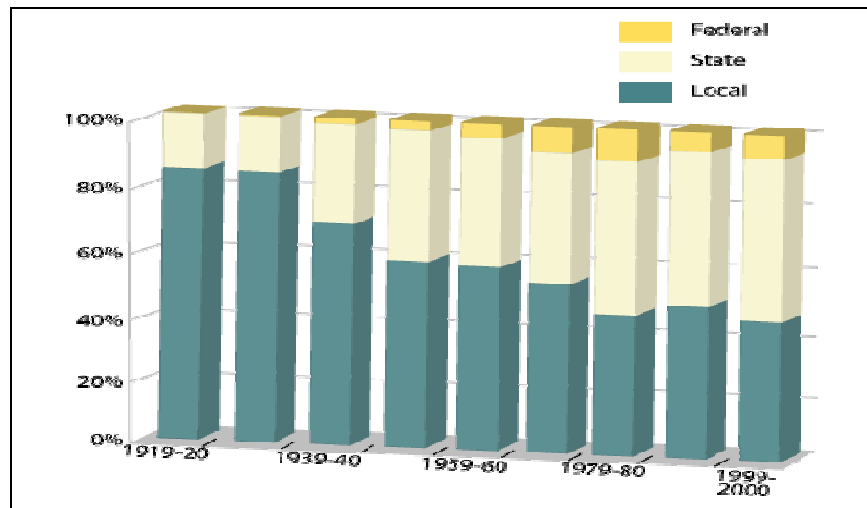
Source: Facts on Policy: School Funding Shift. Hoover Institute, Stanford University (2000)

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[49] *Serrano v. Priest*: Cal.3d 584, 487 P.2d 1241, 96 Cal. Rptr.601. (1971).
[50] National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 2004.* Table 153: Revenue for Public Elementary and Secondary Schools.

Typically, to compensate for an overabundance of needs, to include to poor education quality, poorer communities have higher tax rates than do more affluent suburban communities. Kozol (1991, p. 54) states that in the suburbs where homes are often valued on average much higher when compared to those located in poor, inner-city neighborhoods, the county government is able to draw upon larger tax bases in proportion to its student populations. The student populations in most counties continue to explode as many inner-city populations decline, further expanding the funding gap between the inner-city schools and their surrounding county school systems (Prestidge, 2009).

Personal property tax payments are allowable deductions for qualifying property owners. Homeowners in more affluent communities generally realize larger tax relief as a result of higher allowable tax deductions. The mortgage interest that homeowners pay is also an allowable federal deduction and amounts to a second federal subsidy that can be substantial for some property owners. Federal subsidies such as these contribute to the inequities between poor and affluent schools (Kozol, 1991) and are policies in which Katz (2000) calls "counterproductive" and McClelland (2004) refers to as "unintentional consequences".

The major levels of government exhibit a "circularity" of efforts as each unit seeks to address educational issues. Each institution acts to preserve the democratic premise upon which public schools were formed. Each institution establishes policies that define their responsibility and accountability to the public. However, in many instances, the lines of responsibility are blurred as issues become increasingly controversial, and one or more level of government is unable to address an issue adequately, either legally or financially (Howell, 2005; Rosenthal, 1998).

Funding Deficiencies and Public School Abandonments

Public schools are institutions are generally governed by public boards, managed by public employees, and funded by the general public (Toma, 2005, p. 2). Increasing financial pressures and decreasing tax bases equate to less funding from central-city governments. The receipt of fewer dollars directly impacts the physical maintenance of school facilities, as well as the community programs housed or offered at these school sites. Barring their physical deficiencies and site confinements, inner-city public schools are limited in their utility mostly by the lack of sufficient funding. School budgets are inadequate to address the deficiencies in building conditions, teacher/pupil ratios, staff development, technology infrastructures, as well as the many social needs of students (Mountjoy, 2001).

Current literature indicates that there is an expansive gap between the political rhetoric, education policies, and the actual funding available to address the needs of the public school systems, particularly inner-city schools. The inescapable fact is that the needs of most inner-city school systems far exceed available resources. Consequently, school districts seek more and more federal and state subsidies. These subsidies are often contingent upon adherence to stringent mandates and periodic audits imposed by federal and state agencies (Howell and Peterson, 2002).

Supporters of educational equity have now begun to explore the societal and educational costs associated with educating poor and minority children. Research has established a high correlation between low academic performance and low-income students. Carnevale (2001) suggests that equalizing the learning opportunities for low-income children would increase national productivity; thereby, increase the nation's wealth. As inner-city school districts

73

attempt to improve educational achievement and resolve overwhelming social problems, teachers are expected to accomplish these feats with fewer classroom resources.

Typically, the funding appropriated to school divisions is based on the total number of students enrolled, their special needs, and the financial resources available to the individual localities. The guidelines by which these resources are expensed are established and governed by the individual school districts and their boards or governing bodies (Hanushek, 2001; Howell, 2005; Prestidge, 2009). As a result, funding inequities often exists among most school districts. Many inner-city, low-income families live in public housing or neighborhoods where the property values are much lower in comparison to other city neighborhoods and most suburban areas (Slavin, 1997). Funding allocations for public schools are often commensurate with the social and economic statuses of the neighborhoods in which the schools are located.

Historically, local districts and their constituents have shouldered the burden of paying for school constructions and renovations. However, with the needs so large and widespread, it is evident by the lack of progress that local communities are overwhelmed (Kennedy 2005). Many states have committed additional funds for school facilities. For a very brief time, the federal government offered a program for facilities improvements with limited funding. Many believe that the federal government should do more to financially support the physical improvement of school facilities. A survey conducted by the National Education Association polled 1,005 registered voters and found that 60 percent of these voters would like to see the federal government take a greater role in providing fiscal support for school renovations (Kennedy and Argon, 2004).

Additional funding for the renovation of school facilities would help maintain and preserve what is sometime the only public "community" building in many central city

74

neighborhoods. As many inner-city students, their parents, and other community members struggle to overcome a number of social problems, neighborhood schools provide a centrally located site for many community uses. School facility preservations would also help ensure that many of the critically needed social programs would remain easily accessible to the neighborhood at large (Kennedy, 2005). Schools not only provide a number of before and after-school programs, like remedial classes and providing meals, they also serve to educate students about drug abuse, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, obesity, and teen pregnancy and family planning (Epstein, 2004).

The abandonment of neighborhood schools means that the social programs housed at these facilities will be displaced or eliminated. For many residents, including students, city transportation deficiencies add to the burdens of those residents who rely on these programs. As a result of the abandonment of neighborhood schools, many public needs may remain unmet. For this reason, among others, communities are reassessing the benefits of neighborhood schools, as well as the comprehensive value these facilities represent not only the community, but to the entire city.

In the next section, I provide some reasons that communities are rejecting the traditional uses of school facilities. Community and civic leaders are seeking to use public schools beyond the normal day-to-day educational activities. Many feel that public schools offer additional utility as community facilities, where schools can provide space for adult learning, socialization, and physical activities, as well as extend the programs needs of the entire community. The transition from traditional use to community use contributes to value of neighborhood schools and their preservation.

75

Reviving Community Schools

The idea of community schools was created for economic considerations. Economic considerations are centered on the full use of these facilities and the elimination of duplicate spaces as well as operations and maintenance costs. The goal of community schools is to reduce the cost of financing and constructing two separate facilities to serve the needs of one neighborhood. For many small, inner-city neighborhoods, building a school and community center is not economically feasible. Therefore, many believe that schools should be planned to serve a wider range of educational and non-educational purposes, by accommodating programs beyond the conventional school week and hours of operation (Brubaker, 1998; UNESCO, 1977).

In 2007, in lieu of closing ten under-enrolled schools in the city of Baltimore, the district's superintendent, proposed to use school facilities as community schools. This idea makes more efficient use of these facilities and provides neighborhoods with more resources and more space to house a variety of social programs and cultural activities (Jones, 2007). The Coalition for Community Schools (2003, p.1) asserts that "as the hubs, community schools bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, families, and communities – before, during, and after school, seven days a week."

Many traditional schools are used for less than half of the day, five out of seven days a week, and generally sit idle during holidays and school breaks. In addition, sports facilities, assembly halls, labs, and various workshops are seldom used to capacity. All factors considered indicated that there is an enormous waste of public funds in traditional uses of most public school facilities (Brubaker, 1998). Therefore, the resurrection of the community schools movement has been to promote the sharing of school facilities for the benefit of the entire community.

76

Kennedy (1979, p.9) defines community schools as, "those types of educational facilities which in one way or another depart from the traditional pattern of serving a particular age group for a limited part of the day, the week, the year, and for some specific purpose, i.e. "education." In the spirit of this definition, many feel that all public schools should serve as continuous education centers for all residents, and the facilities should be located within walking distance or a short drive for persons of all ages. Interests in lifelong learning and the growing need for cultural and social centers support the movement to transition from the normal daily- and weekly-uses of school facilities to more community-friendly schedules. In the past, only students enrolled in neighborhood schools used the facilities, and at the end of the school day, many of these buildings were closed. Today, many are viewing public schools as vital resources for adult education programs, year-round recreation, cultural activities, and social development. As a result, many school buildings now operate on extended schedules, to include nights, weekends, and during the summer and winter breaks (Brubaker, 1998).

Leonard (2004, p. 20)[51] challenges how some define "community use" in public schools. He states, "What we see typically in schools is not really community use or community sharing. It's using a gym occasionally; it is using the commons for a Boy Scout meeting; it really isn't true community use. It's a school facility that has some community functions that occur in it…(schools) should be part of a complex and rich social environment." Brubaker (1998) suggests that neighborhood residents are beginning to take more ownership of "their" facilities and making use of the benefits these buildings are able to provide. Schools are integral parts of the community as a whole, and should be recognized as a community asset.

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[51] Leonard, Kerry participated in a roundtable discussion that was moderated by Joe Argon, AS&U Editor-in-Chief, at AIA Committee on Architecture for Education's fall conference held in October 9, 2003 and feature in January 2004 issue of American School and University Magazine, *"The Top Ten Schools of Tomorrow: Envisioning the future of education facilities-10 concepts that will shape their look and function."*

Older inner-city schools were built on centrally located sites, and changes in their purposes would easily transition them to community schools. For areas, like those of most inner cities, community use schools would provide a number of benefits. Today, as a result of limited uses and school abandonments, many inner-city communities are isolated from their schools—deprived of direct access to their once community-based programs and institutions (Glaser, Denhardt and Hamilton, 2002; Kennedy, 1979). To help recreate community bonding in many distressed areas, inner-city governments are offering low-interest home loans for teachers, police officers, and firefighters to relocate to inner-city neighborhoods. The targeted population of this policy is the young professionals who will eventually, if not already, have children to help re-populate inner-city schools. Many police officers once worked in their residential neighborhoods. "Walking the beat" in their neighborhoods allowed the police officers to become role models for the youth, as well as to bond with residents (Montero-Sieburth, 1989).

In 2006, Richmond City Public Schools hired a teacher to work specifically in the neighborhood school in which she resided (Kastner, 2006). Like police officers, many teachers once lived in the neighborhoods in which they worked. Very often, their children attended the schools in which their parents worked. Generally, residents also attended their neighborhood churches together, creating an unspoken "neighborhood bonding." The community felt more connected to their neighborhood schools and churches as a result (Montero-Sieburth, 1989). The continued trend to abandoned neighborhood schools is believed to be one reason that many residents feel deprived of direct access to community-based institutions (Stone, Doherty, Jones, and Ross, 2000).

78

Community Socialization, Neighborhood Stability and Public Schools

Population shifts have always been the expectation for inner-city neighborhoods. Relocating families are expected be replaced by other families, and the demand for housing stock and school facilities are expected to remain constant. As a result, schools would continue to function as the focal points of the neighborhoods, and their utility would continue to stimulate the growth of vital community relationships and provide neighborhood stability.

For many central-city students, neighborhood schools represent safe and stable environments, comfortable shelters from the elements, as well as places where many children may receive their only meal of the day. The same is true for some senior and disabled residents, as well as for many homeless families. Neighborhood schools represent central locations where members of the community are able to socialize, exercise, educate, and to be educated. These facilities typically become shelters and makeshift medical facilities in times of disaster. Neighborhood schools also serve as convenient polling facilities where citizens go to vote, and where politicians hold town hall meetings (Stone, Doherty, Jones, and Ross, 2000).

School auditoriums provide citizens with spaces to showcase the diversity of their community through plays and exhibits. Library resources and computer technologies contribute to the continued educational growth of the community by providing an array of books, materials, and multimedia (Kennedy, 2004). Many supplemental before- and after-school programs that provide tutoring and remedial classes for students of all ages are often held at neighborhood schools. For those facilities with gymnasiums, neighborhood schools enable students, as well as adults, to participate in various forms of physical activity. An opportunity for the public to understand personally the district's needs is created when the community is provided access to schools for recreational and other activities (Klauke, 1988; Kennedy, 2005). Neighborhood

79

schools offer a venue where the needs of the youth and the needs of the elderly are able to converge and complement one another (UNESCO, 1977). Pickle Elementary School in Austin, Texas, for example, shares its gymnasium and cafeteria with the local community center that contains a public library and community police station (Kennedy, 2003).

Operating inner-city public schools beyond the normal school day may gain support from those taxpayers who often feel that they have no "real" connection to neighborhood public schools. As a result of this disconnect, many citizens without children or grandchildren attending inner-city public schools often oppose tax increases to support public schools (Brubaker, 1998). Other citizens oppose tax support for public schools because they derive no benefit from the various social programs located at the schools, many of which are designed to aid low-income and minority residents. As a result, many believe that a disconnect exists between the taxpaying citizens and the tax-supported citizens. Educators tend to perceive matters associated with the uses of school buildings as district controlled matters. City officials and community developers often view schools as community resources in which the sentiment is that the community should have a voice in the uses and dispositions of school facilities (Jehk, Blank, and McCloud, 2001).

A disconnect is also believed to exist between city officials and school administrators about the importance of maintaining neighborhood schools, as well as supporting the social programs that offer opportunities to promote neighborhood bonding (Argon, 2004). The value placed on neighborhood schools depends upon the individual evaluators. Some school administrators feel that if adequate funding were provided to modernize neighborhood schools, to increase teacher salaries, and to provide the needed social programs for students, academic achievement levels would increase. And, as a consequence, families would return to

80

neighborhoods and their children would return to neighborhood schools. These actions have the potential to spur revitalization, and ultimately increase economic growth in declining neighborhoods, in the declining schools, and in declining cities.

However, some city officials believe that abandoned schools provide an opportunity to market these facilities as non-educational, income-producing properties for the city. The belief is that the sale of these properties may also help spur neighborhood revitalization in some of the poorest and most depressed areas, as well as enhances repopulation efforts. The differences in the two assessments often create a competition between the school administrators and city officials for control over the facility, and some cases over control of the school district.

The District of Columbia, New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, and nearly a dozen more large inner cities are setting the trend to manage the school systems as a unit of the city government (Chaddock, 2006; Favro, 2007; Martin, 2007; and Stewart and Labbe, 2007). Despite their differences about how to achieve their goals, city and school leaders typically agree that the repopulation of the neighborhoods and their supporting schools would be beneficial for all parties.

Blurock (2004, p.20)[52] states that, "Cities and school districts need to break down issues of political turf" and eliminate the barriers of separation, which tend to be reflected in the planning and development "that separate rather than integrate". Holy (1972, p 124) states that city planning and school planning are interrelated at so many points and that these points should be advance concurrently at all times. He further states that to do otherwise would constitute economic waste resulting from bad school planning and lack of articulation with city planning.

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[52] Thomas H. Blurock, Thomas Blurock Architects, participated in a roundtable discussion that was moderated by Joe Argon, AS&U Editor-in-Chief, at AIA Committee on Architecture for Education's fall conference held in October 9, 2003 and feature in January 2004 issue of American School and University Magazine, *"The Top Ten Schools of Tomorrow: Envisioning the future of education facilities-10 concepts that will shape their look and function."*

City planning and school planning have a common goal which Holy (1972) feels is critical to the welfare and betterment of the entire community.

Poor and ineffective school planning contributes to the loss of neighborhood schools and weakens neighborhood structures as a result (Crispell, 1991). In the following section, I suggest that there is cycle or chain reaction of events that directly or indirectly leads to the abandonment of public schools.

Abandonment of Inner-City Public Schools: A Chain Reaction

School abandonment is often very difficult and most communities object to losing their neighborhood anchors. As I identify in this study and as adequately presented in literature, there are a number of factors that may be linked to the closures, abandonments, and demolitions of inner-city public schools. I suggest that there is an interconnection of factors that may represent "links" in a chain that begins with a decrease in student performance levels, leads to significant shifts in student enrollments, and often ends with the abandonment of public schools.

The order that I suggest in this cycle is not meant to signify that all stages must or should occur sequentially; nor, do I suggest that all links must be present to result in school abandonments or that I assert the factors identified are the only influences of public school abandonments. I offer this cycle as a means to identify conditions that are challenging many inner-city schools systems, and as a result of the impacts of these influences on neighborhood and school demographic changes, I suggest that these factors are contributing directly or indirectly to the abandonment of public schools in poor, inner-city schools. I identify and

82

describe the following links and their potential impact on school abandonment: poor academic levels; inner-city flight; declining student enrollments; surplus classroom space; immigrant influxes; over-crowded schools; school maintenance and operational costs; aged and deteriorating schools; and school consolidations.

Poor academic achievement levels **–** McDaniel (2006) and Orfield (2002) asserts that the exodus from many inner-city neighborhoods is escalated by poor quality, poor performing schools. Academic achievements of most central-city public school students remain below the state and national assessment levels in many core subjects like math, reading, and writing. Nowhere is this fact more dismal than in the academic performance of low-income, inner-city students who attend public schools.

With the well-documented, poor academic achievement levels of many inner-city public school students, the issue of public education has graduated from being the concern of individual school districts to one that the nation continues to wrestle. Many politicians, business and civic leaders, educators, district administrators, and private citizens continue to debate the measures needed to correct the downward spiral in quality public education, especially for inner-city public schools.

Local, state, and federal agencies have recognized the need for additional government intervention to improve the academic performance of low-income students, and as a result, these institutions have developed and implemented a number of academic improvement measures. Nearly all states have established a set of learning standards that require progressive improvement levels, and the federal government requires through the NCLB Act that performing schools adhere to a set of mandates. However, many inner-city schools continue to receive substandard scores on most standardized tests. McDaniel (2006) states that poor performing

83

schools make it difficult for cities and districts to retain families with children. Through

government initiatives or personal income, families who can afford to so, leave central cities in

record numbers for schools that report better achievement levels (Hazard, 2005).

Inner-city flight – "Failing" inner-city schools have contributed to "white" and middle-class

"black" flight from inner cities in search of better public schools in suburban areas or in inner-

city private and parochial schools (Galster, 1996; Orfield, 2002). These relocations lead to

enrollment reductions, loss of political clout for neighborhoods, and limited growth potential in

central cities.

Decline in student enrollments – The collective impact of population shifts, in addition to the

declining birth rates, anti-segregation mandates, and increasing numbers of student dropouts, has

contributed significantly to an overall population decline in most inner-city schools systems.

The reduction of student enrollments creates surplus classroom spaces.

Surplus space – Declining student populations rarely warrant the number of school buildings

held in a district's active inventory. Central cities and their school districts tend to have

escalating problems with space management. Use assessments or facilities master plans often

indicate that many inner-city public school districts have an abundance of classroom space,

which results in the underutilizations of many facilities.

Immigrant influxes – Over the last decade the nation has witnessed an influx of foreign-born

immigrants, particularly Hispanic and Asians. Immigration influx has resulted in significant

changes in the nation's student population an (Ruiz-de-Valesco and Fix, 2000). Among these

changes is the need to address overcrowded classrooms in some school districts. The bulk of

84

these *newcomers* are settling in central-city areas. Despite the population decreases related to inner-city flight, many school districts are experiencing increasing numbers of immigrant students.

These influxes often result in classroom overcrowding and increasing needs for social programs geared to aiding assimilation processes, particularly in education. Public school systems are required by the federal NCLB Act to meet all annual yearly progress standards. These standards apply to the English-challenged students as well. The requirements of NCLB challenge most school districts to find instructors who are able to assist immigrant students and their families (Klein and Gilbert, 2005).

Overcrowded schools/Lack of space – The significant growth of the immigrant populations in many larger central cities has created an increased need for additional educational facilities. Overcrowded schools, particularly in the nation's inner cities, present a serious challenge for school administrators and school and city planners. With land at a premium and funding at a deficit, construction-related choices are limited. Consequently, many city and school administrators are opting to combine the populations of overcrowded neighborhoods schools by constructing larger facilities on remote sites. This trend contributes to outward growth or sprawl, and often leaves many inner-city neighborhood schools vacant and abandoned.

Maintenance and operational costs – Often without success, district administrators are tasked to justify the financial resources required to adequately maintain their facilities. Many of these facilities are believed to have outlived their educational utility. And, since public school funding is based largely upon student enrollments, school systems with declining enrollments are finding it difficult to properly maintain their buildings.

85

In addition to the maintenance of the structural and mechanical building systems, physical plant departments of school systems are challenged by other building deficiencies. Accommodations related to accessibility, technology and safety infrastructures, as well as interior and exterior spacing needs tend to be difficult to correct in older buildings. As a result, many maintenance measures undertaken often equate to only temporary *band-aids* that are not sufficient to reverse the deteriorating conditions of many inner-city public school facilities.

Aged, deteriorating conditions of facilities – Facilities that have deficiencies that cannot be corrected within budget constraints are often deferred or the facilities are closed. Less funding received to adequately maintain and operate school facilities often results in a consolidation of two or more school populations. Typically, due to land restrictions with inner-city areas, the new school is constructed on a remotely located site, and students are transported outside their residential neighborhoods.

School consolidations[53] – Over the last century, the trend to consolidate small schools has created a significant decline in the number public schools[54]. School consolidations are often highly charged, emotionally and politically. School consolidations often lead to longer bus rides for students and extended travel times for parents and staff. Most school consolidations also result in larger class sizes, dismissing efforts to provide more individualized time to students—a critical element for proving services to disadvantaged and disabled children. For this reason, Kay (1982) advises school administrators to investigate the nature, extent, and strength of social services agencies that serve the community of the abandoned school. Despite the adverse impact

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[53] School consolidation is the practice of combining two or more schools for education or economic benefits.
[54] Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, Chapter 2: Education and Secondary Education. 2005

86

that school consolidation may have on the community, the efforts of school leaders to conform to budgetary deficits is the overriding factor and often results in the decisions to vacate and abandon of public schools.

The descriptors identify some of the issues that many public school and city officials are facing and are including in decision making about the fates of school facilities. Decisions to vacate and abandon school facilities are often the discretion of the individual governing bodies, and therefore are not uniform across districts. Some school facilities are adaptively reused, some are demolished, while others are left vacant and in states of deterioration. Many vacant and abandoned schools become eyesores, fire hazards, and crime havens located at the core of inner-city neighborhoods. Abandoned schools, like most vacant and abandoned properties, lower the property values.

The closure of public school facilities is not new endeavors for school administrators; however, their conversions for non-educational purposes remain complex and highly controversial. However, adaptive reuses of neighborhood schools often serve to mitigate some of the risks of having a vacant and abandoned facility located in center of neighborhoods. In the following section, I discuss some adaptive reuses for vacant and abandoned public schools.

Adaptive Reuse of Abandoned Public Schools

> *"One of the great things about adaptive reuse is that it forces you to address context. It also moves beyond the building and gets to the site issues and buildings within communities. We actually can start to not breakdown and recreate communities, but build on what's been done before and help that maturation process of communities by working with what we've got." (Kerry, Leonard, 2004, p. 27)*[55]

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[55] Leonard, Kerry participated in a roundtable discussion that was moderated by Joe Argon, AS&U Editor-in-Chief, at AIA Committee on Architecture for Education's fall conference held in October 9, 2003 and feature in January

Vacant public school facilities are considered valuable real estate assets (Hoffman, 2005). These assets are usually already paid for (debt-free), and very often can be used in their current states or are able to be adaptively reused to house a number of community programs. These facilities can be used to accommodate other educational usages or to generate revenue through non-educational lease options. And, like many vacant and abandoned facilities, abandoned schools offer municipalities an opportunity to address residential housing needs without having to "confiscate" additional precious open spaces or bear the expense to install new infrastructures.

In communities where not only the student enrollments are declining, the overall neighborhood populations are shrinking as well. Many residents and area leaders are seeking solutions to minimize the impact of population losses. Since facility costs continue even after the facilities have been abandoned, administrators are wise to plan for alternative uses of these facilities (Kennedy, 2001). Liability costs related to fire and building security maintenance remains the responsibility of the school districts until the facility is transferred to the city or another entity (Kennedy, 2005). As a result, the adaptive reuses of abandoned facilities are viable options to help relieve the schools districts of some financial burdens. Successful adaptive reuses can create valuable resources of unproductive properties and substantially reduce land acquisition and construction costs, as well as help to revitalize neighborhoods and help control sprawl (Spector, 2003).

The term adaptive reuse is used to refer to "the conversion of an existing property to accommodate the requirements of a new tenant or the new use of an outdated structure for the purpose of giving new vitality to the property" (Campbell, 1996 p.26). Typically, the two key

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2004 issue of American School and University Magazine, "*The Top Ten Schools of Tomorrow: Envisioning the future of education facilities-10 concepts that will shape their look and function.*"

factors that influence the adaptive reuse of a structure are adequate financial resources and whether or not the structure can be classified as a historic site. The cost of renovating (adapting) an older building is dependent upon the condition of the building. Rehabilitation costs increase dramatically for every year buildings are allowed to remain vacant (Betts, 1999). The deterioration of roof and mechanical systems, coupled with vandalism and environmental problems, is exacerbated the longer buildings remain abandoned. Like many older buildings, school districts often abandon facilities when the cost of repairing or renovating the structure becomes cost prohibitive. These facilities often have little or no market value while they exist in dilapidated conditions, especially if the buildings are located in distressed areas (Kennedy, 2005).

Abandoned school buildings may be structurally sound overall, but still may be unsafe physically and environmentally in their present conditions. Older schools are often laden with toxic materials–lead paint, lead piping, and asbestos. The cost to abate these contaminants increases the facilities' overall renovation costs. Additionally, the electrical, heating, air conditioning, and plumbing systems are often outdated and do not meet current building codes, including the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Campbell, 1996).

Limited resources and deferred maintenance has played major roles in decisions by school boards to abandon schools rather than renovate them. Demolition costs tend to be beyond what many school districts can afford. Interestingly, if given the choice and adequate funds, many districts tend to opt for newer facilities over the rehabilitations of older facilities (Kennedy, 2001; Poynter, 2002; Spector, 2003). Accordino and Johnson (2000) state that vacant and abandoned buildings lower the market value of neighboring properties, therefore, making these properties difficult to market and therefore, to sell. Compounding this problem is the fact that

89

most for-profit developers are reluctant to renovate aged, deteriorated schools that are located in distressed areas without some forms of financial incentives for the government.

Tax incentives, grants, and a variety of other financial assistance often make it possible for developers, including nonprofits, to consider adaptive reuse instead of demolition and new construction. Financial assistance is often provided by organizations for the preservation of historic buildings and sites. Many inner-city public schools are classified as historic buildings (Weatherford, 2003). The costs of adaptive reuse typically range between 16-25% less than the cost of new construction. Construction time for building renovations is reported to be nearly 18% less than the construction time for new facilities (Campbell, 1996, p.1).

One objective of facility renovations is to keep the best of the past, while adapting facilities accommodate the needs of the present and future. Betts (1999) stated that there is an "aesthetic and economic" cost to building rehabilitation. The decision categories for addressing school facilities needs are usually newly constructed schools; those to be restored, renovated, or expanded; those to be abandoned; and those to be demolished. Either choice presents challenges for fiscally strapped school districts (Brubaker, 1998).

Inner-city neighborhood schools are challenged to respond to their surroundings and "fit" into their communities—physically, as well as maintain the same character. Inner-city neighborhood schools are pressured to adapt building expansions and new construction projects in increasingly dense areas. Consequently, acreage standards are primary barriers to preserving and renovating historic schools in older neighborhoods (Argon, 2004). Even when decisions are made to demolish older schools, oftentimes current standards make it difficult to replace them with newer schools on the same site, where there is often little to no room for expansion. The exception, which is rarely feasible because of building restrictions, is to "build up" or add upper

90

levels to an existing building. The age and condition of many schools can also make this option

an unreasonable one (Argon, 2004).   However, many large cities have managed to obtain

waivers of the acreage requirements to allow for renovations to be acceptable options.

Most public schools are extensions of their communities' identities. The architectural

and structural integrity of a school, as well as its political, cultural, and emotional value,

influence its consideration as candidate for adaptive reuse. However, not every property is a

good candidate for adaptive reuse, suggests Campbell (1996) and Chung (2002). The desire to

replace all old school facilities with new ones is an obvious impossibility. Each older building

must be evaluated separately to determine whether it can be successfully renovated at a

reasonable cost. In addition to the school's physical condition, its historical significance and

place in the community's social fabric should be a consideration. Although restoration of older

buildings is labor intensive, many older schools built during the first three decades of this

century are still structurally sound, fire safe, and architecturally distinct. Many of these facilities

also offer enough adaptable space to accommodate new programs and infrastructure updates

(Argon, 2004).

In some cases, the highly visible, detailed architectural design and structural soundness of

many older schools do make them ideal candidates for historical preservation[56]. For example,

the City of Richmond, Virginia, "was blessed with the quality of its school buildings," states

Calder Loth, senior architectural historian with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

(Weatherford, 2003, p.288). Weatherford (2003) asserts that Richmond school buildings, like

many 20th century buildings, were built with artistic and elegance criteria.

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[56] Historic properties are those sites or structures that are either listed in or eligible to be listed on the National
Register of Historic Places, listed in a State or local inventory of historic places or designated as a State or local
landmark or historic district by appropriate law or ordinance (§570.203, Ofc. of Asst. Secy., Comm. Planning,
Develop., HUD, p. 45, 2004).

Also, like many inner-city schools, many of Richmond's schools are over 70 years old, and have outlived their educational usefulness. Many of these schools are located in neighborhoods where the student populations have declined significantly, while others are ill equipped to handle current programs and modern technology needs (Weatherford, 2003). Still others are overcrowded and modular units have been installed to accommodate increasing student populations. For these reasons, the Richmond City School Board has considered the consolidation of their under-populated facilities and the permanent closure of nearly fourteen schools (Wermers, 2002).

Many older educational buildings are excellent resources. The size of school facilities offers the opportunity for their retrofit to accommodate a diverse base. Clearly, some older schools are able to be adapted to meet today's safety and educational program needs (Kennedy, 2005). In many central cities, school officials have reached agreements with city parks, nearby churches, public transits and other public agencies to share playing fields, parking spaces, and transportation services. Cities like Boise, Idaho; Manitowoc, Wisconsin; Spokane, Washington; and Columbia, South Carolina have all invested funds to renovate and expand schools on existing sites. Clifford Janey, former Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools, identified 16 underused school facilities as candidates for sharing space with charter schools.

Ohio legislation allows Cincinnati Public Schools, as well as all other school divisions in the state, to offer its surplus facilities to charter schools (Mrozowski, 2005). This legislation allows the district an opportunity to sell buildings that no longer meet the educational needs of its students or are too costly to renovate. Most important, this legislation allows the district to have

92

some of the most architecturally significant neighborhood facilities "recycled" back to an active status, decreasing the number of potential vacant buildings (Cincinnati Public Schools, 2005.)

In October 2005, as result of excess classroom capacity, the Baltimore City Public School board voted to reduce the square footage of the district's schools by 15%. In February 2006, the board approved the closure of seven schools. The school board considered leasing surplus space to charter schools to promote the preservation of neighborhood school buildings and green spaces (Kennedy, 2005; Mrozowski, 2005; Rowley and Broadwater, 2007).

Preservation of Neighborhood Schools

The preservation of neighborhood schools plays a major role in the preservation of the physical landscapes of neighborhoods, particularly in inner cities areas where there is scare acreage and limited green and open spaces. McClelland (2004) quotes Tom Watkins, former state superintendent for Michigan,

> *"School facilities are a critical element in the education formula.*
> *Some of our schools are states of the art and others are in a state*
> *of disgrace…There are hundreds of examples where the need (communities)*
> *are best met by renovating existing schools and preserving the sense of*
> *community. Where we can, we should revamp and improve our*
> *existing school buildings."*

The preservation of existing school stock in lieu of constructing new "sprawl schools" can help protect the urban landscape, its sense of community, and entire neighborhoods (Beaumont, 2002). Richard Moe of the National Trust for Historic Preservation states,

93

"When the school anchors a neighborhood, both the student and the residents benefit. The trend of building shopping mall-sized schools outside of town alienates students and encourages sprawl and impairs our sense of community. We can serve our students better by revitalizing our historic neighborhood schools. It's responsible, thoughtful, and fiscally sound."[57]

Preservationists believe that decisions to raze older schools should not be based solely on choosing between an old facility and new one. The high cost of new construction, changes due to improved technology, and the multiplicity of uses of school facilities can be determinants of whether to adaptive reuse these facilities or to demolish them. The transformation of existing schools into shared civic spaces is fiscally responsible, environmentally friendly, and pro-community. If community agencies locate their services on school sites, a more comprehensive approach can be taken to meet the economic, physical, educational, and social needs of residents. Additionally, schools that function as centers of positive activity have the ability to strengthen and revitalize the entire community (Holy, 1972, Rydeen, 2007).

The requirements of today's society for a more "global" or broader-based education for students have resulted in many young people staying in school longer, as well as a greater number older adults returning to the classrooms. These factors have led to new demands for education spaces. The pursuit of lifelong and ongoing education has brought much of the adult population into the neighborhood schools, and has led to the increased use of school facilities as community learning centers (Rydeen, 2007). More and more, health clinics, YMCAs, daycare centers, and public libraries are seeking and acquiring space within public schools. In an effort

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[57] Richard Moe's comments contained in a national report presented by National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D. C., November 16, 2000 and listed at online: http//.nationaltrust.org/news/docs/20001116_johnny_cantwalk.html

to utilize surplus space, many districts are also establishing schools within schools by incorporating different grade levels and specialized curriculums within in one school facility.

Communities are becoming more conscious of their powers to insist that school administrators be more effective in reestablishing contact between students, their families and the overall community. Many after-school programs are being established to increase the involvement of students in the upkeep of their schools, as well as the maintenance of their neighborhoods and recreational areas. Many secondary schools are requiring and many college recruiters are advocating that students participate in a number of community service programs. As a result, business partnerships are being formed with public school districts to encourage and support student participation in school facilities improvement projects.

Strickland (2002) asserts that over the next decade, the nation is expected spend between $200 billion and $400 billon on new and renovated schools. School architects, city planners, educators, and developers may be able to combine efforts to revitalize inner cities as they seek to expand educational opportunities. In an attempt to improve the educational performance of Richmond City Public School students, during his tenure, L. Douglas Wilder, former mayor, proposed to make the improvement of the city's school facilities an education priority. He states that quality of public schools influences residential selections, as does the quality and affordability of housing.

Housing and Education Quality and School Abandonments

The quality of educational output and availability of affordable housing are theorized by some to be linked. At school board meeting, Mr. Wilder stated that housing and school facilities issues are inseparable and must be addressed simultaneously in order to enhance and promote economic growth in the Richmond, Virginia area. He promised to address both issues during his tenure as mayor. Mayor Wilder suggested that to attract and retain families and jobs in the Richmond area, improvements must be made in the quality of services provided by Richmond City Schools (Kastner, 2004).

Dr. Clifford B. Janey, former Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools, stated that there is interconnectivity between neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, and public school investments and that all three areas should be included in a city's strategic planning efforts (McDaniel, 2006). Based on Cameron's (2008) report, an annual survey conducted by the National Association of Realtors concluded that in 2006 many homebuyers (27%) feel that the quality of schools influence where they purchased their homes. This preference was not just for families with children; many buyers target neighborhoods with "quality" schools (attractive physically and high performing academically) because of the potential resale values of the homes located in those areas.

The theory is that poor quality schools adversely impact population changes, and the lack of quality, affordable housing, both public and private, impedes economic growth and neighborhood stability (Chung, 2002; Proscio, 2004). Many inner-city neighborhoods consist of poorly maintained public and private owned housing stock. Many of these same neighborhoods are also facing challenges with surpluses of school buildings with aged and deteriorating infrastructures. Efforts to address only one deficiency may not result in the anticipated goal to

improve neighborhood growth and development; instead, it may exacerbate the already abundance of social and economic problems that plague inner cities. For this reason, Doug Wilder and other inner-city mayors sought state and federal incentives to help in the replacement public-housing units in the city of Richmond, VA (Ress, 2005). Many socioeconomic problems associated with publicly subsidized housing often transition into neighborhood schools problems.

As a result, many inner cities are attempting to correct problems that have been linked to "institutionalized" style public housing. However, very often, many of these efforts redistribute populations of concentrated poverty instead of encouraging the development of mixed-income neighborhoods. The transformation of public housing units often requires the use of existing land, and therefore, the demolition of the existing units prior to the construction new housing. As a consequence, there are often *forced* or involuntary relocations; as a result, some families may be displaced permanently (Chung, 2002). This was the case when residents of a distressed Richmond, Virginia neighborhood were displaced as a result of a HOPE VI initiative (Shepherd, 2003).

The demolished publicly subsidized housing complex in Richmond was home to nearly 200 low-income families, all of which were promised the ability to be able to return to the newly constructed single-family homes at the completion of the project. This, however, was not the case. These families were provided housing vouchers that in many cases were not redeemable in the Richmond area. To add insult to injury, these new homes were priced for moderate income-level buyers. Consequently, none of the displaced families were able financially to return to the new revitalized neighborhood, which also included a newly constructed elementary school. However, seeking to minimize the displacement of families, the Atlanta Housing Authority and

97

the Atlanta Public Schools worked together on a HOPE VI project and to prevent the abandonment of a school slated for closure as a result of low enrollment.[58]

In some cases, market prices for inner-city housing make home purchases unaffordable for most low-income families. In many areas, the high prices for inner-city housing are contributing to the increase in family relocations. According to Asimov and Knight (2006), in the San Francisco area, student populations are declining and as a result, a number of schools are being closed. Enrollment declines and school abandonments, they conclude, are a result of high housing costs, not for under-achieving schools. The dramatic rise in housing costs in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia has priced many families out of the housing market.

Inner-city crime has also contributed to declining enrollments within inner-city schools. Former mayor of Richmond, Virginia, Douglas Wilder lobbied state government to help establish policies that expand the definition of "persistently dangerous" schools[59] so that parents would be provided an avenue to relocate their children to "safer" schools (Ress, 2005). Student transfers to "safer" schools would also contribute to under-populated schools for the transferring sites and over-crowded conditions at the receiving ones.

Wilder's proposed measures would have served to increase the loss of students in neighborhood schools that are already suffering from the loss of revenues tied to enrollment declines. Some Richmond parents expressed concern that student transfers could result in

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[58] Presentation by Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent, Beverly Hall at Mellennnial Housing Commission, Atlanta, 2001: "Using Public Schools as Community Development Tools: Strategies for Community-Based Developers, Connie Chung, 2001.
[59] States, in conjunction with the federal government's *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,* establishes the definition of persistently dangerous schools*.* SEC. 9532. UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTION - Each State receiving funds under this Act shall establish and implement a statewide policy requiring that a student attending a persistently dangerous public elementary school or secondary school, as determined by the State in consultation with a representative sample of local educational agencies, or who becomes a victim of a violent criminal offense, as determined by State law, while in or on the grounds of a public elementary school or secondary school that the student attends, be allowed to attend a safe public elementary school or secondary school within the local educational agency, including a public charter school (www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/nclb/dangerousschools.pdf).

unmanageable mega-schools with students having few social ties to their home neighborhoods (Kastner, 2006, p. B1). Without adequate research, the determination of whether or not declining housing and deteriorating school facilities conditions are independent issues or if one issue is a symptom of the other, may difficult to identify. For this reason, many city officials seek to address issues related to housing and school facilities in tandem.

Public School Planning and Siting and Neighborhood Preservation

City leaders, particularly city mayors and planners, are responsible for the physical landscapes of their cities as a whole. Deteriorating school facilities represent but one of many problematic conditions for which city administrations must contend. In the processes of generating city revenues, negotiating with constituents, and determining where schools are built or demolished, architecture is often an afterthought. However, the recent focus on the conditions of public school facilities has brought to the forefront the need for better school facility planning, to include the options of preservation whenever possible (Rabenaldt, 2000).

The implementation of this strategy may help to promote neighborhood stability, as well as preserve some historic landmarks. School architecture has the potential to not only enhance education but to spur community development. Ray (2002, p., 22.) quotes a symposium attendant at a mayor's conference,

> *"When the neighborhood is the weakest, quite often the school*
> *is one of the most important institutions and provides the most*
> *continuity and anchored quality of any of the other components*
> *of the neighborhood including the residential stock, and*
> *the retail and business opportunities."*

Development strategies that combine school and urban design and development are being discussed as means to improve inner-city neighborhoods and their public schools. By coordinating school facilities projects with housing, economic development, and job-training initiatives, schools become potent new forces in urban revitalization. As early as 1935, the importance of schools and city government planning and collaboration of efforts were discussed. Holy (1972, p., 37) puts it best stating that:

> "The wisdom and necessity of preparing plans for the future development of school systems are becoming more generally recognized. Many uncertain factors are introduced if no city plan is available to serve as a guide."

School facilities are key components to planning for the recreational and cultural lives of communities. Budget restrictions and new accountability standards are prompting city officials to bridge the gap between school administrations and city governments and their planning strategies. School buildings are being recognized as assets that are either advantages or disadvantages. High-achieving, well-maintained schools are believed to be beneficial to the retention of students and serve as primary attractions for new families and new students to the neighborhoods and public school systems (Chung, 2002; Kennedy, 2005).

In contrast, deteriorating school facilities, coupled with poor academic performances, tend to repel families and contribute to the increasing numbers of student transfers from public schools (Chung, 2002; McDaniel, 2006). Very often, school abandonments result in the resegregation and isolation of populations who consist primarily of poor and minority students who are often underserved or disenfranchised socially and economically (Orfield, 2001). In the following section, I discuss my research problem and the importance of my study to the mitigation of adverse impacts of public schools abandonments on the community structures.

100

Problem Statement and Significance

> *Schools have been closed (abandoned) in the past to save*
> *money in periods of low enrollment and fiscal constraint.*
> *Limited research on closures provides little evidence and little*
> *sense that school closings are always in the best interests of*
> *school officials, teachers, parents, and students* (Valencia, 1985, p.94).

As understood by Richard Valencia (1985) and as my research confirms, public schools continue to be abandoned despite the lack of the comprehensive and reliable data and analyses that could provide urban planners and school boards a better understanding of why and where school abandonments occur and the impacts of these abandonments on neighborhood structures. Despite a growing amount of research that indicates the negative implications of vacant properties on the physical conditions of inner-city neighborhoods, many public schools currently sit vacant and abandoned in the hearts of neighborhoods. Instead of contributing to economic vitality, abandoned public schools are contributing to the physical decay of the neighborhoods in which they are located. Despite the established links between housing, schools, and neighborhood wealth and sustainability, many new construction and renovation housing projects in inner cities are targeting families without children—leaving many public schools under-populated, under-utilized and subject to abandonment.

Despite on-going controversies and political rhetoric about the improvement of academic achievements of inner-city public schools, a number of public policies are contributing to the depopulation of public schools and to steady reductions in school budgets, and therefore, reductions of social programs. Despite the role that public schools play in the social cohesiveness and economic stability of neighborhoods, demographic shifts and increasing fiscal

101

challenges are contributing to the reduction or elimination of anti-poverty and academic remedial programs in some of the most socially and economically challenged school districts.

Despite research that advocates the benefits of smaller neighborhood schools and the adaptive reuses of abandoned schools on their existing sites, many urban and school planners are electing to build mega, remotely located schools and transport students outside their residential neighborhoods. Despite increasing medical research that supports the need for children to increase their physical activities to reduce the rise in a host of medical risks, many students are attending schools outside their residential neighborhoods. As a result, most students do not walk to and from schools; they require vehicular transport instead.

Despite the various reasons that I discuss in my literature review that may be contributing to the increasing number of public school abandonments, research lacks collective and comprehensive data analyses specific to the numbers, the locations, and the impacts of public school abandonments on communities and their physical, economic, and social structures. Crispell (1991, p13.) states that since all school-age children must attend schools, the annual birth rate is a good predictor about public education needs, and as a result, demand is simple to predict at the national level. However, she states "school administrators in the U.S. haven't always done a great job of anticipating their own needs." She further stresses that students do not attend nationally schools; they attend local schools, which makes it is crucial that school districts and urban planners develop more effective planning strategies to meet local demands. As a result, I argue that the lack of this critical information limits the strategic efforts of urban planners and school districts to better understand and mitigate the negative impacts of public school abandonments, particularly in poverty and minority concentrated neighborhoods.

Significance of Effective Urban Planning, Public School Siting and Preservation

Effective neighborhood and school planning and strategic development require effective and sound resources, to include comprehensive data development and analyses. The establishment of these resources will provide decision makers a means to gauge the implications of public school abandonments on neighborhoods and where alternatives, if possible, could be vital components of the planning stage. I suggest that as inner cities and public school systems continue to be challenged socially and economically, and undermined by unintended consequences of public policies, poorer schools may continue to be abandoned without the benefit of comprehensive data and analyses. These data would allow urban planners to review physical, academic, financial, social, and other demographic data in tandem. Therefore, these data will enhance the development of better strategic planning for neighborhoods and public schools (www.schoolmatters.com; 2005)

Most inner cities and school districts do not have sufficient available acreage or funding to accommodate their increasing population and demographic changes and resulting increasing requirements for public services. Most inner-city neighborhoods lack open spaces, affordable housing stock, quality school facilities, and adequate numbers of quality public service providers. These deficiencies create a competing arena for the uses of limited federal, state, and local resources. The political disconnects among city and school officials serve to create contention instead of collaboration when prioritizing the needs and uses of these limited resources.

Americans tend to be very mobile, and as a result, the changing ethnic, age, and socioeconomic compositions of most inner cities make it necessary to continually monitor population and demographic trends. Dealing with the cyclical nature of school enrollments is a

103

challenge for school facilities planners and administrators, as well as for urban planners and government leaders. Influxes of immigrants and the homeless are equally challenging. Complications of steady declines in income-producing businesses and fewer resident taxpayers are also impacting funding and service needs for public schools and other public agencies.

Some neighborhoods experience long periods of stability, followed by periods of steady decline. In many inner cities, population shifts often result in school closures or abandonments. And, like many issues concerning education, data relative to the construction, maintenance and disposition of public school facilities is often localized, incomplete, or nonexistent. Prepared or not, city and school planners must find means to accommodate population shifts and the resulting social and economic impacts. As school abandonments are often consequences of declining budgets, it is very important that public schools and city leaders are cognizant of and prepared the address such trends effectively (Crispell, 1991; Kennedy, 2005; Prestidge, 2009; Valencia, 1985).

On a regional note, as surrounding counties continue to be faced with issues sprawl, research indicates that their older suburbs (urban fringes) are beginning to experience similar problems that have long plagued poor inner-city neighborhoods and public schools. Orfield (2002) asserts that schools in many suburbs are growing poorer and more racially isolated. As a result, county school divisions may also derive benefit from my study, especially as interconnectivities to inner-city school abandonments may be linked directly or indirectly to resulting changes in county neighborhoods and public schools.

Local governments and school boards that are being forced to make decisions on how best to address the challenges associated with the replacement of aging school facilities and population shifts will need to consider more than just whether or not to renovate or construct new

104

buildings. Although changes in student enrollments are key components to effective planning and policy development, city and school leaders need to decide if the projections of student enrollments are the primary criteria for deciding whether or not to abandon neighborhood schools.

Argon (2004) reminds planners that the need to improve public school infrastructure and lack of adequate funding will continue well into the future, and cannot be ignored. Evaluative studies are required to assess the current trend to construct large campus-style schools on large remote sites. These studies are important to planning and the construction of school facilities, particularly in financially challenged, inner-city communities where many neighborhood schools are deteriorating enrollment declining, and available land is at a premium.

One of the challenges for planners and key decision makers is that the overall success of public school students encompasses more than a physical structure that can be located or relocated on any available site. As Philipsen (1999) states, school sites are thought to be more than merely building locations. School facilities are one of the most important tools in the educational process, as well as the social and economic vitality of the neighborhoods and cities in which they are located.   These buildings (neighborhood schools), asserts Oritz (1994), represent a community's identity.   As a result, it is important that schools enhance the urban community, not simply as an aesthetic object, but as a site for social development, neighborhood resource development, and urban revitalization (Beaumont, 2002). Mayor Joseph Riley of Charleston, South Carolina, stated,

> *"The challenge of educating our children is the single*
> *most important issue facing our community, and this*
> *is a battle we cannot and will not lose. We must*
> *increasingly find ways for us, the citizens of our*
> *community, to connect with our children and let*
> *them know that we know they are most our important asset."*
> (Nation's Cities Weekly, 2005)

105

Historically, elementary schools were one of the key public institutions most accessible to neighborhood residents. For this reason, many neighborhood schools became and continue to function as substitute healthcare, recreational, and civic facilities. As such, the decision making about what should be done with surplus schools should not be as simply as close or not close the buildings. Abandoned school facilities become part of the "missing teeth" and decaying structures of neighborhoods and central cities.

From social and economic perspectives, school abandonment often means that jobs are lost and students and supplemental educational programs are displaced when school facilities are abandoned. Teachers, administrative and support personnel, as well as school suppliers may be eliminated as a result of school abandonments. In some cases, social programs conducted in these facilities are eliminated and students are transferred to locations that can only be reached by vehicular transportation and decisions concerning the disposition of the facilities are ongoing.

While public opinion continues to value education, all levels of government are being pressured to spend tax dollars more efficiently, which often means significant reductions in public school funding and directives to do more with less (Weiss, 2004). The reuse or abandonment of the closed school facilities very often becomes a matter of community and political debates. The majority of the *taxpaying* public has a low level of confidence in the management of most public schools (Sleenman and Rockwell, 1981). The public's overall dissatisfaction with the condition of educational achievements and the physical conditions of inner-city public schools is often displayed in the public's unwillingness to vote for the issuance of bonds to finance new construction or renovations of existing school facilities.

Despite strong community commitments to education, many public school issues, especially in areas of concentrated poverty, are often addressed with a "crisis mindset" that does

not afford the opportunity for critical reflection or for in-depth planning (Haar, 2002).
Consequently, the role that school design, including school restorations and "siting", may play in
the creation of successful or failing urban environments is often excluded from most formal
decision-making processes. The "reactive" or "nonreactive" responses to most public school
needs are often the result of political pressures or the lack of political clout.

As more urban area leaders, school administrators, and the members of the general public
begin to recognize that the placement for education facilities can make a difference in the quality
of learning and in the sustainability of neighborhoods, more strides may be made to conduct
more in-depth school facility assessments (Chung, 2002). For many, schools are regarded as
community centers serving the needs of not only the neighborhood residents, but the needs of
city and some county residents as well. Neighborhood schools are used for various recreational
and social purposes. In some cases, regional use agreements benefit inner-city schools and the
surrounding county school systems in their efforts to support the entire metropolitan area.

According to Moelis and Valukas (2002), the diversity of most inner cities is reported to
produce a need for "commonness" and community gathering space. As the public shares many
city resources, it makes sense that public schools function as multipurpose community learning
facilities. Centrally located and publicly owned, these properties are economically ideal
community resources, particularly those facilities located in land-deprived and landlocked inner
cities. Despite their ideal locations, economic benefits, and increasing support of educators and
parents, neighborhood schools continue to be abandoned. These schools are often abandoned
and student populations consolidated in larger, remote facilities. According to Rypkema (2001,
p.1), the abandonment of existing neighborhood schools:

"…means not only the destruction of some of our built heritage, but also the loss of an important social anchor in established neighborhoods. Old neighborhood schools, with their distinctive architecture and prominent location in the neighborhood, communicate a message that children are an integral part of the community and that their education is a core community value."

The relationship between the abandonment of inner-city public schools and their neighborhoods, while it may be assumed, is not supported by literature. Literature about school abandonment, though very limited, typically focused on the deteriorating conditions of school facilities and the need for better and bigger ones. One reason for this lack of literature may be a result of the trend to demolish and construct of new facilities verses the adaptive reuse of these existing ones. The fact that much of the information disseminated to the public is done so at the discretion of the individual districts may account for the void in official documentation.

As Accordino and Johnson (2000) suggest, the lack of literature addressing the problems of vacant and abandoned properties may be due to the perception that these problems are symptoms of urban decline rather than causes of urban decline. In this same vein, the abandonment of inner-city neighborhood schools may be viewed as a symptom instead of a cause. Orfield (2002) asserts that poor performing, low quality schools contribute to the high vacancy rates being experienced in urban areas.

As the former mayor of Richmond, Virginia, L. Douglas Wilder, believed that the issues of affordable housing and the condition of education facilities are so "intertwined" that to improve educational output (student achievement) and economic development, strategies must be developed and implemented to address both issues simultaneously (Kastner, 2004). Prosico (2004, p.1) agrees, stating that though research supports the theory that "coordinated investment in neighborhoods and school can produce better outcomes in low-income neighborhoods than

108

investment in either schools or neighborhoods alone", there has been little collaboration. He further states "decades of profound transformation in neighborhood housing, commercial activity and the quality of public spaces have taken place without much effect on neighborhood schools. Even where school improvements have been significant, they have mostly taken place without any real connection to other plans for the neighborhood and its development—almost as if the two are on different planes."

Blending affordable and accessible housing into inner-city neighborhoods is complemented by locations in close proximity to public transportation (Chung, 2002; Shadowen, 2008). Many core city areas have dominate pockets of concentrated poverty, and as a consequence, are plagued with an array of symptoms associated with extreme poverty, to include the lack of growth and investment in most public infrastructures and service enhancements. In some areas, school districts are the primary developers, and "what they do and how they do it will affect more communities than anything else. As a result, there is a natural antagonism between school districts and other governmental agencies, which often leaves the idea of schools as centers of their communities as unfilled promise"[60] (Argon, 2004, p. 20).

The "disconnect" between school, community, business, and local government officials compounds the problem for inner-city mayors. As a result, land use planning and decision-making processes tend to be those of exclusivity instead of inclusiveness (Graham, 2005; Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 2009). The maintenance of viable school facilities and sustainable neighborhoods represent two reasons for city and school leaders, private sponsors, and citizens to move away from exclusivity.

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[60] Joe Argon, editor of American School and University, conducted an exclusive roundtable discussion, "Schools of Tomorrow, quote is Kerry Leonard, AIA, Senior Education Planner. January 2004, p.20.

Prosico (2004) asserts that when schools are omitted from community development planning, neighborhoods are forced to market themselves primarily to people who are not concerned about schools. Proscio (2004) also states that as a result of this disconnect, the vision for quality public schools and quality neighborhoods seem to be compatible but unrelated, existing on two parallel planes. Englehardt and Englehardt (1928[61]) confirm that the "disconnect" between school districts and city planning is not new. They state,

> *"City planning is interlocked with the public schools in three major points. In the first instance, unless the school authorities are fully aware of the contemplated city plans, a destructive loss may ensue to the schools as well as to the city in that the designation of schools sites may not be adequate and economical. Second, the playground and recreational problems are interrelated to the whole educational program both for children and for adults that these facilities cannot be properly planned unless the school authorities are cooperating with the planning commission. Third, the problem of educating the public to a full appreciation of the significance of a well-developed city plan is a matter in which the schools must share if it is to be properly done."*

One may question whether or not the impact of school abandonment is exclusive or isolated to inner cities or inclusive of their entire metropolitan areas. Logan (2001) suggests that large social and income disparities between cities and suburbs are likely in the long run to damage the region as a whole. For this reason, schools can no longer function as single-purpose facilities, particularly in inner-city neighborhoods where concentrated poverty is often overwhelming. Therefore, all aspects of school facilities use and planning need to be guided by a community-school mindset that considers societal and economical conditions (Kennedy, 2003).

As new communities, including new schools, are constructed in adjacent suburbs, outward migration leaves most inner-city public schools under-populated and under-funded. However, the greater demands of sprawl and over-crowded schools often strain the budgets of

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[61]Cited by Holy (1972). City and School Planning. Englehardt, N. L. and Fred Englehardt. Planning School Building Programs in American Cities. P. 210

110

county school systems. Orfield (2002, p. 1) states that "sprawling development is gobbling up land with no corresponding growth in supporting infrastructure." He further asserts that such unplanned growth has an adverse impact on the quality of life for people in all areas by contributing to social isolation and economic waste.

Research Questions

Current trends indicate that many believe that neighborhood schools are community centers and should function as such. There is also an abundance of literature that describes the emphases and importance of neighborhood revitalization and role that schools play in neighborhood preservation. Yet, despite the number of documented revitalization projects in inner-city neighborhoods, there is a lack of consistent and comprehensive data that describe the numbers and locations of the construction, renovation, adaptively reused, abandoned, or demolished public schools. Lacking also is comprehensive evaluation and analyses of any impacts of any such changes.

Much of the available data about public schools are collected and complied by federal and state sources. However, these sources often rely upon the selective data issued by the individual school districts. I suggest that such information is lacking as comprehensive and strategic components of urban and school planning. For the benefit of central cities and their public schools and make better use of limited public funds, these data could be collected, analyzed, and incorporated in the decision-making processes of neighborhood renewal and revitalization projects.

Despite the increasing expectations and challenges of all public schools systems and the decreasing quality and the numbers of public school buildings, there is no clearly defined

111

nationwide policy for the provision, siting, or abandonment of public school facilities. Facilities and urban planners and school district officials, as rule, do not have data systems that support the complex and demanding responsibilities of decision-making, planning, management oversight, and funding for public schools. Moreover, at the building level, facilities' data are maintained at the school or district level, and these data are not always readily available to state and other public agencies or may not be available in uniform and usable formats.

Many boards of education tend to aggregate data, making it difficult to extract individualized information. As indicated by the U.S. Department of Education and NCES (2003), there is a "missing link" between the information maintained by facilities managers of the individual school districts and the information necessary to enhance policy planning and implementation at the state and national levels. The lack of mandated data collection and standardized formats tend to result in school district data that is maintained and reported inconsistently. However, some districts may conduct studies on a regular basis but not create comprehensive databases, while others district may use unofficial, informal surveys to assess specific needs that often do not support future needs or reflect past circumstances with any degree of accuracy.

Public schools are funded and operated by their local governments. As independent entities, the majority of information produced and distributed by and for school districts is subject primarily to the determination and decisions of the governing bodies of the school districts. The charters and individual state laws often establish legal rights for school districts. For example, Section 5 of the *Code of Virginia* acknowledges the independence of school districts within the Commonwealth of Virginia (http://leg1.state.va.us/000/src.htm, 2005). The code states,

112

*"The power to operate, maintain and supervise public schools
in Virginia is, and has always been, within the exclusive jurisdiction
of the local school boards and not within the jurisdiction of the
State Board of Education."[62]*

Most school districts are responsible for the construction, maintenance, and disposition of their facilities. As such, the political, legal, operational, and financial aspects of the nation's public schools are often distinct. Consequently, the degree and type of statistical data collected and report are distinct as well. For example, many districts do not identify the number of closed or new school facilities in their standard reporting. Very often the net number (existing – closed + new = reported number of school facilities) of publicly owned and operated schools facilities is reported. As a result, the degree of public school closures or abandonments is difficult to identify and track.

With much of the political, social, and financial pressures being focused on the quality of public school education, district leaders often direct most of their energies toward the improvement of student achievement, which is considered their core responsibility. Higher student performances tend to signal to the field of public opinion that school districts are being productive and diligent with public funds. This opinion may account for the lack of data about facilities management, to include the monitoring and tracking of the abandonments of public schools.

Despite their current uses, many public school facilities were designed and operated to serve an array of community needs, many of which were non-educational needs. However, today as educational, community, and technology needs change, older school buildings tend to

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[62] Bradley v. School Bd., 462 F.2d 1058 (4th Cir. 1972), aff'd, 412 U.S. 92, 93 S. Ct. 1952, 36 L.Ed.2d 771 (1973).

113

require modifications to accommodate new program demands and to meet current building and construction codes and local ordinances. Developers, historic preservationists, and community leaders are beginning to realize that there is value in maintaining existing school facilities and cost effective means for choosing school renovations on existing sites in lieu of new constructions on remote locations. They are discovering that adaptive reuses of public school buildings are worth consideration, especially in central cities where land is at a premium and historic school buildings are being demolished at an increasing rate. For these reasons and the current demands for public schools to function as community facilities, the retention of existing schools is being viewed as a means to strengthen communities and preserve the physical structures; many are designated as historic buildings.

My literature review identifies a host of adverse impacts linked to vacant and abandoned residential and commercial buildings and to the abandonment of inner-city public schools. As a result, I assert that any means to minimize the decline of neighborhood and public school environments should be of vital interest to those with a responsibility to maintain and to plan and develop sustainable neighborhoods and to build and maintain safe and productive school environments. Such information should also be of concern to families and taxpayers who are being burden financially by decisions that may not be supported by effective planning strategies resulting from the lack of effective and comprehensive data.

I argue that as a consequence of the lack of comprehensive data and statistical analyses to support their strategies, urban and school planners are disadvantaged in their overall assessments of the implications of public school abandonments on neighborhood and school preservations. Therefore, in my dissertation, I provide a better understanding about public school abandonments

114

and confirm the need for the development of comprehensive data and analyses by answering the following research questions.

1. *How extensive is the problem of public school abandonment? For example, how many public schools have been abandoned and where have public school abandonments occurred more often? For example, how many public schools have been abandoned? Do public school abandonments occurred more often in inner-city neighborhoods in than in urban fringe neighborhoods?*

2. *Where are public elementary (neighborhood) school abandonments more prevalent? For example, do more public elementary (neighborhood) school abandonments occurred in central-city neighborhoods or in urban fringe neighborhoods?*

3. *What indicators best describe the neighborhoods in which public elementary (neighborhood) schools have been abandoned? For example, are there consistent patterns in racial (minority-majority concentrated) compositions, poverty levels for single-female lead households with children under 18 years of age, poverty levels for individuals, and unemployment and vacancy housing levels in neighborhoods where public elementary schools have been abandoned?*

Purpose of Study

In this dissertation, I do not propose to establish causality for public school abandonment, but only to identify and describe this current trend and to provide a better understanding of the impacts of this phenomenon. In so doing, I want to confirm the need for urban and school planners to use more effective means to address the problems of public school abandonment, and as a result, minimize the adverse impacts on the physical and socio-economical structures of inner-city neighborhoods and public schools.

While literature links the declining conditions of inner-city neighborhoods to poverty, and though it may be intuitively assumed, I find literature missing of comprehensive data and analyses that link public school abandonments specifically to poverty. As a result of this lack of information, I want to learn more about where public school abandonments are occurring most often. I want to know if school abandonments are confined to inner-cities neighborhoods, or are school abandonments occurring in urban fringe areas as well? If so, how do the numbers of abandonments differ by these two locations?

Literature indicates that many inner-city neighborhoods are challenged by poverty and minority concentrations, and as a consequence, are challenged physically, socially, economically, and politically. Literature also indicates that a number of adverse impacts are linked to vacant and abandoned properties in most poor inner-city neighborhoods. As a result, I want to explore the social and economic trends of neighborhoods and public school districts where public school abandonments have occurred.

For neighborhoods where public schools have been abandoned, I also want to know the racial and household compositions, as well as the poverty, unemployment, and vacancy (housing) rates. I select these descriptors to explore my theory that public schools are being

116

abandoned more often in poverty and minority concentrated inner-city neighborhoods than in the urban fringe areas. The confirmation of the trend to abandon public schools most often in poor, inner-city neighborhoods and the indication that public school abandonments are expected to increase in inner-city neighborhoods are alarming, especially as decisions to abandon public schools are apt to continue without the benefit of comprehensive data and analyses specific to public school abandonments.

Currently, many of the nation's poor inner-city neighborhoods are riddled with increasing numbers of vacant and abandoned buildings, and the increase in public school abandonments not only adds to the numbers of abandoned properties, but adds to the negative stigmas attached to inner-cities and inner-city public schools.

The purpose of public schools and their contribution to maintaining viable neighborhoods and strong community networks should be of interest to, not just city residents but also the general public of the metropolitan areas. The completion of my study confirms the need for the urban and school planners to establish comprehensive data and is a foundation for conducting advance research specific to public school abandonments. By providing a better understanding of the potential impacts of public school abandonments, urban and school planners may better understand the impacts of their decisions on the communities they seek to serve.

Why Care About This Research?

Poor, inner-city neighborhoods and public schools have sufficient challenges without adding the adverse impacts of abandoning the buildings that are meant to serve as community anchors. The fact that most inner-city public school boards continue to be strapped financially,

117

public school administrators may feel that there are no options to the abandonment public school buildings to reduce costs and save money, particularly in the absence of comprehensive data to indicate other alternatives.

As a result of declining populations and increasing budget shortfalls, major U.S. cities like Baltimore, Detroit, Kansas City, Portland, Richmond, New York, and the District of Columbia, are anticipating a number of additional school abandonments. In contrast, as a result of anticipated decreases in funding, Los Angeles and Houston are strategizing to cope with projected increases in student enrollments and a need for more school facilities to alleviate overcrowded classrooms.

Many of the reasons that are being attributed to school abandonments and the implications of these abandonments will not continue to remain exclusive or confined to the poorer areas of inner cities. Some of the same problems and resulting implications that many feel are unique only to inner-city public schools and neighborhoods are now being seen in urban fringe areas of inner cities and older suburban neighborhoods located in adjacent counties. These older, more mature suburbs are now experiencing challenges with failing schools, budget shortfalls, crime, and the loss of jobs and businesses to other remote suburbs (Katz, 2000, p. 5).

Orfield (2002) states that edge communities[63] may not have the social needs that are associated with the poor nor the aged infrastructure that plague inner cities, but are increasingly challenged by environmental, fiscal, and physical problems related to rapid and unconstrained growth. Like most inner-city neighborhoods, older suburban areas have increasing needs for neighborhood reinvestments and redevelopments (Katz, 2002). In addition, the number of

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[63] Edge cities—suburban communities with more than 5 million square feet of office space and more jobs than bedroom communities or prototypical suburbs that are characterized as mainly white with low density, new homes and average growth. Source: American MetroPolitics: The Suburban Reality, Orfield, 2002.

suburban residents living in poverty and the overall poverty rates for these areas rose between 2000 and 2007 (Frey, Berube, Singer, Wilson, 2009). For these reasons, metropolitan business and community leaders, as well as city officials, school administrators and urban planners may need to expand their visions and their efforts to support regional cooperation and research in areas of effective land-use policy development and assessment that includes public school planning, facilities management and neighborhood preservation.

In support of regionalism, James E. Ukrops, a grocery and banking magnate in the metro-Richmond, Virginia asserts, "…our vision stops at jurisdictional lines. Really, no one is thinking about what we will look like by 2025, 2030, 40, 50." To become effective, regionalism in most metropolitan areas may have to overcome the obstacles related to finances and political power and priority.[64] Dr. John Moeser, University of Richmond urban planning scholar, states that as a result of the decline being seen in older rings of counties (Henrico and Chesterfield) adjacent to Richmond City, regionalism is critical. He explains, "Poverty and affordable housing aren't just a city problem anymore. Capital projects are good, but building buildings doesn't address the issues of employment, job training, and education" (Kollatz, 2008, p.4). As a result of the interconnectivity of inner cities and their surrounding suburban communities, I believe that my research provides a framework for urban and public school planners and community and civic leaders to consider the development of planning strategies that focus on regional perspectives to support sustainable neighborhoods and quality public schools.

Literature indicates the role and value of inner-city public schools to the neighborhoods and cities in which the schools are located. Literature also indicates the increasing trend of school districts to abandon or close public schools and identifies a number of potential impacts

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[64] Richmond Times Dispatch series, "Not Just Borders Limit Our Localities", written by staff, Sunday, June 24, 2007, p.1.

of these abandonments. Literature also suggests that due to the concentration of poverty that exists in many inner-city neighborhoods, the potential impacts of school abandonment may be more devastating for the residents of poorer, inner-city neighborhoods (Chung, 2002; Katz, 2002).

For purposes of this study, I focus primarily on inner-city neighborhoods and inner-city public elementary schools[65]. However, I recognize that explorations of metropolitan areas provide broader, more diverse descriptions of demographic changes and impacts of public school abandonment than would the depiction of inner-city areas alone. To better understand and identify changes about public school abandonments in metropolitan areas, I explore and compare various characteristics of inner-city neighborhoods and public school divisions to those neighborhoods and schools divisions located in surrounding counties.

In Chapter III, I detail my methodology to answer my research questions. In this chapter, I identify the data collection processes and define the descriptive data that I use to investigate public school abandonment. I also identify and describe the variables that I use for indicate the conditions of the neighborhoods and public schools that I target for this project, and I discuss the development and distribution of my online survey instrument.

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[65] As noted, the vast majority of neighborhood schools by definition and residential attendance requirements are elementary schools. Literature also indicates that elementary schools are generally constructed to serve one neighborhood, and as the census tract represents my units of analysis, data at the neighborhood level are consistent with my research needs.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The basic methodology of my dissertation is a descriptive one. As such, I examine the demographic characteristics of select neighborhoods where public school abandonments exit. In this chapter, I identify and describe the data collection processes that I use to confirm the phenomenon of public school abandonments. Due to the limited amount of empirical data about public schools and the incompleteness and lack of standardization of data that do exist, I expect that my research findings may not be generalizable or easily reproduced. As public school data are not collected consistently, and public school districts are not mandated to track or report school abandonment information, duplicating my research may not be possible. The lack of validity and reliability of my work is yet another reason for the development of comprehensive data and analyses that would support more valid and reliable research. However, to bring forward a better understanding of the public school abandonments, the resultant implications, and the need to produce comprehensive data and analyses, I examine secondary data extensively.

In this chapter, I identify the geographic areas of interest and describe the demographics or variables that I use to indicate the conditions or attributes of these locations. I explain and describe the variables that I select to indicate the existence of concentrated poverty in public schools and inner-city neighborhoods. I also suggest that tracking these same variables over time could serve as forewarnings of neighborhood and public school decline. The variables that I select and discuss in this chapter describe neighborhood and school populations, poverty levels, racial composition, and the unemployment and vacant housing rates.

I also describe my research design, survey instrument, and the steps I take to complete my data collection and review. I first review and collect quantitative secondary data that describe conditions and characteristics of select inner-city public schools and neighborhoods.

121

Analyses of these data allow me to describe neighborhoods where public school abandonments exist.

To enhance and support my secondary data, I create and implement an on-line survey to collect primary qualitative and quantitative data from public school officials of some of the nation's most populous inner-city public districts.

Secondary Data Collection

As a result of the confirmed lack of comprehensive data and analyses specific to public school abandonment and to provide a better understanding of the problem, I collect quantitative secondary data in three phases:

1. General and Basic Demographics by CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA
2. General and Basic Demographics by Public School Districts
3. General and Basic Demographics by Census Tracts

Phase One: General and Basic Demographics by CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA

In Phase One, I collect demographic data for nine of the nation's ten most populous Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas (CMSA)[66] and the Atlanta MSA. I select CMSA data because these data represent one or more population centers or central cities and include

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[66] The United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines CMSAs as core areas that contain a substantial population nucleus, together with adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration within the core areas.

adjacent communities that are comprised of surrounding counties that share economic and commuting ties to the central cities (www.goa.gov, 2005). I select the Atlanta MSA to present one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas and one that represents an area of significant growth, both in population and industry.

For my study, I review Census data (2000) for the CMSAs and the cities of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Detroit, District of Columbia, and Atlanta. I also collect demographic data from the American Fact Finder[67]. My review of secondary databases includes data collected from the decennial census[68] , which are easily accessible and available via the U. S. Census Bureau's website. I identify the geographic areas for this study in **Table 4**.

Table 4 Population and Geographical Location of Selected Most Populous CMSA and the Atlanta MSA

Metropolitan Area (CMSA/MSA)	Geographic Location	Census Population (2000)
New York	Northeast	21,199,865
Los Angeles	West	16,373,645
Chicago	Midwest	9,157,540
Washington	Northeast	7,608,070
San Francisco	West	7,039,362
Philadelphia	Northeast	6,188,463
Detroit	Northeast	5,456,428
Dallas	South	5,221,801
Houston	South	4,669,571
Atlanta (MSA)	South	4,112,198

Source: US Census Bureau (2000)

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[67] http://factfinder.census.gov

[68] Decennial Census collects basic demographic information on households (age, gender, race, school enrollments, income, poverty statues, occupation, employment, and housing). www.census.gov

123

I feel that the Census data and data that I collect from FreeDemographics.com and Lewis Mumford Center[69] represent reliable and comprehensive demographic data for my target areas. Census databases provide information about my select metropolitan areas and provide data that describe how central city and surrounding county environments are related physically, economically, and socially, and in most cases how these environments compare to each other over time.

I do recognize and affirm that geographic boundaries change over time, and for this study, when I perform area comparisons, I ensure that the boundaries are consistent between 1990 and 2000 census data, and omit areas that are not constant over the time period. The use of CMSA data also allows for the identification of the dispersion of distressed areas, particularly in areas described as "pockets" of concentrated or extreme poverty adjacent to geographical areas where the majority population generally does not live in extreme poverty[70]. A review of these data is critical to my theory that not only do public school abandonments occur most often in inner-city neighborhoods, but also that public abandonments occur most often in poverty concentrated neighborhoods.

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[69] I randomly reviewed FreeDemograghic.com and Lewis Mumford Center data to determine accuracy and consistency in reporting with that of US Census Bureau data.

[70] For purposes of this study extreme poverty is defined as a poverty level of 40% or more. Extreme poverty areas are census tracts (neighborhoods) where 40% or more of the residents are poor. www.census.gov/population.

Table 5 Select US Metro/Consolidated Statistical Areas (MSA/CMSAs) and Geographic Components.

1. **New York**—Northern New Jersey—Long Island, NY—NJ—CT—PA **(CMSA)**

2. **Los Angeles**—Riverside—Orange County, CA **(CMSA)**

3. **Chicago**—Gary—Kenosha, IL—IN—WI **(CMSA)**

4. **Washington**—Baltimore, DC—MD—VA—WV **(CMSA)**

5. **San Francisco**—Oakland—San Jose, CA **(CMSA)**

6. **Philadelphia**—Wilmington—Atlantic City, PA—NJ—DE—MD **(CMSA)**

7. **Detroit**—Ann Arbor—Flint, MI **(CMSA)**

9. **Dallas**—Fort Worth, TX **(CMSA)**

10. **Houston**—Galveston—Brazoria, TX **(CMSA)**

11. **Atlanta**, GA **(MSA)**

Source: US Census Bureau (2000)

I also examine select data to identify and compare characteristics of ten of the nation's most populous inner cities and ten of most populous inner-city school districts. I identify the geographical components that comprise the target metropolitan areas for this study in the above table (**Table 5**).

To better understand, compare, and describe the similarities and distinctions of these locations, I create maps, charts, and tables of general and basic demographics of the select geographic areas. I use this information as supporting data in my analyses of public school abandonments and the implications of public school abandonments on the fabrics of inner-city neighborhoods. I reference the supporting secondary data in the Appendices Section of this paper, where each geographic location is assigned a separate section.

125

Phase Two: Basic and General Demographics for Public School Data

In Phase Two, I continue my data investigation by exploring the number of public schools located in the target CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA. I collect data from the National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, for the 2004-2005 school year. I use this file to identify the city/county name where the school is located, school name, school address, school grade level, school district name, district locale[71], total student enrollment, racial compositions of student, and student/family poverty status[72]. To prepare these data for my analyses, I edit these data by performing the following steps:

1. Delete addresses of public school districts not included in the areas selected for this study.

2. Delete duplicate addresses of public schools that are included in my areas of study.

3. Delete public schools with post office box addresses.

4. Assign dummy variables to indicate whether a school is open or is closed/abandoned.

    a. I create dummy variables to indicate whether the school is open or in operation or whether the school is closed or abandoned. I code schools, using zero (0) to represent schools that are open and one (1) to represent schools that are closed. For this research, schools that are listed and indicate zero (0) students enrolled and zero (0) teachers, I consider abandoned.

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[71] School local identifies whether the school is located in a Central City, Urban Fringe of Central City or Rural area.
[72] Student/family poverty status is indicated by eligibility to receive free and reduced meals. This stat used typically to determine the number of disadvantaged students.

126

5. Sort data and by CMSA, City/County, Locale, and by Open/Close statuses.

Phase Three: Public School Demographic Data at Census Tract Level

Like many researchers, for my dissertation I use census tracts to represent my neighborhoods of interest. To better understand the conditions of neighborhoods in which public schools are vacant and abandoned, I use census tract-level data. For Phase Three, census tracts represent my units of analysis and the basic measurements that I use to identify and describe the conditions of neighborhoods in which public elementary school have been abandonments. I examine elementary schools only in this phase. Elementary schools are typically defined as the neighborhood schools and serve only one neighborhood or census tract. In comparison, middle and high schools have larger populations that are comprised of students from one than one neighborhood or census tract. For purposes of this study, I use census tract and neighborhood interchangeably.

I use my existing dataset, for the 2004-2005 school year[73] to develop, collect and analyze census tract-level data. Again, I note that for this phase, I focus on elementary schools only. I note that some school districts may have consolidated elementary schools that exceed the fifth grade; for consistency, I use elementary schools with grades K-5. For this study, I define neighborhood public schools as public elementary schools, and as a result, I delete all public schools with grade levels above the fifth grade.

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[73] National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2004-2005 Common Core of Data (CCD) Public School Data. www.ed.gov/ccd

I find that there are challenges to comparing school district data. Some states have elementary school districts, some have secondary school districts, and others have unified or combined school districts at each level. Still, other school districts areas overlap, some city and county school districts overlap[74]. As a result of such challenges, I use census tract data associated with the address of the abandoned elementary school and make the assumption that the student enrollment represents the number of student residing in the identified census tract or neighborhood.

To collect data at the census tract level, my dataset needed to be geocoded[75] by individual street addresses of the abandoned public school. At the completion of the geocoding process, I use tract-level-data to identify neighborhood school populations, racial/ethnic compositions, incomes, and poverty and unemployment rates. I also use tract-level data to describe housing and family household data, particularly data indicative of households headed by single females with children under age 18.

To get a better understanding of the neighborhoods where public elementary school are abandoned, I structure my data analyses processes to first, analyze secondary data to describe demographics in neighborhood and public school environments where schools are abandoned. I also use these data to identify areas of concentrated poverty. For this study, concentrated poverty areas are defined as neighborhoods where the poverty rate for the overall population is 40 percent or higher. I compare the demographics of neighborhoods that are poverty concentrated to neighborhoods where the overall population is not poverty concentrated.

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[74] Population Division of the US Census Bureau. 2004. Oosse, Monique, "School District Population Estimates Methodology Research Using Administrative Data Sources: Public Education Enrollment.

[75] Geocoding is defined as the process by which the geographic coordinates of a location are determined by its address, postal code, or other explicitly non-geographic descriptor. http://www.census.gov/srd/papers/pdf/rr2000-06.pdf

128

I use descriptive statistics to discuss populations, poverty levels, racial composition, and the unemployment and vacant housing rates in the selected areas. The statistics that I use to describe and compare the conditions of the neighborhood and school environments are the mean, median, standard deviation, and percent and percentage change for select variables. Below I identify and discuss the variables that I select for this study. I select these variables because these variables are used most often by researchers to indicate neighborhood decline (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Frey, Berube, Singer and Wilson, 2009; Katz, 2002). Since neighborhood conditions impact public school conditions, I use the similar variables to investigate the conditions of public schools environments.

Demographics (Variables)

*Racial Composition—*Racial compositions of neighborhood often serve as indicators of area financial and economical stability. Chung (2002) states that mixed-income, racially diverse neighborhoods tend to be more stable and fiscally sound.   Segregated and isolated populations of minorities are often a result of white flight and have significant implications on the social and economic structures of the neighborhoods that experience the migration of whites and middle-class families away for inner cities. "White flight" is considered and indicator of inner-city decline that contributes to deteriorating conditions of the physical environments (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Orfield, 2000; Katz 2002). Frankenberg and Lee (2002) suggest that patterns of segregation by race are linked to segregation by poverty and concentrated poverty, which is linked to unequal opportunities.

*Population Changes—*Declining populations are indicators of people transitioning away from specific cities and neighborhoods. Decreasing populations are viewed as indicators of urban and

129

public school decline. Orfield (2002) and Downs (2000) suggest that declining populations can be indicators that areas are becoming less attractive to residents. According to Accordino and Johnson (2000), the increasing flight of middle-class residents away from central cities tends to result in neighborhoods that are concentrated with poor and minority families. Consequently, for purposes of this research, changes in populations are important to identifying shifts in racial compositions and related conditions in neighborhood and public school environments where schools are abandoned.

Housing (Vacancy Rates)—Vacant and abandoned properties lower property values, decrease neighborhood investments, increase opportunities for crime, and affect the social and economic structures of communities (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Chung 2002). Neighborhoods with increasing vacancy rates signal the depopulation and potential declines in the physical, economic, and social fabrics of those areas. Increases in vacant and abandoned school facilities have to potential to escalate the negative impacts in areas that with high vacancy rates. In many inner-cities, vacant properties are clustered in poor, minority neighborhoods. In some cases, these properties are adjacent to public schools that are abandoned or being considered for abandonment (Hazard, 2005; Maxwell, 2007).

Poverty Rates—The level of poverty indicates the level at which families are able to support themselves financially. Concentrations of low-income households in central cities create conditions that contribute to declining neighborhood structures (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Downs, 1997). Poverty has long been recognized as a contributing factor of crime and a host of other social ills (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Chung, 2002). Poverty also contributes to lower student academic achievement levels (Schellenberg, 1998). Higher poverty levels suggest the

130

weakening of tax revenues and social fabrics of communities, and as a result, poverty increases the need for public subsidies (Orfield, 2002). Tracking and monitoring the poverty levels provide researchers a means to identify shifts in poverty statuses, particularly in neighborhoods where the poverty levels begin to move from non-poverty to poverty and from poverty to concentrated poverty statuses.

*Unemployment Rates—*High unemployment rates are indicators that a significant number of residents in a defined location are unemployed and may be challenged economically, as a result, maybe in need of public subsidies to meet basic needs. In many instances, public school districts are often one of the largest individual employers in many central cities (Chung 2002), and the abandonment of public schools often job losses for public school employees and other neighborhood residents.

*Single Female Households with School Age Children—*Higher rates of single female lead households with school age children in a defined location are indications that children raised in these families are more likely to live in poverty and are more likely to be in need of public subsidies (Katz, 2002). There is adequate research available that indicates the adverse social and economic impacts of poverty on children who reside in poverty and in households that a led by single females (Chung, 2002, Katz, 2002; Graham, 2005)

Student Enrollment – Evaluations of the shifts in student enrollments provide information about the school districts' demand for teachers, school facilities, and the number of services required to accommodate the special needs of the student populations. Inner-city neighborhoods have the highest student mobility (Chung, 2002). As public school funding is tied to student enrollments,

131

shifts in student populations are indicators of expected increases or decreases in revenues, which can be linked to school abandonment.

Primary Data Collection

For this project, I collect primary data by way of an on-line survey. I construct my survey to acquire first-hand knowledge, opinions, and experiences from subject-matter experts in the field of public school planning and other fields that are directly involved in strategic planning, construction, management, and operations of public school facilities. I design the questionnaire to obtain insight as to the number of public school districts that have been abandoned or are being considered for abandonment.

My survey focuses solely on obtaining information about public school from a facilities management perspective, and as a result, I do not include any questions about student-specific data. I want to obtain a better understanding as to why public school districts have abandoned schools, and to learn if school districts anticipate future abandonments and why. For example, research indicates that the primary reasons that elementary schools were abandoned in the Chicago Public Schools include lack of funding, academic failure, low enrollment, and underutilization[76].

Finally, to help determine the facility planning strategies of the target public school districts, I want to know if the school districts currently have and use facilities master plans. Master plans typically contain the district's planning and development strategies for physical

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[76] Neighborhood Capital Budget Group. 2007. Fact Sheet: "Why Schools Have Been Closed by Chicago Public Schools?" Chicago, IL. www.cps.k12.us.edu

plant maintenance and operations. Generally, these plans also identify the districts' construction and renovations needs and the funding required to meet those needs. Most school district master plans also describe the districts' facilities inventory and asset management programs and the methods of disposition for surplus or under-utilized buildings.

Research Survey

I design my survey to identify the number of vacant and abandoned neighborhood public school facilities[77] that are located in select geographical areas. The information that I want to know focuses on the identification of past, present, and anticipated public school abandonments. The identification and understanding of reasons associated with the abandonment of public school facilities is important to my understanding of what can be done to minimize any resulting harms on community structures.

My survey incorporates qualitative and quantitative data collections. A number of questions are designed to obtain the perceptions of impact that public school abandonments have on the neighborhoods in which abandoned public schools are located. Some survey questions are administered to obtain a better understanding of what public services are being provided to students and residents at neighborhood public schools.

The complete processes that I follow to conduct my online survey and the actual questionnaire are included in the Appendices Section of this paper. In the next chapter, I provide

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[77] Neighborhood schools were and for the most part still are facilities designed and constructed to function as elementary schools. For purposes of this research, neighborhood schools and elementary schools are the same.

133

my analyses of secondary and primary data.   I conclude Chapter IV by providing process details, narratives, and charts, tables, maps, and other descriptive illustrations of my research findings.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSES

In this chapter, I analyze and describe my research findings. I analyze data that I collected from the U. S. Census Bureau and the U. S. Department of Education. I also analyze and describe data that I collected from the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES), Common Core of Data. In this chapter, I provide data analyses for the select geographic areas and public school districts. I also analyze data at the census tract (neighborhood) and public school levels. I analyze primary data provided by public school district subject-matter experts who responded to my on-line questionnaire. I also analyze simple t-tests to identify the impact of school abandonment on neighborhoods.

My analyses describe the demographics of the locations and public school systems selected for study. My research findings are not intended to suggest causality for public school abandonments or the resulting conditions of neighborhoods where abandoned public schools exist. My research findings are also not meant to be generalizable or to infer the conditions of all poor, inner-city neighborhoods or public school systems.

In this study, I analyze and present the conditions as indicated by a limited amount of data specific to public school abandonment. For example, as a result of the lack of data standardization and requirements, many public school districts do not provide consistent and complete information to state and federal agencies, including the Census Bureau. For years, the focus of data collection and analyses have been improving academic achievement levels and funding inequities. There is very little data collection and analyses about public school abandonments. My research findings provide reasons that support the development of valid and reliable data about public school abandonments that would support generalizations and inferences through statistical testing. To confirm my theory that neighborhoods where public

schools are abandoned are challenged by poverty-related ills, I use the 2004-2005 dataset to perform basic statistical t-tests. I structure and present my data analyses to correspond to the four collection phases that I identify and describe in the previous chapter. To confirm my theory that neighborhoods where public schools are abandoned are challenged by poverty-related ills. The following identifies the four collection phases and the structure of my data analyses.

1. CMSA and Atlanta Public School Data

2. Inner City and Public School Data

3. Public School Abandonment Data

   a. Statistical Tests

4. Primary Data

CMSAs and Atlanta MSA Public School Data Analyses

Based on my analyses of the selected dataset (NCES, 2004-05), school district data for the nine target CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA represent a total student population of nearly 8 million students who attend 12,066 public schools facilities. Data indicate that the total student populations for both the New York CMSA and the Los Angeles CMSA are around 1.7 million. The Atlanta MSA (229,000) and the San Francisco CMSA (302,000) report the smallest student enrollments of all the geographic areas under review.

Data also indicate that of the total number of students enrolled in all the select geographical areas, White students represent 2.5 million or 32%, and Black students represent

136

2.2 million or 28%. Native Americans represent the minority student group (0.6%) of in all geographic areas.

Table 6 Racial Composition, Nine Most Populous CMSAs and Atlanta MSA, 2004-05[78]

Metro Region	Total Students	%Native Americans	%Asian	%Black	%Hispanic	%White
Atlanta MSA	229,172	0.1%	3.9%	66.4%	7.3%	20.1%
Chicago CMSA	918,442	0.2%	4.2%	35.5%	28.5%	31.3%
Dallas CMSA	723,915	0.4%	4.2%	23.3%	39.9%	32.1%
DC CMSA	408,464	0.5%	2.9%	59.4%	5.9%	31.4%
Detroit CMSA	613,622	0.5%	3.4%	37.5%	3.6%	54.6%
Houston CMSA	746,721	0.2%	4.8%	22.2%	45.8%	27.1%
Los Angeles CMSA	1,703,336	0.5%	7.9%	8.7%	54.6%	26.6%
New York CMSA	1,728,458	0.3%	10.7%	29.0%	32.8%	27.1%
Philadelphia CMSA	582,020	0.1%	4.3%	36.4%	11.1%	48.1%
San Francisco CMSA	302,375	0.6%	29.0%	15.7%	27.0%	24.2%
Total Students	**7,956,525**					

During the 2004-2005 school year, while the Los Angeles (55%) and Houston (46%) CMSAs report the greatest number of Hispanic students, the Atlanta MSA (66%), the District of Columbia (60%), Detroit CMSA (38%) and Philadelphia (37%) report the highest number of Black students. During 2004-2005, the Detroit CMSA (55%) reports the only area with an overall White student majority.

The analyses of data at the CMSA include the enrollments of larger county public school systems, and cannot be used to infer or describe accurately the conditions of inner-city public school populations. Therefore, as my interest is ultimately the conditions of inner-city school

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[78] Source: I Analyze of Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version.

and neighborhood environments, I review data specific to inner-city public schools. However, the data at the CMSA level provide the ability to identify and describe some of similarities and differences between the county and inner-city public school districts demographics.

Demographics for Inner-City Public Schools

Population Shifts - Total Student and School Facilities

As I describe in **Table 7**, during the school term of 1989-1990, the ten public school districts that I select for this study indicate a total student enrollment of 2.8 million and a total of 3,605 school buildings. By the 2001-2002 school term, the total number of enrolled students increases by 11% and the number of school buildings increases by 8%. From the 1990 to 2002, the Atlanta (-8%); Detroit (-5%); District of Columbia (-16%); and San Francisco (-5%) public school districts show declines in the total student enrollments.

Table 7 Student Enrollments and Number of Schools: Change 1989-1990 to 2001-2002

District Name	Students (2001-02)	Schools (2001-02)	Students (1989-90)	Schools (1989-90)	% Change Students	% Change Schools
Atlanta	56,586	97	61,373	116	-7.8%	-16.4%
Chicago	437,418	599	408,442	608	7.1%	-1.5%
Dallas ISD	163,562	226	125,897	200	29.9%	13.0%
Detroit	166,675	265	175,436	259	-5.0%	2.3%
District of Columbia	68,449	165	81,301	184	-15.8%	-10.3%
Houston ISD	210,950	299	185,566	244	13.7%	22.5%
Los Angeles Unified	735,058	663	609,746	630	20.6%	5.2%
New York City	1,049,831	1,218	930,440	998	12.8%	22.0%
Philadelphia	197,083	263	189,451	256	4.0%	2.7%
San Francisco Unified	58,566	113	61,935	110	-5.4%	2.7%
	3,144,178	3,908	2,829,587	3,605	11.1%	8.4%

SOURCE: Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2001–02; 1989-90. Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2001–02; 1989-90, Version 1a.

In the Atlanta Public School District, the number of public school buildings reduces by 16%, and the number of public schools for District of Columbia City Schools reduces by 10%.

139

While student enrollments increase in the Chicago City Public Schools District, the total number of school facilities declines by nearly 2%. During this same time period, the total number of enrolled students declines in the Detroit City Public Schools District (-5%), but the number of public school buildings increased by 2%.

In the San Francisco Unified public School District, despite a 5% decline in enrolled students, the total number of school buildings increased by nearly 3%. The Dallas Independent School District (30%) posts the greatest percentage increase in the total number students, followed by Los Angeles with a 21% increase. The Houston Independent School District (23%) reports the highest percentage increase of public school buildings, followed closely by the New York City Schools (22%).

Analyses of data indicate that in 2001-2002, despite total of declining student populations for all public school districts under review, the overall numbers of public school facilities increases by 8%, which often leads to increases in per student costs to maintain and to support under-utilized school facilities.

Racial Composition – Majority-Minority Population

In 2000, the central cities I review for this study report high percentages of minority (non-white) student populations. (See **Table 8**.) My analyses of data identify a total of 3,850 public schools for all of the select inner cities. Of the total 3,850 schools, 3,031 of these schools (79%) report student populations of 81 to 100% majority-minority.

The data also indicate that the overall total of minority student enrollment exceeds 82% in each of the select inner-city school districts. Of the cities included in this study, four public school districts have minority populations that exceed 92% of their total student enrollment; as noted in

140

Table 8, those school districts are Detroit (96%); District of Columbia (96%); Atlanta (93%) and Dallas (92%).

Table 8 Percent of Minority Students Enrolled in Selected Central City School Districts

Name of reporting district	State	Total Schools	Minority membership percentage					Total % of minority students
			0 to 20	21 to 40	41 to 60	61 to 80	81 to 100	
Total Nationwide		**15,349**	**1,794**	**1,932**	**2,051**	**1,993**	**7,579**	**68**
New York City Public Schools	NY	1,196	21	48	114	135	878	84.6
Los Angeles Unified	CA	655	4	18	43	97	493	89.8
City of Chicago School District	IL	595	1	21	27	53	493	90.0
Houston Independent School District	TX	293	1	4	18	19	251	90.0
Philadelphia City School District	PA	259	7	13	34	34	171	82.4
Detroit City School District	MI	257	0	1	6	12	238	96.1
Dallas Independent School District	TX	218	0	3	9	28	178	91.5
District of Columbia Pub Schools	DC	162	0	5	3	5	149	95.6
San Francisco Unified	CA	116	0	0	2	22	92	88.1
Atlanta City School District	GA	99	2	2	2	5	88	93.2

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 1999-2000, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 1999-2000.

Economically Disadvantaged Students

Data for the 2001-2002 school year, indicate that of the nearly 8 million public school students, almost 3.1 million (37%) received free or reduced meals. Data also indicate that at least 50% of all students in the target public school systems are eligible for free and reduced meals. As I note in **Table 9**, the percentage of students attending the Atlanta and Chicago Public School Districts who are eligible to receive free and reduced meals exceeds 80%.

Table 9 Percent of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals by School Districts [79]

Name of reporting district	State	Schools	%Students eligible for free and reduced Meals
Atlanta City School District	GA	97	80.1
City of Chicago School District	IL	597	81.9
Dallas Independent School District	TX	220	74.5
Detroit City School District	MI	261	70.3
District of Columbia Public Schools	DC	165	60.9
Houston Independent School District	TX	299	72.7
Los Angeles Unified	CA	663	72.8
New York City Public Schools	NY	1,213	73.4
Philadelphia City School District	PA	263	71.0
San Francisco Unified	CA	113	54.5

Public School Abandonment Data

Public School Abandonments at CMSAs and Atlanta MSA Levels- Where and How Many?

Additional analyses of my dataset (2004-2005) indicate that a total of 489 public school closures or abandonments occurred in the target CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA. Of the total number of abandonments in all areas, data indicate that the highest percentage of abandonments were recorded in the Houston CMSA (20%), followed by the Dallas CMSA (17%) and the Los Angeles CMSA (13%). Analyses of data also indicate that the highest percentage of school

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[79] SOURCE: Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2001–02, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2001–02, Version 1a. Table 8. My analysis of Free and reduced-price eligibility and racial/ethic composition as a percentage of school district membership, and percentage of schools for which characteristic is reported in the 100 largest school districts in the United States and jurisdictions: By school district, school year 2001-02.

abandonments by the individual metropolitan areas include Atlanta MSA (11%), followed by the

Houston CMSA (9%) and the Dallas CMSA (7%).

Table 10 Total School Abandonments in CMSA/MSA and by School Location

CMSA/MSA	Total Schools	Total Closed Schools	% Closed Schools	%Closed Urban Fringe	%Closed Central City	%Closed Rural
Atlanta MSA	364	39	11%	64%	33%	3%
Chicago CMSA	1,497	43	3%	35%	65%	0%
Dallas CMSA	1,159	84	7%	31%	65%	4%
DC CMSA	683	17	2%	65%	24%	12%
Detroit CMSA	1,228	42	3%	36%	57%	7%
Houston CMSA	1,051	98	9%	47%	47%	6%
LA CMSA	1,971	65	3%	39%	52%	9%
NY CMSA	2,572	60	2%	40%	60%	0%
Philadelphia CMSA	966	21	2%	48%	24%	29%
San Francisco CMSA	575	20	3%	70%	20%	10%
Medians	1105	42.5	3%	44%	50%	7%
Total	12,066	489				

Source: Analysis of Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version.

As I describe above in **Table 10**, more public school abandonments occur in central city

areas than in the urban fringe and rural locations combined.   Central city abandonments

represent 51% of all public school abandonments and urban fringe locations represent 43%,

followed by 6% in rural locations.   With the exception of the Atlanta MSA, Philadelphia

CMSA, and San Francisco CMSA, public school abandonments occur most often all in the

central city areas than in urban fringe areas. Chicago and the Dallas CMSAs report the highest

percent of public schools abandonments in central city areas, with 65% of total public school

abandonments for both

143

As I show in **Table 10** and **Table 11**, nearly 12,070 total public schools are represented in the select metropolitan areas. Descriptive statistics indicate the median number of public schools in these areas is 1,105, and the median number of abandoned public schools in those regions is 43. The median percent for abandoned public schools in central cities is 50%, while the median percent of public schools closed in urban fringe areas is 44%.

Table 11 Descriptive Stats for Total School Closures in Selected CMSAs and Atlanta MSA

Total Schools		Total Schools Closed		%Closed Schools		%Closed Urban Fringe		% Closed Central City		% Closed Rural	
Median	1,105	Median	43	Median	3%	Median	44%	Median	50%	Median	7%
SD	667	SD	28	SD	3%	SD	14%	SD	18%	SD	8%
Sum	12,066	Sum	489								
Count	10	Count	10	Count	10	Count	10.0	Count	10	Count	10

Data analyses also indicate that elementary school abandonments account for 24% of the total public school abandonments in all metropolitan areas. The percentages of elementary school abandonments by location and metropolitan area are displayed in **Table 12** below.

Table 12 Percent of Elementary School Closures by Selected CMSA/MSA and Location[80]

CMSA/MSA	Central City Closures	Urban Fringe Closures	Rural Closures
Atlanta MSA	80%	10%	10%
Chicago CMSA	93%	7%	0%
Dallas CMSA	71%	25%	4%
DC CMSA	50%	0%	50%
Detroit CMSA	64%	29%	7%
Houston CMSA	55%	45%	0%
Los Angeles CMSA	78%	17%	6%
New York CMSA	38%	63%	0%
Philadelphia CMSA	11%	56%	33%
San Francisco CMSA	50%	50%	0%

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[80] Source: Analysis of Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version.

144

With the exceptions of the New York and Philadelphia CMSAs, data indicate that the majority of elementary school abandonments occur in the central cities. As I note in **Table 12**, 93% of the elementary school abandonments in the Chicago CMSA occur in the central-city locations. In the Atlanta MSA (80%), the Los Angeles CMSA (78%), the Detroit (64%), the Houston (55%) and the Dallas CMSA (71%), the majority of elementary schools abandonments occur in central cities.

Public School Abandonments by Inner-city School Districts

To develop the data to analyze the characteristics of the census tracts or neighborhoods where public school abandonments exist, I use the 2004-2005[81] dataset to identify the public elementary schools. This dataset was geocoded to indicate the census tracts or neighborhoods in which the public elementary schools were located. The data were edited to identify the public elementary schools as either open (0) or closed/abandoned (1). The closed/abandoned school addresses were used to locate census tracts or neighborhoods of the schools. I entered the school address into an on-line search tool and obtain specific demographics of the census tract in which the each school is located.

In the following sections, I analyze and compare data by first presenting summary statistics (totals and median percents) for select indicators for the neighborhoods with abandoned public schools that are located in the ten target central cities. Second, I analyze data and describe all identified neighborhoods by using summary statistics (totals and medians). Data

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[81] Analysis of Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version.

indicates a total of 69 abandoned public schools for all target areas. I note that there are likely more schools abandoned than the 69 that I identify for this study. This acknowledgement supports my argument that development of comprehensive data and analyses would provide more reliable and consistent data about public school abandonments.

Data Analyses for All Neighborhoods with Public School Abandonments

On page 351 – 353 of this report (**Table 73** and **Table 74**, Appendix, N), I summarize the data for the abandoned public elementary schools that are located in the target central cities. Data indicate a total of 69 abandoned public elementary schools in all target school districts. Data also indicate the nearly 50% of all students residing in the identified neighborhoods are elementary school students.

Data analyses for all neighborhoods indicate that many children attending inner-city public schools, particularly those residing in neighborhoods (census tract) where schools are abandoned, live in poverty. Summary statistics of the data for the neighborhoods with abandoned schools indicate that the median poverty rate for children under 18 years of age living in single female households is 44%; the median poverty rate for individuals living in the same neighborhoods is 34%. (See **Table 13**)

Table 13 Summary Selected Stats for Neighborhoods with Abandoned Schools – All Areas (A)

% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child <18		% Below Poverty Rate Individuals		% Unemployed		Median HH Income		% Vacancy Units	
Mean	46.1	Mean	34	Mean	9.0	Mean	27,717	Mean	13.4
SE	2.6	SE	2	SE	0.6	SE	1,989	SE	1.3
Median	44.0	Median	34	Median	8.6	Median	23,112	Median	10.3
Mode	42.0	Mode	34	Mode	4.7	Mode	24,821	Mode	10.0
SD	21.4	SD	18	SD	5.1	SD	16,519	SD	10.9
Minimum	0.0	Minimum	6	Minimum	1.0	Minimum	4,602	Minimum	1.2
Maximum	100.0	Maximum	91	Maximum	25.5	Maximum	85,180	Maximum	67.0
Count	69.0	Count	69	Count	69	Count	69	Count	69.0

146

The median unemployment rate for all neighborhoods with abandoned public schools is 9%, and the median household income is $23,112. The median percent of vacant units in all neighborhoods is 10%. The median number of all students enrolled in all schools is 838, and the median percent of enrolled elementary students is 47.

The overall student population is majority minority. The median percent of blacks enrolled in neighborhoods where schools are abandoned is 86, while whites represent a median percent of 3 and Hispanics at 3 as well. (See **Table 14**.)

Table 14 Summary Selected Stats for Neighborhoods with Abandoned Schools – All Areas (B)

Student Enrollment		% Elem Students Enrolled		% Black		% White		% Hispanic	
Mean	1,112	Mean	43	Mean	68	Mean	13.2	Mean	14.0
SE	104	SE	2	SE	4	SE	2.4	SE	2.7
Median	838	Median	47	Median	86	Median	3.0	Median	3.0
Mode	594	Mode	45	Mode	97	Mode	1.0	Mode	1.0
SD	864	SD	14	SD	34	SD	19.9	SD	22.7
Minimum	81	Minimum	2	Minimum	1	Minimum	0.0	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	4,650	Maximum	67	Maximum	100	Maximum	82.0	Maximum	91.0
Sum	76,723								
Count	69	Count	69	Count	69	Count	69.0	Count	69.0

Statistical Testing

To continue my efforts to provide a better understanding of the potential implications of public school abandonment and to confirm my theories about the characteristics of neighborhoods, I compare select neighborhoods where schools public school abandonments exist to neighborhoods without public school abandonments. Below I construct hypotheses to test and

determine the significance of the presence of select characteristics in neighborhoods with public school abandonments when compared to neighborhoods without public school abandonments.

I use my dataset for the NCES (2004-2005) to determine the number of abandoned public schools in select central-city school districts. I also use this dataset to perform five basic statistical t-tests to compare the means. For each test, I use the closed/abandoned variable to represent the neighborhood (census tract) with (coded, 1) or without (coded, 0) public school abandonments. I use select indicators commonly used by researchers to indicate poverty and neighborhood decline:

1. Operating Status: Determine the number of open/abandoned public inner-city schools.
2. Minority Presence:
   a. Percent of Whites
   b. Percent of Blacks
   c. Percent of Hispanics
3. Percent of Children Living Poverty
4. Percent of Individuals Living in Poverty
5. Percent of Vacant Housing Units
6. Percent of Unemployment

I develop five (5) hypotheses and perform statistical tests. Using the statistical package STATA, I perform two independent sample t-tests on selected variables and compare the means of the variables for minority presence, poverty, unemployment, and vacancy rates for

148

neighborhoods (census tracts) with an abandoned public school to neighborhoods (census tracts) where this is not an abandoned public school. For these tests, I select a 95% confidence interval, meaning P-Values that not exceed 0.05 levels will be used to describe statistical significance.

My intent in performing these tests is to provide additional descriptions of neighborhoods with abandoned public schools and to support the need to develop comprehensive data and analyses about public school abandonments. As the variables in my dataset are highly correlated and model testing may be subject multicollinearity, I do not perform regressions. I use my existing dataset (2004-2005) to perform the tests. Below I provide tables that describe the findings.   In the following section, I state my hypotheses and describe the findings.

Table 15 Number of Public Schools by Location (2004-2005)

Location	Frequency	Percent
Atlanta MSA	194	2.96
Chicago CMSA	846	12.89
DC CMSA	414	6.31
Dallas CMSA	579	8.82
Detroit CMSA	713	10.86
Houston CMSA	443	6.75
LA CMSA	999	15.22
NY CMSA	1,477	22.50
Philadelphia CMSA	588	8.96
San Francisco CMSA	310	4.72
Total (N)	**6,563**	**100.0**

As I note in the **Table 15**, the locations that I review for this study total ten and the number of public school building in the dataset totals 6,563. Data analyses indicate that the New York (1,477) and Los Angeles (999) CMSAs have the greatest number of public schools, and the San Francisco CMSA has the smallest number of schools of the group. Nearly 200 schools are

149

identified for the Atlanta MSA. Data analyses also indicate that 4 percent (270) of the total

number of public schools reviewed (6,563) were abandoned. See **Table 16** below.

Table 16 Number of Public Schools by Operating Status

Closed_Flag	Frequency	Percent
0 (Open)	6,293	95.89
1(Closed)	270	4.11
Total (N) =	**6,563**	**100.0**

Hypotheses and Test Results

Hypothesis One: There are statistically significant differences in the percent of minorities[82]

residing in neighborhoods where schools were abandoned in comparison to the percent

minorities residing in neighborhoods were schools were not abandoned.

Table 17 Two-Sample T-Test: Percent of Whites by Public School Operating Status[83]

Group	Obs	Mean	Std Err	Std Dev.	95% Conf Interval	
0 (Open)	6,280	47.6007	.4320582	34.23908	46.75376	48.44773
1 (Closed)	268	39.0417	1.987374	32.53472	35.12878	42.95462
Combined (N)	**6,548**	**47.25043**	**.4227731**	**34.21068**	**46.42166**	**48.07921**
T= 4.0157						
P-value = 0.0001						

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[82] For purposes of this research minorities are defined as blacks, Hispanics, and Asians or non-White students.
[83] Public School Operating Status: Open (0) or Abandoned (1)

Based on the data analysis as described **Table 18,** the means are not equal, meaning that there are a significant differences (T=4.1057 and Value=.0001) in the percent of white students who attended public schools in neighborhoods where there is an abandoned school (39%) in comparison to the percent white students who attended public schools in neighborhoods where there is not an abandoned school (47%). As a result of these findings, hypothesis one as stated cannot be rejected.

Table 18 Two-Sample T-Test: Percent of Black Students by Public School Operating Status

Group	Obs	Mean	Std Err	Std Dev.	95% Conf Interval
0 (Open)	6,280	25.16507	.4146893	32.86266	24.35214 25.97801
1 (Closed)	268	31.06085	2.036081	33.33208	27.05204 35.06967
Combined (N)	**6,548**	**25.40638**	**.406578**	**32.90017**	**24.060935 26.2034**
T= -2.8746					
P-value = 0.0041					

Based on the data analysis as described **Table 19,** the means are not equal, meaning that there are significant differences (T=-2.8746 and Value=.0041) for the percent of Black students who attended public schools in neighborhoods where there is an abandoned school (31%) in comparison to percent black students who attended public schools in neighborhoods where there is not an abandoned school (25%). As a result of these findings, hypothesis two as stated cannot be rejected.

151

Table 19 Two-Sample T-Test: Percent of Hispanic Students by Public School Operating Status

Group	Obs	Mean	Std Err	Std Dev.	95% Conf Interval	
0 (Open)	6,280	18.97215	.2955607	23.42214	18.39275	25.97801
1 (Closed)	268	22.87148	1.489209	24.3794	19.9394	25.80357
Combined (N)	**6,548**	**19.13175**	**.2900761**	**23.47287**	**18.5631**	**19.70039**
T= -2.6645						
P-value = 0.0077						

Based on the data analysis as described **Table 20,** the means are not equal, meaning that there are significant differences (T=-2.6645 and Value=.0077) for the percent of Hispanic students who attended public schools in neighborhoods where there is an abandoned school (23%) in comparison to percent black students who attended public schools in neighborhoods where there is not an abandoned school (19%). As a result of these findings, hypothesis two is not rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There are statistically significant differences in number of children living in poverty who reside in neighborhoods where a school is abandoned in comparison to the number of children living in poverty who reside in neighborhoods where a school is not been abandoned.

Table 20 Two-Sample T-Test: Percent of Children Living In Poverty by Public School Operating Status

Group	Obs	Mean	Std Err	Std Dev.	95% Conf Interval	
0 (Open)	6,263	19.14964	.2244297	17.76117	19.70968	19.58959
1 (Closed)	268	24.36307	1.249675	20.45805	21.90026	26.8212
Combined (N)	**6,531**	**19.36347**	**.2215928**	**17.90793**	**18.92908**	**19.79787**
T= -4.6724						
P-value = 0.000						

152

Based on the data analysis as described **Table 21** the means are not equal, meaning that there is a significant difference (T=-4.6724 and Value=0.000) in the percent of children living in poverty who attended public schools in neighborhoods where there is an abandoned school (24%) in comparison to the percent of students living poverty who attended public schools in neighborhoods where there is not an abandoned school (19%). As a result of these findings, hypothesis two is not rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There are statistically significant differences in the percent of vacant housing units in neighborhoods where public schools are abandoned in comparison to the percent of vacant housing units in neighborhoods where public schools are not abandoned.

Table 21 Two-Sample T-Test: Percent of Vacant Housing units by Public School Operating Status

Group	Obs	Mean	Std Err	Std Dev.	95% Conf Interval	
0 (Open)	6,275	6.235039	.0804596	6.373597	6.077311	6.392768
1 (Closed)	268	7.194206	.392983	6.43341	6.420466	7.967945
Combined (N)	**6,543**	**6.274327**	**.0788539**	**6.379396**	**6.1194747**	**6.428906**
T= -2.4117						
P-value = 0.0159						

Based on the data analysis as described **Table 22,** the means are not equal, meaning that there is significant difference (T=-2.4117 and Value=0.0159) in the percent of vacant housing units in neighborhoods where there is an abandoned public school in comparison to the percent vacant housing units in neighborhoods where there is not an abandoned school. As a result of these findings, hypothesis three as stated is rejected.

153

Hypothesis Four:

There are statistically significant differences in the percent of individuals living in poverty in neighborhoods with an abandoned public school in comparison to the percent of individuals living in poverty in neighborhoods where there is no abandoned public school.

Table 22 Two-Sample T-Test: Percent of Individuals Living in Poverty by Public School Operating Status

Group	Obs	Mean	Std Err	Std Dev.	95% Conf Interval
0 (Open)	6,278	15.40467	.174249	13.80641	15.06308 15.74626
1 (Closed)	268	19.00971	.9322913	15.26227	17.17413 20.84529
Combined (N)	**6,546**	**15.5526**	**.17163**	**13.88613**	**15.21581 15.88871**
T= -4.1674					
P-value = 0.000					

Based on the data analysis as described **Table 23,** the means are not equal, meaning that there is a significant difference (T=-4.1674 and Value=0.000) in percent of individuals living in poverty where there is an abandoned public school (19%) in comparison to the percent of individuals living in poverty in neighborhoods where there is not an abandoned school (15%). As a result of these findings, hypothesis four as stated cannot be rejected.

Hypothesis Five: There are statistically significant differences in the percent of unemployment in neighborhoods where schools are abandoned in comparison to the percent of percent unemployment in neighborhoods where schools are not abandoned.

154

Table 23 Two-Sample T-Test: Percent of Unemployment by Public School Operating Status

Group	Obs	Mean	Std Err	Std Dev.	95% Conf Interval	
0 (Open)	6,278	6.079641	.0611615	4.846057	5.959743	6.199538
1 (Closed)	268	7.588192	.4493079	7.355482	6.703556	8.472829
Combined (N)	**6,546**	**6.141402**	**.0615751**	**4.98188**	**6.020695**	**62.26211**
T= -4.8630						
P-value = 0.000						

Based on the data analysis as described **Table 23,** the means are not equal, meaning that there is a significant difference (T=-4.8630 and Value=0.000) in percent of unemployment in neighborhoods where there is an abandoned public school (8%) in comparison to the percent of unemployment in neighborhoods where there is not an abandoned school (6%). As a result of these findings, hypothesis five as stated is not rejected.

Based on the results of the results of the statistical tests, neighborhoods with public school abandonments have fewer White students and more Black students when compared to neighborhoods without public school abandonments. Neighborhoods with public school abandonments are occur most often in inner-city neighborhoods than in urban fringe neighborhoods. Also, neighborhoods with public school abandonments have higher percentages of children and individuals who live in poverty and higher percentages of unemployment and vacant housing units when compared to neighborhoods where there are no public school abandonments.

In addition to the statistical test results, data also indicate that the regions reviewed for this study had pockets of poverty intertwined throughout.   However, the highest degrees of concentrated poverty appeared in core inner-city neighborhoods with concentrations of large

155

populations of minorities, which were often segregated and isolated by race as well. These findings, coupled with the presence of an increasing number of vacant and abandoned properties contribute to the identification of a number of social problems, to include neighborhood disinvestments, as well as social and economic problems. I describe this information in more detail and provide graphically displays in the Appendices section of this report, where I compare metropolitan area data, central city data, and public school district data for the target locations. I also provide summary statistics (totals and medians) for the area descriptors.

In the next section, I discuss the analyses of my survey data. As a result of my very low response rate, I felt that needed to provide an extensive exploration of secondary data, which is the reason for the detailed supporting data included in the Appendices section of this study. However, I felt that the inclusion of the key results of the data collected would be beneficial and supportive of my argument that there is lack of comprehensive data about public school abandonments, and the very often it is the public school systems that are not forthcoming with the consistent and complete data to support more effective urban and school planning.

Primary Data Analyses for Public School Abandonments

My survey, "Public School Abandonment," was fielded on December 2006 and closed out December 2007. An invitation to participate in the survey was mailed to approximately 302 schools; only 139 respondents started but did not complete the survey. Of the 139 respondents who started the survey, only 74 school systems completed it.

156

My survey was administered using QuestionPro, an online service provider. QuestionPro

allows respondents to submit responses securely and efficiently via the Internet. My response

rate was less than expected and is considered insufficient to make generalized inferences.

However, some of the survey responses provide beneficial primary data about public school

abandonments. I present these data for informational purposes only to enhance my secondary

analysis. I do not perform any statistical modeling or tests of the survey responses. Below, I

indicate what I fell are the key participation results in **Figure 3** and **Table 24.**

Figure 3 **Survey Response Data**

Survey Overview
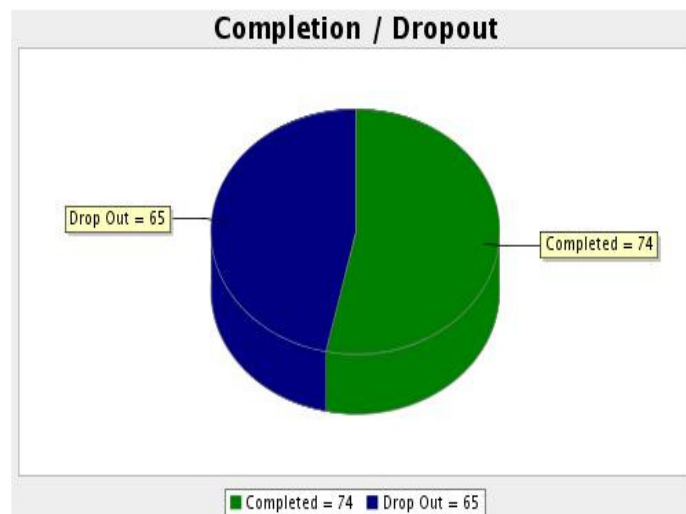
Of the 302 school districts that I invite to participate in this study, 163 viewed (open the link, but

do not start survey). Almost 139 of the total invitees open the questionnaire and answer at least

one question before dropping out. Of those 139 users who started the survey, 65 (47%) drop out

before completing the survey (do not click complete button) and 74 (53%) respondents complete

the survey.

157

Table 24 Statistics for Online Questionnaire

Survey Statistics	
Viewed	163
Started	139
Completed	74
Completion Rate	53.24%
Drop Outs (After Starting)	65
⟩ Average time taken to complete survey : 14 minute(s)	

In this section, I identify selected survey questions and responses:

Question: *How would you describe the state of your school district's current overall student enrollments?*

Nearly 42% of respondents (65) report that the overall state of their student enrollments is stable, while almost 33% describe the state of their school enrollments as overcrowded, and 25% of the respondents state that their school district have declining student populations. (See **Figure 4**.)

Figure 4 Summary Statistics: Opinion of School District's Student Population
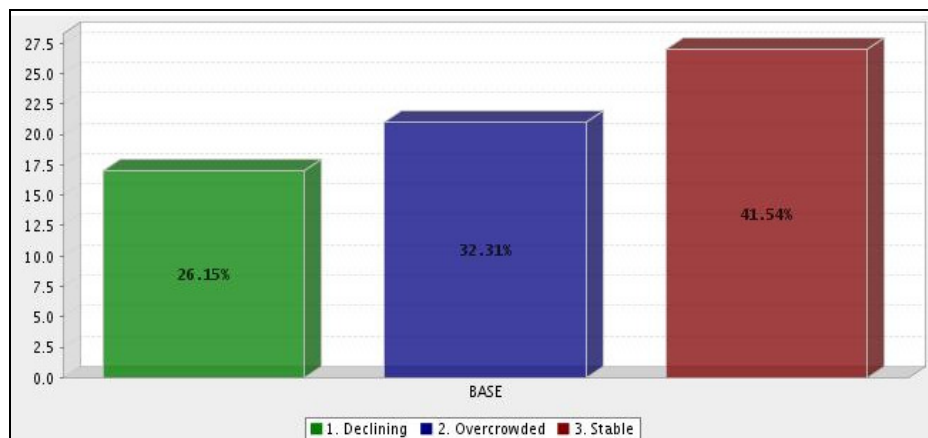
N=65

These data provide some insight into the challenges that this districts are facing. Literature indicates that there are adverse implications for managing and operating both under-utilized and over-crowded school facilities.

Question: *Does your school district currently have a Facilities Master Plan?*

One indication of a school district's commitment to address its facilities improvement needs. Facilities master plans also identify the short and long-range strategies of school systems to address facilities management. Almost all respondents (95%) report that their districts have established facilities master plans. (See **Figure 5**.)   These plans are critical to obtaining financial and political support to implement changes required to meet the needs of declining or expanding student populations. The establishment of comprehensive data and analyses will enhance the development of school facilities master plans. The development of consistent and uniform data collections could be incorporated in the facility master plans and serve as a resource for tracking and reporting public school abandonments and the demographic conditions of impacted the neighborhoods.

Figure 5 Percent of School Districts with Facilities Master Plans
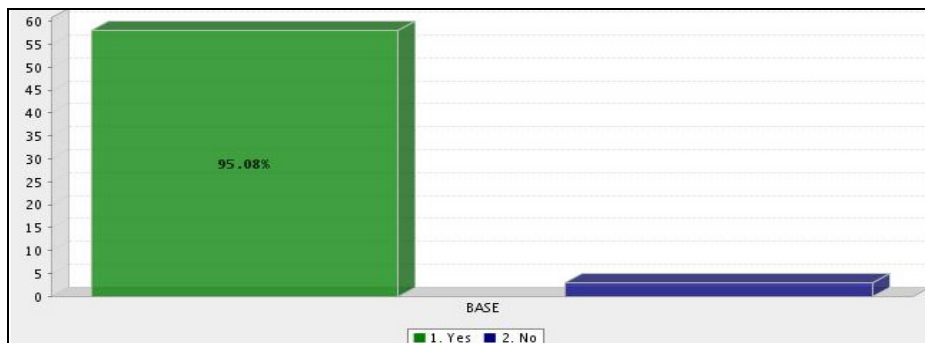
N = 58

159

Question: *Please select all reasons for which your school district has abandoned (closed) a school facility or facilities in the past 5 years.*

As I describe in **Figure 6,** when asked to identify the reasons that their districts abandoned elementary schools over the past five years, 48% of respondents report that school abandonment was not applicable to or not required of their individual school systems. While 12% of respondents report school consolidations influence school abandonments, 12% report declining student enrollments as the reason for abandonments. Nearly 9% of respondents indicate that the physical conditions of the facilities led to the abandonments

Only 7% report budget shortfalls as the cause of school abandonments. However, this particular response should be alarming, particularly since the steep economic decline currently being experienced across all financial markets and the highly publicized decline in public school funding have many inner-city school districts already preparing to abandon schools.

Figure 6 Reasons Respondents Abandoned Schools in the Past Five Years
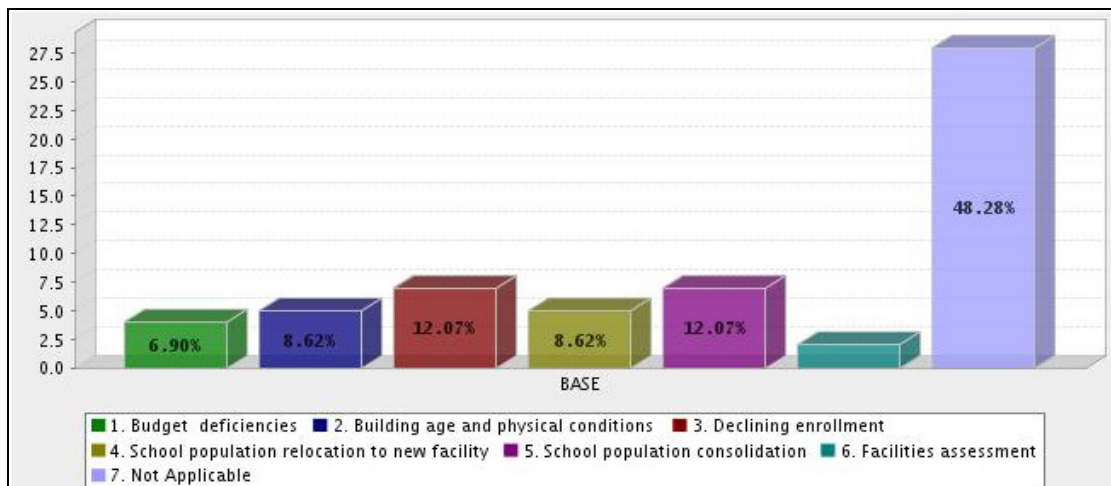
N = 58

Question: *Please select all reasons for which your school district anticipates the abandonment (closure) of a school facility or facilities in the next five (5) years.*

160

As I show in **Figure 7**, nearly 47% of respondents report that school abandonments within the next five-year period would not applicable. Dale Vigil, Superintendent of LAUSD, Local District 6 in Los Angeles states "Our problem is that our schools are too big. We are building new (smaller) schools in LAUSD and our area is benefiting from it." He states that the district will construct 21 new schools by 2011."

Almost 15% of school districts report that the reason that they expect to abandoned schools will result from declining student enrollments, and 13% of respondents expect to abandon schools as a result of school consolidations. Only 5% of respondents relate school abandonments to budget shortfalls, while nearly 10% forecast that abandonments will be caused by the age and conditions of the buildings. Again, given the current poor economic conditions of the nation, these responses should raise flags for urban and school planners to consider all demographic aspects that influence the abandonment of public schools and that have the potential to negatively impact the communities.

Figure 7 Reasons Respondents Anticipate Schools Abandonments in the Next Five Years
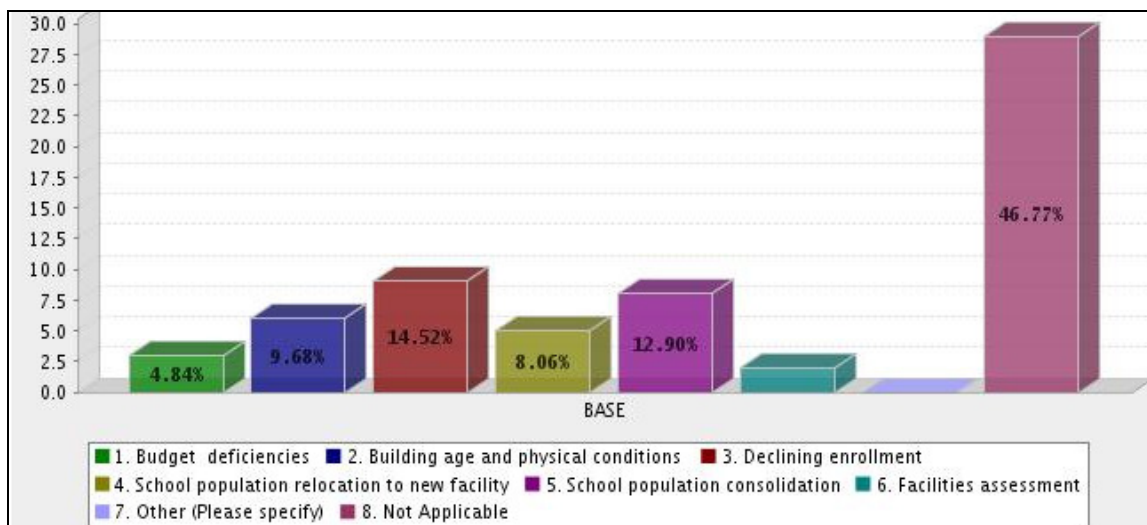
N = 62

Public school districts reporting under-enrollment or under-utilized facilities were asked what the districts did or planned to do the address this problem. The overwhelming response was to consolidate school population and abandoned the under-enrolled facility. Two respondents indicate that staffs were conducting studies to determine the best course of action. Two districts state that boundary shifts would be implemented, while one respondent states that the district would continue with the "status quo.

Nearly all districts that responded to whether or not there were activities held at elementary schools during non-school hours answered yes. The activities ranged from remedial and tutorial programs to organizational meetings, to include Boys Scouts, Home Owner Associations, YMCA, latchkey programs, as well as church and recreation and park activities. All such activities would require relocation to another facility or termination in the event of the abandonment of the host school.

Confirming the political nature of school abandonments, several respondents would not provide the names of any potential abandonment, stating political backlash as the reason.

Research Findings: Responses to Research Questions

The results of my dissertation provide a better understanding about public school abandonments and support the need for the development of comprehensive data and analyses about the subject. In this section, I discuss the findings of my research in relation to my research questions and the data collected and analyzed about public school abandonments. My study asked three research questions.

4. *How extensive is the problem of public school abandonment? For example, how many public schools have been abandoned and where have public school abandonments occurred more often? For example, how many public schools have been abandoned? Do public school abandonments occurred more often in inner-city neighborhoods in than in urban fringe neighborhoods?*

5. *Where are public elementary (neighborhood) school abandonments more prevalent? For example, do more public elementary (neighborhood) school abandonments occurred in central-city neighborhoods or in urban fringe neighborhoods?*

6. *What indicators best describe the neighborhoods in which public elementary (neighborhood) schools have been abandoned? For example, are there consistent patterns in racial (minority-majority concentrated) compositions, poverty levels for single-female lead households with children under 18 years of age, poverty levels for individuals, and unemployment and vacancy housing levels in neighborhoods where public elementary schools have been abandoned?*

In this section, I respond to the research questions by first restating the question, followed by a summary of the research findings.

1. *How extensive is the problem of public school abandonment? For example, how many public schools have been abandoned and where have public school abandonments occurred more often? For example, how many public schools have been abandoned? Do public school abandonments occurred more often in inner-city neighborhoods in than in urban fringe neighborhoods?*

Finding: Data indicate that public school abandonments occur most often in central-city locations, when compared public school abandonments in urban fringe and rural locations.

As a result of a lack of comprehensive data and analyses about public abandonments, my exploratory study and research procedures relied heavily on my literature review and secondary datasets. As a result, to provide a better understanding of how many public schools that have been abandoned and where these public school abandonments occurred most, I analyzed data collected from the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) for 2004-2005. These data were specific to the nine select CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA. Based on my review and analyses of these data, public school abandonments occurred in all nine CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA, and public school abandonments occurred most often in inner-city locations when compared to public school abandonments in urban fringe and rural locations.

As displayed in , data indicate that for the 2004-2005 school term, the reporting public school districts identified a total of 12,066 public schools that were located the select nine CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA. Data also indicate that of the reported 12,066 total number public schools located in the ten select locations, roughly 4% (489) of the total number of public schools had been abandoned. Of the 489 total number of public school abandonments in the ten select areas, the highest percentage of public school abandonments occurred in the Houston CMSA and Dallas CMSAs. Data indicate that of the total 1,051 public schools reported for the Houston CMSA, approximately 9% (98) of these schools were reported to be abandoned. Data also indicated that of the 1,159 public schools reported for the Dallas CMSA, roughly 7% (84) of the total number of public schools in the Dallas CMSA were identified as abandoned. The Philadelphia and New York CMSAs reported the smallest percent of individual public school abandonments. Of the reported 2,572 public schools reported for the New York CMSA,

164

the percent of public school abandonments was a reported 2% (60 public schools). Data also indicate that of the 966 public schools 20 or 2% were abandoned. (See)

The highest percentage of public school abandonments of all of the ten select individual areas was reported the Atlanta MSA. Of the total reported 364 public schools indicated for the Atlanta MSA, 39 public schools or 11% were reported to be abandoned.

Location of Public School Abandonments?

As described in data indicate that when compared to urban fringe locations, more public schools were abandoned in central-city locations. Public school abandonments in central cities represented 51% of all public school abandonments. Of the total number of reported public school abandonments (489), 249 public schools were identified as being abandoned in central-city areas. Data also indicate that of the total number of public school abandonments (489) approximately 43% (211) of the public school abandonments reported for the ten select areas occurred in urban fringe locations, followed by 6% (29 out 489) of the public school abandonments occurred in rural locations.

2. *Where are public elementary (neighborhood) school abandonments more prevalent? For example, do more public elementary (neighborhood) school abandonments occur in central-city neighborhoods or in urban fringe neighborhoods?*

Finding: Data indicate that public elementary school abandonments occur more often in central-city neighborhoods, when compared public school abandonments in urban fringe neighborhoods.

Based on my review and analyses of data, public school abandonments of elementary schools located in the nine select CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA occurred most often in inner-city locations. Based on my review and analyses of the NCES (2004-2005) dataset for the ten select areas, data indicate that of the reported 489 public school abandonments, 116 or 24% of the abandonments were public elementary schools.[84] (See **Table 33** and **34, page 226.**) Of the total 116 public elementary schools, data indicates that 66 % of these schools were abandoned in central-city neighborhoods and 28% were abandoned in urban fringe neighborhoods. Data also indicate that, with the exceptions of the New York and Philadelphia CMSAs, all other select areas reported more public elementary school abandonments in central-city locations, when compared to urban fringe and rural locations. Data indicate that, with the exceptions of the New York and Philadelphia CMSAs, the percent of abandonment of public elementary schools in central-city locations was equal to or exceeded 50% when compared to the data reported for public elementary school abandonments for urban fringe and rural areas. Inthe Chicago CMSA, data reported that 33% of its total public school abandonments (14 out of 43) occurred in central cities, followed by the Los Angeles CMSA at 13% (8 out of 60) and the Dallas CMSA at 33% (28out of 84).

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[84] Public elementary schools are define as neighborhood schools with grade levels of K-5 and identified by one census tract.

3. *What indicators best describe the neighborhoods in which public elementary (neighborhood) schools have been abandoned? For example, are there consistent patterns in racial (minority-majority concentrated) compositions, poverty levels for single-female lead households with children under 18 years of age, poverty levels for individuals, and unemployment and vacancy housing levels in neighborhoods where public elementary schools have been abandoned?*

Finding: Data indicate that neighborhoods with public school abandonments were minority concentrated, and single-female headed households with children under 18 years of age residing in neighborhoods with abandoned public elementary schools lived in extreme poverty and individuals residing in these same neighborhoods lived in poverty as well. Data also indicate that the unemployment and vacant housing rates in the neighborhoods with abandoned public elementary schools exceeded 9%.

To respond to this research question, I present the findings of my literature review and continue to analyze of my existing 2004-2005 NCES dataset. However, to identify neighborhood descriptive data, I analyze the geocoded version of the NCES 2004-2005 dataset, which identifies the census tract or neighborhood level descriptors for those neighborhoods that reported public elementary school abandonments.

NCES (2004-2005), data indicate a total 69 abandoned public elementary schools were located in the select primary central cities of Atlanta (5); New York (5); Dallas (6); Chicago (16); Detroit (11); Philadelphia (1); Houston (6); Los Angeles (2); San Francisco (5); and the District of Columbia (12). (See **Table 70, page 347**) The characteristics that I use to describe the census tracts or neighborhoods with abandoned public elementary schools and to indentify and describe any consistent patterns of racial composition, single-female headed households with children under 18 years of age, individual poverty levels, unemployment rates, median household incomes, and vacant housing rates are summarized in **Table 73 (page 350).** As in

167

typical of many researchers, I use the descriptors indicated in **Table 73 (page 350)** to identify

whether or not the neighborhoods or census tracts under study are challenged by poverty and

neighborhood decline (Accordino and Johnson, 2000; Chung, 2002; Katz 2000), The descriptors

are concentrated minority population, poverty rate, median household income, percent of single-

female households with children under 18 years of age, and unemployment and vacancy rates for

housing units.

Minority Presence

NCES (1999-2000) data indicate that the overall total of minority student enrollment

exceeded 82% in each of the select inner-city public school districts. Of the cities included in

this dataset, all of the ten select public school districts had minority populations that exceeded

80% of their total student enrollment. (See **Table 8, page, 150**) Data indicate that four out of the

ten select inner-city public school districts had minority concentrated populations of more than

90%; those public school districts were Detroit (96%); District of Columbia (96%); Atlanta

(93%) and Dallas (92%).

NCES (2004-2005) data (**Table 73, page 350**) indicate that in most inner-city neighborhoods

with public school abandonments, student populations were minority concentrated ones. The

median percent reported for Black students in the neighborhoods located in the city of Atlanta

was 95%; in Chicago, 97%; in Philadelphia, 95%; and in Detroit, 93%, followed by the District

of Columbia at 88%.   Data indicate that Hispanic students comprised 2.2% of the total number

students living in neighborhoods with public school abandonments in Atlanta; in New York,

73%; in Los Angeles, 34%; in Houston, 24%; and in Chicago and Philadelphia at 1% each.

Though not a majority, data do indicate that neighborhoods located in city of San Francisco

reported the highest median percent of White students (49%). Data also indicate that

neighborhoods in Chicago (1%); Philadelphia (1%); Detroit (1%); the District of Columbia (2%);

and Atlanta (2%) report small numbers of White students enrolled in theie public school systems.

Data indicate that for all 69 census tracts or neighborhoods with abandoned public elementary

schools, (**Table 74, page 351-353**) Black students were represented at an 86% (median rate); White

and Hispanic students were reported at a of 3% median rate for each.

Single-female Households with Children under 18

   NCES (2004-2005), data for all of the 69 census tracts or neighborhoods with public

elementary school abandonments, (**Table 73, page 350**) the poverty rates for single-female headed

households with children indicated that these families lived in extreme poverty[85]: New York

(60%); Chicago (66%); Dallas (50%); Philadelphia (50%); Los Angeles (44%); and the District

of Columbia at 44% all reported poverty rates of 40% or more. Data also indicate that single-

female headed households with children under 18 years of age who resided in the four remaining

central cities lived in poverty as well: Detroit (37%); Houston (36%); and Atlanta and San

Francisco at 35%. Data indicate in **Table 74 (page 351-353)** a median poverty rate of 44% for all

single-female headed households with children under 18 years of age living in neighborhoods

with an abandoned public elementary school.

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[85] For purposes of this research, extreme or concentrated poverty is defined at 40% or more of residents living at 40% below the poverty rate.

Poverty Rate: Individuals

NCES (2004-2005), data for all 69 census tracts or neighborhoods with public elementary school abandonments, (**Table 73, page 350)** indicate that the median poverty rate for individuals in all neighborhoods with an abandoned public elementary school was equal to or exceeded 25%. In the New York (43%); Chicago (49%); Philadelphia (42%) neighborhoods with an abandoned public elementary school, the reported majority of individuals lived in extreme or concentrated poverty. Data indicate that San Francisco (10%) neighborhoods had the lowest poverty level of all neighborhoods where a public elementary schools had been abandoned. Data (**Table 74, page 351-353**) also indicate the median poverty rate for all 69 neighborhoods or census tracts was 34%.

Unemployment Rate

NCES (2004-2005), data for all 69 census tracts or neighborhoods with public elementary school abandonments, (**Table 74, page 350**) indicate that those neighborhoods in the cities of Atlanta (12%); Chicago (13%); Philadelphia (17%) and New York (19%) reported the highest unemployment levels. At 3% each, Houston and San Francisco reported neighborhoods with the lowest levels of unemployment. The median unemployment rate for all 69 census tracts or neighborhoods with an abandoned public elementary public school was 9% (**Table 74, page 351-353**).

Median Household Income

NCES (2004-2005), data for all 69 census tracts or neighborhoods with public elementary school abandonments indicate that at $60,036, the median household income for the San Francisco neighborhoods far exceed all other neighborhoods in the ten select areas. (**Table 73, page 350**)   After San Francisco, the neighborhoods in the District of Columbia ($30,408); Los Angeles ($29,585); and Houston ($27,679) report the next highest median household income levels for neighborhoods. Data also indicate that New York ($19,615); Philadelphia ($17,480); and Chicago ($15,601) represented the neighborhoods with lowest median household incomes. Data also indicate that the median income for all 69 neighborhoods or census tracts with an abandoned public elementary was $23,112 (**Table 74, page 351-353**).

Median Percent of Vacant Housing Units

NCES (2004-2005), data for all 69 census tracts or neighborhoods with public elementary school abandonments identify the greatest percent of vacant housing units in the neighborhoods located in Philadelphia (26%); Chicago (23%) and Atlanta (12%). After Philadelphia, Chicago and Atlanta, the vacancy rates reported for neighborhoods in Dallas (11%); Houston (10%); Detroit (10); and the District of Columbia were about the same. The areas with the least percent of vacant housing units were reported in the neighborhoods in San Francisco. (**Table 73, page 350**) Data also indicate that the median vacancy rate for all 69 neighborhoods or census tracts with an abandoned public elementary school was 10% (**Table 74, page 351-353**).

171

In the following chapter, I provide some implications of the findings identified in the previous section. I also indicate why my research confirms that potential impacts of public school abandonments are too critical for urban and school planners to continue the trend of public school abandonment in poor inner-city neighborhoods without the benefits of comprehensive data and analyses, particularly when there may be viable alternatives to public school abandonments. The consideration of viable alternatives could minimize harm to neighborhoods and public schools that are often marginalized and that are currently in decline.

172

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

What can be learned from exploring the demographics of inner-city neighborhoods and public school districts that have abandoned public school buildings?

Public schools play a critical role in meeting the educational and social needs of students, their families, and their communities. Public schools contribute to physical quality, attractiveness, and marketability of the neighborhoods in which they are located. Therefore, public schools can influence the economic sustainability of neighborhoods. As a result, public schools are influential in the growth and development or the decline of the cities in which they are located. For these reasons and potential adverse implications, the current trend to abandoned public schools is alarming and requires more effective, more thoughtful and careful planning and evaluative processes. Prior to implementing public school abandonments, urban and school planners must also investigate potential harm to communities and public school districts and seek alternatives to abandonments whenever possible.

First, my research and data analyses indicate that there is a need for the development of comprehensive data and analyses about public school abandonment. Comprehensive data and analyses would provide urban and school planners with reliable and standardized information about public school abandonments and the impacts of these abandonments on the sustainability of neighborhood structures. The collection and review of standardized, relevant and timely data would also benefit decision makers in both inner-city and county school districts and governments. These data would provide decision makers with resources to aid in the identification of the impacts of their decisions to abandon public schools on the communities in which the schools are located. Comprehensive data and analyses would provide decision makers the resources to evaluate the needs of residents, students, and businesses prior to the

173

abandonment. Evaluations of the neighborhood conditions and community needs may provide incentives to develop workable alternatives to the abandonment of public neighborhood schools, particularly in neighborhoods that are already stressed by social and economic decline.

Second, my review of data indicates that the trend to abandoned inner-city public schools in poor, minority neighborhoods is increasing. This discovery is alarming as most inner city public schools will continue to be challenged by funding shortfalls, land deficiencies, and areas of concentrated poverty (Frey, Berube, Singer, and Wilson, 2009). These challenges will also continue to include unintentional consequences. Though well intentioned, public school and urban planners tend to address declining budget and acreage deficiencies primarily through public school abandonments. However, without effective strategies to address the impacts of public school abandonments, urban and school planners run the risk of destroying neighborhood structures in many areas that are often already in decline. Confirmation of this fact is but one reason that urban planners should not implement public school abandonments without the data that provides for the consideration of potential implications and the development of viable alternatives to actual physical abandonments (Benson, 1985).

My research indicates that inner-city public school districts where public school abandonments exist have high concentrations of low-income, minority students, and as result, a spatial concentration of various social and economic problems. Inner-city public schools tend to have high concentrations of economically disadvantaged students. In many of the public schools included in this study, over 80% of the students qualified for free and reduced meals, which is the standard measure used to identify economic disadvantaged students. As my literature review indicates, most public school districts are tasked with providing array social services to students and their families.

174

For various reasons, public schools are expected to do more for children than ever before. Goodman (1985) tells us that public schools are expected to prepare children to succeed academically, to be good citizens, and to lead healthy lifestyles. As a result of the vital roles that neighborhood public schools play in the educational and social development of the children and families who live in inner-city neighborhoods, the abandonment of public schools problematic. Typically centrally located, public schools serve as the hubs of the communities and are often used to support a number of social activities. As a consequence, the physical impact of public school abandonments on neighborhood sustainability and development makes the abandonment of school facilities, which are located in the "heart" of these communities, problematic.

The economic impact of public school abandonments on the fiscal soundness of the communities in which these buildings are located makes public school abandonments problematic for many residents and public school employees. While some public school employees are transferred to other school locations, some employees become unemployed as a result of the abandonment of the neighborhood public school. Residents are faced with the negative ills of having an abandoned structure in the center of their neighborhood and investors and business owners are apt to seek other areas to invest. There is an abundance of literature that identifies the adverse impacts of vacant and abandoned residential and commercial properties on neighborhoods. My research suggests the abandonment of the neighborhood public school serves to intensify the problems not only for the immediate neighborhood and its residents, but directly or indirectly impacts the marketability and sustainability of the city as a whole. The associated problem, as Accordino and Johnson (2000) state, is that very often vacant and abandoned properties are clustered, creating city blocks that have concentrations of "eyesores", with one facility (the school) in the heart of the neighborhood.

175

Research identifies the trend to school and urban planners to address the challenges of under-utilized, under-populated public schools through the use of school consolidations and school abandonment. Research also identifies the trend of school and urban planners to address the need for newer schools by constructing new facilities on larger, remotely located sites. This trend also leads most often to the abandonment of the neighborhood public school and the transfer of students and programs away from their residential areas. This trend also leads most often to increase transportation costs for the school district and travel time for students and teachers. Health service providers are concerned that the elimination of walkable and bikable school locations adds to a list of serious health concerns for students. Student obesity and its resulting physical impacts is a major concern of health services providers. Not only are current trends to abandoned neighborhood public schools and to relocate replacement schools on remote sites impacting students abilities to walk to school, these trends often eliminates the students abilities to participate in after-school sports and other activities.

The abandonment of neighborhood public schools, where parents and students are able to access without vehicular transportation, makes the siting of replacement schools in remote locations problematic. The trend to continue public school abandonments in poor, inner-city neighborhoods without the benefit of comprehensive data and analyses makes the siting of replacement outside the neighborhood problematic, not just for inner cities but county neighborhoods and school systems as well. The construction of new schools on remotely located sites increases the need for additional acreage to accommodate parking and open spaces for athletic activities. Remotely located schools also increase traffic congestion and pollution as a result of transporting students outside their residential neighborhoods and eliminate the ability for students to walk to school and often decrease parental involvement in school activities.

176

Neighborhood schools or localism, according to Benson (1985, p. 13) contributes to the vitality of parental involvement in schools and strengthens community identity. As a result, the abandonment of public schools contributes to the decline of the social fabrics between the public school and students and their families.

Data also illustrate that neighborhoods with abandoned schools have a higher concentration of poverty, as well as school populations that are comprised of a majority of minorities. These neighborhoods, when compared to areas without abandoned schools, have more vacant housing units, higher unemployment rates, as well as higher percentages of single-female led households with and children under 18 years of age. To better understand the implications of the presence of these conditions in poor, inner-city neighborhoods and public schools, I describe my research findings of some of these implications in more detail.

Implications of Findings

Declining Student Enrollment

My review of literature reveals that student population is the primary driver that most public school districts use to indicate their funding, program, and staffing needs. Student enrollments are also used to determine a district's need for public school facilities, including new constructions, renovations, and abandonments. The funding needs for many inner-city public school districts continue to increase as a result of aged, deteriorating building envelops and mechanical infrastructures. The cost of maintaining under-utilized, under-populated school facilities means higher per student costs for public school districts and for taxpayers. Likewise,

177

maintaining and operating school facilities at over-capacity levels also require additional funding and create additional strains on building infrastructures that are often old and in need of repair.

Literature does not identify comprehensive data that indicates where student populations are being tracked and analyzed with any degree of accuracy or consistency among public school districts and state boards of educations. Comprehensive data and analyses about student enrollments would help to validate the needs for public school funding requests. These data would also provide a history of the changes in student transitions and reasons for the transitions. Such data would allow urban and school planners to not only anticipate shifts in student populations, but also provide some insight as to the implications of continued student losses. Therefore, urban and school planners would have a foundation for developing specific strategies that would address long and short-term needs of the community and public school system. Obviously, the need to address one major problem, the abandonment of public neighborhood schools in declining inner cities could be one of such strategies.

As the data included in most federal databases are subject to the cooperation and commitment of the state and school boards to report these data consistently. Very often there are gaps in the submitted reports by public school districts. As such, these data are apt to be incomplete, inconsistent, and may not accurately reflect all information required to make the best and most informed decisions. Therefore, the needs of some students, public school districts, and neighborhoods may not be given adequate review and considerations as a result of the missing data. The tracking and analyses of the shifts in student enrollments can provide urban and public school planners the means to identify current and future school facility and programs needs. Shifts in student enrollments can also serve as indicators of school and neighborhood quality.

178

Literature supports the idea that public schools that are perceived to be physically and academically poor are two of the primary reasons that parents transfer their students to other school districts.   The development of comprehensive data and analyses will provide public school administrators and urban planners a resource for tracking student population shifts over time. The establishment of this resource would also allow urban and school planners to identify where student enrollments are increasing or decreasing and where such shifts may be contributing to public school abandonments and to changes in neighborhood structures. As school and urban planners better understand the impacts of student enrollment shifts on the overall physical, social, and financial stability of public school systems and neighborhood environments, consideration of these impacts could be incorporated the strategic planning and development programs for these areas.

Racial Composition: Minority-Majority Populations

As I identify in my literature review, inner-city public schools with majority-minority populations are often challenged with poor quality schools and poor academic achievement levels. These school systems are also increasingly challenged by declining school budgets, increasing numbers of student transfers, and neighborhoods that are often riddled with increasing vacant and abandoned residential and commercial properties.

As my review of literature also indicates, the potential increases in public school abandonments are expected to escalate, and as a result, the adverse impacts of vacant and abandoned properties in poor, minority-concentrated neighborhoods are likely to increase. The link of minority concentrated populations to a host of negative impacts on public schools and inner-city neighborhoods should be alarming to school administrators, educators, and urban and

179

school planners. What should also be of concern to policymakers and urban and public school planners is the fact that all the impacts cited in literature, to include the landmark case, Brown v. the Board of Education, about segregated schools have legally come full circle. Tracking minority-majority concentrated populations should be a critical component of the establishment of comprehensive data and analyses about public schools. As I indicate in my literature review and my data analyses, concentrated minority populated public schools and neighborhoods are often challenged by negative social, economic, and environmental implications.

The development of comprehensive data and analyses about public school abandonments would allow urban planners and public school administrators to track the racial segregation and isolation of neighborhood and public school populations. These data could help those involved in making decisions about public school and neighborhood preservation and sustainability better understand factors that are contributing to the resegregation of inner-city schools, and how this understanding could be used to develop strategies to mitigate the resulting adverse implications.

Literature indicates that racial segregation is linked to declining public school enrollments, and consequences of these declines are increasing the numbers of public school abandonments. Therefore, the development of comprehensive data and analyses would allow decision makers to track the shifts in the racial compositions of public schools and to better understand the impacts of racial segregation on poor, inner-city schools and neighborhoods. The development of comprehensive data and analyses would also help urban and public school planners to identify and encourage the development of mitigating strategies to address the adverse impacts of racial, social, and economic isolation. Research indicates that strategies such as the development of mixed-income and more racially diverse neighborhoods contribute to more racially and economically diverse public schools. Consequently, the actual implementation

180

of such strategies may help to mitigate the challenges currently being seen in minority concentrated public schools. Currently, there are a number of studies that indicate that minority concentrated schools have a growing number of economically-disadvantaged and special needs students. Literature and my data analyses indicate that this concentration of needs and the growing shortfalls in revenue are forcing public schools to reduce operating costs. In most inner-city school systems, public school abandonments top the list of strategies.

Economically Disadvantaged/Poverty

As my literature review indicates, children living in poverty face increasing social and economic problems, many of which require school supported and school funded programs to help to mitigate academic and social deficiencies. Public school systems with high percentages of students who are eligible to receive free and reduced meals are also increasingly challenged by declining school budgets, by increasing the numbers of student with special needs, and by neighborhoods that continue to lose residents, businesses, and political clout. Most racially segregated, poor neighborhoods are also challenged by disinvestment, which contributes to neighborhood decline.

As I identify in my literature review, potential increases in public school abandonments are expected to escalate adverse impacts on public school and neighborhood environments, particularly in inner-city locations where many poor and minority families are already impacted negatively by a host poverty-related ills. As public school abandonments occur most often in neighborhoods challenged socially and economically, the displacement of children attending these schools already have a sufficient number of complications that are related the poverty.

181

Urban and school planners could use comprehensive data analyses to track the shifts in the number of children who are economically disadvantaged and consider from a broader perspective the added impacts of the abandonment of their neighborhood public school. For example, the abandonment of public neighborhood schools often results in the need for students to be transported to remote locations, increasing travel time and minimizing parental involvement. A better understanding of such impacts of public school abandonments may provide urban and school planners the incentive to encourage neighborhood development that includes multi-use building, to include the use of existing under-populated and under-utilized public schools.

Public School Location/Siting

There is an adequate amount of research that exits that supports the importance of public school location or siting, particularly in poor, inner-city areas. My data analyses indicate that public school abandonments are implemented most often in inner-city neighborhoods than in urban fringe areas. This finding represents a number of implications for public school systems, students, and neighborhoods structures.

Abandoned public schools in most inner-city neighborhoods often represent one of the largest facilities in these areas. As such, the abandoned facility escalates the decline of number physical, social, and economic structures. Physically located at center or heart of neighborhoods, increasing crime

As a result of these findings, I conclude that this dissertation establishes the need for the development of comprehensive databases that school boards, city and school planners, and

182

public policymakers are able use to help mitigate potential impacts of public school abandonments on the physical, social, and economic structures of neighborhoods. Comprehensive strategic urban planning must be inclusive and must address the short and long-term needs of neighborhoods and public school districts. Effective urban planning is meant to balance the needs of the public and mitigate if possible, the adverse impacts. To effectively address implications of the trend of public school abandonments, comprehensive, valid and reliable supporting data and analyses are needed.

Recommendations

To better understand the impacts of public school abandonments, decision makers must begin to view public school abandonment in a broader context. Studies should be conducted that focus of the implications of school abandonments on poor, inner-city communities and public school students. Public school abandonments must be seen as more than simply a means to balance budget deficits and how to save money by closing a building. My research and data analyses indicate that the potential harm to students, families, and the overall neighborhood structure should become part of the evaluative processes. At-risk populations, declining enrollments, poverty and vacancy rates, and aging infrastructure are elements present in the majority of inner-city schools and neighborhoods. I recommend these and other data about public school abandonment are collected in a standardized format and used to develop a comprehensive database that can be used by school officials, urban planners, city and county administrators, state and federal officials, public agencies, and scholars. In an effort to improve

183

conditions in struggling areas, these data could be used to conduct studies that identify and track demographic shifts in neighborhood and public schools.

The development of comprehensive data will allow urban and public school planners to better understand the consequences of public school abandonments, particularly in areas that are already challenged by demographic shifts and resulting declines in their financial, physical, and socially environments. By conducting studies of neighborhoods and public school environments prior to the implementation of public school abandonments and after the implementation, urban and school planners would have concrete data that would indicate the conditions that are linked to any decline in public schools and neighborhoods structures. This knowledge would help planners better understand this phenomenon and the need for developing potential alternatives.

Comprehensive data would also allow for cross-sectional research studies that would allow for various levels of comparisons to be conducted and analyzed over time. Before and after "snapshots" (periods in time) would serve to identify demographic conditions as populations change and neighborhood needs change and city and regional strategies change. Analyses of such changes would provide urban and school planners a resource to monitor and compare neighborhood structures prior to the public school abandonment to neighborhood conditions or structures post public school abandonment.

As a result of ineffective or failed public policies related to planning and development and abandonment of public neighborhood schools, an already often isolated and disenfranchised group of people may subjected to additional challenges. For this reason, the potential impact of public school abandonments on neighborhoods with declining financial and political resources is particularly alarming. Research identified a number of key findings about neighborhoods and public school abandonment. These findings are not meant to suggest that all children fall into

184

the listed categories. However, for the majority of families and students living in the select areas, these findings tend to be applicable in the neighborhoods were public schools had been abandoned. My research findings identified the demographic conditions of neighborhoods and public schools and the potential influences that these conditions may have on children living in neighborhoods where public schools have been abandoned. These findings suggest that decisions to abandon public should not be done with a crisis or reactive only mindset. As a result, effective and thorough comprehensive planning and development strategies should seek to address potential challenges through the long and short-terms.

Research indicates that public schools will continue to be abandoned in increasing numbers. As a result, policymakers and urban planners should focus on minimizing harm by developing workable alternatives to public school abandonment. My research indicates that the impacts of public school abandonments in inner-city neighborhoods require the aid of various agencies to support the needs of the students and their families. However, very often these agencies have no input into the decisions to abandoned public schools. Future decisions should include these agencies. Departments of health, state boards of educations, city and state welfare departments, police departments, parent and teacher organizations, private organizations, public and private universities, and county leaders could all play vital roles in minimizing the implications abandonment of public schools.

The development and implementation of better planning strategies are believed to be a start to addressing problems suggested to be linked to public school abandonment. One problem is that research indicates that there is the lack of a standardization of planning, construction, and abandonment of neighborhood public schools. Research also suggests the importance of addressing the need for effective collaboration between school boards and city governments and

185

between central city governments and their surrounding county governments. School planning, to include the methods to address under-utilized and aged facilities, require in-depth review to mitigate many adverse impacts on students and the neighborhood as a whole.

The siting of replacement schools is critical.   City and public school planners and administrators are faced with addressing not only the ills associated with school facilities and budgetary shortfalls; they must develop and implement programs and resources to support the growing social needs of the students and their families.   A combination of population and demographic changes, to include the outward migration of racial and ethnic groups as well as income level shifts are critical elements identified in this study, are precursors to conditions of neighborhoods and public schools.

Development of comprehensive data and analyses will help in the establishment of effective planning and policies needed to abate further distress on neighborhoods already challenged by concentrated poverty and related ills. The development of these data is reliant upon consistent monitoring of demographic changes in inner-city neighborhoods and schools. Demographic indicators that identify concentrated poverty and neighborhood decline, to include changes in the social, economic, and physical structures, can serve as data foundations for comparative analyses and strategic planning and development for city and school leaders and planners.

I agree with Chung (2002) that comprehensive development strategies should recognize the link between public schools and neighborhoods as good education policy and good community-development policy. State and local agencies should work together use under-utilized or abandoned public schools to better serve the needs of communities. Public policy should reflect the roles that public schools play addressing the social and physical infrastructures.

186

State and local governments, including school districts, should work toward the development and implementation of a requirement for school districts to submit school facility utilization reports, to include school facility planning, school facility conditions, and school facility abandonments and decision criteria. These data should be tracked and maintained consistently at both the school district and state levels. State boards of educations are often the requestors for federal funds to support the needs of public school districts. Similar to the need for consistent US Census data to support the needs of states and neighborhoods, a comprehensive database is needed to understand and address the needs of public school districts.

For more effective urban planning, inner-city capital improvement initiatives and revitalizations projects must address the construction, renovation, and adaptive reuses of public school facilities. My research identifies some of the implications of the disconnects between public school planning and dispositions and local government planning and development. The implementation of coordinated urban and capital-improvement planning would allow for coordinated uses of limited revenue sources and for coordinated service deliveries in existing neighborhood facilities. Research suggests that collaborative planning and shared uses of resources would benefit not only public schools systems, but the entire city as well. Research also suggests that urban and school planners will need to develop strategies that allow for jointly used "community" schools, where programs can be conducted to help meet educational and social needs of the entire neighborhood. To minimize neighborhood and public school depopulation and decline, these strategies must address the utilization of abandoned public school buildings.

Bickers and Williams (2001) suggests that in the development of comprehensive data and analyses, policy forecasts must be produced; policy forecasts as, if Policy A is implemented,

187

what will happen? If Policy B is implemented instead, what else will happen? I agree. Comprehensive data will serve as baseline measurement for demographic changes in areas where public neighborhood schools are abandoned. This data will also provide public school and city planners tools to aid in the determination of the potential impact of school abandonment on the programs and community activities held in these facilities. This data will also provide valuable information that can be used in the determination of effective adaptive reuses of these facilities, if required, and help ensure the vitality and sustainability of the neighborhoods through effective investment planning and development. Public schools should solicit input from city leaders and have should open and thorough dialogues with social and health services agencies to obtain the needs of neighborhoods and recommendations in the development of comprehensive data to mitigate harm caused by ineffective decision-making processes.

   Mitigation strategies may include alternatives to abandonment of the facility. The reuse or repurpose of the school is one viable option. Many public schools can be leased to public and private entities, which would allow these schools to be occupied and maintained until such time that the building is needed to be reactivated as a school facility. Public service agencies could better serve the neighborhood by providing services directly from those neighborhood school facilities. Police departments and health service agencies could be conveniently located in neighborhoods where their presence is sorely needed. Library and computer technology offerings, and expanded course offering by local public and private universities and charter programs are viable considerations for occupying surplus spaces. Private daycare centers for children and the elderly are also options. The costs to maintain the buildings could be shared among the agencies and reduce the burden on the city and public schools to maintain an abandoned property.

188

I recommend that the consideration of all viable options is better than the alternative—another vacant and abandoned building in the heart of a poor, inner-city neighborhood and where there will be additional adverse implications on the students and families who are apt to be struggling with a host of social and economic problems. The abandonment of public schools will mean the elimination of neighborhood programs meant to support the needs of students and their families, as well as other residents. Tutorial and other remedial programs would be eliminated from that location. Athletic programs, programs that support teen mothers and the elderly would be close with the public school. The relocation of these programs to other areas may not be conducive to residents, causing further harm to those that these programs are meant to serve.

While public school matters continue to be addressed by school leaders, research indicates that this method does not produce the most effective planning strategies. Public school infrastructure problems must begin to receive as much attention as public school academic achievement. City and school administrators must begin to understand their need to work together for the betterment of the entire city. For the city to remain attractive to new residents and to retaining existing ones, urban and school planners must realize that the neighborhood and public school development must have equal consideration in the city's strategic master plan. Abandoned public schools contribute to the decline of not only the physical environments of neighborhoods; they also contribute to destruction of the social and economic structures of these areas as well. Urban planners must develop strategies that support and meet the needs of these areas. The development of a comprehensive database about public school facilities and public school abandonments would be a great beginning to developing and implementing strategies that promote sound, physical and economic neighborhoods.

189

On major stumbling block to the future successes of urban and school planning may be the political disconnects and power struggles that exist between most inner-city and state governments and public school boards. The lack of cooperation and unified vision is apt to continue to create competition between public school districts and other agencies. These disconnects are more pronounced when city officials feel that public schools are hindrances to the marketability of the city. However, without effective means to measure the impacts of their decisions on communities, urban and school planners may continue to work in isolation and public school abandonments may be continue to be the primary tools used to address the challenges of public school districts. Consequently, the conditions in poor inner-city neighborhoods and public schools may continue to experience additional decline, which will eventually impact the entire metropolitan area.

The social and economic ills of concentrated poverty and minority populations are confined to inner-city areas only. Mitigation programs implemented and supported by federal, state, and local funds become the tax burdens for all. Therefore decisions that have the potential to increase these burdens should not be implemented by public schools boards only. Public school abandonments in poor, inner cities impact land use and revitalization strategies. Public school abandonments in poor, inner cities impact housing and neighborhood and commercial development. Public school abandonments in poor, inner-cities impact the health and welfare of students and their families. Public school abandonments in poor, inner cities impact the safety of communities. For these reasons, decisions that lead to public school abandonments should be a result of more effective, more thoughtful planning. Decisions that lead to public school abandonments should be based on cooperative and collaborative input from representatives of

190

the city, state, and public school planners and policymakers and a review of comprehensive data and analyses that identify the potential implications of their decisions.

A growing number of studies show that increased funding is not the answer. Accountability strategies and school choice programs may not be as effective as expected. And, the establishment of comprehensive data and analyses is not expected to "cure" the ills of poor, inner-city neighborhoods and schools. The establishment of comprehensive data and analyses is expected to provide urban and school planners, policymakers, and communities a history of implications of past actions and means to predict and mitigate, through the development of workable alternatives, future harm to declining neighborhoods and public schools.

191

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207

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APPENDICES

This section comprises data collections and analyses that I use to support the information of this dissertation. In each appendix, I identify and analyze data specific to the metropolitan areas, central cities, and public school districts targeted for this study. For each location, I describe and display data in various graphs, charts, and figures. These aids serve to describe the similarities in the demographic changes and the increasing challenges of these locations as a result.

Demographic data allows me to describe the selected characteristics of the neighborhoods. I also include maps to provide pictures of some neighborhood and school attributes. The maps describe poverty levels, transportation routes between inner-city and county school districts, racial segregation and isolations levels, vacancy rates, and school district quality.

212

Appendix A: Public School Data by Selected CMSAs and Atlanta MSA

I examine and use Census Bureau data for the year 2000[86] to describe the select geographical areas. Census data for 1980, 1990, and 2000 were reviewed and compared to CMSA data represented by FreeDemograhpics.com, an on-line demographics' provider[87]. I do recognize and affirm that geographic boundaries change over time and for this study, when comparisons are performed, I ensure that the boundaries are consistent between 1980, 1990, and 2000 census data, and omit areas that are not constant over the time period being reviewed.

I generate custom reports and charts from data downloaded and from the Census Bureau. I also create thematic maps of the targeted CMSA and the Atlanta MSA and use these maps to identify the poverty and school quality levels of specific neighborhoods. The Census Bureau and an online research institute provided the data and means to develop these maps.[88]

School district data reviewed for the nine selected CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA represent a total student population of nearly 8 million students and 12,066 schools facilities. Student enrollment is a major planning component for local and state school boards and urban planners. Student enrollments are critical in the determination of education needs—number of teachers, school facilities, transportation, books, computer and other supplies.

Nationwide, many inner-city school districts are losing students and shuttering schools buildings. Population shifts, housing costs, open-enrollment policies, and competition from charter schools are reshaping city school districts (Gehring, 2005). Historical data indicate that

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[86]Decennial Census Data - Poverty Status in 1999 by Census Tracts with 20 Percent or More in Poverty 2000. Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3. Universe: Population for whom poverty status is determined
[87] Data source: © 2008. FreeDemographics provides by SRC, LLC: http://www.freedemographics.com/AllocateOnline.srct
[88] As a public service, the American Communities Project makes information available on specific metropolitan areas and their respective city and suburban portions. The project is presently jointly by the Initiative in Spatial Structures in the Social Sciences, Brown University and the Lewis Mumford Center, University of Albany. *http://www.s4.brown.edu/cen2000/data.html*

213

the number of public school districts and the number of school buildings maintained by public school districts have varied over time.   According to the National Center for Education Statistics[89], in 1939, there were 117,108 public school districts nationwide. However, by 1975, that number reduced significantly, with a total of only 16,376 public school districts totaling and nearly 89,000 public school facilities. Of the 89,000 schools, 63,200 of these buildings were elementary schools.

By the 1981, the number of public schools reduced to 83,688, of which 61,100 were elementary schools and public school districts reduced to 15,929.   In 2000, public school districts had reduced to 14,859, but number of school facilities had increased to nearly 93,300, with elementary schools increasing to a total of from 61,100 to 69,700.

In 2002, the nation's 100 largest school districts served nearly 11.2 million students and had responsibility for 15,383 school buildings.[90] The National Center for Education Statistics (2003) reported that there were nearly 95,000 public schools in the United States, and of that total, 71, 270 represented elementary schools. These 95,000 schools were governed by almost 15,000 school districts. During the 2004-2005, approximately 48 million students were enrolled in 14,205 public school districts. I describe these data below in **Figure 8**.

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[89] Source: Table 84-"Number of Public School Districts and Public and Private Elementary and Secondary Schools: Selected years 1869-70 and through 2003-04 (US Department of Education, National Center for Education). Table prepared in August 2005.
[90] Source: Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2001–02, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2001–02, Version 1a.

Figure 8 Total Number U. S. Public School Districts from 1989 through 2002
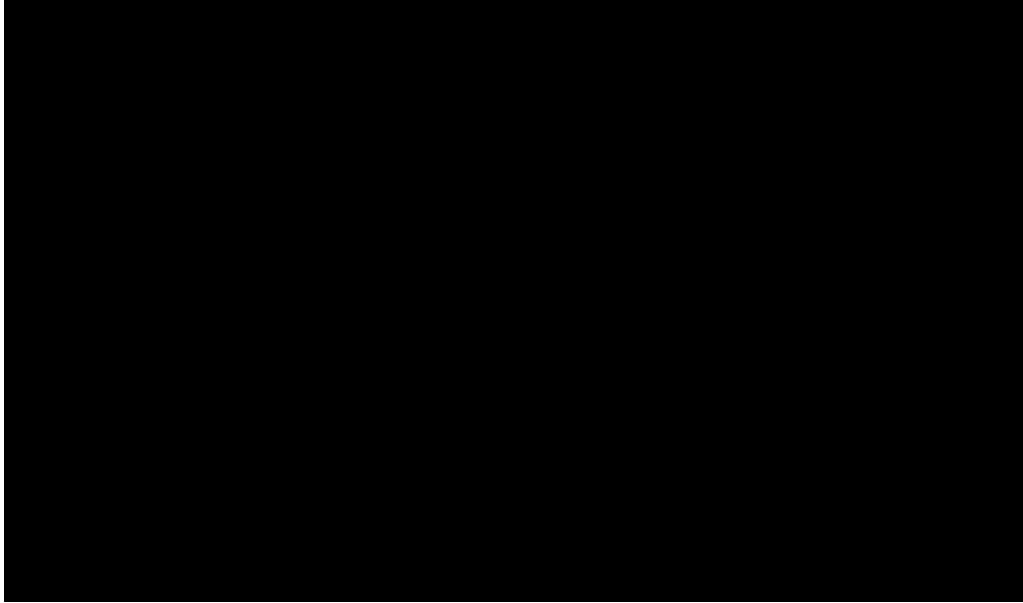
Source: Author Analysis- US Department of Education, NCES (2005).

A review of NCES data for 1990 and 2000 indicates that despite the number of losses of students, the number of school facilities often increased. In 2000, select central cities in the metropolitan areas report that a majority of the schools in their districts had high percentages of minority student populations. There was a total of 3,850 schools governed by the selected central cities, of which 3,031 schools (79%) had student populations that were 81 to 100% minority.   The overall total of minority student enrollment exceeded 82% in each of the selected central city school districts. Of the areas included in this study, the school districts of Detroit (96%); District of Columbia (96%); Atlanta (93%) and Dallas (92%) had the greatest percentage of minority populations.

Student enrollment is basic descriptive data were collected for the public school divisions located with the described areas. These data were compiled and described to indicate the similarities and differences of the public school districts that were associated with the selected geographical areas.

215

The collection and analyses of data from the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES) and American Communities Projects were used to meet objective three. Data provided by the Federal Financial Examination Counsel were also used to describe selected neighborhoods (census tracts), especially in those neighborhoods where schools had been abandoned. Where comparable, the1990[91] Census Bureau and census tract data were examined and compared with the 2000 data for the applicable census tracts.

The goal was to identify, describe, and compare the population data related the neighborhoods, distinguishing between the areas that were poverty-concentrated neighborhoods and those that were not. As is typical in many central cities, declining student enrollments resulted in changes in the school systems' racial and socioeconomic compositions, often resulting in a student body comprised of mostly minority, low-income students who have a number of special needs.

Data were extracted from the National Center of Educational Statistics (NCES). The datasets were used to identify the number of open and closed public schools located within the nine selected CMSAs, the Atlanta MSA, and primary central cities.[92] A review of these data provided the means to perform comparative analyses of neighborhoods and their supporting school systems where closures/abandonments occurred to those neighborhoods where public schools were not abandoned or closed. These datasets also provided basic descriptions of student enrollments and other related demographics. These data were analyzed to determine the

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[91] Source: Bureau of the Census CPH-3 series of publications from the 1990 Census of Population and Housing: Population and Housing Characteristics for Census Tracts and Block Numbering Areas (http://www.census.gov/geo/www/estate/poverty.html). Some census tracts are often incomparable due to changes such as, the tract being renumbered, expanded, deleted and combined. Tracts that are not able to be compared will be deleted from data and the action noted.

[92] The researcher notes that datasets may not include all school closures or newly constructed. Renovated/adaptively reused school facilities may be identified in the collected data. As noted throughout this study, school divisions are not always forthcoming with thorough, timely, consistent or accurate data.

216

public school enrollments, the number of facility closures within specific inner cities, and to provide comparative analyses of those trends.

This objective was partially accomplished through the collection of qualitative and quantitative data from respondents to an on-line survey. The survey responses were insufficient to statistical inferences; however, the data provided some helpful qualitative data.

Student Enrollment Shifts in Public Schools by CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA

Over the past decades, U.S. metropolitan areas have become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse (Denton and Massey 1991; Iceland 2003). Over the past ten years, the Black, Hispanic and Asian populations have increased dramatically in both inner cities and suburban neighborhoods nationwide (Rawlings, Harris, Turner, and Padilla, 2004). An examination of the racial composition served to describe diverse populations residing in the target areas, as well as indicate the changes in the total populations in these areas over time.

An examination of the movement of selected populations within these primary cities provides a means to make comparisons, as well as to help better understand the composition of inner-city neighborhoods and the public schools supported by these areas.

In 2002, student populations declined in Atlanta (-8%), Detroit (-5%), District of Columbia (-16%) and Philadelphia (-5%). The number of overall school buildings declined in Atlanta (16%), Chicago (2%), and District of Columbia (10%). Detroit and Philadelphia had decreases in student enrollments and increases in school buildings.

217

Racial Compositions in Public Schools Select in CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA

The analysis of the mobility of White families is important to understanding the impact of changes of racial composition on the neighborhoods and public schools. Research suggest that the "flight" of middle- and upper-income White families from central cities influences the economic and social declines in many of the nation's central city areas and public schools (Chung, 2002; Frankenberg and Lee, 2002; Graham, 2005; Katz, 2002; Orfield, 2001).

In 2004-2005 school year, while the New York and Los Angeles CMSAs enrolled the greatest number of Hispanic and Asian students, the Atlanta MSA, the District of Columbia and Detroit CMSAs reported the lowest number of Hispanic and Asian students. Of the total number of students enrolled in the selected areas, the total number of White students equaled 2.5 million or 32% and black students totaled 2.2 million or 28%. Native Americans represented the minority student group of in all school regions.

Appendix B: Basic Demographic Data for Public Schools

Student Enrollment and Number of School Facilities

While the top 20 largest school districts enrolled over five million students, or 11% of the total student enrollment,[93] as is noted in **Table 25** eight of the most populous inner-city public school systems enrolled 3.1 million students and maintained nearly 3,700 school facilities.

Table 25 Eight Most Populous Inner-city Public School Districts with Total Students of 100,000+

Total Students	Total Schools	District Name	City	State
1,049,831	1,164	New York City Public Schools	Brooklyn	NY
735,058	663	Los Angeles Unified	Los Angeles	CA
437,418	599	City of Chicago School District	Chicago	IL
210,950	299	Houston Independent School District (ISD)	Houston	TX
197,083	263	Philadelphia City School District	Philadelphia	PA
166,675	265	Detroit City School District	Detroit	MI
163,562	226	Dallas ISD	Dallas	TX
141,599	182	San Diego City Unified	San Diego	CA

Source: Analysis of NCES data 2000-2001, Local Education Agency Universal Survey, 2001-02.

As can be seen in **Table 26**, during the school term of 1989-1990, the ten districts selected for this study had a total student enrollment of 2.8 million and 3,605 school buildings. By the 2001-2002 school term, the total number of enrolled students increased by 11% and number of school buildings increased by 8%. From 1990 to 2002, the Atlanta (-8%); Detroit (-5%); District of Columbia (-16%); and San Francisco (-5%) school districts lost students.

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[93]Source: U S Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics: Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethic Minorities, 2007.

219

Table 26 Total Students and Total Schools in Selected School Districts (1989-90 and 2001-02 School Years)

District Name	Students (2001-02)	Schools (2001-02)	Students (1989-90)	Schools (1989-90)	% Change Students	% Change Schools
Atlanta	56,586	97	61,373	116	-7.8%	-16.4%
Chicago	437,418	599	408,442	608	7.1%	-1.5%
Dallas ISD	163,562	226	125,897	200	29.9%	13.0%
Detroit	166,675	265	175,436	259	-5.0%	2.3%
District of Columbia	68,449	165	81,301	184	-15.8%	-10.3%
Houston ISD	210,950	299	185,566	244	13.7%	22.5%
Los Angeles Unified	735,058	663	609,746	630	20.6%	5.2%
New York City	1,049,831	1,218	930,440	998	12.8%	22.0%
Philadelphia	197,083	263	189,451	256	4.0%	2.7%
San Francisco Unified	58,566	113	61,935	110	-5.4%	2.7%
	3,144,178	3,908	2,829,587	3,605	11.1%	8.4%

SOURCE: Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2001–02; 1989-90. Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2001–02; 1989-90, Version 1a.

Poverty Levels for Selected Public School Districts

In **Table 27**, none of the selected school districts in their aggregate compositions had extreme poverty levels (40+ %). The Detroit City Schools had more households (24.3%) and more families (21.7%) with income levels below the established poverty level than did the other nine selected school systems. The Atlanta City School district, with the second highest poverty levels, had nearly 21% of its total households and families with incomes below the 1999 established poverty level. The San Francisco Unified School District had the smallest percentage of total households and smallest percentage of families living below the established poverty level.

220

Table 27 Percent of Households/Families with Incomes Below the Poverty Level by School District

District Name (CITY)	Percent of Total Households, income below poverty level (1999)	Percent of Families, income below poverty level (1999)
New York City	19.7	18.5
Los Angeles Unified	18.6	18.3
Chicago	17.4	16.6
Houston ISD	17.6	17.4
Philadelphia	21.8	18.4
Detroit	24.3	21.7
Dallas ISD	15.9	16.5
San Francisco Unified	10.2	7.8
Atlanta	20.7	21.3
District of Columbia	17.1	16.7
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, The 2000 School District Tabulation (STP2).		

Economically Disadvantaged Public School Students

Of nearly 8 million students, almost 37% or 3.1 million students received free or reduced meals. I illustrate in five of the ten combined metropolitan areas—Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Houston and LA—had at least 50% of their students who had received free or reduced lunch.

Table 28 Percent of Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals by School Districts [94]

Name of reporting district	State	Schools	%Students eligible for free and reduced lunch
Atlanta City School District	GA	97	80.1
City of Chicago School District	IL	597	81.9
Dallas Independent School District	TX	220	74.5
Detroit City School District	MI	261	70.3
District of Columbia Public Schools	DC	165	60.9
Houston Independent School District	TX	299	72.7
Los Angeles Unified	CA	663	72.8
New York City Public Schools	NY	1,213	73.4
Philadelphia City School District	PA	263	71.0
San Francisco Unified	CA	113	54.5

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[94] SOURCE: Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1a. Table 8. Free and reduced-price eligibility and racial/ethic composition as a percentage of school district membership, and percentage of schools for which characteristic is reported in the 100 largest school districts in the United States and jurisdictions: By school district, school year 2004-05.

Appendix C: Public School Abandonments: Comparisons by CMSAs and Atlanta MSA

In 2004-2005, the total number of reported school closures in the ten selected areas was 489. This number of closures represented four percent of the total overall number of abandoned schools. Of the total number on abandonments in all areas, more closures occurred in the Houston CMSA (20%), followed by the Dallas CMSA (17%) and the Los Angeles CMSA (13%). Of the selected metropolitan areas, the highest percentage of school closures was identified in Atlanta MSA (11%), followed by the Houston CMSA (9%) and the Dallas CMSA (7%).

As described in Table 29, more schools were closed in the central city areas than were closed in the urban fringe and rural locations combined.   Central city closures represented 51% of all school abandonments. Those abandonments that occurred in the urban fringe locations represented 43% of the total closures, followed by 6% in rural locations.   With the exception of the Atlanta MSA, the Philadelphia CMSA, and the San Francisco CMSA, all other selected locations had more schools closed in the central city areas than in urban fringe areas. Of the total number of closed facilities within the selected areas, the Chicago CMSA and the Dallas CMSA reported the highest percent of closures in central city areas, with a 65% of closure for both.

223

Table 29 School Closures in Selected CMSA/MSA and by School Location[95]

CMSA/MSA	Total Schools	Total Closed Schools	% Closed Schools	%Closed Urban Fringe	%Closed Central City	%Closed Rural
Atlanta MSA	364	39	11%	64%	33%	3%
Chicago CMSA	1,497	43	3%	35%	65%	0%
Dallas CMSA	1,159	84	7%	31%	65%	4%
DC CMSA	683	17	2%	65%	24%	12%
Detroit CMSA	1,228	42	3%	36%	57%	7%
Houston CMSA	1,051	98	9%	47%	47%	6%
LA CMSA	1,971	65	3%	39%	52%	9%
NY CMSA	2,572	60	2%	40%	60%	0%
Philadelphia CMSA	966	21	2%	48%	24%	29%
San Francisco CMSA	575	20	3%	70%	20%	10%
Medians	1105	42.5	3%	44%	50%	7%
Total	12,066	489				

As denoted in **Table 30** and **Table 31**, of the nearly 12,100 total schools, the median total number of schools in the selected regions was 1,105, and the median number of closed schools in those regions was 43. As indicated, the median value for schools closed in the central cities was 50%, while the median percent of schools closed in urban fringe areas was 44%. The greatest percentage of school closures in all the selected areas were reported for Atlanta (11%) followed by Houston (9%) and Dallas (7%).

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95 Source: My Analysis of Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004-05, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2004-05, Version.

Table 30 Total Number of Public School Abandonments in Select Locations

Location	Total Schools	Closed Urban Fringe	Closed Central City	Closed Rural
Atlanta MSA	39	25	13	1
Chicago CMSA	43	15	28	0
Dallas CMSA	84	26	55	3
DC CMSA	17	11	4	2
Detroit CMSA	42	15	24	3
Houston CMSA	98	46	46	6
LA CMSA	65	25	34	6
NY CMSA	60	24	36	0
Philadelphia CMSA	21	10	5	6
San Fran CMSA	20	14	4	2
Total	489	211	249	29
		43%	**51%**	**6%**

Table 31 Descriptive Statistics for the Number School Closures in Selected CMSAs and Atlanta MSA

Total Schools		Total Schools Closed		%Closed Schools		%Closed Urban Fringe		% Closed Central City		% Closed Rural	
Mean	1,207	Mean	49	Mean	5%	Mean	48%	Mean	45%	Mean	8%
Median	1,105	Median	43	Median	3%	Median	44%	Median	50%	Median	7%
SD	667	SD	28	SD	3%	SD	14%	SD	18%	SD	8%
Sum	12,066	Sum	489								
Count	10	Count	10	Count	10	Count	10.0	Count	10	Count	10

Source: Analysis of Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2001–02, Version.

Elementary school abandonments accounted for 24% of the total closures in the selected areas. The percentages of elementary school closures per location and metropolitan area are displayed in **Table 32**.

225

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Table 32 Percent of Elementary School Closures by Selected CMSA/MSA and Location[96]

CMSA/MSA	Central City Closures	Urban Fringe Closures	Rural Closures
Atlanta MSA	80%	10%	10%
Chicago CMSA	93%	7%	0%
Dallas CMSA	71%	25%	4%
DC CMSA	50%	0%	50%
Detroit CMSA	64%	29%	7%
Houston CMSA	55%	45%	0%
Los Angeles CMSA	78%	17%	6%
New York CMSA	38%	63%	0%
Philadelphia CMSA	11%	56%	33%
San Francisco CMSA	50%	50%	0%

Table 33 Number of Public Elementary School Abandonments in Select Locations

Location	Number of Abandoned Public Schools	Closed Urban Fringe	Closed Central City	Closed Rural
Atlanta MSA	10	1	8	1
Chicago CMSA	14	1	13	0
Dallas CMSA	28	7	20	1
DC CMSA	2	0	1	1
Detroit CMSA	14	4	9	1
Houston CMSA	11	5	6	0
LA CMSA	18	3	14	1
NY CMSA	8	5	3	0
Philadelphia CMSA	9	5	1	3
San Fran CMSA	2	1	1	0
	116	**32**	**76**	**8**

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[96]
Source: Analysis of Data reported by states to U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version 1a, and "Local Education Agency Universe Survey," 2004–05, Version.

226

With the exceptions of the New York and Philadelphia CMSAs, the majority of elementary school closures took place in the central cities. Of the targeted areas, 93% of the elementary school closures in the Chicago CMSA were in the central city. In the Atlanta MSA (80%), the Los Angeles CMSA (78%), the Detroit (64%), the Houston (55%) and the Dallas CMSA (71%), the majority of elementary (neighborhood) schools occurred in central cities.

Atlanta and the District of Columbia represent the only school districts with declines in both student enrollments and school facilities. In the Atlanta Public School District, the number of school buildings reduced by 16% and the District of Columbia City Schools reduced by 10%. While student enrollment increased in the Chicago City Public Schools District, the total school facilities declined by nearly 2% in the district. The total number of enrolled students declined in the Detroit City Schools District (-5%), but the number of school buildings increased by 2%.

In the San Francisco Unified School District, despite a 5% decline in enrolled students, the total number of school buildings increased by nearly 3%. The Dallas ISD (30%) had the greatest percentage increases in the total number students, followed by Los Angeles with a 21% increase. The Houston ISD (23%) had the highest percentage increase of school buildings, followed closely by the New York City Schools (22%).

227

Appendix D: Atlanta MSA and Atlanta Public Schools

The Atlanta MSA is one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas. In 2000, more than 4.1 million people resided in the Atlanta metropolitan area, a 39% increase from 1990. The Atlanta MSA represents an area of significant change in its metropolitan area overall. Atlanta represents a southern central city that experienced a period of severe decline; yet, found a way to reverse its steep population declines (Rappaport, 2003). A report released by the Brookings Institute Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy (2000), states that the Atlanta metro area is home to four of the ten fastest growing counties in the nation, adding more than 650,000 newcomers and 350,000 new jobs since 1990. The redevelopment and revitalization efforts and the documented changes in Atlanta offer comparable data at the census tract levels (neighborhood levels).

The City of Atlanta is located in the center of Fulton County, the largest county in size and population in the Atlanta MSA. In both 1990 and 2000, Fulton and DeKalb were the most populated counties within the Atlanta MSA. In 2000, the Atlanta MSA was comprised of 658 census tracts and 167 of those tracts were located in Fulton County and 115 in DeKalb County. Although the overall poverty rate in Fulton County declined substantially over the last ten years, the largest concentration of high-poverty levels continued to be located in the City of Atlanta.

Atlanta Public School District (APS)

Atlanta is located in the center of Fulton County and APS serves as the school district for a large portion of the County. Therefore, the data for neighborhoods (census tracts) specific to Fulton County were analyzed to compare neighborhoods where schools were abandoned to those

228

where schools were not abandoned. Currently, the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) is under the leadership of its 15th appointed superintendent, Dr. Beverly L. Hall.   As I indicate in **Table 34**, since 1999, the

Table 34 **APS Student Enrollment Change, 1990 – 2002**

| School Year	Student Enrollment
1990-1991	65,655
1991-1992	64,829
1992-1993	61,947
1993-1994	62,266
1994-1995	62,701
1995-1996	59,648
1996-1997	65,699
1997-1998	65,189
1998-1999	64,569
1999-2000	55,672
2000-2001	53,576
2001-2002	52,388

Source: Statistical Services: School Year Enrollment Report 2001-2002, Atlanta Public Schools, June 2000.

APS student enrollments have declined steadily. In 2000, APS enrolled approximately 56,000 students and maintained and operated 103 school buildings, of which 55% were elementary schools. In 2001-2002, the total student enrollment for APS declined to 52,400. This total represented an 8% decrease from the 1999-2000 school year. In 2008-2009, student enrollment in APS declined to 49,300. During this same period, nearly 76% of the district's students were eligible for free and reduced lunches.

Blacks represented 85% of the district's total student population, followed by Whites at 8%. Hispanics represented 4% of the district's total population and Asians made up less than

229

$1\%^{97}$.   As of 2006-2007, nine percent of the APS student population had a recognized disability and three percent were identified to have a limited English proficiency.[98]

Figure 9 Atlanta Public School District by School Type
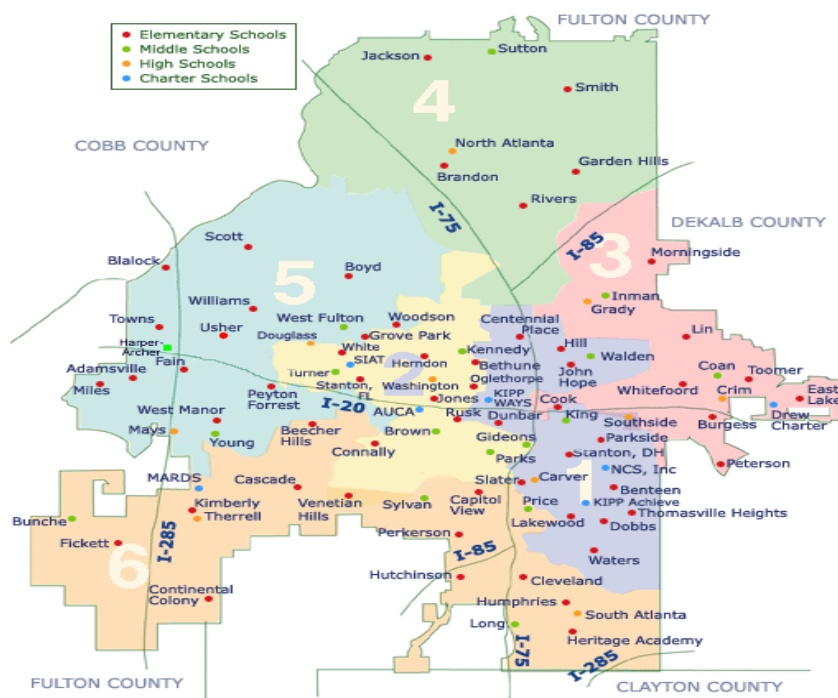
Source: APS website: www.atlanta.k12.edu

Of the district's 180,000 households, 12% were single parent households with children.   In 2007, 27% of Atlanta's residents earned less than $15,000 and the unemployment rate was nearly 5%. **Figure 9** compares APS and surrounding county school districts.

As I illustrate in **Table 35**, City of Atlanta is surrounded by a number of large counties, all of which that have school systems with student populations that exceed 25,000.   In 2007, as shown, APS (50,631) had the second smallest student body; Cherokee County (35,000) had the

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[97] Source: Atlanta Public Schools website: www.atlanta.k12.ga.us.
[98] Source: Georgia Department of Education, 2006-2007

smallest student population. APS had the highest percentage of Black students (85%), and the

highest percentage of economically disadvantaged children (75%).

**Table 35 Comparison: School Districts: Atlanta MSA Schools by County**

	Atlanta City	Clayton County	Cobb County	DeKalb County	Fulton County	Cherokee County	Gwinnett County	Paulding County
Enrollment (%) - 2007								
Student Enrollment (#)	50,631	52,533	107,274	101,396	83,861	35,068	152,043	25,669
White	8.9	5.9	48.3	10.1	37.6	79.1	39.1	73.6
Black	85.0	73.3	29.4	75.7	41.2	6.2	26.3	19.0
Hispanic	4.4	12.8	13.9	8.5	10.0	10.5	20.6	4.4
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.6	4.2	4.1	3.2	7.8	1.5	10.2	0.6
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2
Economically Disadvantaged	74.9	74.2	34.5	64.4	36.3	22.8	39.6	28.8
English Language Learners	2.2	5.5	7.5	5.4	4.4	3.3	10.0	1.1
Students with Disabilities	8.8	9.5	10.9	8.6	9.5	10.8	10.7	9.5
Community Profile - 2008								
% Adults with Bachelor's Degree	41.4	19.2	42.4	36.6	50.3	37.9	35.9	18.7
% Single-Parent Households with Children	12.8	21.3	13.5	14.5	9.0	12.1	13.8	11.4
District Facts								
City or Town	Atlanta	Jonesboro	Marietta	Decatur	Atlanta	Canton	Lawrenceville	Dallas
County	Fulton	Clayton	Cobb	DeKalb	Fulton	Cherokee	Gwinnett	Paulding
Urban Status	City, Large	Suburb, Large	Suburb, Large	Suburb, Large	Suburb, Large	Suburb, Large	Suburb, Large	Rural, Fringe
Source: Analysis of School Matters Data (2007)								

With the exception of Clayton County (6%) Schools, APS (9%) has the lowest

percentage of White enrolled students. Clayton County Schools and APS shared similar

demographics. However, APS (41%) had more than twice the number of college graduates when

compared to Clayton County Schools (19%). Clayton County (21%) had nearly twice the

number of single parent households with children when compared to APS (12%).

In 2007, more Hispanic students enrolled in the county school schools than in APS.

Gwinnett County (21%) had the highest representation of Hispanic students when compared the

other school systems identified in the above **Table 35**. Hispanic students represented only 4% of

the total students enrolled in APS.

Figure 10 Map: Atlanta Public Schools and Neighboring School Districts
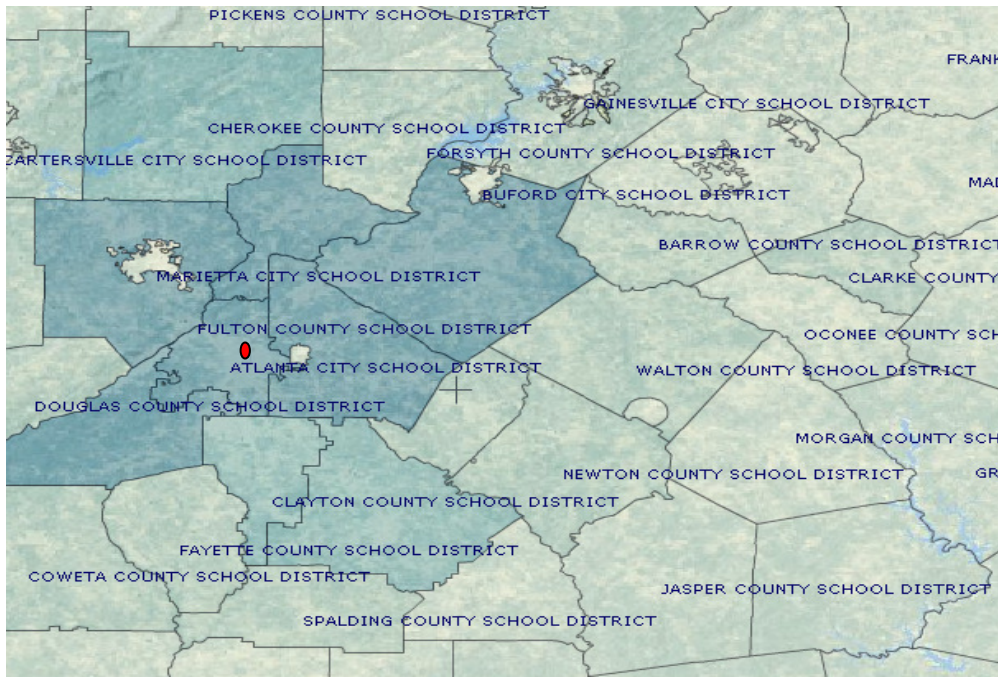
Source: Census School District Tabulation (STP2), National Center for Education Statistics (2000).

The number of adjacent school districts and the number of transportation avenues provide residential and education choices to families with the financial means to relocate away from the City of Atlanta. (See **Figure 10**)   As can be seen in **Figure 11,** there are a number of accessible travel routes leading to and from Atlanta and the APS communities by which families are able to transition to surrounding county public schools and suburban neighborhoods.

Figure 11 Map Travel Routes to Surrounding School Districts from Atlanta Public Schools
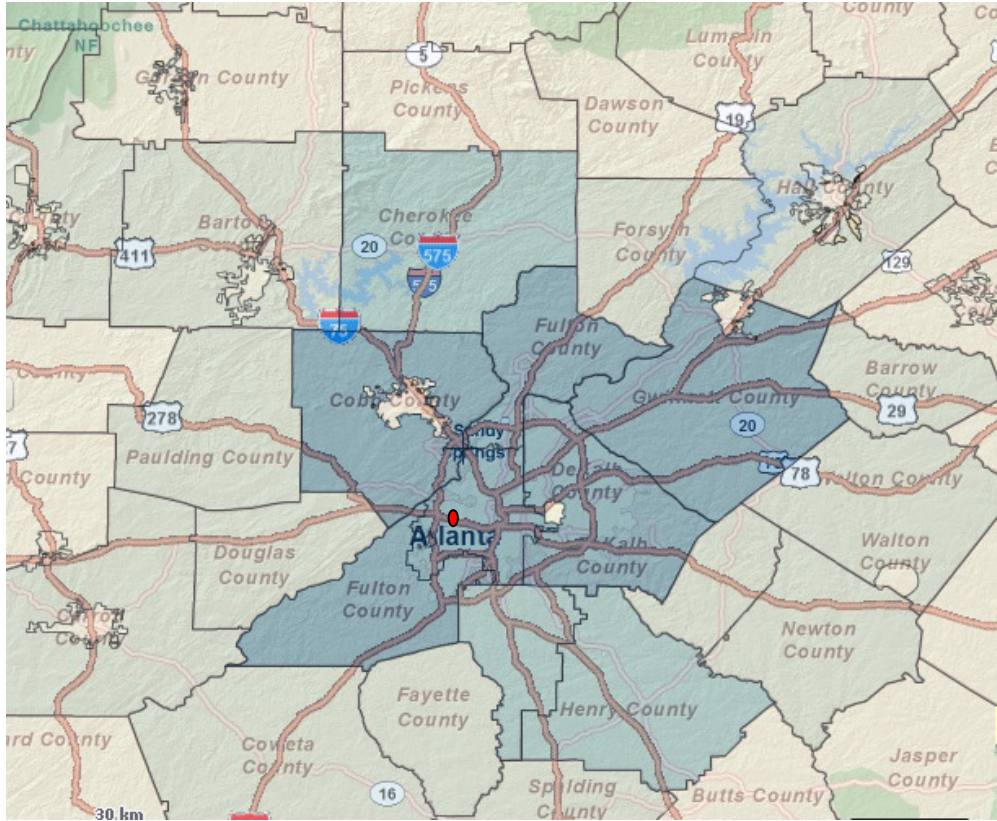
Source: The Census School District Tabulation (STP2) is a special tabulation prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division and sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics

Many of the APS abandoned schools were identified from news releases and internal documents that were located on the school district's website, as well through data collected from NCES databases. As should be noted, data were not available to indicate the historical activities specific to the disposition of APS facilities. As a result, the schools identified in this report and listed in **Tables 36** and **37** do not represent all abandoned elementary schools for APS. These schools represented only those schools that could be identified as abandoned or were to be abandoned by the end of 2009. Again, for purpose this research abandoned schools are defined as school facilities that have been closed and vacated, and are not anticipated to be reused for educational purposes on the existing sites. Data identified in **Tables 38** and **39** represent selected variables that characterized the neighborhoods in which elementary schools had been abandoned within the APS District.

Table 36 **Selected Demographics for Neighborhoods with Abandoned Elementary Schools**

Abandoned School	Census Tract#	Student Enrollment	% Elem Students Enrolled	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
Anderson Park	83.02	671	48.4	98.0	0.08	1.2
Arkwright	0420	774	51.0	95.0	2.1	2.8
Burgess	02090	1,678	44.3	80.8	16.6	2.2
McGill	55.01	356	50.3	90.5	4.6	4.7
Ragsdale	66.02	494	36.4	95.4	3.3	1.0

Source: Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File 4, Free Demographics

In 2000, the majority of students in all of the selected neighborhoods (census tracts) were represented Blacks. The highest percentage of Black students (98%) was reported in census tract #83.02, where Anderson Elementary School was abandoned, followed by census tract #66.02,

where Ragsdale Elementary School was abandoned. Whites and Hispanics represented a very

small percentage of the residents in all the selected neighborhoods.   In neighborhood #209,

located in DeKalb County, Burgess Elementary was closed. With the exception of Burgess

Elementary School that is located in census tract (neighborhood #020900[99]), White students

represented less than 5% of the total student population.

Figure 12 Poverty Rates: Families in Fulton County by Selected Census Tracts
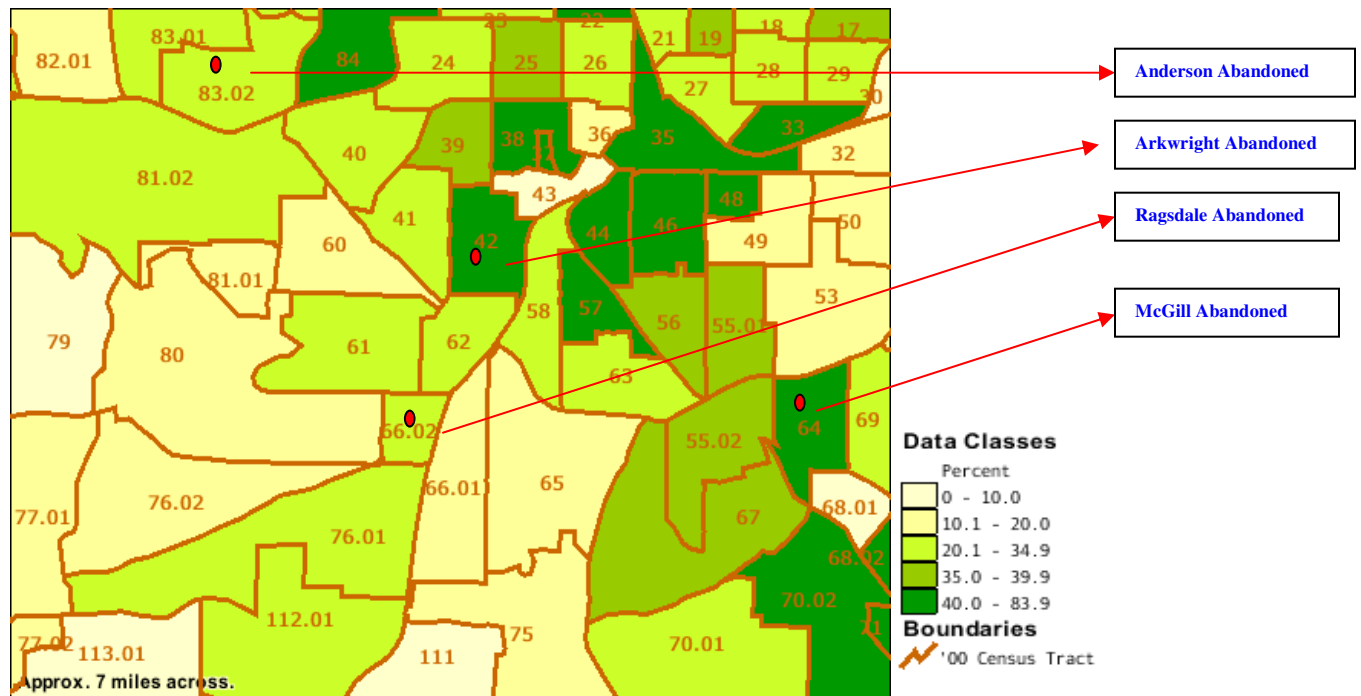
Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000, Summary File 3, MatrixP90

The neighborhood (#020900) had the highest median household income level ($34,630)

and the largest student population (1,678). The location of Burgess Elementary may account for

it having the area's largest percentage of white students and the lowest percentage of black

students. In comparison to all other selected neighborhoods, the lowest percentage of vacant

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[99] Burgess Elementary is located in DeKalb County, which has several neighborhoods that are included in the APS district.

housing units were also reported in the neighborhood #20900, as well as lowest poverty rates

18%) for individuals and households headed by single females with children under age 18

(27%).

Table 37 Selected Demographics for Neighborhoods with Abandoned Elementary Schools

Abandoned School	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child <18	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Anderson Park	83.02	32.0	20.0	12.1	$23,112	17.0
Arkwright	04200	61.0	48.7	15.9	$13,880	12.0
Burgess*	020900	26.7	18.2	12.3	$34,630	8.2
McGill	55.01	53.3	39.0	14.0	$16,198	21.7
Ragsdale	66.02	35.4	29.2	10.9	$20,990	9.7

Source: Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File 4, Free Demographics

Neighborhood #04200 (Arkwright) had an overall poverty level for individuals of 49%

and 61% poverty level for female households with children less than 18 years of age.

Neighborhood #66.02 had the lowest percentage of unemployed workers (11%).   Neighborhood

#4200, where Arkwright Elementary was abandoned, had the highest at unemployment rate

(16%), followed by neighborhood #55.01 (14%), where McGill Elementary was abandoned.

One out of five neighborhoods had an overall poverty level for individuals of 40% or

higher (#04200 - Arkwright), and neighborhood (#55.01 - McGill) was nearly qualified with a

poverty rate of 39%. Two out of five neighborhoods had poverty levels over 50% for single

female households with children under the age of 18. **Figure 12** displays by percentage the

distribution poverty levels for children under the age of 18 residing in Atlanta and surrounding

counties. In 2000, while the overall poverty level for individuals living in Atlanta was 14%, the

236

overall poverty level for children under 18 residing in the City of Atlanta was 20%. **Figure 13**
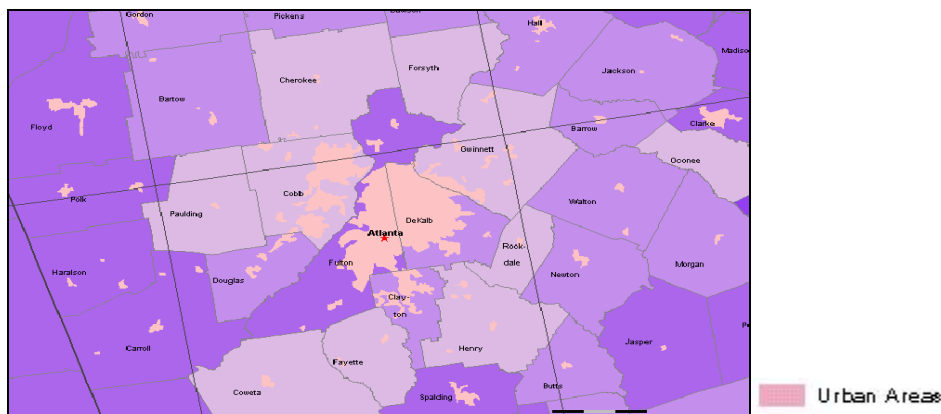
outlines the urban areas.

Figure 13 Poverty Rate for Children <18 Years, Atlanta and Surrounding Counties
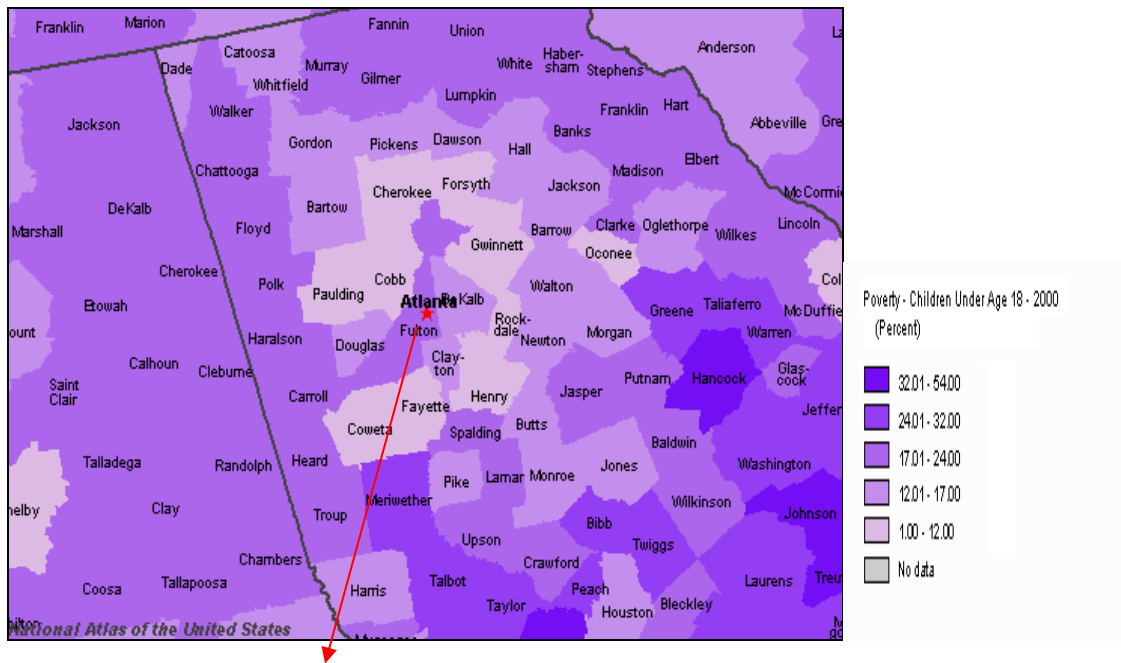
Poverty - All People 2000: 13.8%

**Poverty - Children Under Age 18 - 2000: 20.4%**

Figure 14 Poverty Rate for Children under 18 Years by Urban Area for Atlanta and Surrounding Counties

237

APS owns several sites where schools have been abandoned. Some of these facilities have been used for alternative purposes by the school system and others were leased to other non-profit organizations. In most cases, declining enrollment and deteriorated building conditions were given as the primary reasons for closing these facilities.

The Atlanta Public Schools also owns vacant property, which in some cases was purchased as potential sites for new schools. The properties, along with all properties owned by the Atlanta Public School, are a part of the district's current Facilities Master Plan (Build Smart). The plan details decisions made about properties that APS will abandon and facilities that APS will lease to help minimize area deteriorations (www.atlanta.k12.ga.us, 2009). In 2000, as displayed in **Figure 15**, ten percent of the total housing units in Atlanta were vacant.

Figure 15 Percent of Vacant Housing and School Type by Level and Academic Performance
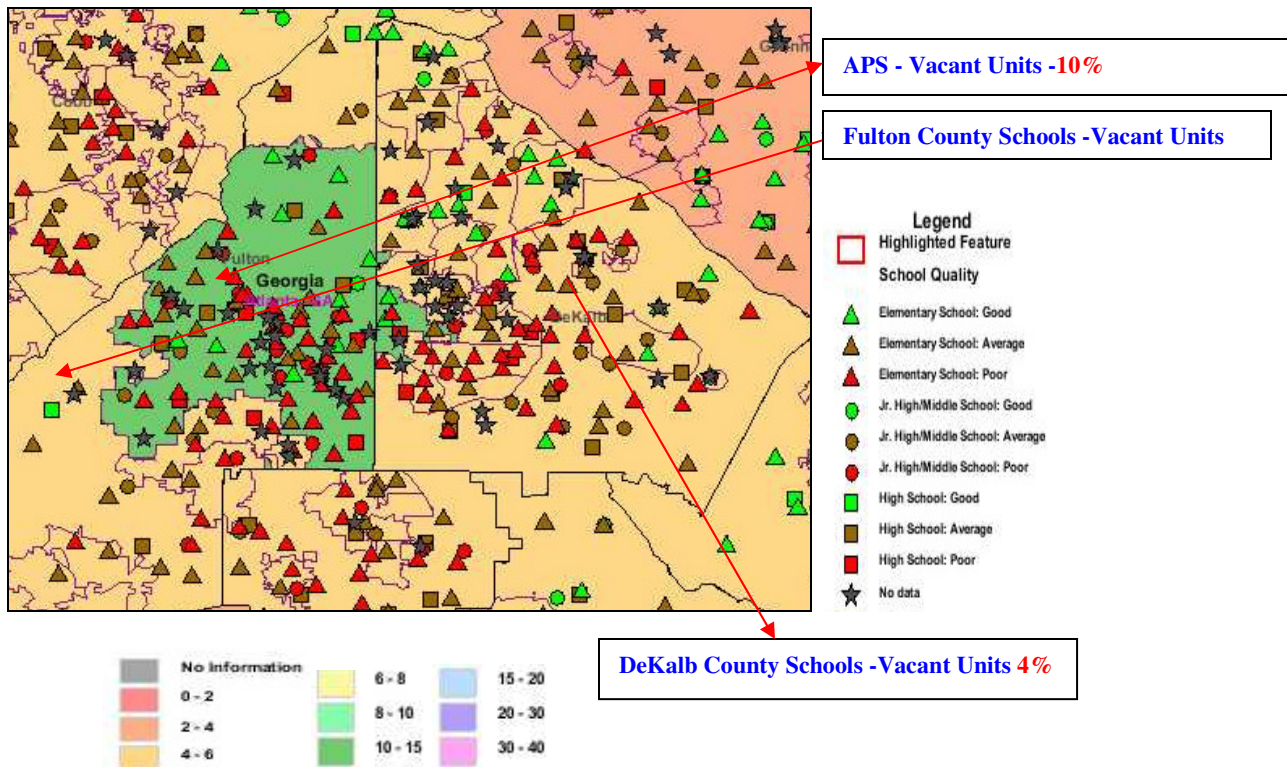
As shown in **Figure 15**, the APS area had the largest percent of vacant units in comparison to its surrounding county school districts. Of the total housing units in the DeKalb County School District, 4% were reported to be vacant, and Fulton County Schools reported vacant units at 6%.

The APS area also had a higher percent of poor performing elementary schools and number of schools reporting no data. Many of the poor performing elementary schools are clustered in the APS and DeKalb County Schools communities. County school districts located further away from the central city of Atlanta had fewer poor performing schools and lower percentages of vacant units.

Appendix E: New York City Public School District

New York City Public Schools represented the largest U.S. public school system. The district has been under mayoral control since 2002. Currently, led by Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Joe Klein, the district's chancellor, the school system has a student enrollment of nearly one million students and maintains more than 1,500 public school buildings.[100] Half of the school building constructed prior to 1949. Since 2002, approximately 335 new schools have been constructed. The school system has structured and implemented various phases of its school construction plan to return to smaller learning communities.

The construction and renovation of school facilities is managed by the School Construction Authority (SCA), which was established by the New York Legislature in 1988. The New City Department of Education (DOE) is in its fifth year of the district's capital improvement plan. New York City's DOE allocated $250 million to support and develop new charter schools. In 2006, this capital improvement allocation contributed to the $1,745 per student cost (see **Figure 16**). The funding is intended to assist in the supply of charter schools district-wide.

Many of the district's large, underutilized buildings have been or are slated to be converted to smaller schools; some with schools within schools. According to the district's website[101], the school system has been very successful in leasing older, under-utilized, and abandoned facilities. The district leases many of its abandoned schools to charter school programs. If needed, the school system can reactivate the leased facilities for future use by the

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[100] NCES: Characteristics of the 100 Largest Public School Districts, 2006-2007; Released June 2009
[101] http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/SCA/Reports/CapPlan/DoEDFY_201014Five-YearCapitalPlan-Proposed-February2009.htm

240

school district.   Also noted in the district's capital improvement plan, New York City has constructed a number of school facilities multiple levels accommodate for the lack of available site acreage.

**Figure 16 Capital Expenditures by Function for the New York City School District**
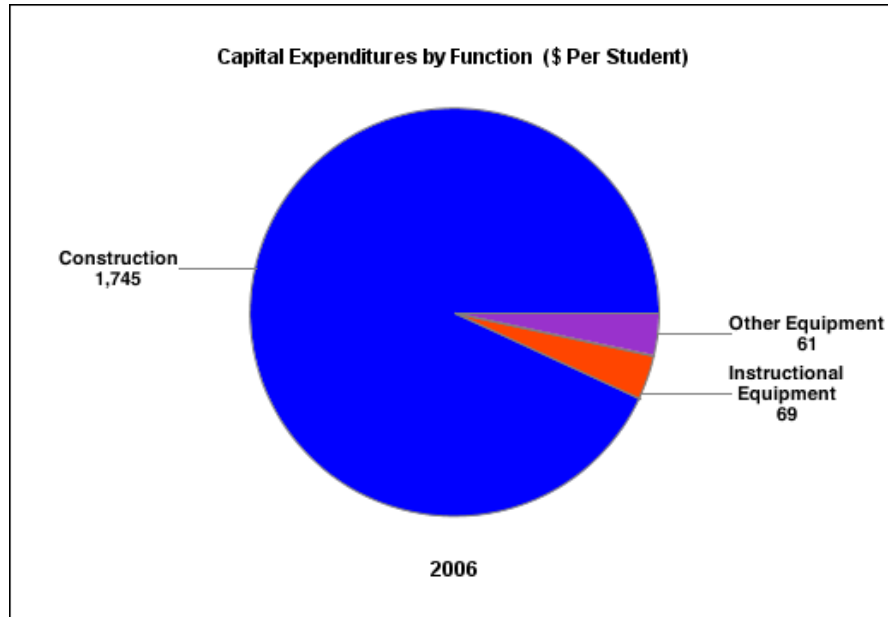
Source: School Matters.com[102]

The New York City Public School District consists of the Boroughs of Brooklyn, Bronx, Queens and Manhattan. Excluding charter school programs, the district's student population totaled nearly 990,000 of which 413,500 students were elementary school students.   As indicated in **Figure 17**, Brooklyn (301,000) and Queens (265,000) had the largest student populations and Staten Island had the smallest (59,000).

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[102] These data was assembled by the School Matters project of the National Education Data Partnership. It is a collaborative effort of the Council of Chief State School Officers, Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Services, and the CELT Corporation and is generously funded by The Broad Foundation and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (http://www.schoolmatters.com).

241

Figure 17 Student Enrollments for New York City Public School District by Borough
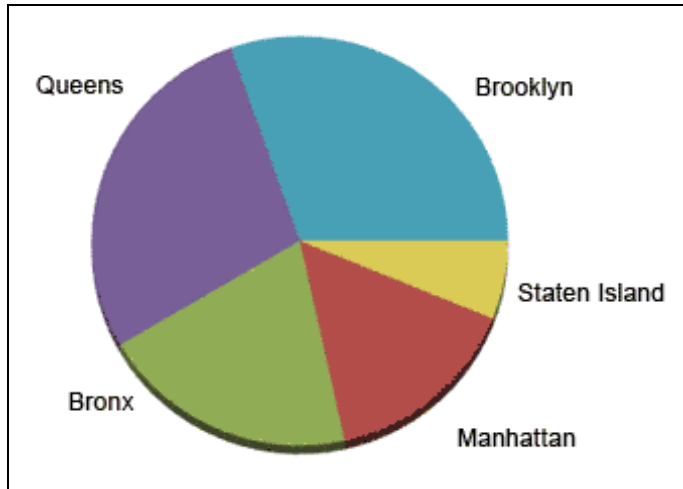
Enrolled Student 2008-09	
Brooklyn	300,964
Queens	265,128
Bronx	209,084
Manhattan	154,303
Staten Island	58,755
	988,234*
*Does not include Charter schools	

Source: http://schools.nyc.gov

With the exception of Richmond, elementary school enrollments have been projected to decline by 1.1% overall between 2010 and 2015. With the exception of Asian students (+16%), black (-12%), white (-2%) and Hispanic (-1%) students are projected to leave the New City Public Schools[103]. The impacted areas can be seen in **Figure 18**, which identifies the internal divisions of the New York City School District.

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[103] Source: Special report, "Enrollment Projections 2006 to 2015, New York City Public, prepared by Grier Partnership, Inc. for the NYC Construction Authority, 2007.

242

Figure 18 New York City Schools by School Districts and by Borough
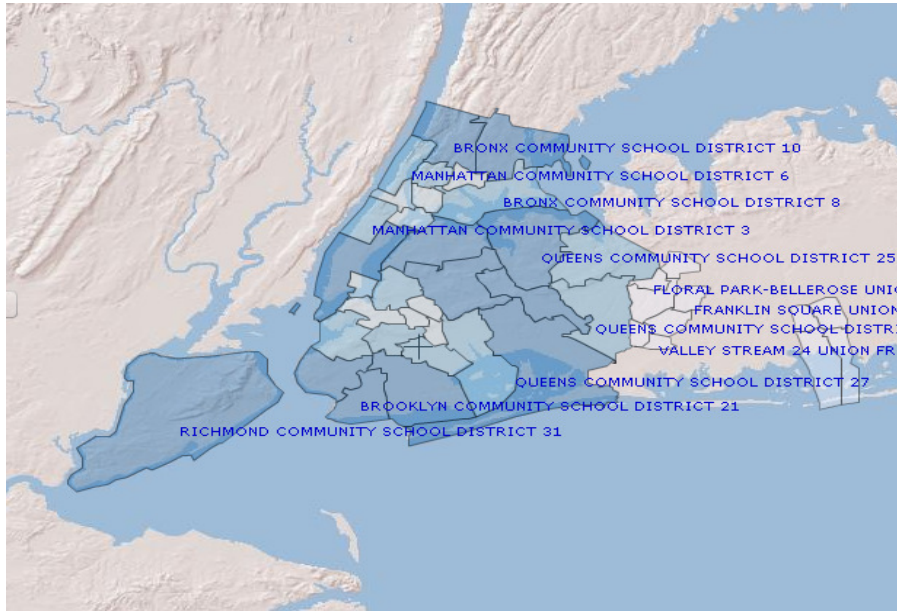
Source: The Census School District Tabulation (STP2) is a special tabulation prepared by the U.S. Census
Bureau's Population Division and sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics

In 2007, as graphically displayed in **Figure 19**, the racial composition of the New York

City Public Schools consisted of a Hispanic majority (39%), followed by blacks at 32%; and

whites and Asians at 14% each.   The New York City School District, like most U.S. central-city

school divisions, has fewer white students residing in core city areas or attending inner-city
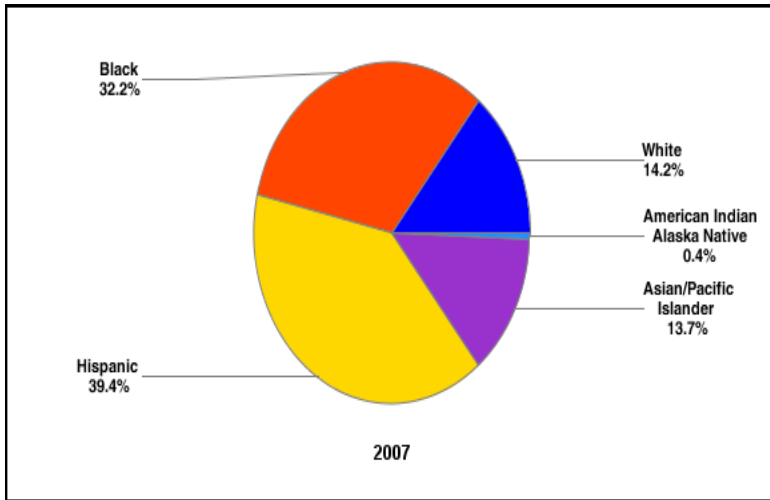
schools.

2007

Source: SchoolMatters.com (2007)

In **Figure 20** and **Figure 21**, the five counties that represent the five Boroughs and the urban areas that comprised the New York City School District are identified by the percent of white residents living in those five areas. The counties of Queens and Bronx had fewer white residents than did New York and Richmond Counties. Richmond County had the highest percent of white residents (78%) and smallest amount of urban area when compared to other four counties that make up the school division. Bronx County had the fewest number of white residents (30%).

Figure 20 Percent of Whites Residing in the New York City School District by County
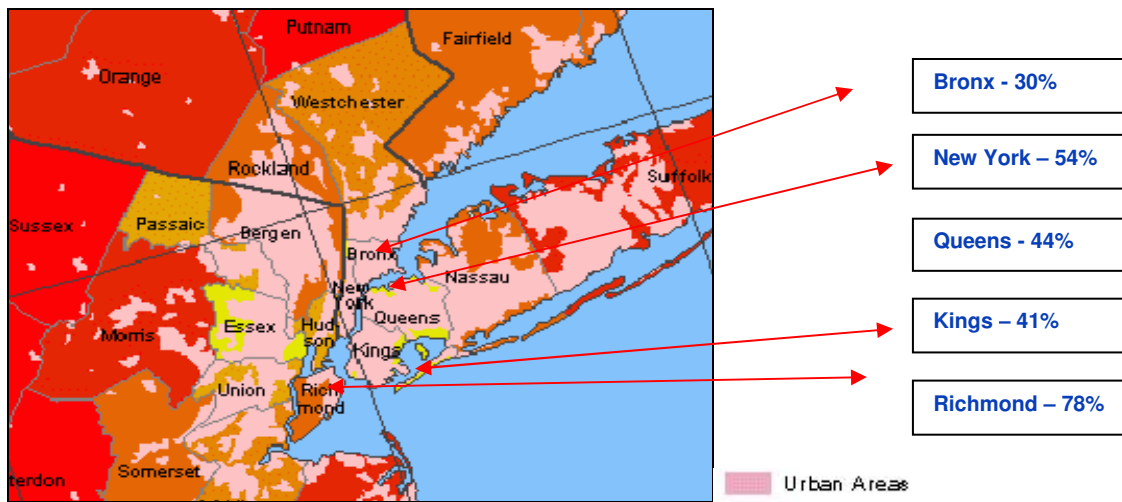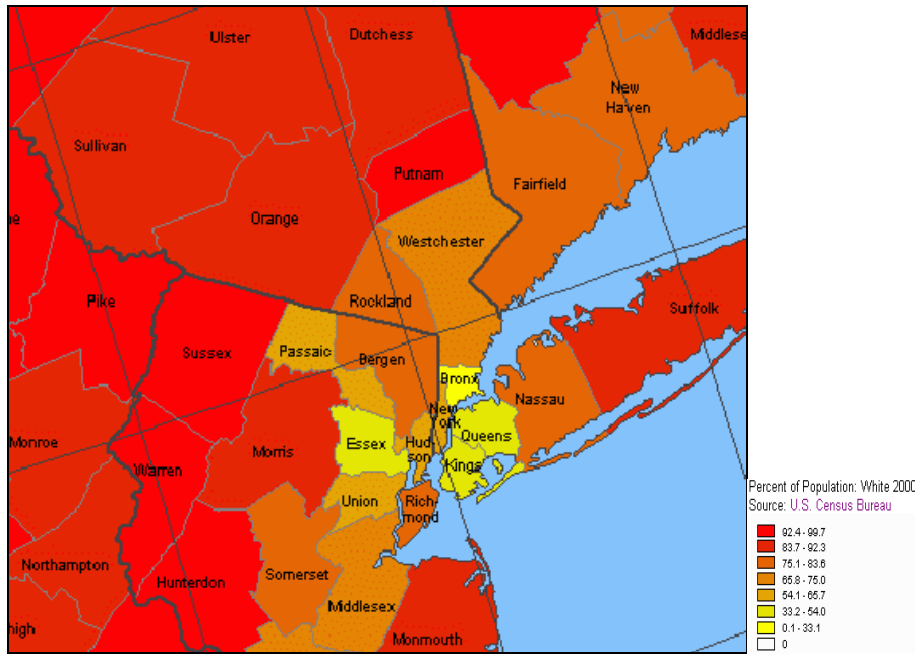

Figure 21 Percent of Whites by Borough and Urban Area

(Source: Nationalatlas.gov and US Census 2000)

The accessibility of New York City to other areas of the city and its surrounding counties

provides the general public enhanced education and residential options for those with sufficient

245

income levels. Various bridges, tunnels and other transportation options allow for commuter

transition to and from the City. These options allow residents seeking to enroll their children in

schools outside the New York City Schools the means to do so. As can be seen in **Figure 22**,

there are a number of travel routes leading to and from the New York City School Districts, as

well as a number of school districts adjacent to the City's school district.

Figure 22 New York City Schools by School Districts and by Borough[104]
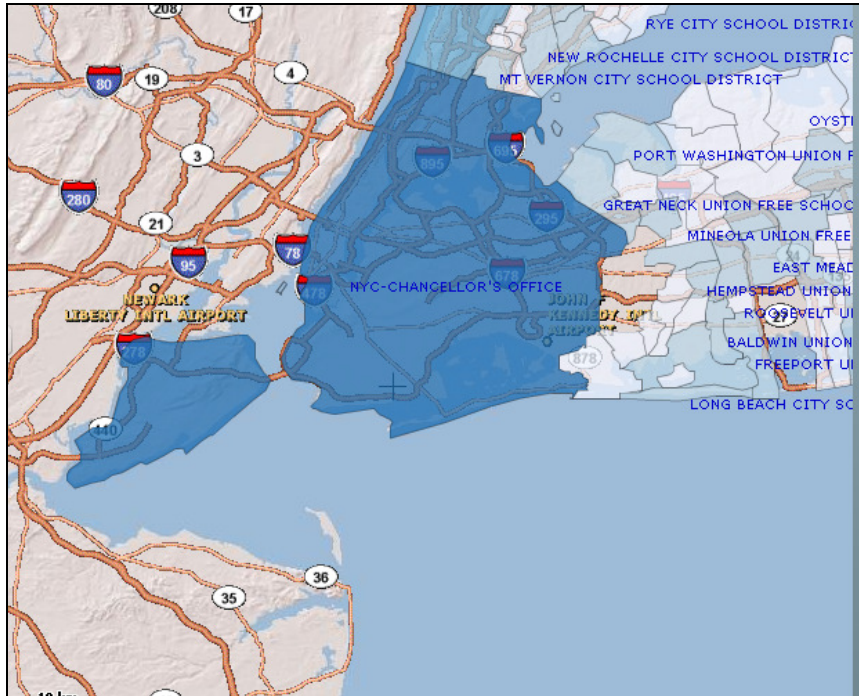
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[104]   Source The Census School District Tabulation (STP2) is a special tabulation prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau's Population   Division and

sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/ed/index.

Neighborhood Comparisons for New York Public School District

The neighborhoods served by the New York City Schools were located in the five Boroughs and represented the census tracts included in this study. According to the 1999 census tract data, New York's five Boroughs and the counties in which the Boroughs are located represented a total of 2,216 neighborhoods. The corresponding counties for the five Boroughs included the Bronx, Kings, New York, Richmond, and Queens. The total population for all neighborhoods was nearly 8 million. The total population of residents with incomes below the federally established poverty level was nearly 2 million or 21% of the total population. The median population was 3,091 for all neighborhoods and was 487 for neighborhoods with incomes below the poverty level. The overall poverty level was 20%.

In the New York City Schools District area, there were 1,967 neighborhoods with overall poverty levels of less than 40%; therefore, these tracts were defined as Non-Qualified neighborhoods. Of these 1,967 neighborhoods, 18% of the population lived below the poverty level at levels between 0 and 39.9%.

The median population for all Non-Qualified Neighborhoods was 3,049 and 436 for neighborhoods with income levels below the federally established poverty threshold. In 1999, the median poverty rate for all Non-Qualified neighborhoods was 15%.

Qualified neighborhoods, those areas with overall poverty rates of 40% or more, numbered 249 or nearly 13% of all neighborhoods. The total population for qualified neighborhoods with poverty levels at 40% 0r higher was 433,323 or 48% of the total population of residents of qualified neighborhoods. The median poverty rate for the population all qualified neighborhoods was 47%.

247

Abandoned Schools: New York City School District

Data provided by NCES (2004-2005) identified five elementary schools that had been abandoned schools by the New York City Schools District. Typically, elementary schools in the New York City Schools are identified by the prefix PS (primary school level) followed by an assigned location code. As can be noted in **Tables 38** and **39**, in all neighborhoods, with the exception of #162, Hispanics represented the majority population. In, Blacks, by a small margin (48% to 43%), were the majority population. **Table 40** displays the median of selected characteristics used to describe the New York City Schools District neighborhoods where schools have been abandoned[105].

The median percentage of whites in all neighborhoods identified with abandoned schools was 2%, and for blacks, the median percentage was 17%. As the majority population, the median percentage of Hispanics residing in all selected neighborhoods was nearly 73%. Neighborhood #291 had the largest student population (3,700) and #375.02 had the smallest (322). Based on the defined neighborhoods for purposes of this study, three out of the five neighborhoods (60%) are qualified neighborhoods and one is a nearly qualified neighborhood. With individual poverty rates of 40% or higher, #87, #20, and #375.02 are qualified neighborhoods and #291 is nearly qualified with a poverty level of 36. Neighborhood #162 had an individual poverty rate of 33% below the established level, and therefore was not included in either category.

The median poverty rate for individuals living in all neighborhoods with abandoned schools was 43%. The median poverty rate for single female households with children 18 years

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[105] The abandoned schools included in this study do not represent all schools abandoned by the New York City schools only those schools that identified through research.

248

of age or younger was 60%. The median income level for all neighborhoods was %19,615, and

the median unemployed rate (about 10%).

Table 38 Selected Demographics: Abandoned Elementary Schools in New York City Schools (2000)

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or younger	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
PS39	87	60	43	9.6	$19,615	7.3
PS176	291	56	36	10	$21,826	2.3
PS196	20	68	52	8.4	$11,963	5.6
PS109	162	36	33	10	$23,211	2.4
PS257	375.02	66	48	8.6	$12,304	8.6

Source U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File 4

The unemployment rate for #87, #162, and #291 was 10%.   Neighborhood #375.02 had

the highest percentage of vacant units when compared to the other selected neighborhoods.

Based on the median student enrollments, the schools that were abandoned were segregated

primarily by Hispanics (73%) and blacks (17%).

Table 39 Selected Demographics: Abandoned Elementary Schools in New York City Schools (2000)

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	Student Enrollment	% Elementary Students	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
PS39	87	1,920	45	17	1.3	81
PS176	291	3,741	45	4	3	91
PS196	20	1,833	42	16	2	73
PS109	162	3,625	37	48	3	43
PS257	375.02	322	47	25	2	71

The statistical medians for the selected variables used to describe the City's neighborhoods where elementary schools were abandoned are identified in **Table 38**9

The median poverty rate was to 60% at the neighborhood level where schools were abandoned.

Table 40 **Table of Medians: Abandoned Elementary Schools in New City Public Schools District**

N=5	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or younger	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median Household Income	% Vacancy Units	Student Enrollment	% Elementary Students	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
Median	60.0	43.0	9.6	19,615	5.6	1,920	45.0	17.0	2.0	73.0

Based on Census data for 2000 and as indicated in **Figure 23**, the overall poverty rate for single female households with children under 18 years of age ranged from 12% (Richmond County) to 35% (Bronx County).

250

Figure 23 Poverty Rates for Children Under 18 Years of Age in NYC School District by Borough
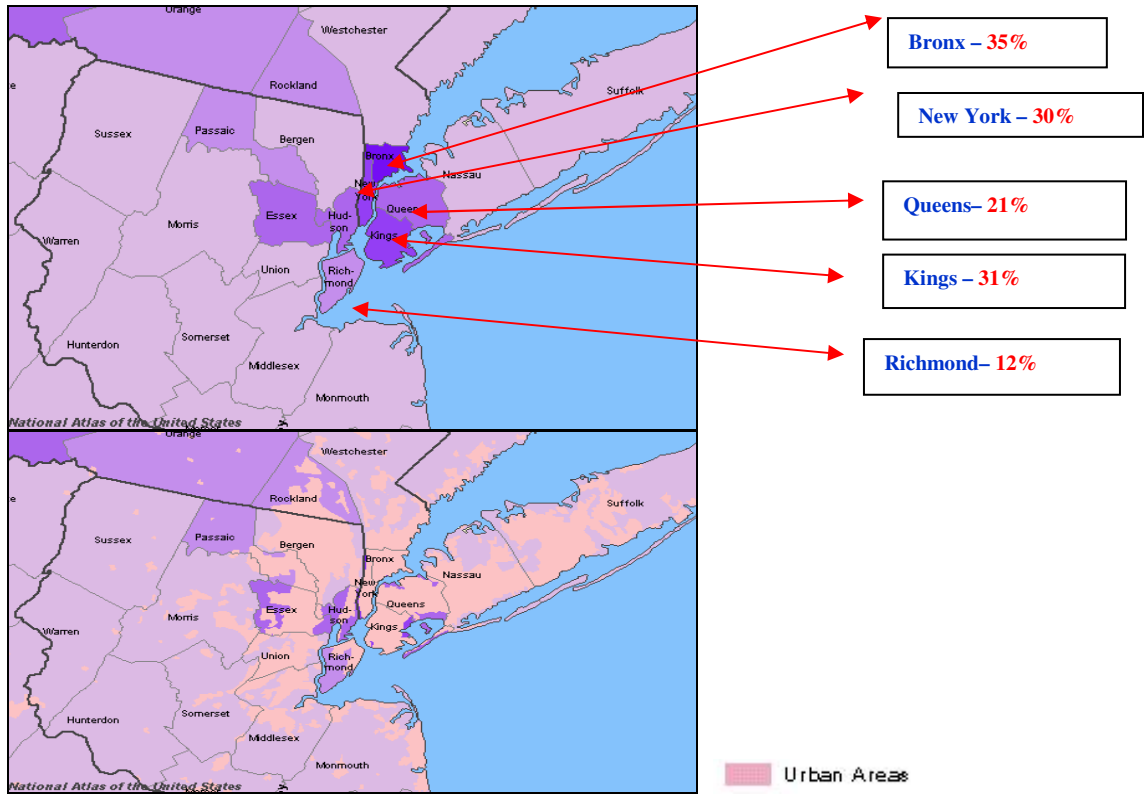

Bronx – 35%

New York – 30%

Queens– 21%

Kings – 31%

Richmond– 12%

Urban Areas

Figure 24 Percent of Vacant Units for NYC School District by Borough

Manhattan #3 – 7%

Brooklyn #16 – 13%

Brooklyn #23 – 8%

No Information
0 – 2
2 – 4
4 – 6
6 – 8
8 – 10
10 – 15
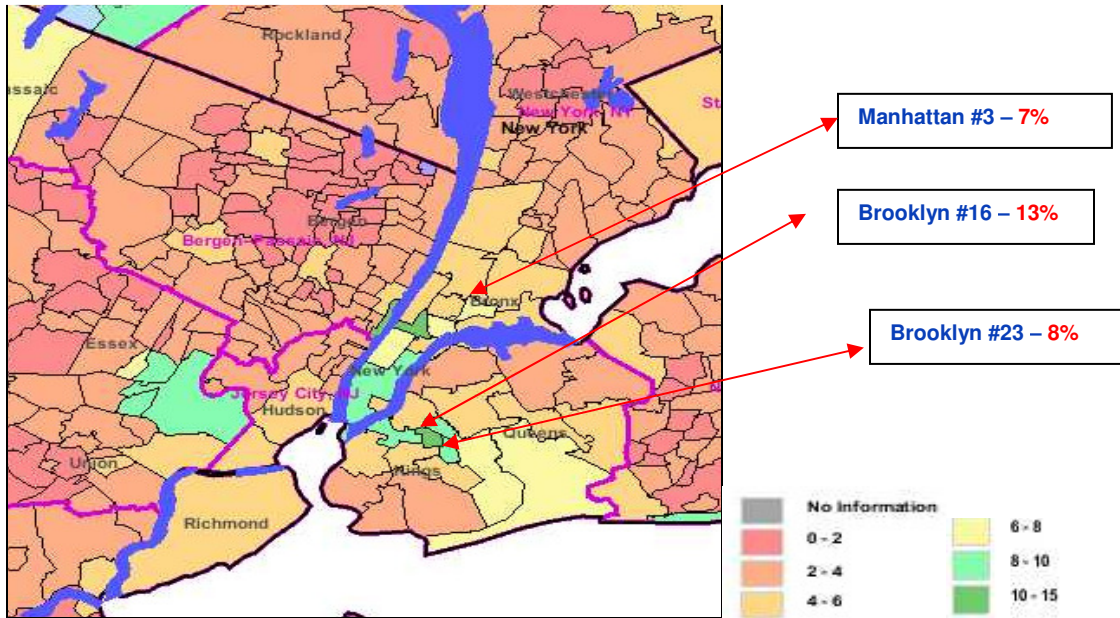
Figure 25 Percent of Vacant Units in the NYC Schools District by School Type and Quality

Legend
Highlighted Feature
School Quality

Elementary School: Good
Elementary School: Average
Elementary School: Poor
Jr. High/Middle School: Good
Jr. High/Middle School: Average
Jr. High/Middle School: Poor
High School: Good
High School: Average
High School: Poor
No data
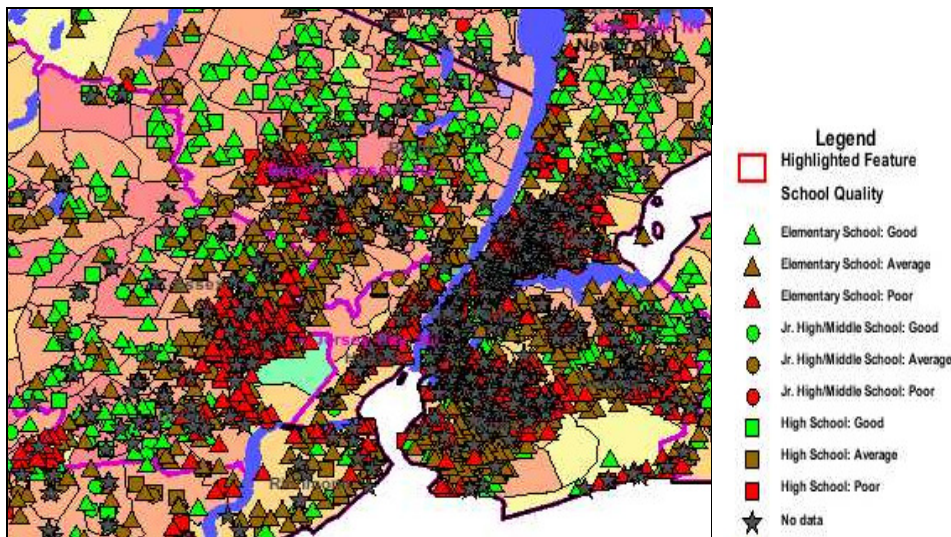
The overall percent of vacant units for the New York City Schools District is nearly 6%. The District has a significant number of schools for which no data were reported. As can be noted in Figure 25, most of the district's poor quality elementary schools are clustered and many of the better quality schools were located outside of the core central city areas.

252

Appendix F: Los Angeles Unified School District

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is comprised of eight (8) local

districts and is, in terms of students, the largest school district in California. LAUSD and its

communities are committed to improving academic performance levels and have initiated an

educational and facilities development program that creates smaller learning communities at all

levels. The citizens of Los Angeles voted and approved a $20.3 billion construction plan that

allows the District to build new schools and modernize existing campuses to reduce

overcrowding and enhance learning opportunities. Despite the approval of more than $20 billion

in for the construction, the needs of the school district continue to exceed the budget allocations.

As a result, the District continues to seek the establishment of community partnerships to

help strengthen the ties of neighborhood schools to their community and provide additional

resources to mitigate declining revenues. Joseph A Mehula, Chief Facilities Executive of

Facilities Services for LAUSD, stated in his March, 13, 2008 letter to the Superintendent and

Board of Education[106],

> *"Declining public resources have prompted the Los Angeles*
> *School District ("LAUSD") to identify external partnership*
> *opportunities to leverage its resources to further education. Today,*
> *more than ever, public schools operate before and after school to*
> *serve multiple constituencies such as students, teachers, parents, and*
> *other members of the community. Extending beyond the instructional*
> *day, a school site provides a center of community to the surrounding*
> *neighborhood, and thus investment to modernize and add amenities are*
> *essential in ensuring school sites are adequately equipped to provide*
> *a viable community space.*

---

[106] Letter dated March 13, 2008 by Joseph A. Mehula. Included in the 2008-2009 Planning and Development
Branch Strategic Execution Plan. LAUSD website.

Mr. Mehula's letter does not address one of the main contributors to the District decline in funding, the decline in student enrollments.   The City of Los Angeles continues to lose residents and the school district's population mirrors those losses.

A review of data provided by NCES (**Table 41)** indicated that between 2000 and 2006, student enrollment for LAUSD increased in 2005 (+4%) but decreased in 2006 (-2%).   The change in number teachers employed by the school district was consistent with the change in student enrollments. Teaching positions increased in 2005 (+4%) but decreased (-1%) in 2006.

Table 41 Trend: Number of Students, Teachers, and Schools for LAUSD

	2006	2005	2000
Total Students	727,319	741,367	710,007
Total FTE Teachers	34,961	35,186	33,754
Total Schools	808	760	655

Source: NCES, Common Core of Data, Local Education Agency Universe Survey (NCES)

Consistent with LAUSD's plan to create smaller learning communities was the increased number school facilities (+50) between 2005 and 2006, despite the declines in teachers and students.

Currently, the school system reports the addition of more school facilities (+ 77) and a decrease in students (-37,000) between 2006 and 2008. The District reports a total of 885 schools, of which 520 are elementary schools. The District serves nearly 690,000 students, of which nearly 300,000 are elementary school students. [107]

Like the racial composition for the City of Los Angeles, the LAUSD's student population was majority Hispanic. However, white students comprised less of the student population than did the white residents did in the City. As noted in **Figure 26**, in 2007, Hispanics represented 73% of the district's total students. Black students accounted for 11% and whites for 9% of the total student body.

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[107] Source: Los Angeles Unified School District Website: www.lauschools.org
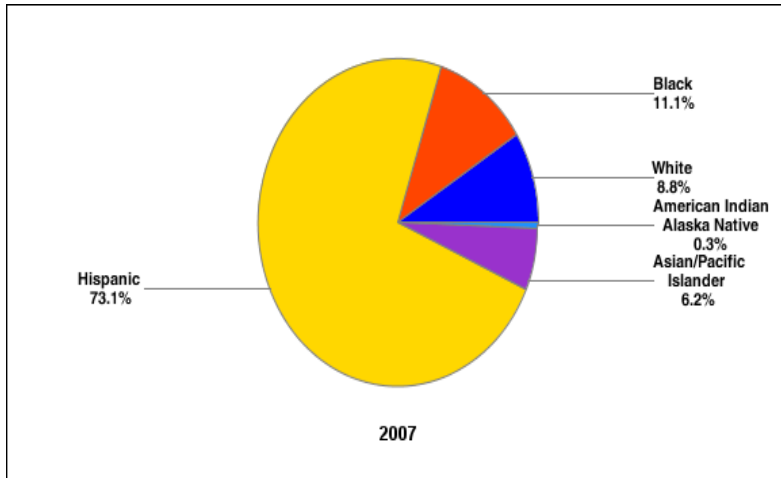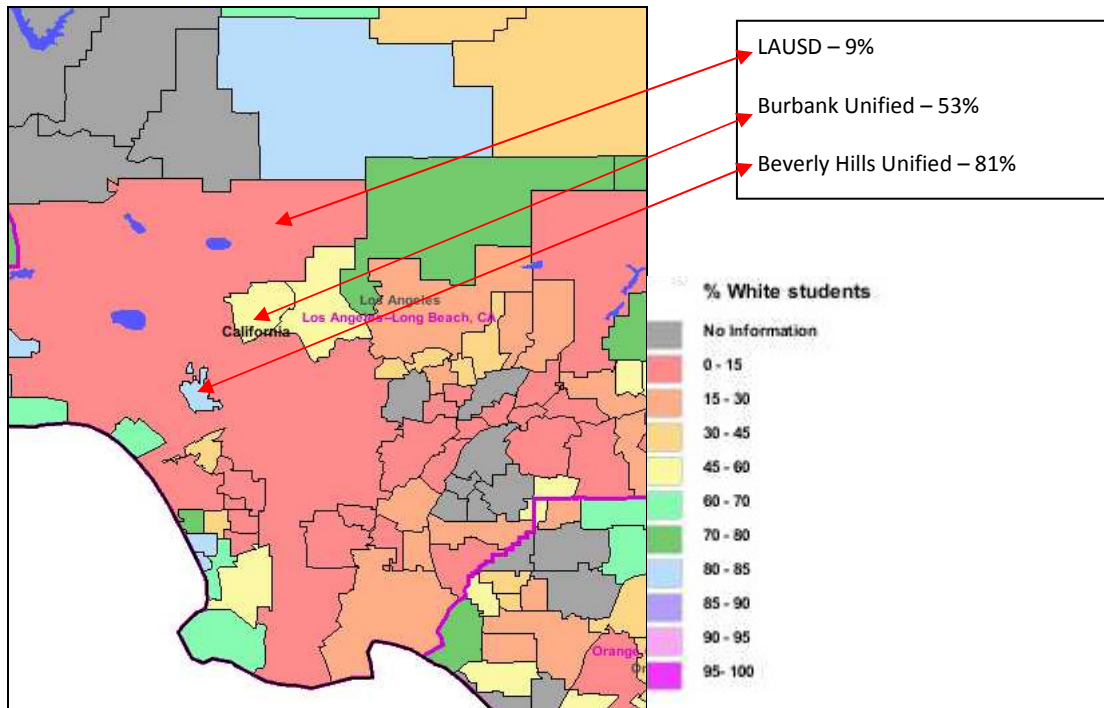
Source: SchoolMatters.com, Los Angeles Unified Schools

Like most central city public schools districts, LAUSD is surrounded by a number of school districts where the number of enrolled white students is significantly greater.   While the percent of whites enrolled in LAUSD is 9%, the percent of white students enrolled in Beverly Hills Unified School District is 81% and in Burbank Unified School District whites represent 53% of the total students. These data are mapped in **Figure 27**.

255

Figure 27 Percent of White Students by School District

LAUSD – 9%

Burbank Unified – 53%

Beverly Hills Unified – 81%

% White students

No information
0 - 15
15 - 30
30 - 45
45 - 60
60 - 70
70 - 80
80 - 85
85 - 90
90 - 95
95 - 100

Source is called the Common Core of Data (http://nces.ed.gov/ccd).

A number of school divisions that are in close proximity to LAUSD are identified in

Figure 28. The number of accessible roadway options provides individuals the option to reside in

areas outside city limits and still work in and enjoy the amenities that the City of Los Angeles

offers. These travel options and various school districts also provide families education options

outside LAUSD.   Some of these travel routes are shown in **Figure 29** and includes a number of

interstate highways. In 2000, the median travel or commute time to work for 16 and over was

nearly 30 minutes.

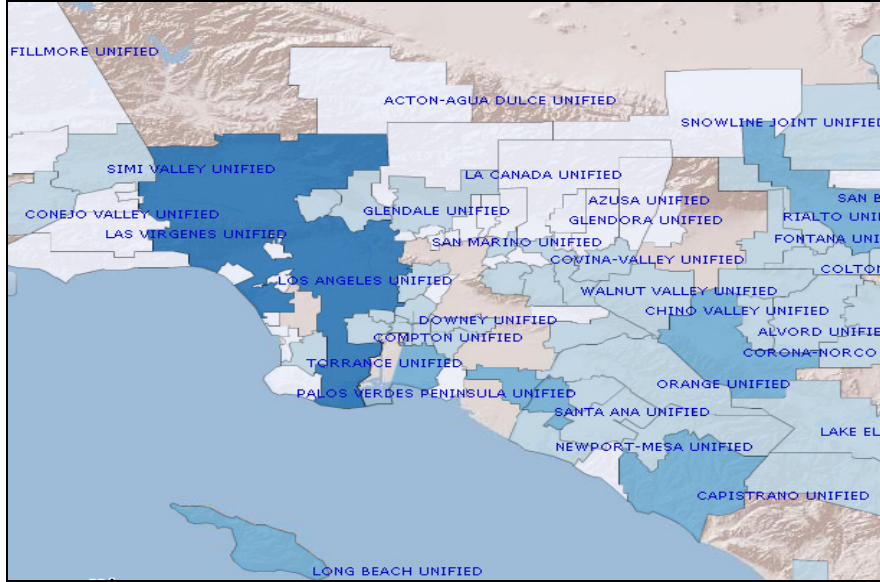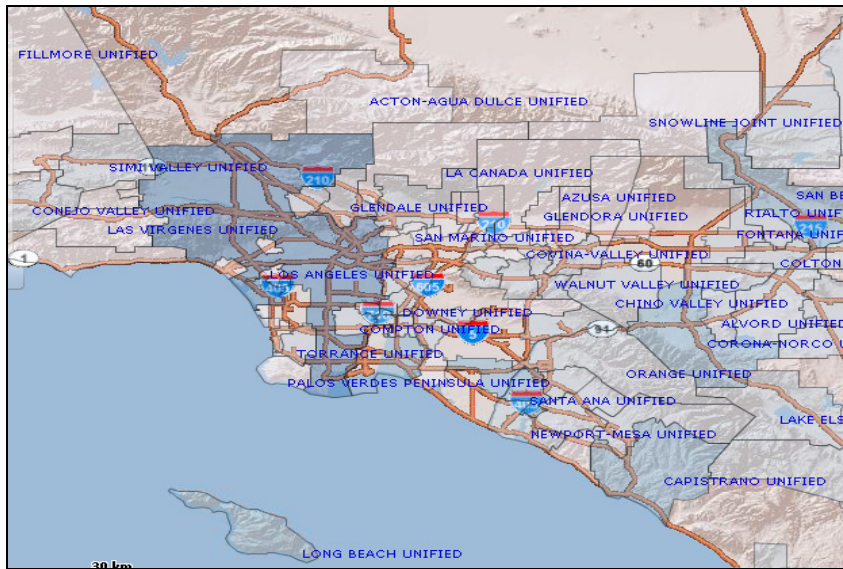**Figure 28** School Divisions in Close Proximity to LAUSD

Figure 29 School District Access - Travel Routes to and from LAUSD

Source: The Census School District Tabulation (STP2); U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division and sponsored by the NCE S.

257

Abandoned Schools: Los Angeles Unified School District

Due to the increased migration in the Los Angeles area, the Los Angeles Unified School District has had very few school abandonments. The school division is challenged to accommodate overcrowded classrooms in areas with an overwhelming number of economically disadvantaged students. The two abandoned schools identified through a review of data collected by NCES and the 2000 Census Bureau are described in **Tables 42** and **43**.

Table 42 Selected Demographics for Abandoned Elementary Schools in Los Angeles Public Schools

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or younger	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units	% Unemployed
Anton (Roger)	63.01	42	23	$28,505	11	3.9
Ninety-Eight Street	2774	45	27	$30,666	5.3	6.7

Source: Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File and NCES file, CCD Core Data 2000-2001

The poverty rate for single females with children under 18 years of age was approximately 40% in both neighborhoods. The overall poverty levels for individuals and the median household incomes in the Los Angeles Unified School District were similar as well. The racial composition, the unemployment rates and the percentage vacant housing units varied. Neighborhood #2774 (Ninety-Eight Street) had more black students (58%) and a higher unemployment rate (7%).

Table 43 Selected Demographics for Abandoned Elementary Schools in Los Angeles Public Schools

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	Student Enrollment	% Elementary Students	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
Anton (Roger)	63.01	1604	51	14	37	45
Ninety-Eight Street	2774	1708	39	58	10	23

Source: Analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File and NCES file, CCD Core Data 2000-2001.

258

As shown in **Figure 30** and **Figure 31**, the poverty rate for children under 18 years of age residing in Los Angeles County was nearly 23%, while the poverty rate for individuals was nearly 16%.

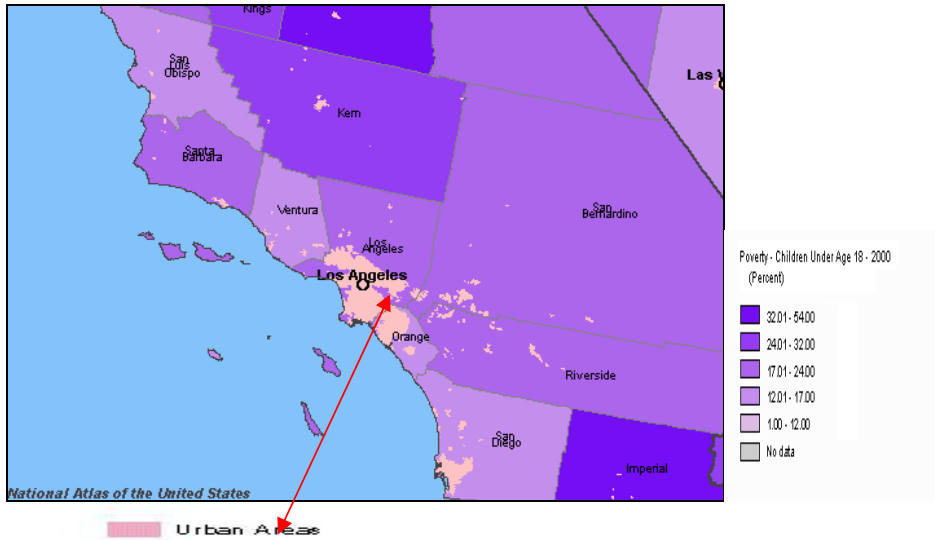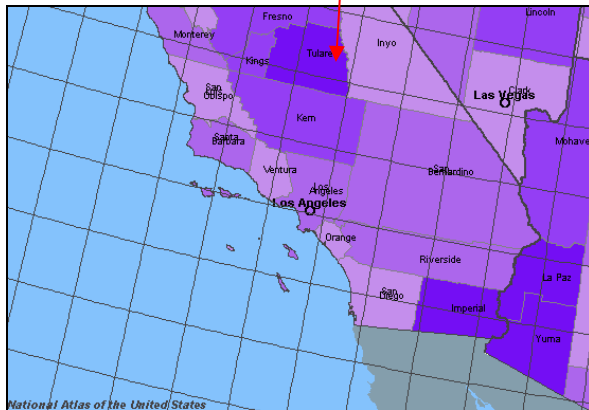**Figure 30** Poverty Rates for Children under 18 years of Age, Los Angeles and Urban Area

Figure 31 Poverty Rate for Children under 18 years of Age, Los Angeles

Median Household Income 2000: $42,045

Poverty - All People 2000: 15.9%

Poverty - Children Under Age 18 - 2000: 22.9%
Population as of 2000: 3,694,820

Source: http://nationalatlas.gov/natlas

Figure 32 Percent Vacant Units and Schools Type by Level and Academic Performance, LA
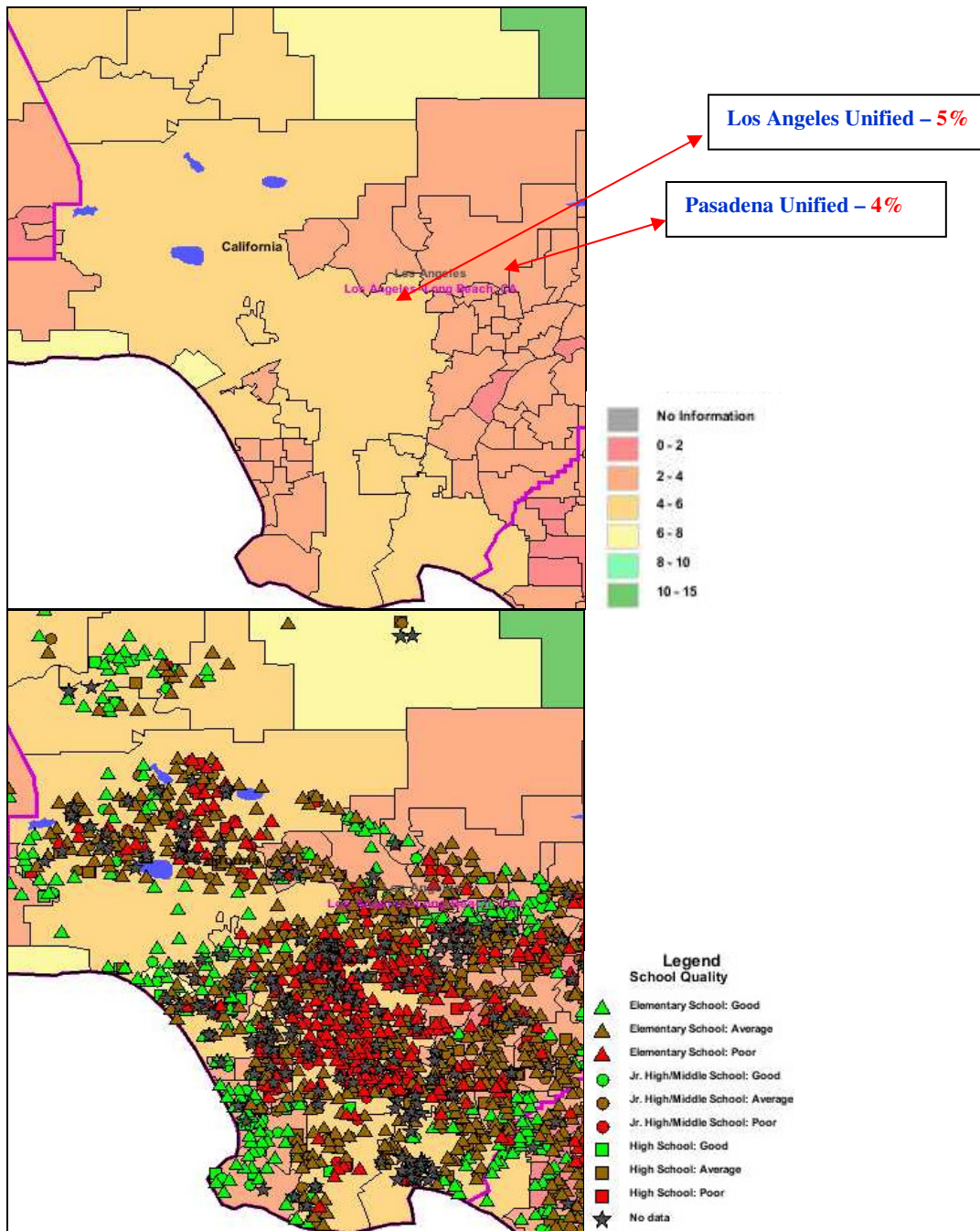
Figure 33 Percent of Vacant Units and School Quality in Los Angeles Unified School District

As can be seen in **Figure 32** and **Figure 33**, the percentage of vacant units LAUSD neighborhoods was 5%, while neighboring Pasadena Unified was 4%. The number of poor quality elementary schools and elementary schools not reporting data outnumbered schools reported to be of good quality.

Appendix G: Chicago CMSA and Public Schools

Figure 34 Chicago and Surrounding Counties
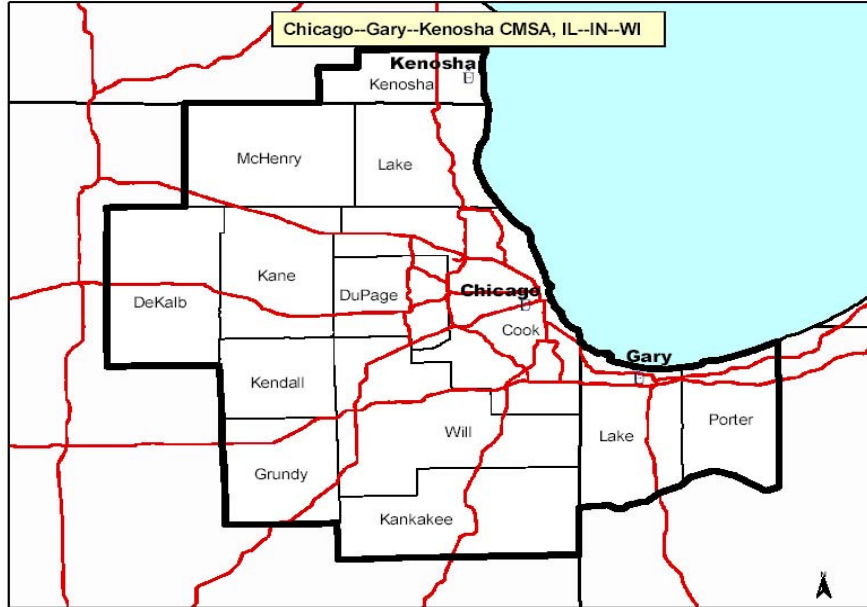
City of Chicago Public School District

For the 2008-2009 school year, the City of Chicago Public School District 299 (CPS) served roughly 408,000 students and managed nearly 670 schools. Black students represented 46% of the total student body. Hispanic students accounted for 41% and white students for 8%. While white students accounted for only 8% of the total students in CPS, their representation increased significantly in surrounding schools divisions. For example, as shown in **Figure 35**, the percent of whites students enrolled in Lincolnwood School District was 67% in 2000 and 85% in Evergreen School District.

262

Figure 35 Comparison: Percent of White Students Enrolled in CPS and Selected Divisions
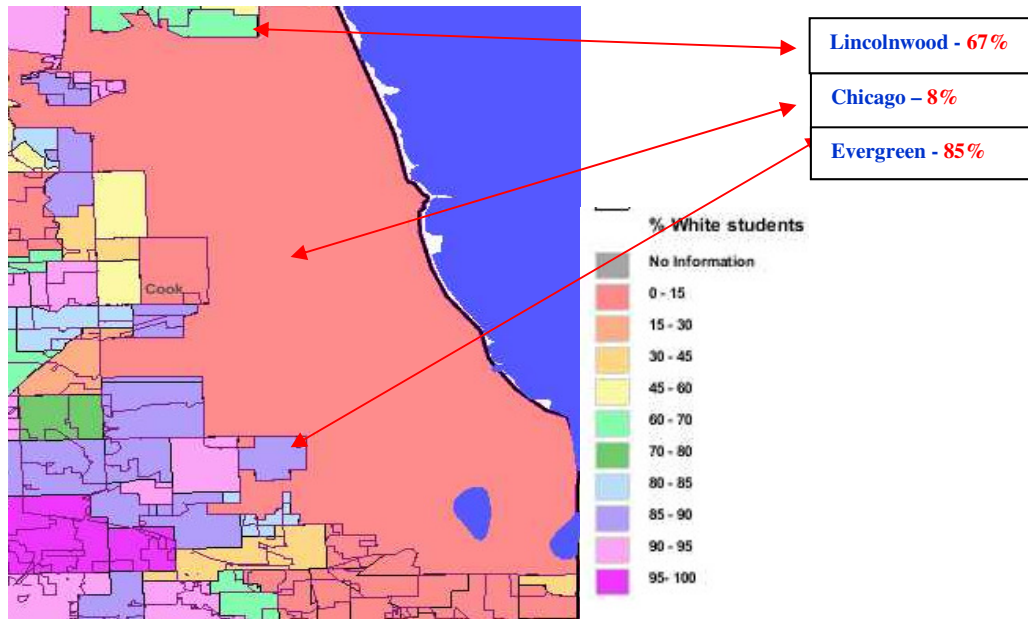
Source is called the Common Core of Data (http://nces.ed.gov/ccd).

In 2000, the number of poor quality schools continued to be clustered primarily in the central-city areas. There was also number of schools for which data were not available. By comparing **Figure 36** and **Figure 37**, it can be noted that the majority of average and good quality schools are located outside the CPS jurisdiction and in areas where the percent of vacant housing units is 6% or less. CPS had the highest percent of vacant housing units (8%) in comparison to surrounding school districts. The combination of poor quality schools and vacant units in significantly greater numbers may help explain the loss of CPS students, especially white students.

263

Figure 36 Percent of White Students and School Quality CPS
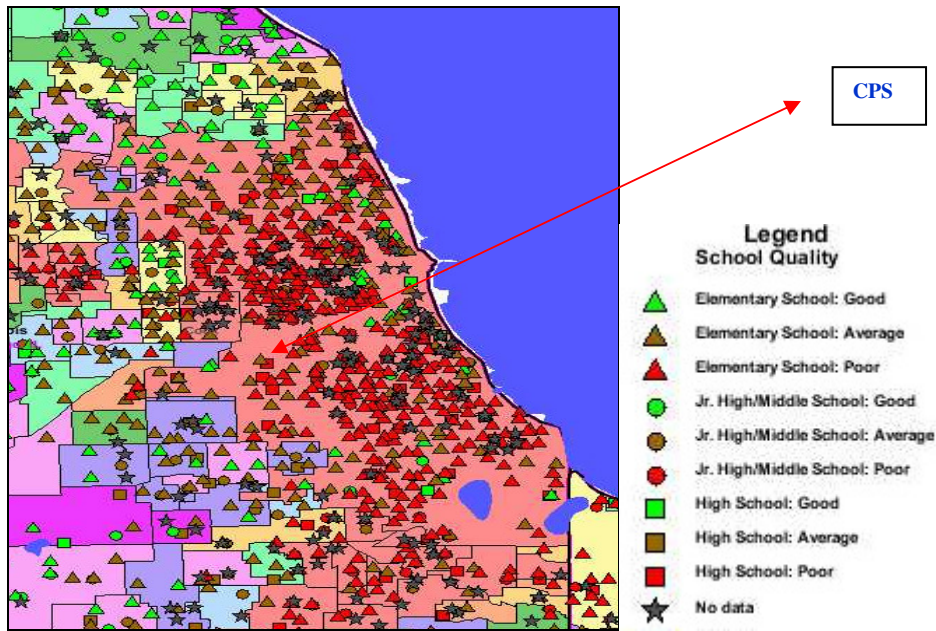
Figure 37 Percent of Vacant Housing Units in the CPS area.
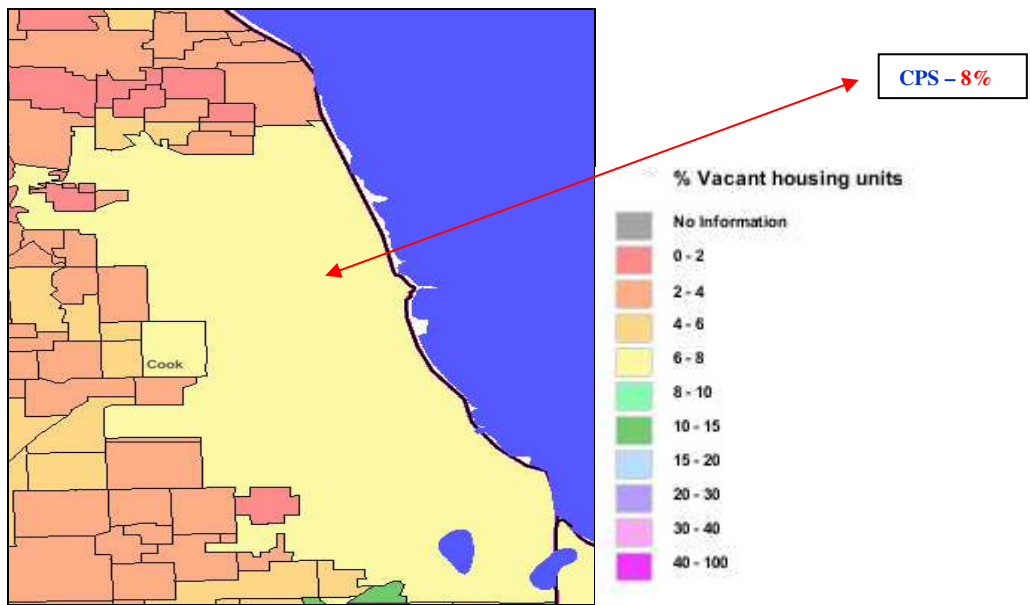
Source is called the Common Core of Data (http://nces.ed.gov/ccd).

The access to various transportation infrastructures provides the Chicago metro area residential and education options outside the core central city area. **Figure 38** and **Figure 39** identify some of the travel routes and public school districts that are available to families and

264

their children. Access to travel routes and various public transit options, as well as number of special programs, to include charter schools, and private school options are also likely to draw students away from inner-city neighborhoods in Chicago. This mobility contributes to the sustainability of neighborhoods and the decline of others.

Figure 38 Travel Routes in the Chicago Metro Area

Figure 39 School District Options for Chicago Metro Area Residents

Source: The Census School District Tabulation (STP2); U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division and sponsored by the NCE S

265

Reviews of the City of Chicago Public Schools' website and various business reports and news releases contained therein identified at least 16 abandoned elementary schools. **Tables 44** and **Table 45*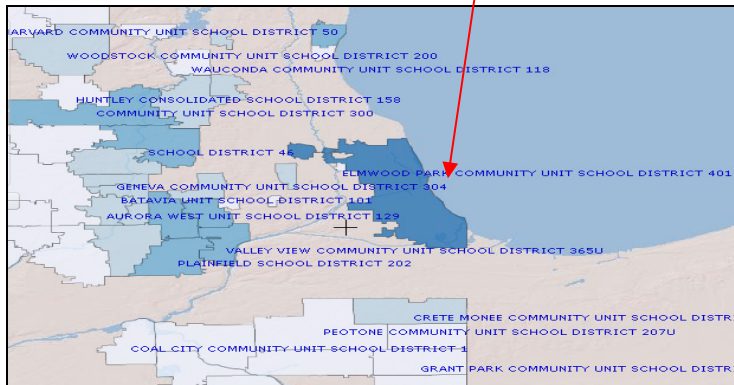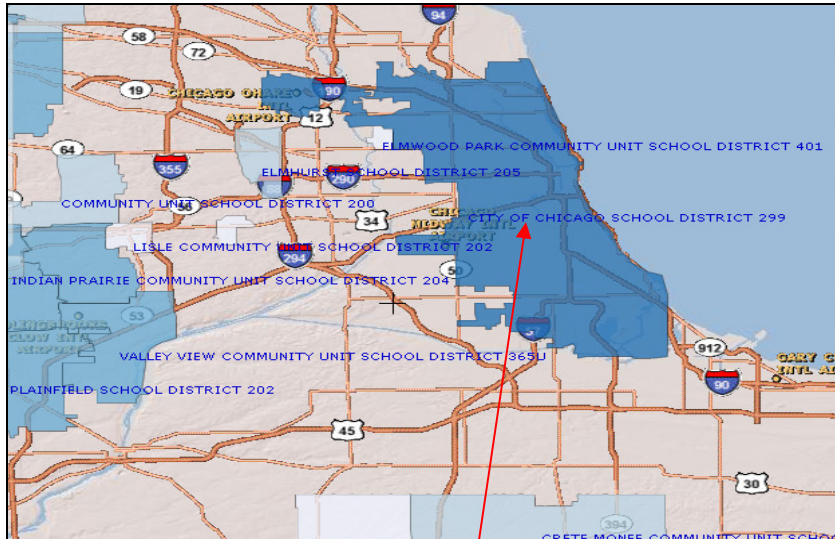* display the neighborhoods where the abandonments occurred and selected statistics about the neighborhoods and the students who attended schools in these areas. The summary statistics used to describe the neighborhoods and attending students are listed in **Tables 46** and **47**.

Of all the neighborhoods included in this listing, neighborhood #3816, where Colman Elementary School was abandoned, was by far the poorest.

Table 44 Selected Abandoned Elementary Schools in City of Chicago Public Schools (A)

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or younger	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Bunche	6711	51	44	12.9	$20,605	13.1
Byrd	808	70	60	19.2	$4,602	35
Colman	3816	100	91	17.2	$7,200	67
Dodge	2709	19	41	12.1	$30,313	20
Donoghue	3603	63	53	17.4	$11,563	41
Doolittle	3511	69	65	17.7	$10,274	25
Douglas	3507	38	29	8.8	$10,295	17
Farren	3818	68	40	8.5	$12,174	22.5
Frazier	2908	88	58	13.6	$18,603	24.8
Jefferson	2831	42	34	3.7	$28,214	4.5
Morse	2316	29	29	11.9	$24,095	10.1
Raymond	3514	68	60	10.2	$11,593	9.8
Riis	2832	79	39	11.5	$20,000	22.5
Suder	2805	33	56	13.3	$19,904	14
Truth	805	69	62	20.8	$12,600	34.2
Wright	2315	61	37	13.4	$26,096	12.8

Source: Analysis U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File

In 2000, Neighborhood #3816 reported 100% of its single female family households with children younger than 18 years of age who lived below the poverty level. Individuals residing in this neighborhood had a poverty rate of 91% and an unemployment rate of 17%. The median

266

family income for Neighborhood #3816 was only $7,200, and the percent of vacant units was 67%.   In 2000, the median percent poverty rate for single female households with children younger than 18 years old was 66% for all selected neighborhoods, and the median poverty rate for individuals was 49%. (See **Table 45**) The median household income was $15,602, and the median unemployment rate for all selected neighborhoods was 13%. The high percentage of vacant units (median 21%), poverty rates, and unemployment indicate that the elementary schools were abandoned in poor neighborhoods and provide a glimpse into the demographic composition of the supporting neighborhood schools.

Table 45 Summary Statistics for Neighborhoods and Students where Schools Were Abandoned in Chicago

% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or younger		% Below Poverty Rate Individuals		% Unemployed		Median HH Income		% Vacancy Units	
Mean	59.2	Mean	49.9	Mean	13.26	Mean	$ 16,758	Mean	23.3
Median	65.5	Median	48.5	Median	13.10	Median	$ 15,602	Median	21.3
Mode	69.0	Mode	60.0	Mode		Mode		Mode	22.5
Stan Dev	22.2	Stan Dev	16.3	Stan Dev	4.43	Stan Dev	$ 7,787	Stan Dev	15.4
Range	81.0	Range	62.0	Range	17.10	Range	$ 25,711	Range	62.5
Minimum	19.0	Minimum	29.0	Minimum	3.70	Minimum	$ 4,602	Minimum	4.5
Maximum	100.0	Maximum	91.0	Maximum	20.80	Maximum	$ 30,313	Maximum	67.0
						Sum	$ 268,131		
Count	16	Count	16	Count	16	Count	16	Count	16

Source: Analysis of Data for Selected neighborhoods where elementary schools had been abandoned

Nearly 50% of the almost 16,000 students were enrolled in elementary schools in the selected neighborhoods. As shown in **Table 46**, in 2000, Neighborhood #3816 (Colman) had a student population that was 100% black. Nearly 65% of all other neighborhoods had student populations that ranged from 97% to 98% black.

Table 46 Selected Abandoned Elementary Schools in City of Chicago Public Schools (B)

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	Student Enrollment	% Elementary Students	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
Bunche	6711	391	49	95	1	1
Byrd	808	755	59	97	1	2
Colman	3816	250	45	100	0	0
Dodge	2709	81	49	97	3	0
Donoghue	3603	420	61	98	1	1
Doolittle	3511	1850	54	98	0	1
Douglas	3507	396	19	86	2	6
Farren	3818	303	44	98	1	1
Frazier	2908	157	33	98	0	0.3
Jefferson	2831	1474	10	33	33	6
Morse	2316	534	45	98	1	1
Raymond	3514	521	54	97	1	1
Riis	2832	376	43	56	32	7
Suder	2805	4650	55	90	2	6
Truth	805	1308	51	95	3	1
Wright	2315	2488	52	97	1	2

Source: Analysis U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File

White students comprised less that 3% of the student population in 88% of the selected neighborhoods. In Neighborhoods #3816 (Colman), #3511(Doolittle), and #2908 (Frazier), there were no white students enrolled in the abandoned schools.   Hispanic students represented less than 8% in all neighborhoods. As indicated in

Table 47, Neighborhoods #2709 (Dodge) and #3816 (Colman) reported no Hispanic students. The median percent of black students that were enrolled in all selected schools was 97%, and for white and Hispanic students, their representations were 1% each.

Table 47 Summary Statistics for Abandoned Neighborhood Schools in CPS

Student Enrollment		% Elementary Students		% Black		% White		% Hispanic	
Mean	997	Mean	45.2	Mean	89.6	Mean	5.1	Mean	2.3
Median	471	Median	49.0	Median	97.0	Median	1.0	Median	1.0
Mode		Mode	49.0	Mode	98.0	Mode	1.0	Mode	1.0
SD	1,187	SD	13.9	SD	18.4	SD	10.7	SD	2.4
Range	4,569	Range	51.0	Range	67.0	Range	33.0	Range	7.0
Minimum	81	Minimum	10.0	Minimum	33.0	Minimum	0.0	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	4,650	Maximum	61.0	Maximum	100.0	Maximum	33.0	Maximum	7.0
Sum	15,954								
Count	16	Count	16	Count	16	Count	16	Count	16

269

Appendix H: Dallas CMSA and Dallas Independent Public Schools

Figure 40 Map of Dallas-Fort Worth CMSA by County
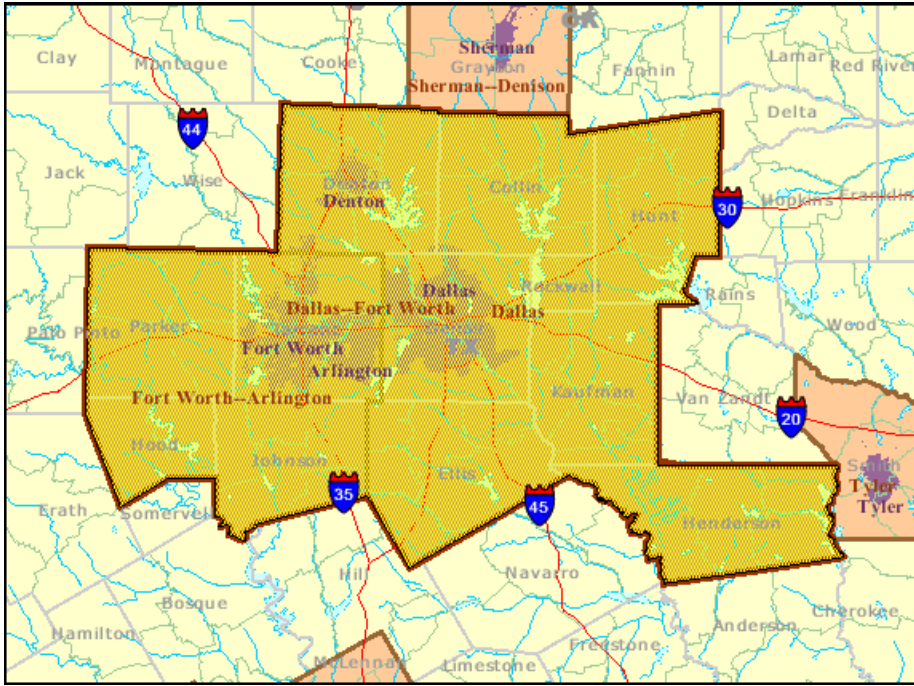

Source: Census 2000 Summary File 1 (SF 1) 100-Percent Data, Thematic Maps

Dallas Independent School District

In 2005, the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) operated 219 facilities, of which 157 were elementary schools. The total student enrollment was nearly 158,000.   In 2007, the Dallas ISD enrolled nearly 159,000 students, of which almost 84% of students were

270

classified as economically disadvantaged.[108]   As indicated in **Figure 41**, the percentage of

students in the Dallas school system with special needs exceeds those percentages recorded for

the overall state and Dallas County enrollments.

Figure 41 Percentage of Students with Special Needs: Dallas ISD
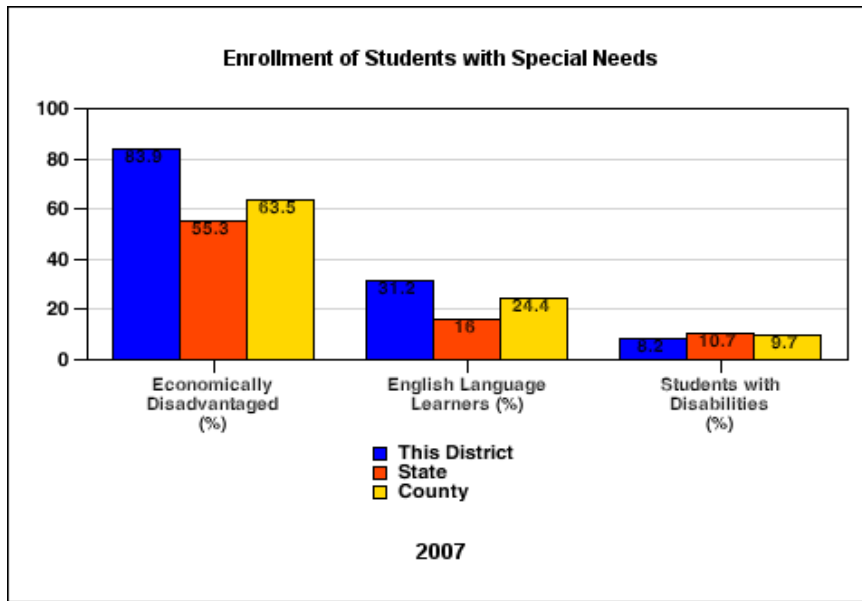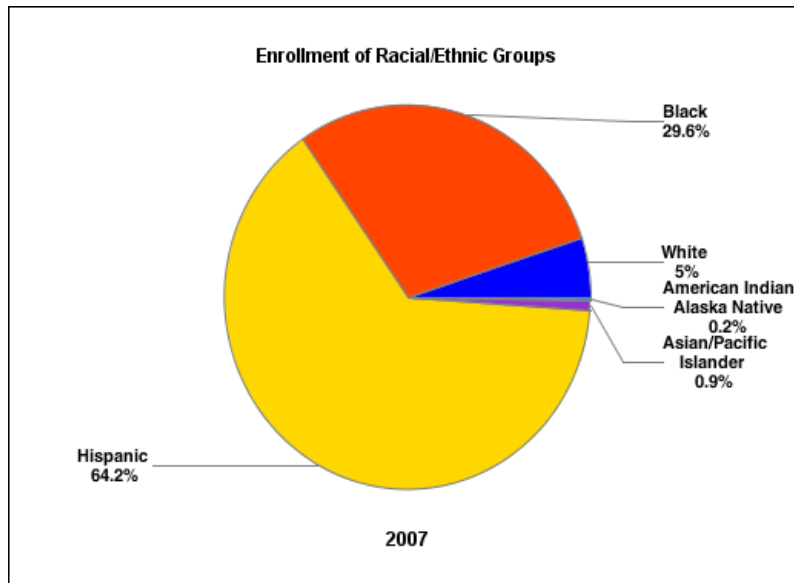

Source: School Matters.com (2007)

In 2007, the Hispanic students represented 64% of the district's total enrollment. Blacks,

the second largest population in the district, represented nearly 30%, and whites were in the

minority at 5%. The 2007 racial composition of the Dallas ISD is illustrated in **Figure 42**.

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[108] Source: Dallas ISD website, www.dallasisd.org

Figure 42 Racial Composition: Dallas ISD

Source: School Matters.com (2007)

The City of Dallas is like many central cities in that its population is segregated by race and economic statuses. The residential patterns of City's are displayed by race in **Figure 46, Figure 47**, and **Figure 48**. Neighborhoods are clearly defined by each racial group, particularly in neighborhoods where there are high concentrations of any one race.

The residential choices of families influenced the racial and economic compositions of the Dallas Independent School District. Although whites represented the second largest group in the City of Dallas, white students do not, by a significant margin, attend school in Dallas Independent School District. In 2000, while the percentages for black students were almost identical in the City of Dallas and the school district, Hispanic representation in Dallas Independent School District is almost twice as much. The racial composition of the residents of City of Dallas is compared to the racial composition of Dallas ISD in **Table 48**. As indicated the by the percentages, whites and Asians had less representation in Dallas ISD than in the City of Dallas.

272

	% Whites	% Blacks	%Hispanics	%Asians
City Dallas POP	35	27	36	3
Dallas ISD POP	5	29	64	1

More whites, as shown in **Figure 43**, resided in a number of majority or concentrated white

neighborhoods than did blacks or Hispanics (shown in **Figures 44** and **Figure 45**).   Whites and

Hispanics have neighborhoods that are 100% segregated.

Figure 43 Percent of White (Alone) Living in Dallas, TX by Census Tract and School District

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

273

www.manaraa.com
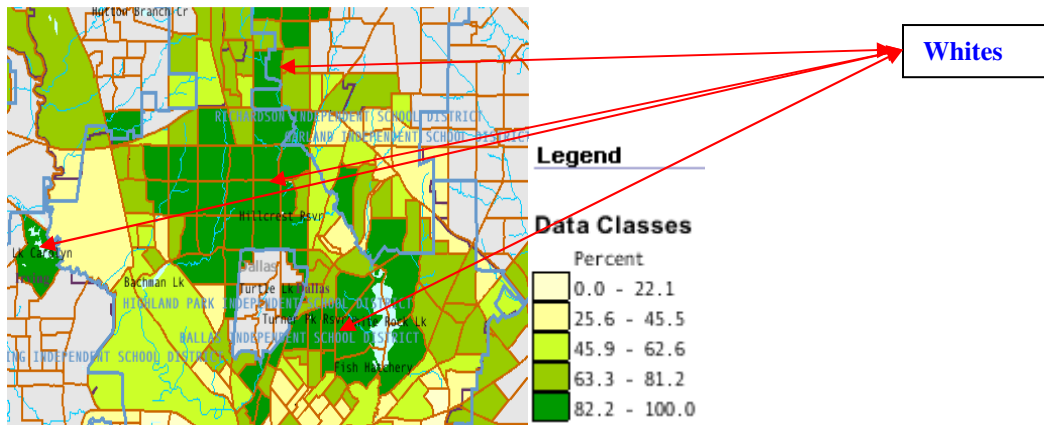
Figure 44 Percent of Blacks (Alone) Living in Dallas, TX by Census Tract and School District
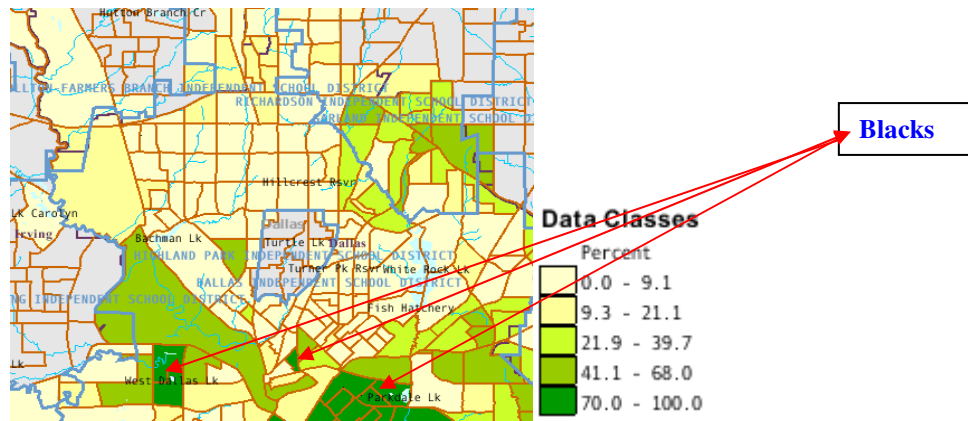
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Figure 45 Percent Hispanic (Any Race) Living in Dallas, TX by Census Tract and School District
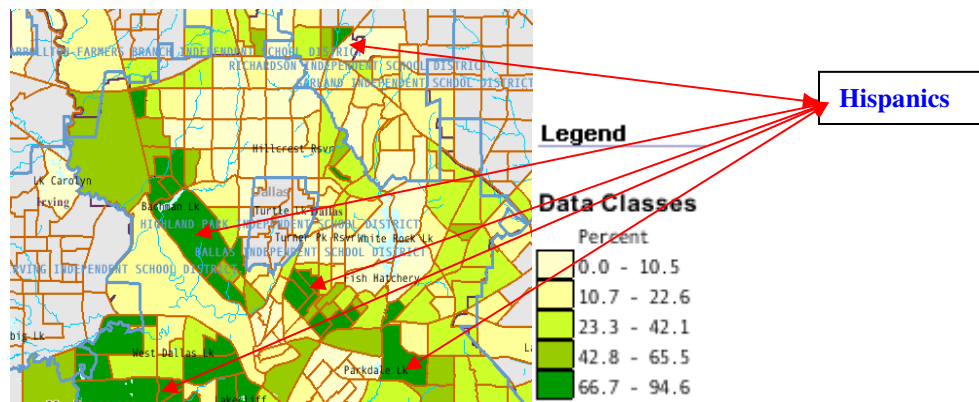
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, P8.

The Dallas Independent School District, as can be seen in **Figure 46** is located in adjacent to a number of independent school districts. This close proximity to other school divisions and the access permitted by a number of travel routes provides area residents enhanced options to live and attend school outside the City of Dallas. Travel options are identified in **Figure 47.**

274

Figure 46 Dallas Independent School District and Surrounding School Districts[109]

Figure 47 Travel Routes for the Residents Living in Dallas, TX

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[109] The Census School District Tabulation (STP2) is a special tabulation prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division and sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics

275

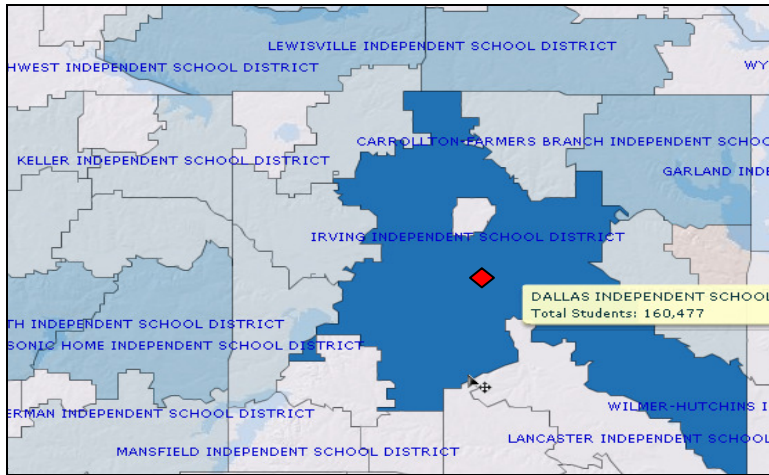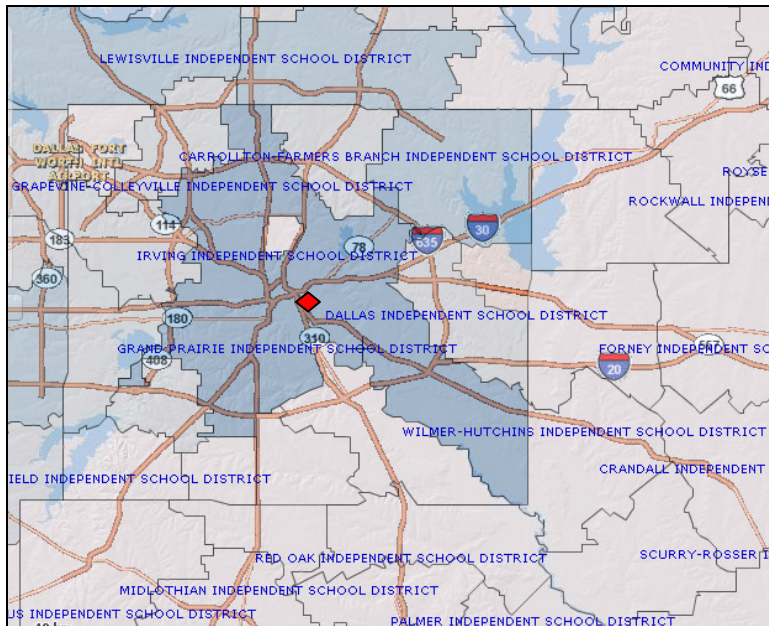Reviews of the Dallas ISD website and data collected for the NCES identified at least six abandoned elementary schools. The schools are denoted in **Table 49** and **Table 50**.

Table 49 Selected Demographics: Abandoned Schools in Dallas Unified School District

Abandoned School	Census Tract	% Below Poverty FHH with Child <18	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Lavillita	16	58	28	4.8	$31,065	14.3
Austin	41	66	54	9.1	$14,341	11
Marshall	59.01	27	18	6.2	$30,527	3.4
Buckner	93.04	64	43	10.4	$18,425	15
Harris	25	42	33	7.6	$20,877	10
McMillan	60.02	33	26	9	$25,348	9

Source U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File 4

Neighborhood #93.04 had the highest percent of unemployment (10.4%) and Neighborhood #16 had the highest median household income. Neighborhood #16 also had greatest percent of vacant housing units (14%). The poverty levels for single females with children under 18 years of age ranged from 27% to 66%, and the poverty levels for individuals ranged from 18% to 54%. Neighborhood #41 had the highest percent of poverty for single female households with children under 18 (66%) as well as the highest percent of poverty for individuals (54%).

Summary statistics of these neighborhoods and the school district are displayed in **Table 51** and **Table 52**. The statistics shown in these tables were used to describe the neighborhood and school district in which these elementary schools were abandoned.

276

Table 50 Selected Demographics: Abandoned Schools in Dallas Unified Schools

Abandoned School	Census Tract	Student Enrollment	% Enrolled Elem Students	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
Lavillita	16	667	31	45	1	31
Austin	41	459	53	75	1	25
Marshall	59.01	1520	50	86	1	12
Buckner	93.04	1887	59	71	3	25
Harris	25	1671	57	41	3	55
McMillan	60.02	1878	23	51	32	10

Source U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File 4

The six neighborhoods where elementary schools were abandoned had total student enrollment nearly 8,100. These six schools had minority majority student populations. Blacks represented a median population of 61% and Hispanics 25%. Whites had a median of 2% of the total population of the six abandoned schools. Neighborhood #93.04 (Buckner) had the largest student enrollment (1,887), followed by Neighborhood #60.02 (McMillan) with 1,878 students. Neighborhood #41 (Austin) had the smallest student population of the six neighborhoods.

Neighborhood #25 (Harris) had the greatest percent of Hispanic students (55%) and Neighborhood #59.01 (Marshall) had the greatest percent of black students (86%). The representation of white students was 3% or less in all neighborhoods, except in Neighborhood #60.02 (McMillan) where the percent of white students was 32%. Despite this large percent of white students Neighborhood # 25 (Harris), like all others included in this group, had a minority majority student population.

Table 51 Selected Summary Statistic for Selected Abandoned Elementary Schools in Dallas ISD

% Below Poverty FHH with Child <18		% Below Poverty Rate Individuals		% Unemployed		Median HH Income		% Vacancy Units	
Mean	48.3	Mean	33.7	Mean	7.9	Mean	23,431	Mean	10.5
Median	50.0	Median	30.5	Median	8.3	Median	23,113	Median	10.5
SD	16.6	SD	12.9	SD	2.1	SD	6,731	SD	4.2
Minimum	27.0	Minimum	18.0	Minimum	4.8	Minimum	14,341	Minimum	3.4
Maximum	66.0	Maximum	54.0	Maximum	10.4	Maximum	31,065	Maximum	15.0
Count	6	Count	6	Count	6	Count	6	Count	6

Source: Analysis of Data: U.S. Census Bureau Summary File 3 and Summary File 4

277

The median percent poverty rate for single females with children younger than 18 years of age was 50%.   In 2000, the median individual poverty level for residents of all neighborhoods was 31%. The median income level for households was $23,113 and the median unemployment rate was 8%.

Table 52 Selected Summary Statistic for Selected Abandoned Elementary Schools in Dallas ISD

Total Student Enrollment		% Enrolled Elem Students		% Black		% White		% Hispanic	
Mean	1,347	Mean	45.5	Mean	61.5	Mean	6.8	Mean	26.3
Median	1,596	Median	51.5	Median	61.0	Median	2.0	Median	25.0
SD	626	SD	14.9	SD	18.3	SD	12.4	SD	16.2
Minimum	459	Minimum	23.0	Minimum	41.0	Minimum	1.0	Minimum	10.0
Maximum	1,887	Maximum	59.0	Maximum	86.0	Maximum	32.0	Maximum	55.0
Sum	8,082								
Count	6	Count	6	Count	6	Count	6	Count	6

Source: Analysis of Data: U.S. Census Bureau Summary File 3 and Summary File

The percent of vacant housing units ranged from 3% to almost 15%. The median percentage for vacant housing units was nearly 11%.

Census tracts in Figure 56 have identified some of the neighborhoods where schools were abandoned in Dallas. For example, Neighborhoods #16, 41, and 25 are identified.

Figure 48 Poverty Rate in the City of Dallas, Texas by Neighborhood by Census Tract and School District

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrix P87
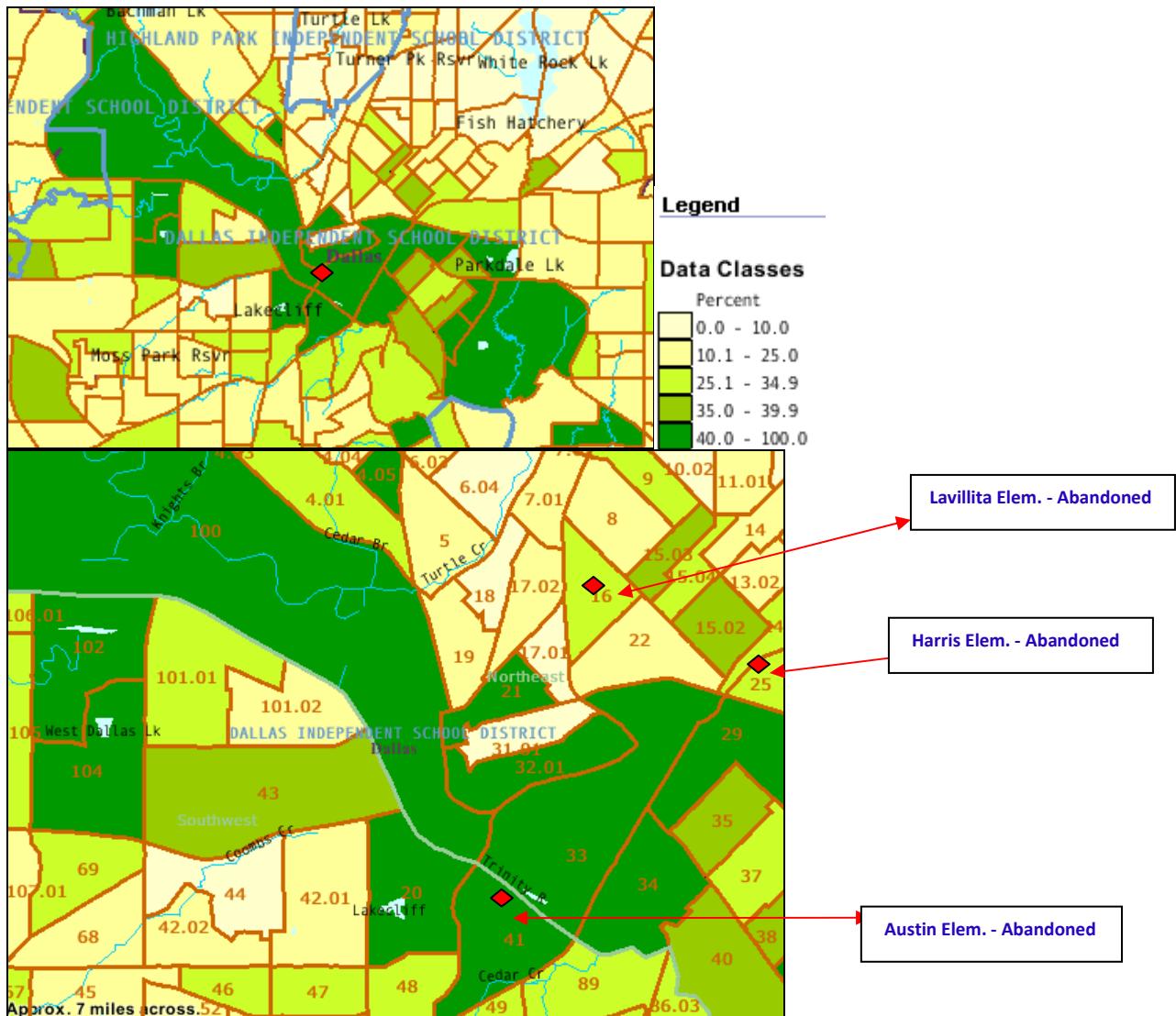
The poverty levels for children younger than 18 years age are displayed in

Figure 49 and **Figure 50**. The overall poverty rate for children in the Dallas metro area was nearly

18% in 2000. The overall poverty rate for individuals was 12% for the same period.

279

Figure 49 Poverty Rates for Children under 18 Years for Dallas, TX
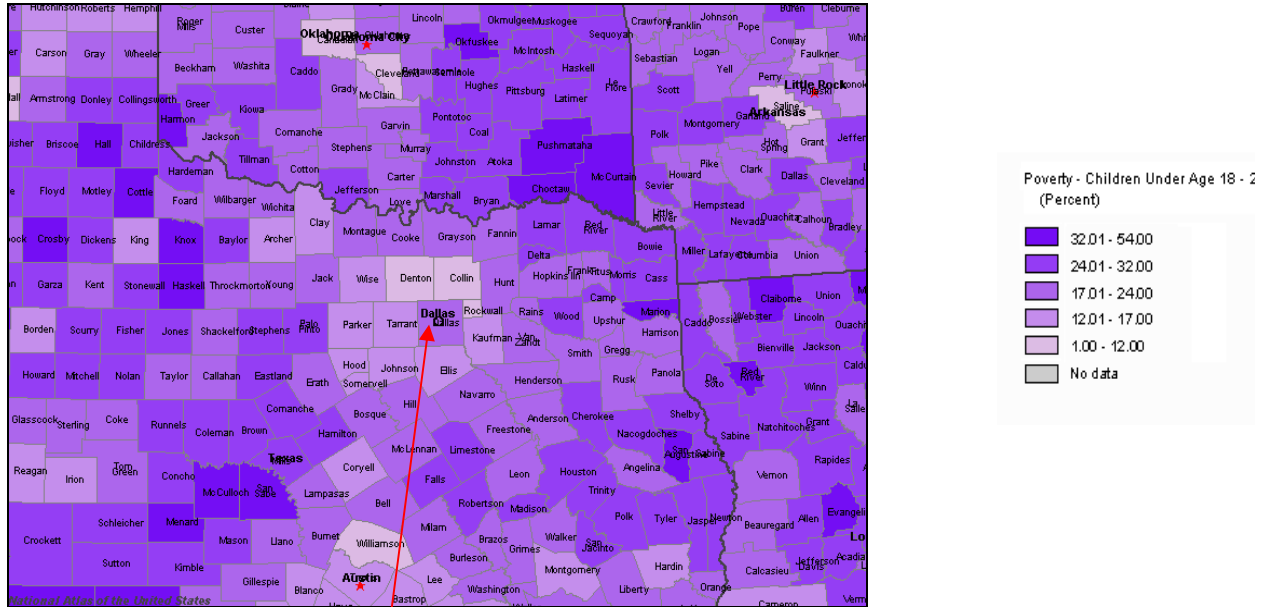
Figure 50 Poverty Levels for Children under Age 18, Dallas, TX by Urban Area

Poverty - All People 2000: **12.0**%

Poverty - Children Under Age 18 - 2000: **17.8%**
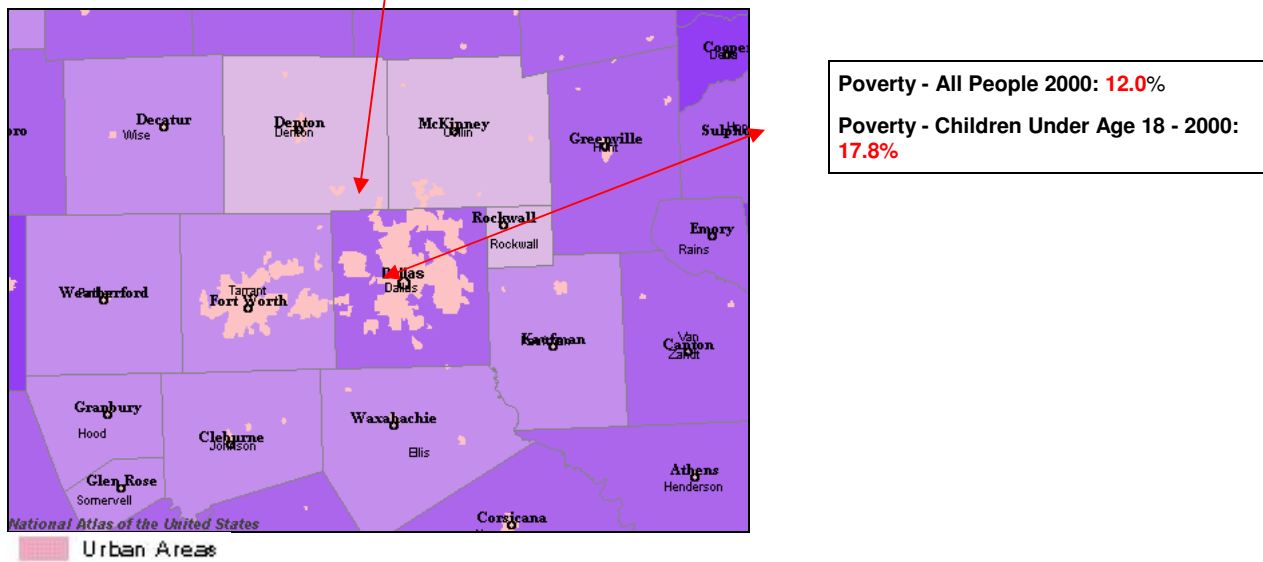
The overall percent of vacant housing units in the Dallas ISD area was almost 7%. The District's overall school quality was poor. As seen in **Figure 51** there were a number of schools for which not data was recorded.

280

Figure 51 Percent of Vacant Units and School Quality in Dallas, TX

281
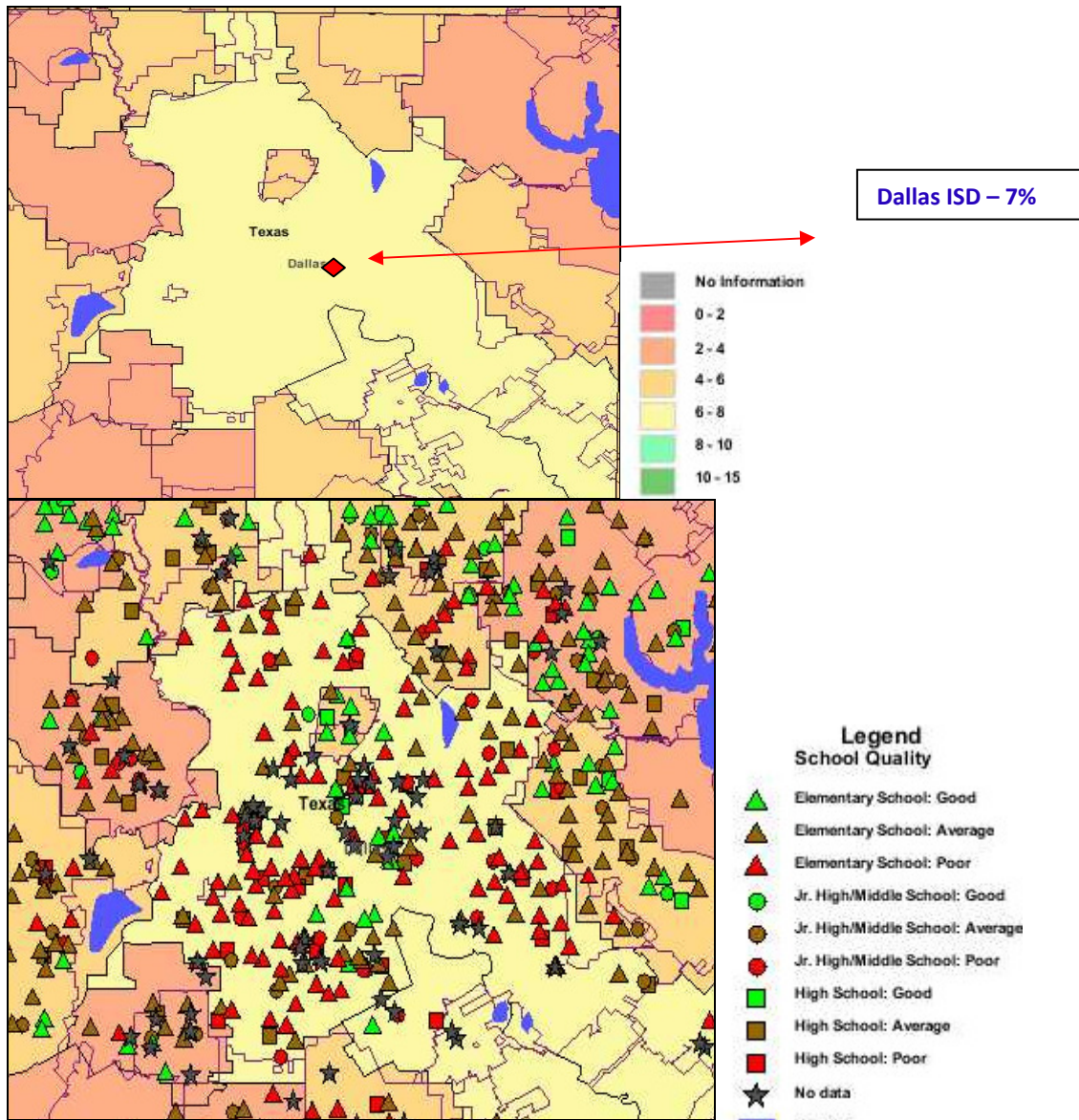
Appendix I: Houston CMSA, MSA and Public Schools

With nearly 5 million residents in 2000, the Houston CMSA was ranked as the 10th largest CMSA in the United States. [110] The geographically area the makes up the Houston CMSA is identified in **Figure 52**.

Figure 52 Houston--Galveston--Brazoria, TX CMSA
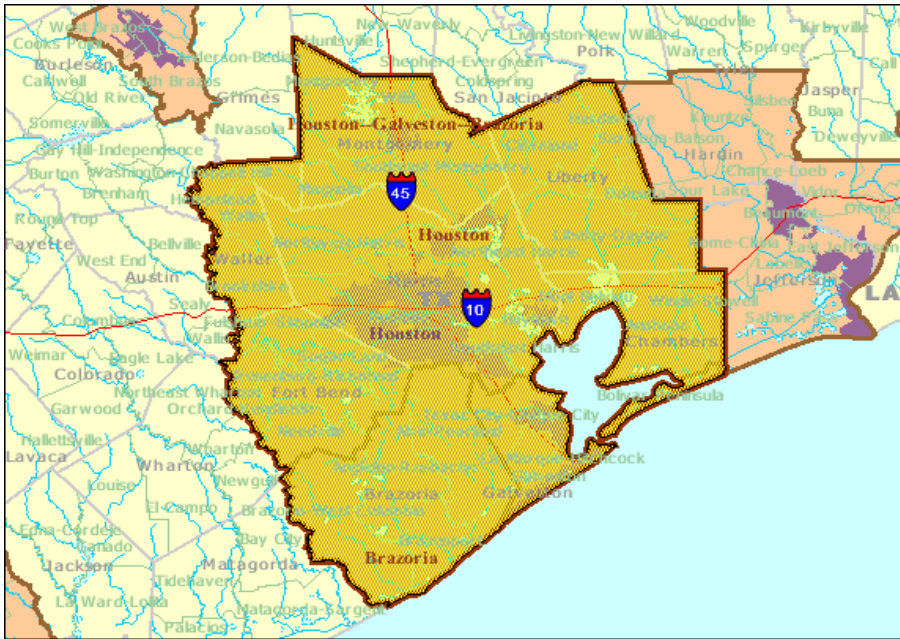
The overall poverty rate for individuals living in Houston is shown in **Figure 53.** The poverty rate for children younger than 18 years of age is also displayed.   As noted, in 2000, the poverty level for individuals in Houston was 13% for individuals and 19% for children.

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[110] Source: US Census 2000 PHC-T-3. Ranking Tables for Metropolitan Areas: 1990 and 2000; Table 3: Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Population: 2000

Figure 53 Percent of Poverty for Children Under 18 Years in Houston, TX

Poverty - All People 2000: **13.4%**

Poverty - Children Under Age 18 - 2000: **19.1%**

Poverty - Children Under Age 18 - 2000
(Percent)

- 32.01 - 54.00
- 24.01 - 32.00
- 17.01 - 24.00
- 12.01 - 17.00
- 1.00 - 12.00
- No data
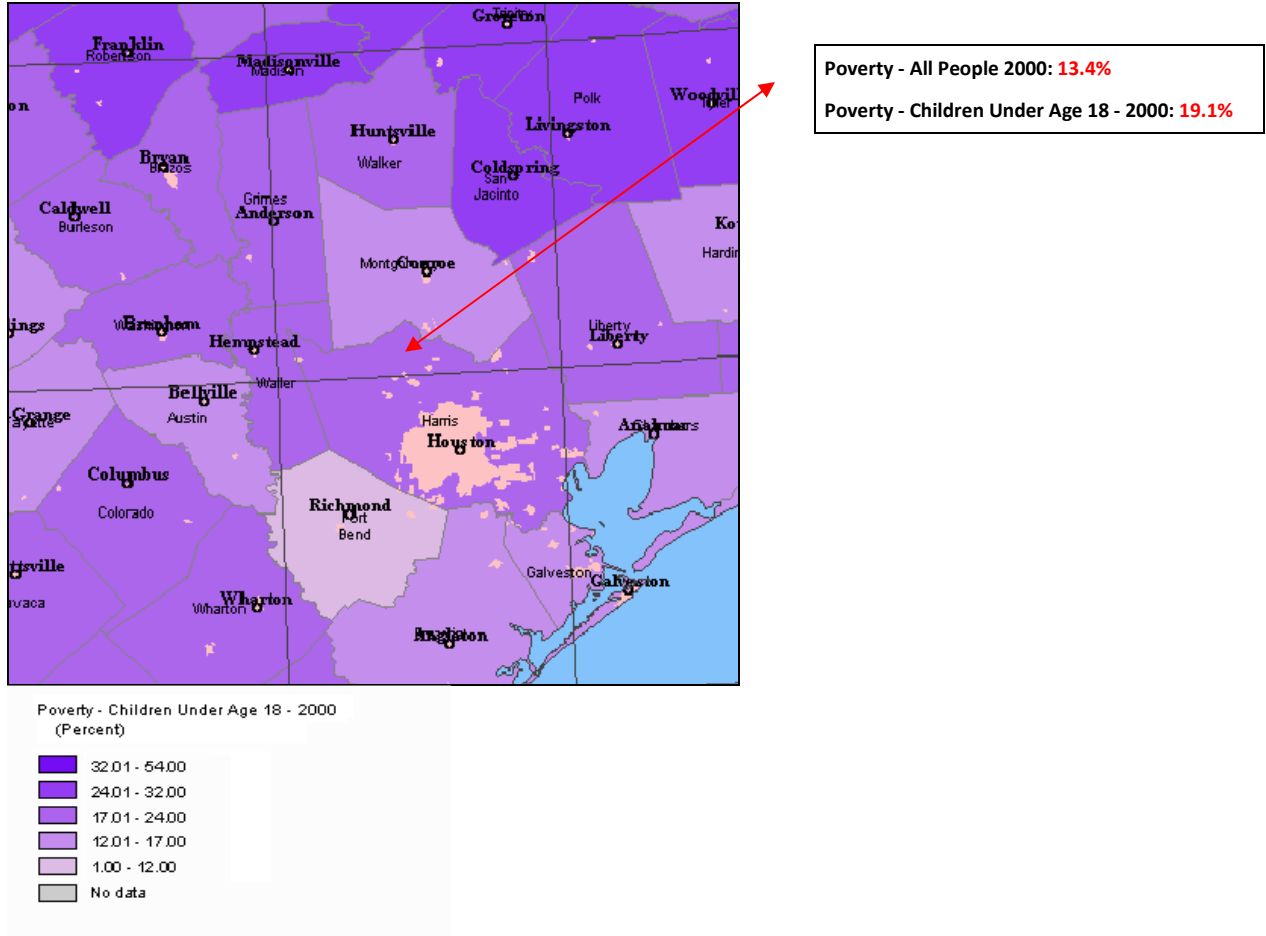
The Houston Independent School District (HISD), the largest school district in Texas, operates and maintains nearly 296 public schools and serves almost 200,000 students.[111] Of the total 296 schools, 60% (179) are elementary schools. Nearly 109,000 students or 54% of all students were enrolled elementary schools. Almost 81% of HISD's students were eligible for free- or reduced-priced lunch, which by federally established definitions are considered economically disadvantaged.

HISD has a minority majority student body. Hispanic students accounted 61% of all students and black students represented nearly 28%. White and Asian students accounted for 8% and 3%, respectively. The increase in Hispanic students during the FY2008-2009 school year sustained the District's population. While Hispanic (+2%) and Asian (+2%) students increased their presence between 2008 and 2009, white and black student enrollments declined by 2% each.

Most of the District's schools are assigned one of five regions (North, South, East, West or Central). Offices located in each community serve students and their families. The five regions are identified in **Figure 54**. In 2002, Houston voters approved the Rebuild HISD program to provide $808.6-million to improve school environments through renovation and new construction projects. The various Harris County school districts are shown in **Figure 55**.

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[111] Source for HISD information: School website, Houston.isd.org/HISDConnect

Figure 54 Map of Five School Regions of HISD
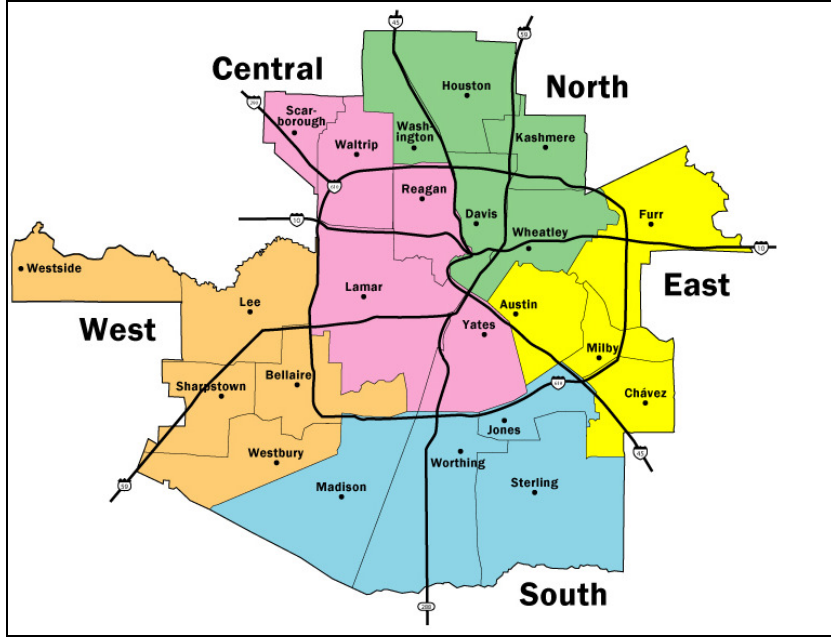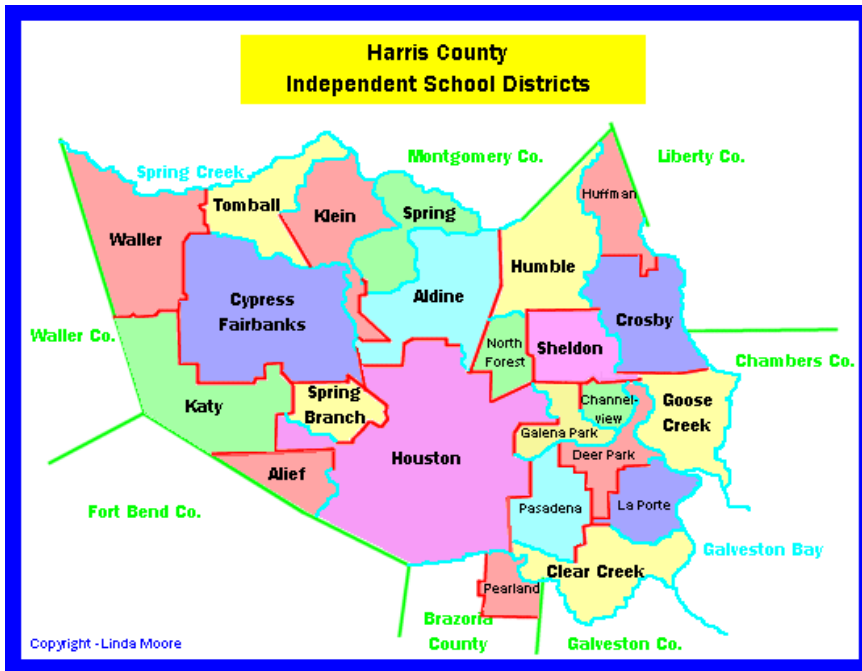
Source: www.houston.isd.org

Figure 55 Harris County School Districts (Includes Houston ISD)[112]

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[112] Permission granted by Linda Moore to use map for this research.

285

Six elementary schools were identified as abandoned in the HISD. The neighborhoods

served by these schools enrolled a total of 6,300 students. The largest individual student

population was reported in Neighborhood #4222 (Argyle) with 2,113 students. The school with

the least amount of students was Neighborhood #5111 (Holden) with less than 500 students. As

indicated in **Table 53**, all neighborhoods, except Neighborhood#4115 (West Central) had a

minority majority student population. The median percent of elementary students who were

enrolled in the selected abandoned schools was 49%. Hispanic students had a median

representation of 38%; blacks, 11%; and whites at 20%.

Table 53 Selected Statistics for Abandoned Neighborhood Schools in HISD (A)

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	Student Enrollment	% Elem Students Enrolled	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
West Central	4115	1,062	18	10	82	9
Argyle	4222	2,113	48	79	5	14
Carnegie	3314	942	56	75	0.3	24
Eighth Avenue	5105	772	45	12.4	29	51
Holden	5111	468	50	10.3	36	54
Milam	5106	966	54	10.4	11	77

As noted in **Table 54**, Neighborhood #3314 (Carnegie) was by far the most economically

disadvantaged of all six neighborhoods. This neighborhood had the highest percent of single

female households with children under 18 years of age (83%) who lived below the poverty

established poverty threshold. Neighborhood #3314 also had the highest percent of persons

(67%) living below the poverty level, as well as the highest unemployment rate (12%). The

median household income for Neighborhood #3314 was $8,056.

286

Table 54 Selected Statistics for Abandoned Neighborhood Schools in HISD (B)

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or <	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
West Central	4115	28	6.5	1	$60,392	10
Argyle	4222	34	26	4.7	$26,271	11
Carnegie	3314	83	67	12.3	$8,056	7.5
Eighth Avenue	5105	57	34	2.8	$27,679	12.4
Holden	5111	36.4	14.4	2.4	$37,008	10.3
Milam	5106	42	37	4.1	$24,683	10.4

Selected poverty levels in the Houston area are displayed by neighborhoods (census tracts) in **Figure 56**. Neighborhoods where abandoned schools occurred are indicated. This illustration provides an overview of the dispersion of poverty in Houston. As can be seen, in 1999, Qualified-Neighborhoods and Nearly-Qualified Neighborhoods were clustered. These clusters identify the segregation by economic status. A closer review of these same census tracts also indicates that most of the neighborhoods were segregated primarily with non-white residents.

287

Figure 56 Poverty Levels by Neighborhoods (Census Tracts) Houston, TX
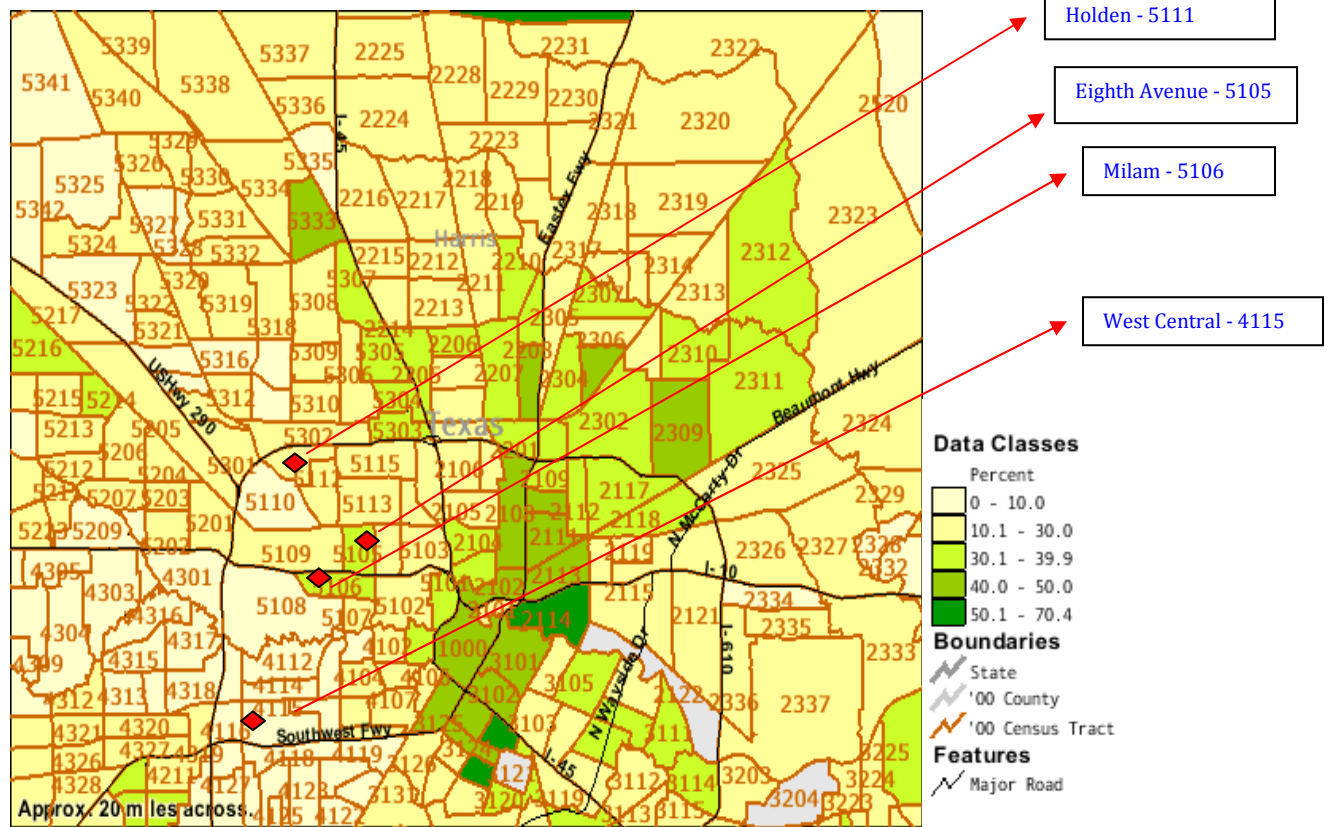
The maps shown in **Figure 57** identifies the education and residential options for families living in the metro Houston area, as well as accessible roadway options that make transitioning to and from the City and HISD neighborhoods easier. This ease influences the preferences for some residents to migrate away from the City and HISC neighborhoods.

288

Figure 57 **School Districts in Close Proximity to HISD and Various Travel Routes Available to Houston Residents**
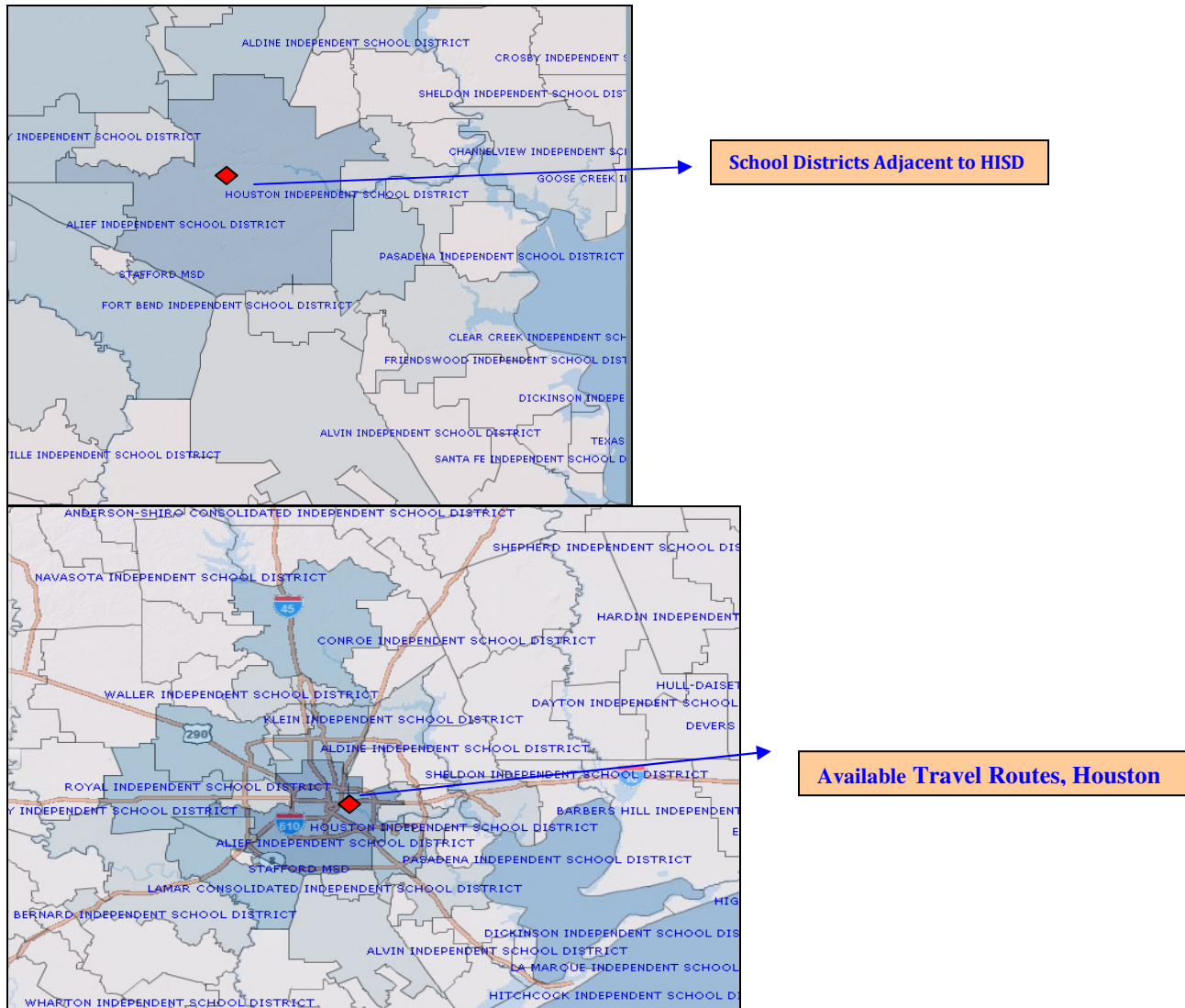
Source: The Census School District Tabulation (STP2), the U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division and sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/sdds/ed/index

In many neighborhoods in Houston the populations are racially and economically segregated. As shown in **Figures 58**, **59**, and **60**, there were neighborhoods in which 70% to 100% of the population was one race. Whites were "clustered" in neighborhoods in which whites represented 60% to 100% of the population. For the most part, as displayed in **Figure 61**, more neighborhoods in which whites were concentrated at 78% or more were located away from the

core inner city. However, there are neighborhoods in Houston in which whites were

concentrated at 78% to 100%.

Figure 58 Percent White (Alone) Living in Houston, TX
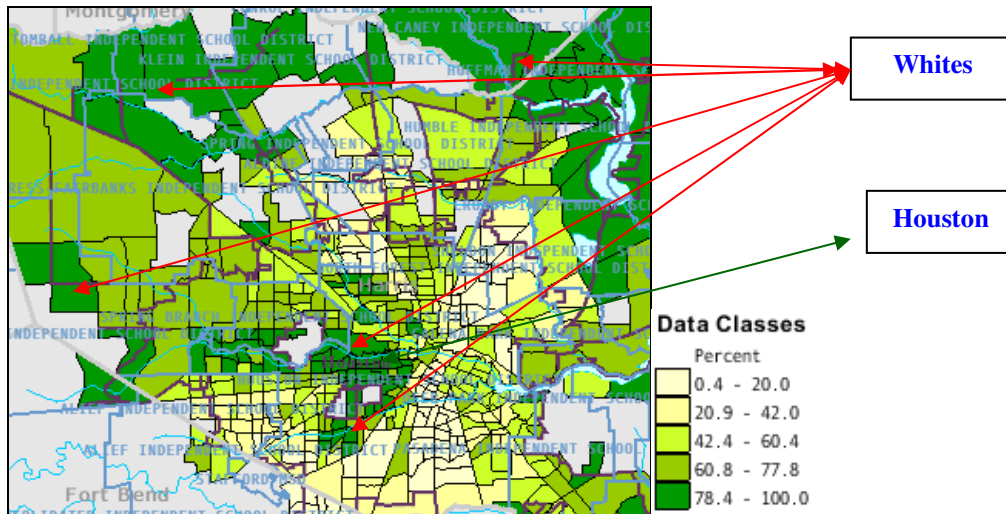
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Blacks resided in some neighborhoods in which blacks had majority statuses that ranged

from 73% to 98%. Similarly, Hispanics clustered in some neighborhoods in which Hispanics

represented 73% to 98% of the population. A review of the concentration of all three groups

identifies clear patterns of residential segregation, including in areas served by HISD. However,

based on student enrollment data, the white students were in the minority overall and Hispanics

were in the majority. These data indicated that many white students who reside in the HISD are

not enrolled in HISD.

Figure 59 Percent of Blacks (Alone) Living in Houston, TX

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.
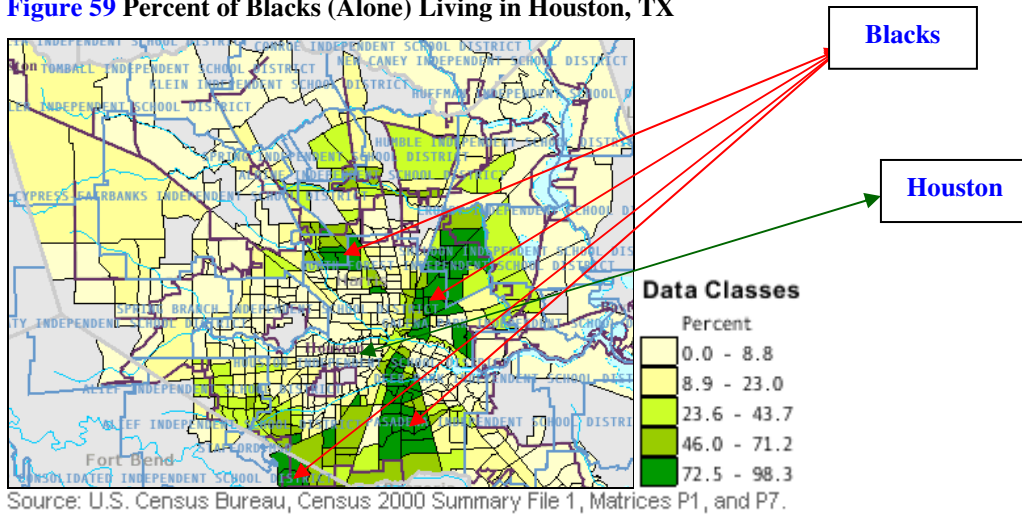
Upon closer review of all three maps, it should be noted that an overlay of three areas would indicate three clearly define segments separated by race in the Houston metro area. These segments mirror populations in other central cities like Dallas, Chicago, Atlanta, and the District of Columbia.

Figure 60 Percent of Hispanics (Any Race) Living in Houston, TX

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, P8.

291
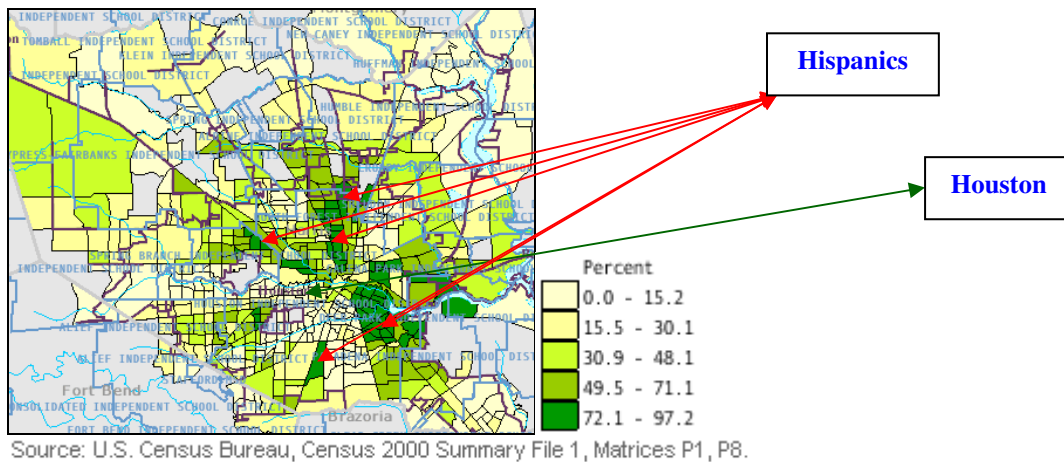
Also like other central cities and their supporting school divisions, there were more

concentrations of vacant housing units in the Houston and HISD neighborhoods than in

surrounding areas. Similarly, the number of poor quality schools and schools for which no data

were reported were also clustered in Houston and HISD neighborhoods. (See **Figure 61**)

Figure 61 Percent of Vacant Housing Units by School Districts and Quality of Schools
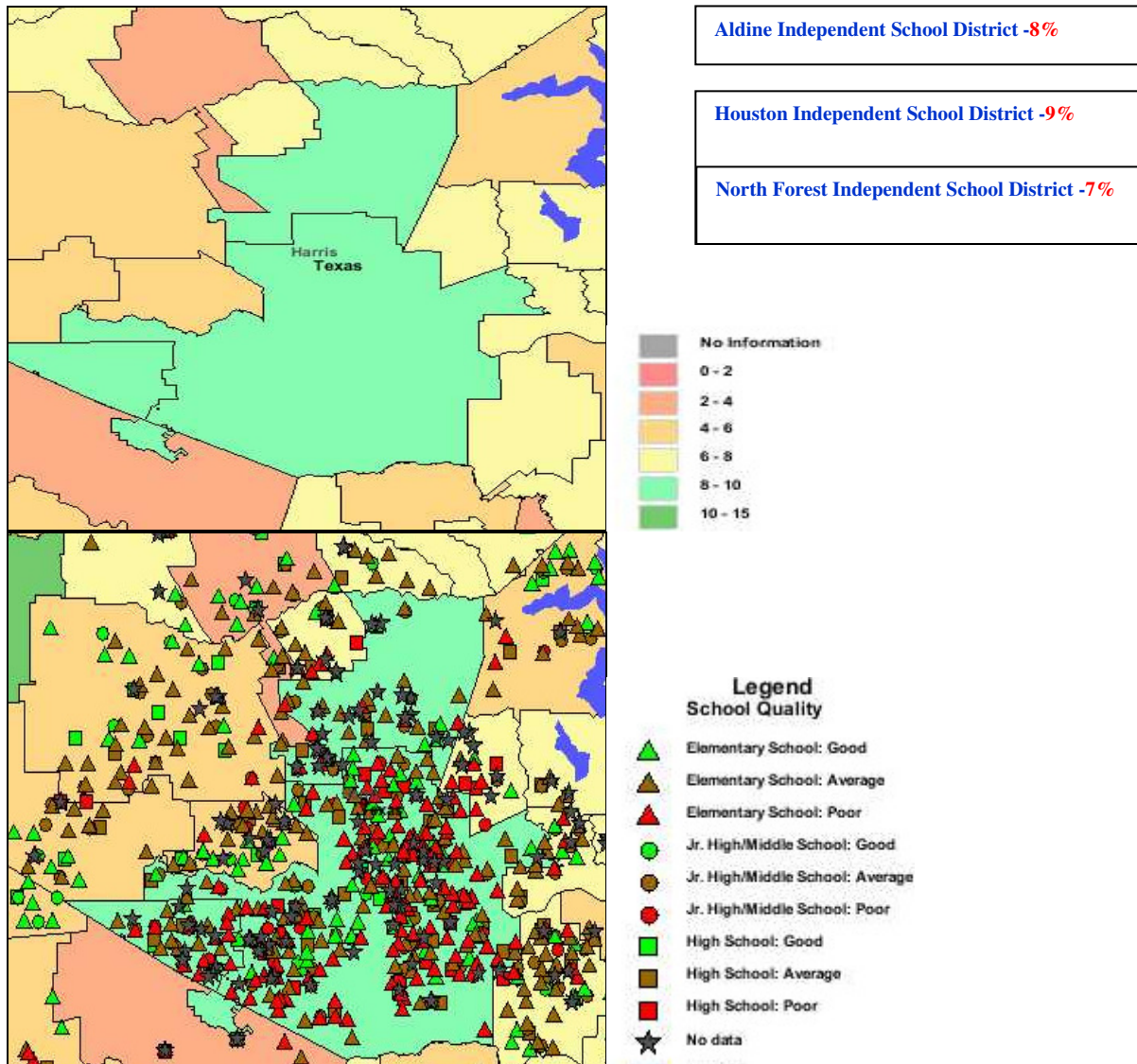
Appendix J: San Francisco Public Schools

In 2000, the San Francisco CMSA, shown in **Figure 62**, ranked as the fifth largest CMSA in the nation and was comprised of ten counties.   The population (7,039,362) for the San Francisco CMSA (2000) increased by nearly 13% when compared to its 1990 population (6,253,311).   However, the San Francisco MSA grew by 127,505 residents between 1990 and 2000.[113]

Figure 62 San Francisco, CA PMSA; San Francisco--Oakland--San Jose, CA CMSA

Where whites live is a key component to obtaining a better understanding of the demographics of public school system. The percent of whites living in the San Francisco area is shown in **Figure 63**.

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[113] Source: US Census 2000 PHC-T-3. Ranking Tables for Metropolitan Areas: 1990 and 2000; Table 3: Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Population: 2000

Figure 63 Percent of Whites by County and Urban Areas in San Francisco Area.

http://nationalatlas.gov/natlas/Natlasstart.asp
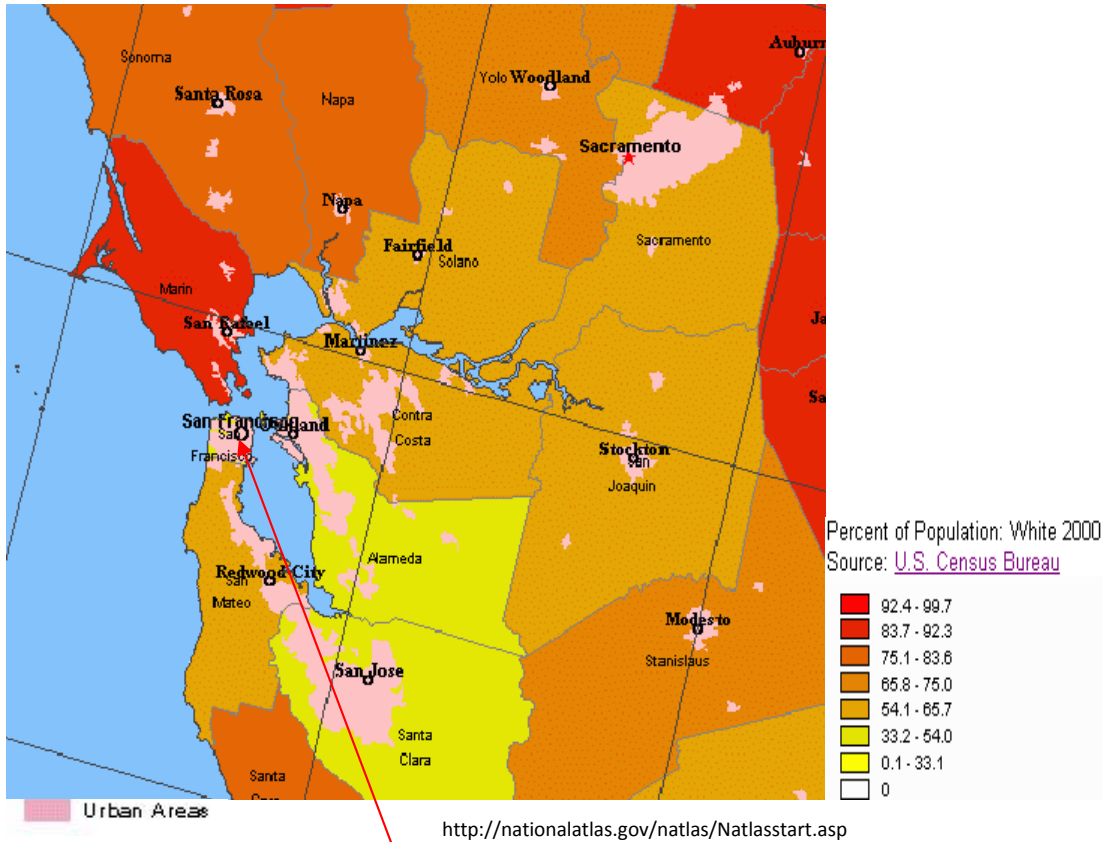
Percent of White Population 2000: 49.7

Total Population 2000: 776,733

County Name: San Francisco

In 2000, San Francisco was home to nearly 145,200 family households, of which, 8% (11,300) single female households with children under the age of 18. A review of the income trends for the city indicated that income levels grew significantly between 1980 and 2000. In 1990, the average household income increased by 122% over that of 1980 and increased by 75% in 2000 over 1990. The per capita and median household incomes increased by similar percentages.   Despite the reported increases in area incomes, nearly 10% of family households

294

had incomes of less than $10,000. The unemployment rate decreased in 2000 when compared to 1990. In 1990, the reported unemployment rate was 6.2%. In 2000, that rate reduced to 4.6%.

San Francisco Unified School District

In 2000, the San Francisco Unified School (SFUSD) system enrolled nearly 55,000 students, employed nearly 4,000 full-time teachers, and maintained almost 102 school facilities. The SFUSD is the only public school district in the County of San Francisco and City of San Francisco.[114] In 2000, nearly 600 County students attended SFUSD.   Almost 54% of the District's student are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Figure 64 Racial Composition of San Francisco Unified School District
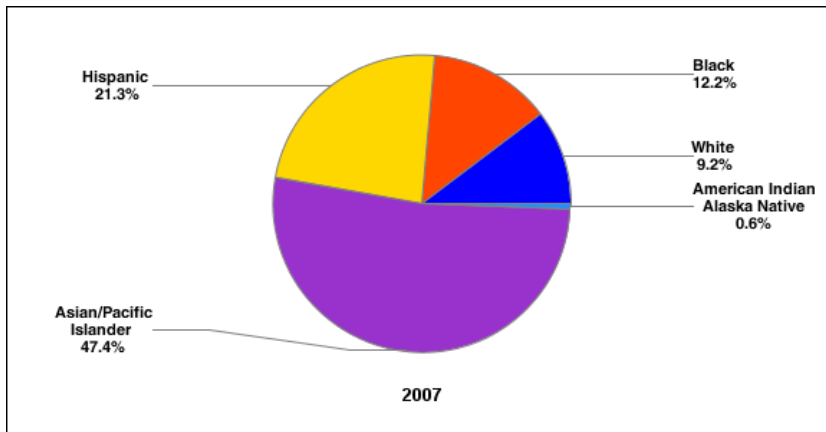
Source: SchoolMatters.com

In 2007, as displayed in **Figure 64**, SFUSD's total student enrollment was a minority majority one. Due to the significant numbers of Asians settling and the outward migration of blacks and whites from the San Francisco area, Asians (47%) represented the majority of the District's students.   In 2007, Hispanics accounted for 21% of the students enrolled in SFUSD.

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[114] Source: San Francisco Unified School District website: SFUSD.edu

Whites (9%) and blacks (12%) were in minority. Students under 18 years of age had poverty

rate of 14%, while the overall poverty rate 10% in San Francisco. (See **Figure 65**)

Figure 65 Poverty Levels for Children under 18 by County and Urban Areas.

Poverty - All People 2000: 9.2%

Poverty - Children Under Age 18 - 2000: 14.1%
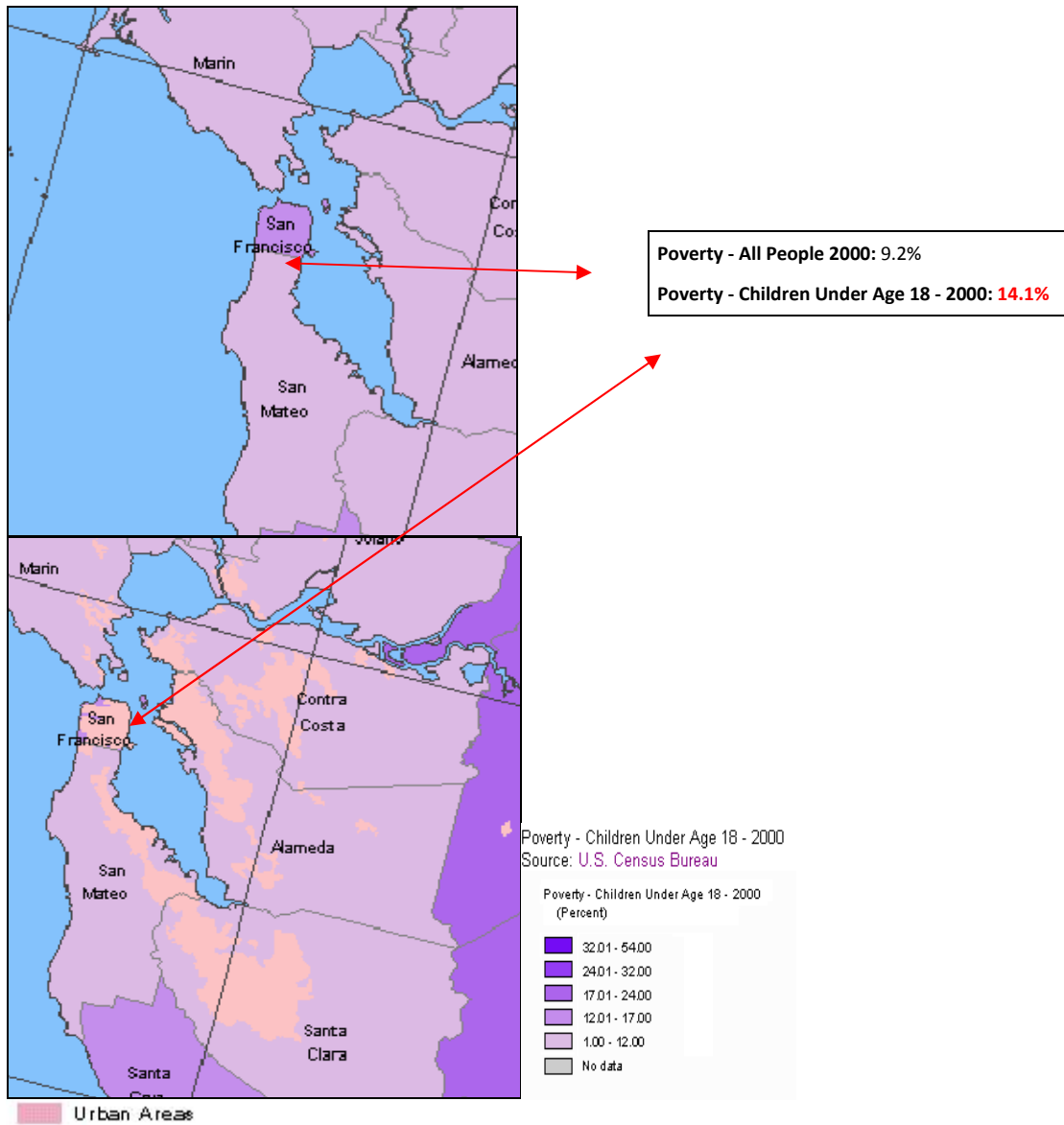
Source: NationalAtlas.com

The City of San Francisco's population is as diverse as its public school system. However, the City's population lives segregated racially. As can be identified in **Figures 66**, **67**, **68**, and **69,** the residential selections of each racial group is clearly defined. Each population is clustered in separate neighborhoods. Unlike most central cities, in 2000, whites were concentrated in the core than other races. However, white students were in the minority in the City's public school system, indicating that many white families who lived in the SFUSD did not enroll their children in SFUSD.

Figure 66 Percent of Whites (Alone) Living in San Francisco by Census Tract and School District
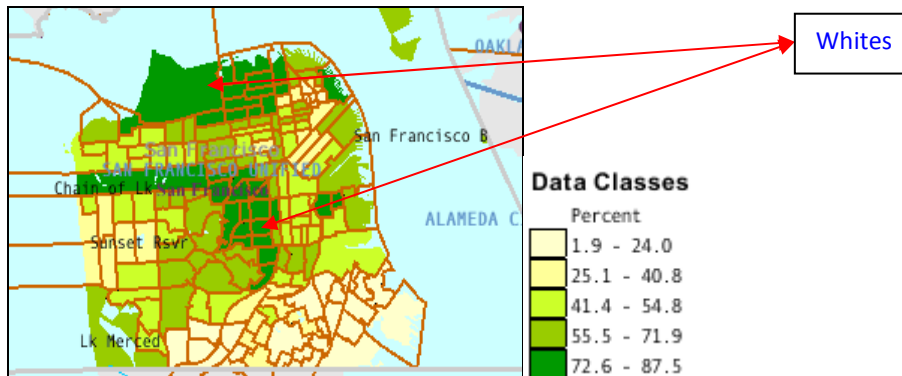
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Figure 67 Percent of Blacks (Alone) Living in San Francisco by Census Tract and School District
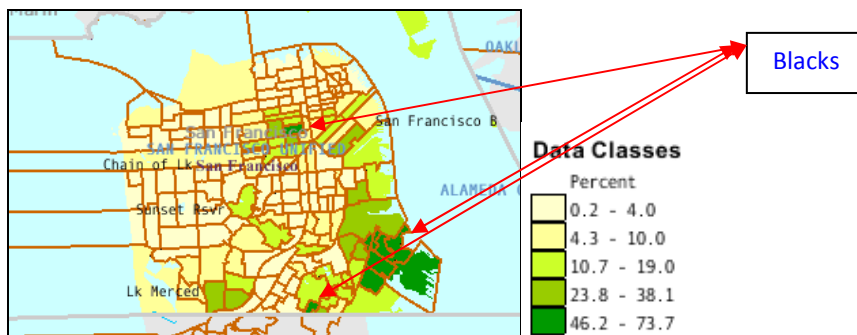
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

297

Figure 68 Percent of Asians (Alone) Living in San Francisco by Census Tract and School District
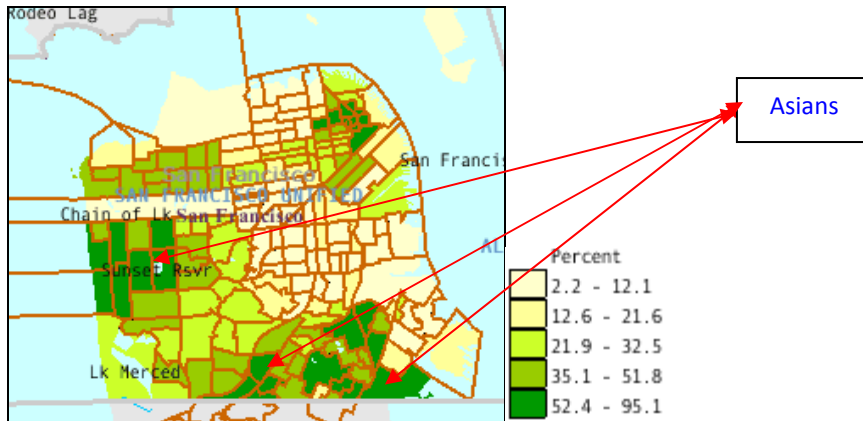
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Figure 69 Percent of Hispanics (Any Race) Living in San Francisco by Census Tract and School District
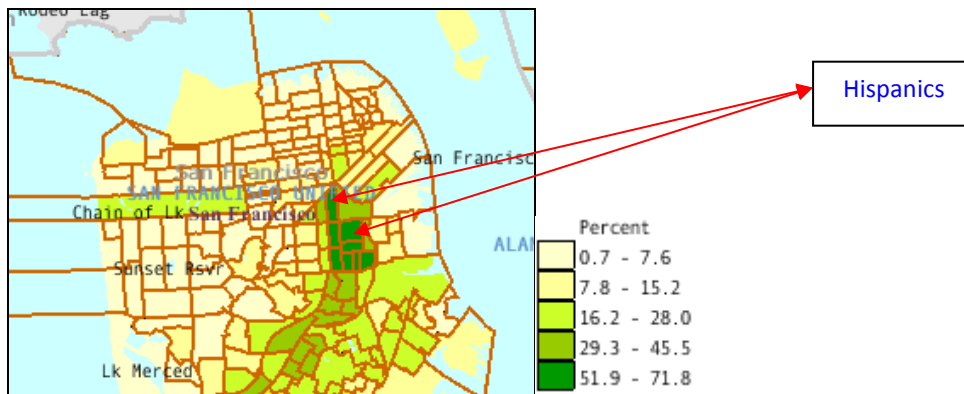
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, P8.

SFUSD in located in close proximity to a number of public school districts, and there are a number of roadway options that permit access to and from the City of San Francisco and other areas of San Francisco County and beyond. **Figure 70** displays a number of education choices for individuals residing in the San Francisco areas, as well as various travel alternatives.

Figure 70 School Districts in Close Proximity to SFUSD and Selected Travel Routes

Source: The Census School District Tabulation (STP2), U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division and sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics

299

Abandoned Schools in San Francisco Unified School District

Since 2000, San Francisco's school district has lost nearly 5,000 (8%) of its students and has closed nine schools (Asimov, 2006).   Five of the district's abandoned schools were elementary schools, and are identified in **Tables 55** and **56**.   By definition none of the abandoned schools were located in qualified neighborhoods. The overall poverty rates for individuals ranged from 6% to 19% below the poverty level.

Table 55 Selected Statistics for Abandoned Elementary Schools in SFUSD (A)

Abandoned School	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or younger	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Cabrillo	477.02	38.2	5.8	1.7	$57,963	1.2
Diamond Heights	217	0	5.6	1.6	$72,804	1.8
Golden Gate	158	44	19	3.1	$45,962	3.3
Laguna Honda	301.01	32	12	3.6	$62,109	3.5
William R. DeAvila	166	0	8.4	3.3	$64,613	3.6

Source: Analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File 4

The median household income for the identified neighborhoods ranged from $46,000 to $73,000. Neighborhood # 158 (Golden Gate) reported to smallest median household income ($45,962) and the highest percent of single female households with children under 18 years of age (44%). This Neighborhood also had the highest percent of poverty for individuals (19%). Neighborhood #217 (Diamond Heights) and Neighborhood #166 (William R. DeAvila) had no single female households with children under 18 years who live below the poverty level.

The unemployment rate in all selected neighborhoods where schools were abandoned in SFUSD was less than 4%.   In 2000, Neighborhood #301.01 (Laguna Honda) reported the

highest unemployment rate of all neighborhoods at 3.6% and Neighborhood #217 (Diamond Heights) had lowest (1.6%).

Table 56 **Selected Statistics for Abandoned Elementary Schools in SFUSD (B)**

Abandoned School	Census Tract	Student Enrollment	% Elem Students	% Black	% White	% Hispanic	% Asian
Cabrillo	477.02	869	35	1	40	4	52
Diamond Heights	217	1,010	32	12	54	11	18
Golden Gate	158	1,501	33	30	44	7	15
Laguna Honda	301.01	1,207	12	3	64	6	24
William R. DeAvila	166	838	12	7	76	6	6

Source: Analysis of data from U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3 and Summary File 4

The median household income in all of the selected neighborhoods was $62,100, and the median unemployment rate was 3%. (See **Table 57**) The median poverty rate for ingle female households was 32%. For individuals, the median poverty rate was 8%.

Table 57 **Selected Summary Statistics for Abandoned Schools in SFUSD (A)**

% Below Poverty Rate Single FHH with Child 18 or younger		% Below Poverty Rate Individuals		% Unemployed		Median HH Income		% Vacancy Units	
Mean	22.8	Mean	10.2	Mean	2.7	Mean	60,690	Mean	2.7
Median	32.0	Median	8.4	Median	3.1	Median	62,109	Median	3.3
SD	21.3	SD	5.6	SD	0.9	SD	9,855	SD	1.1
Minimum	0.0	Minimum	5.6	Minimum	1.6	Minimum	45,962	Minimum	1.2
Maximum	44.0	Maximum	19.0	Maximum	3.6	Maximum	72,804	Maximum	3.6
Count	5	Count	5	Count	5	Count	5	Count	5

The students in all neighborhoods totaled roughly 5,400, and the median percent of students who attended elementary schools in the selected neighborhoods was 32%.   The breakdown of the means for the racial compositions of student who were enrolled in the abandoned schools is shown in **Table 58**.   White students represented the largest student

301

population, ranging from 40% to 76%. The median percent of white students was 54% and 18%

for Asians.   Black (7%) and Hispanic (6%) students were in the minority.

Table 58 Selected Summary Statistics for Abandoned Schools in SFUSD (B)

Student Enrollment		% Elem Students		% Black		% White		% Hispanic		% Asian	
Mean	1,085	Mean	24.8	Mean	10.6	Mean	55.6	Mean	6.8	Mean	23.0
Median	1,010	Median	32.0	Median	7.0	Median	54.0	Median	6.0	Median	18.0
S D	274	S D	11.7	SD	11.6	SD	14.7	SD	2.6	SD	17.5
Minimum	838	Minimum	12.0	Minimum	1.0	Minimum	40.0	Minimum	4.0	Minimum	6.0
Maximum	1,501	Maximum	35.0	Maximum	30.0	Maximum	76.0	Maximum	11.0	Maximum	52.0
Sum	5,425										
Count	5	Count	5	Count	5	Count	5	Count	5	Count	5

The most vacant units were recorded for Neighborhood #158 (Golden Gate) and 301.01

(Laguna Honda), both reported 4% of the housing units in those areas vacant. The median

percent of vacant housing units for all neighborhoods was 3%.   As shown in **Figure 71,** the

percent of vacant units in the selected neighborhoods are consistent with the percent of vacant

units for the SFUSD. The District's percent of vacant units was 5%.

Figure 71 Percent of Vacant Units by School District and School Quality
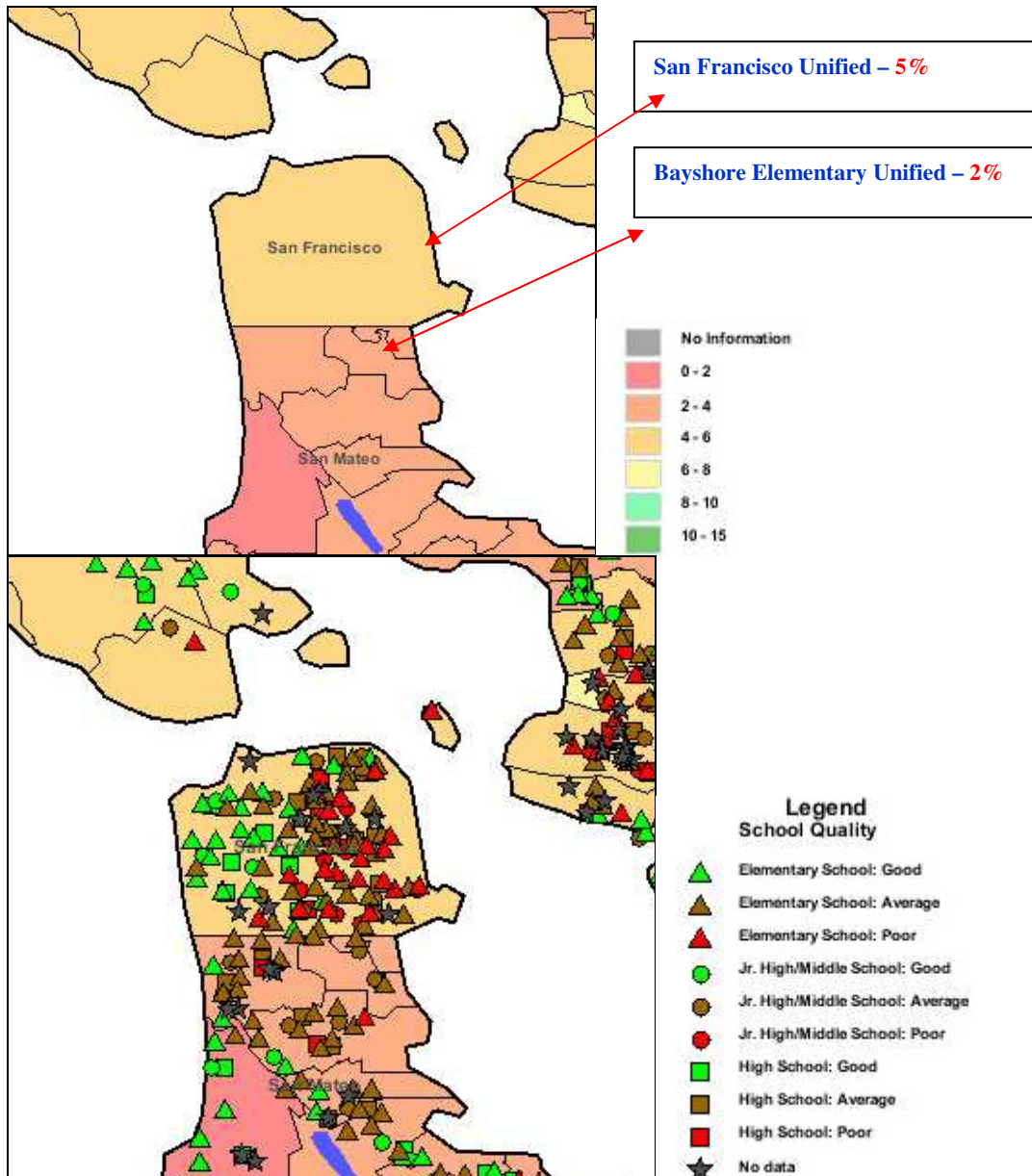
The number of good and average schools in SFUSD, as indicated in **Figure 71**, was greater than those schools that were determined to be poor performing.

Appendix K: Philadelphia CMSA and Philadelphia Public Schools

As can be seen in **Figures 73, 74**, and **75**, Philadelphia, like most central cities, had populations that were racially segregated. The central city is "shared" primarily by blacks and Hispanics, but in mainly separate neighborhoods.

Figure 73 Percent of Whites (Alone) Living in Philadelphia by Census Tract and School District
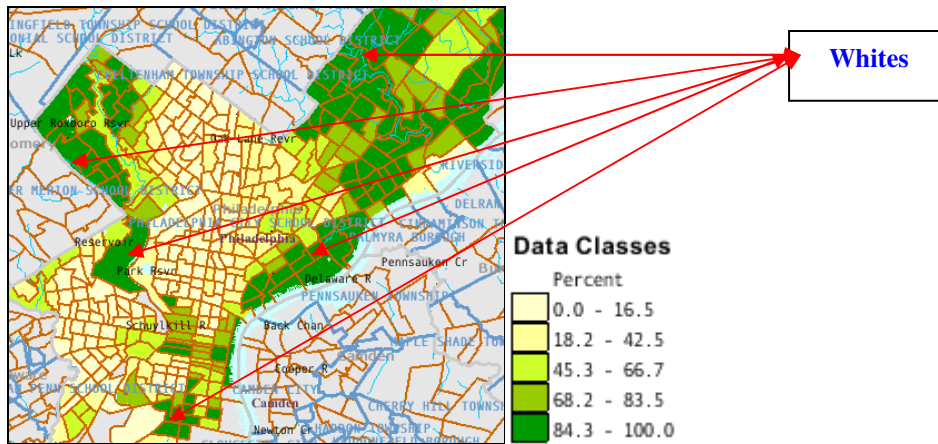
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Figure 74 Percent of Blacks (Alone) Living in Philadelphia by Census Tract and School District
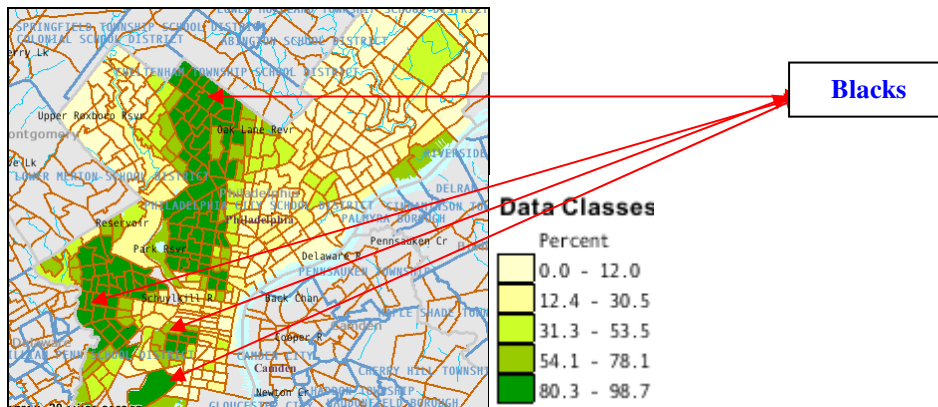
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Figure 75 Percent of Hispanic (Any Race) Living in Philadelphia by Census Tract and School District
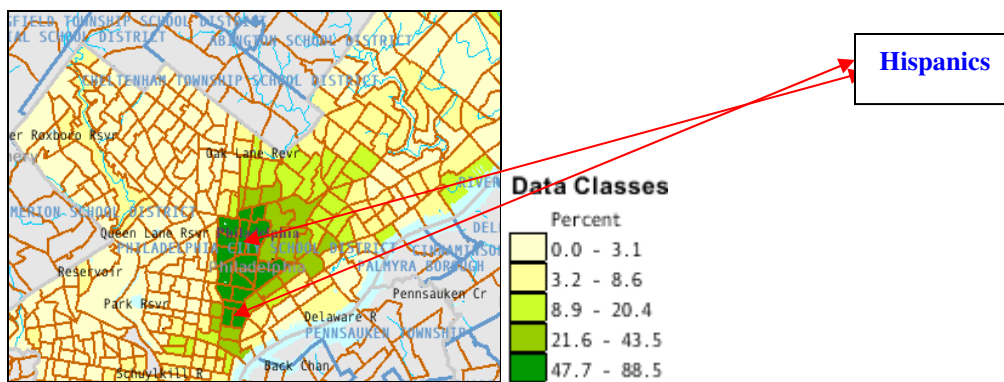
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, P8.

Philadelphia Public Schools

305

The Philadelphia Public School District is divided into twelve regions each under the supervision of a Regional Superintendent[115].   In 2000, the Pennsylvania state legislature approved mayoral control of the Philadelphia's Public Schools. In 2009, the School District of Philadelphia reported approximately 167,000 students in 265 public schools, to include 177 elementary schools.   The average student/teacher ratio was nearly 18 to 1.[116]

Of the nearly 564,000 households included in the district, single females head nearly 17%. As noted in **Figure 76**, in 2008, blacks represented 65% of the total student population and Hispanics accounted for 16%.

Figure 76 Racial Composition: Philadelphia Public Schools
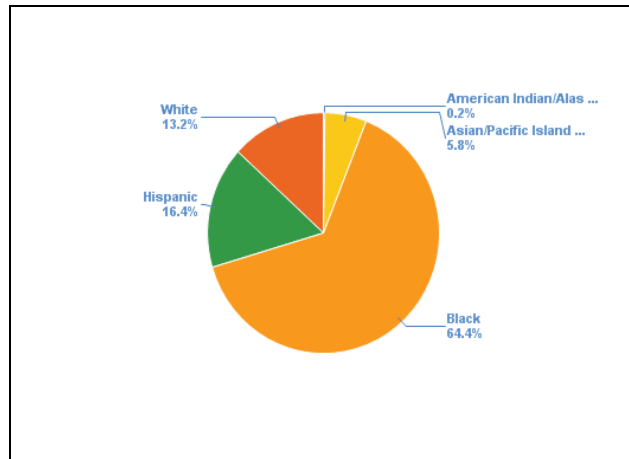
Source: SchoolMatters.com (2008)

Over 70% of the total student population was economically disadvantaged. Students with disabilities represented 15% of the population. The school district provided nearly 130,000 free and reduced meals to students on a daily basis--44,000 breakfast meals and 86,000 lunches.

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[115] Source: Philadelphia Public Schools website, http://www.phila.k12.pa.us (2009).

[116] School district data is provided Standard & Poor's, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc through School Matters.com (www.schoolmatters.com).

Like the city's population, the school district's population continued to decline. The school system lost nearly 5% of its students between 2003 and 2007, many to charter school programs. This trend, as identified in **Table 59**, is expected to continue.

Table 59 Student Enrollment Trend: Philadelphia Public Schools

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
192,683	189,779	186,051	183,188	174,718
% Change	**-1.5%**	**-2.0%**	**-1.5%**	**-4.6%**

Currently, there are more than 60 charter schools in Philadelphia enrolling more than 30,000 students. Philadelphia has budgeted $317 million for charters next year; charter costs are the fastest growing item in its $2.3 billion budget. The Philadelphia Public School District released a "blueprint" to reform the school system. This plan proposes to close 35 failing schools that will be reopened as charter schools.[117] In 2000, a high percent (26%) of Philadelphia's children were under the age of 18 lived below the poverty rate. As shown in **Figure 77**, for individuals living in the City, the overall poverty level at 19% below the poverty rate.

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[117] Source: 2009. Graham, Kristen, "District to Reveal Plan for Revamping Schools". Monday, February 23, 2009. Philly.com. Accessed on May5, 2009.

Figure 77 Philadelphia Urban Area: Poverty Level for Children Under 18 Years
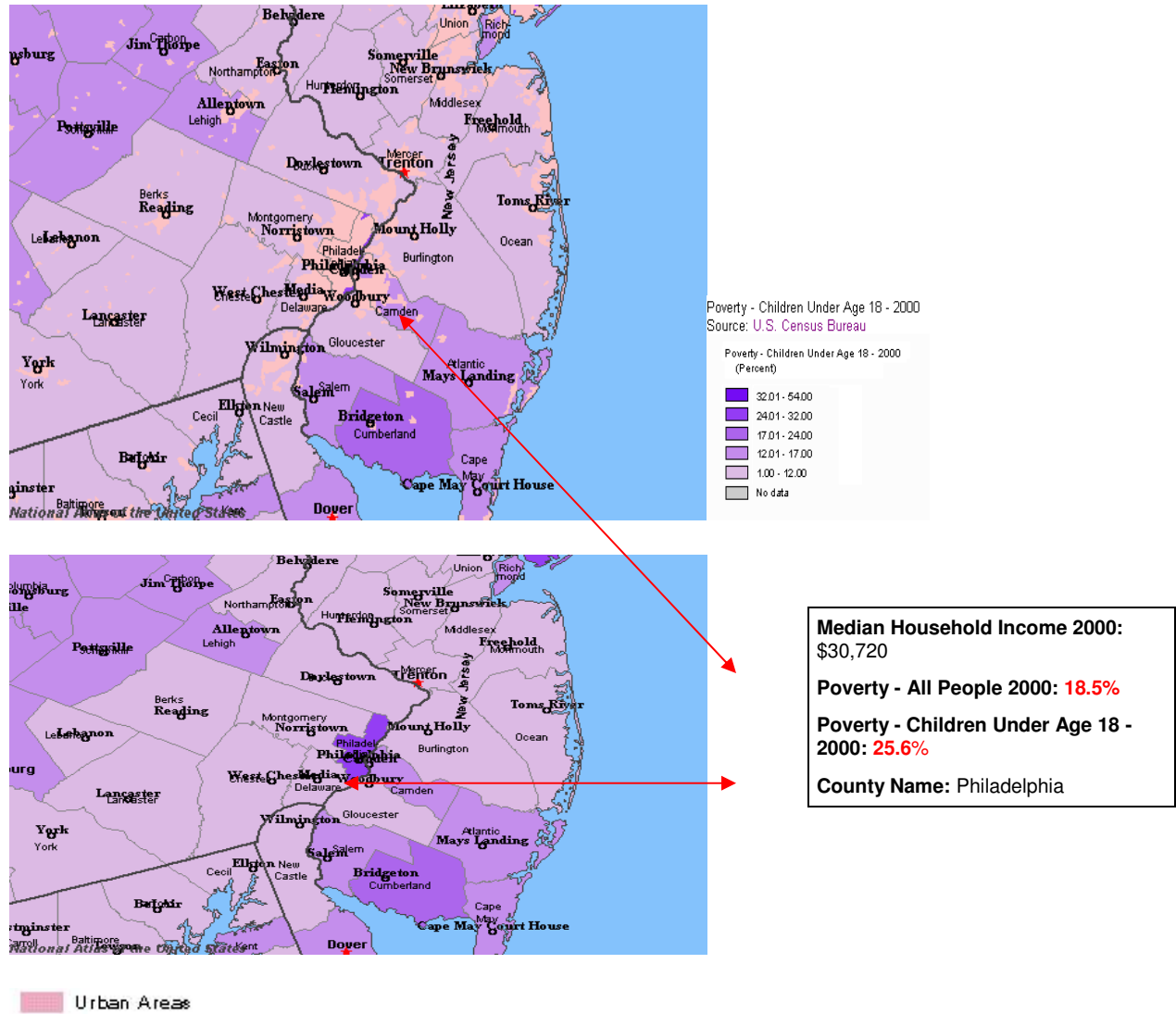
High poverty rates contribute to Philadelphia's decline in student enrollment, as does the available of education and residential options. In addition to private schools and charter school programs that draw students from the Philadelphia Public Schools, there are a number of public school divisions in close proximity to the City of Philadelphia. Some of school districts that are close enough to offer Philadelphia residents education choices are identified in **Figure 78**.

Figure 78 School Districts in Close Proximity to Philadelphia Public Schools.
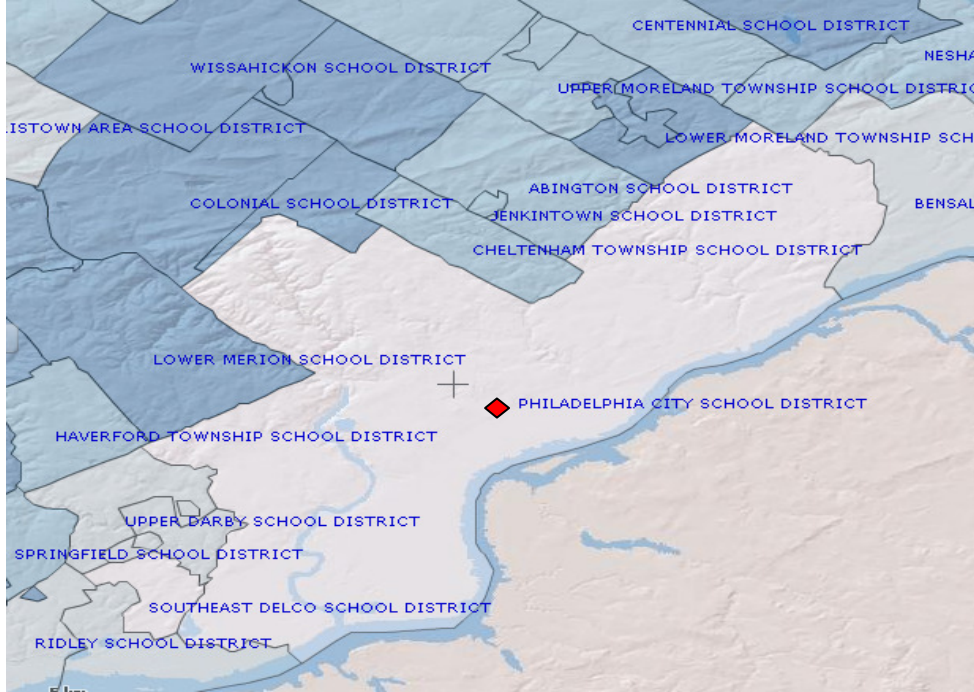
Source: Census School District Tabulation (STP2); U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division and sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics.

There are number travel options available to Philadelphians that provides them access to other school districts and other neighborhoods. Some of these available roadways can be seen in **Figure 79**.
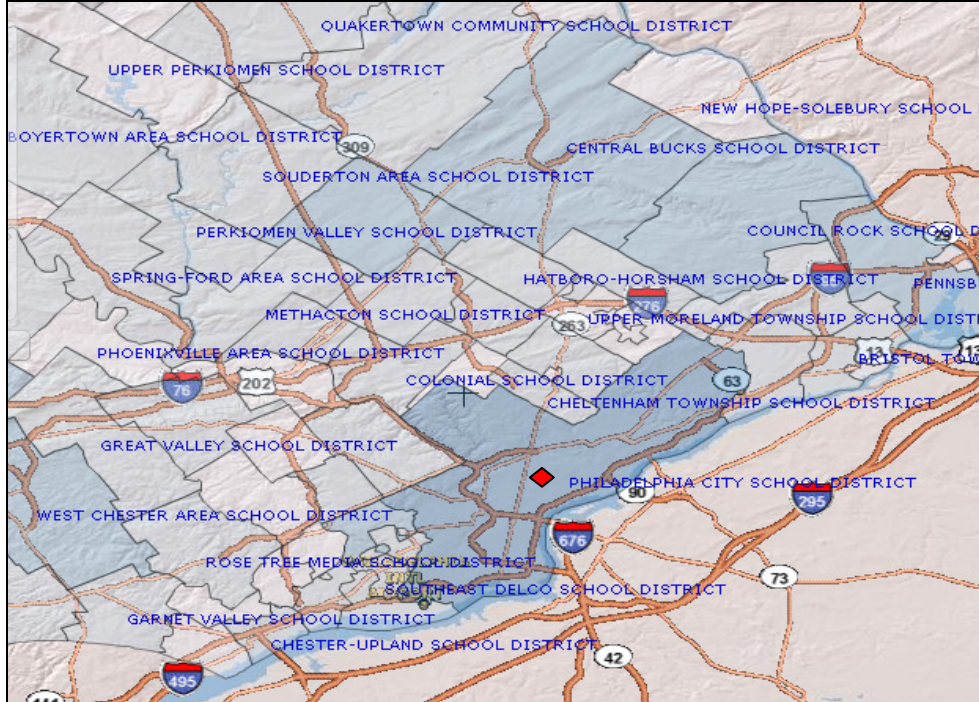
Source: Census School District Tabulation (STP2); U.S. Census Bureau's Population Division and
sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics

School and residential choices, in addition to easy access to areas outside the central city
areas, provide families with the financial resources the means to enroll their children in better
performing schools. Consequently, the City of Philadelphia has a significant number of vacant
housing units. As research has indicated, vacant and abandoned properties contribute to crime,
area disinvestment, and a host of social and economic problems. These problems escalated when
properties remain vacant for long periods. The percent of vacant housing units in relation to the
neighborhoods specific to the Philadelphia School District is shown in **Figure 80**.

Figure 80 Percent of Vacant Housing Units in Philadelphia by Census Tract and School District
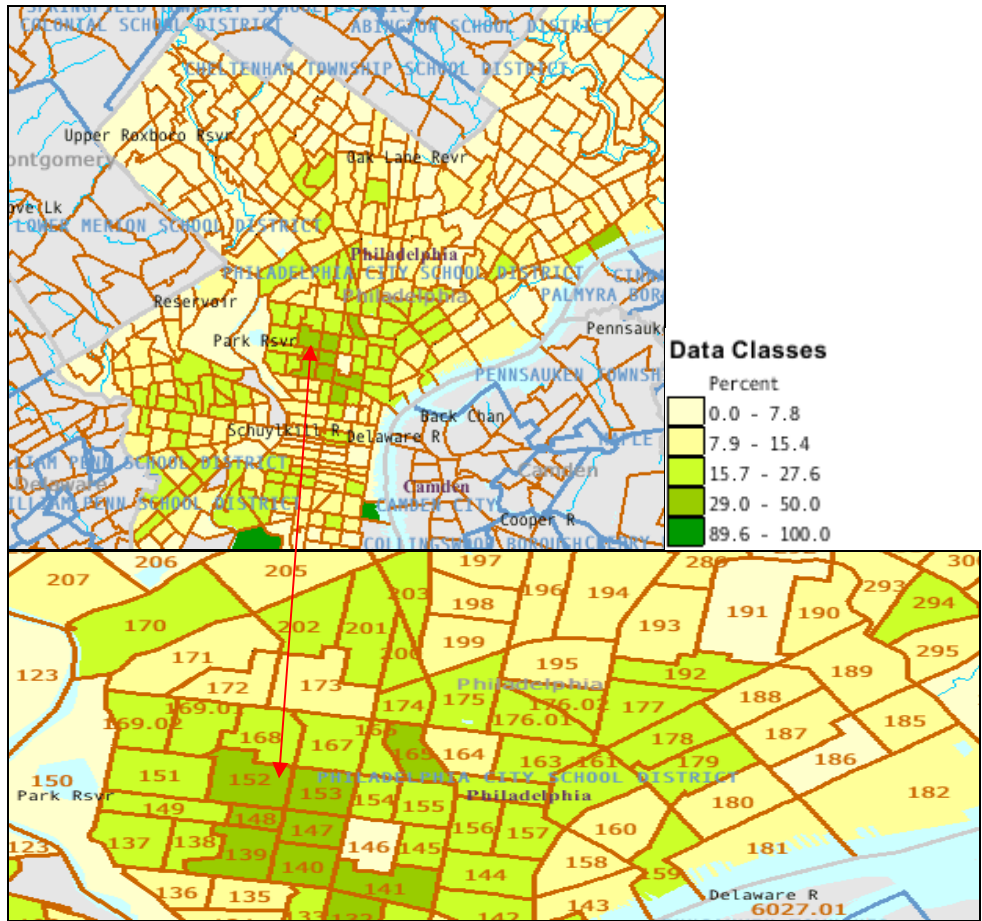
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices H1, and H3.

The lower portion of **Figure 80** is an enlargement of the upper portion of this map. The lower

portion allows the impacted neighborhoods to be identified. This is important, as the only

identifiable abandoned elementary school is located within one of these neighborhoods,

Neighborhood #138.

311

Abandoned Schools – Philadelphia City Public Schools

The City of Philadelphia has consistently partnered with charter school programs to transfer abandoned schools to charter programs.   As a result of this fact and the lack of data specific to school abandonments, the only identified abandoned neighborhood school as Boone Elementary.   Based on the NCES (2000-2001) data reviewed, a number of high schools and middle schools were closed, but Boone was the sole elementary school included for the Philadelphia City Public Schools.

Selected statistics for Neighborhood #138 are displayed in **Table 60** and **Table 61**. In 1980 Neighborhood #138 had a total population of 3,700. Between 1980 and 1990, the population decreased by 21%. This trend continued and between 1990 and 2000, the neighborhood's population declined by another 21%.[118]

Table 60 Selected Stats for Abandoned Neighborhood School in Philadelphia City Public Schools (A)

Abandoned Elementary School	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or younger	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Boone	138	50	42	17	17,480	26

In 1980, 1990, and 2000, the racial composition for Neighborhood #138 was predominately black. However, over the 20-year period, about 39% of blacks moved away from the neighborhood between 1980 and 2000. Whites also left the City between 1980 and 1990 (-19%), but Hispanics increased their representation by 3% for the same period.   As noted in **Table 61,** the median family income was almost $17,500. The per capita income was $10,855 and the

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[118] Source: FreeDemographics.com and US Census Data, 2000

312

reported unemployment rate was nearly 17%. Roughly 32% of the population in Neighborhood #138 earned less than $10,000 annually.

The overall poverty rate for individuals residing in Neighborhood #138 was 42% below the poverty level. For single female households with children under 18 years of age, the poverty rate was 50% below the poverty level. In 2000, nearly 38% of the population earned high school diplomas, and about 5% had attained college degrees.   Over half of all students residing in the Neighborhood #138 were enrolled in elementary school.

Table 61 Selected Stats for Abandoned Neighborhood School in Philadelphia City Public Schools (B)

Abandoned Elementary School	Census Tract	Student Enrollment	% Elementary Students	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
Boone	138	549	51	95	2	1

In 2000, nearly 38% of the population earned high school diplomas, and about 5% had attained college degrees.   Over half of all students residing in Neighborhood #138 were enrolled in elementary school.

Despite the City's overall poverty level of 11% (**See Figure 81**), Neighborhood #138 was clustered with a number of neighborhoods (census tracts) that had overall poverty rates of 40% or higher. (**See Figure 82**)

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Figure 81 Poverty Rate for City of Philadelphia
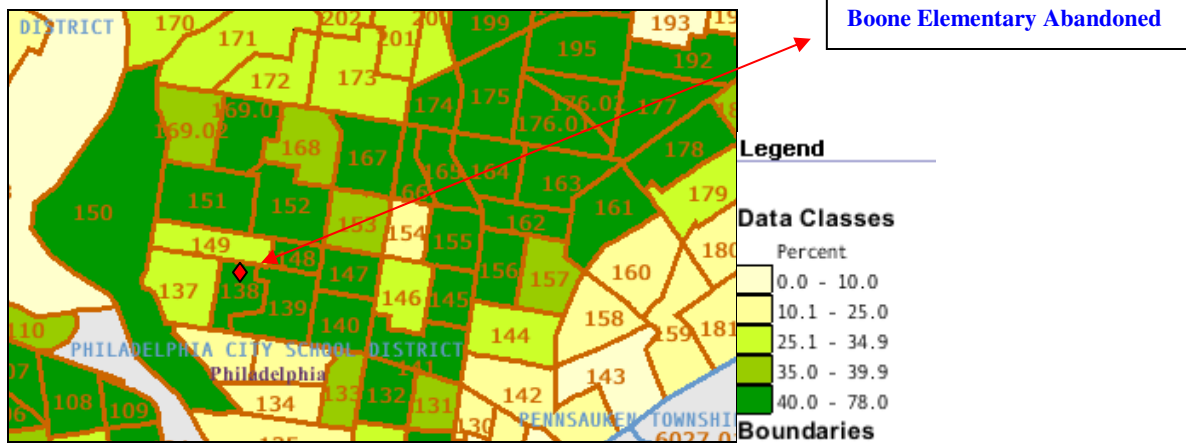
In 2000, of the total housing in Neighborhood #138, 39% of the units were owner occupied and 35% were renter occupied. Nearly 27% of the total housing units were vacant. The median house value for owner-occupied units was almost $19,450, and the average rental contract was $295. Nearly 55% of the homes in the Neighborhood #138 were built in 1939 or earlier.   There were no reported new homes built in this neighborhood between 1990 and 2000.

Figure 82 Percent of Vacant Housing in Philadelphia

314
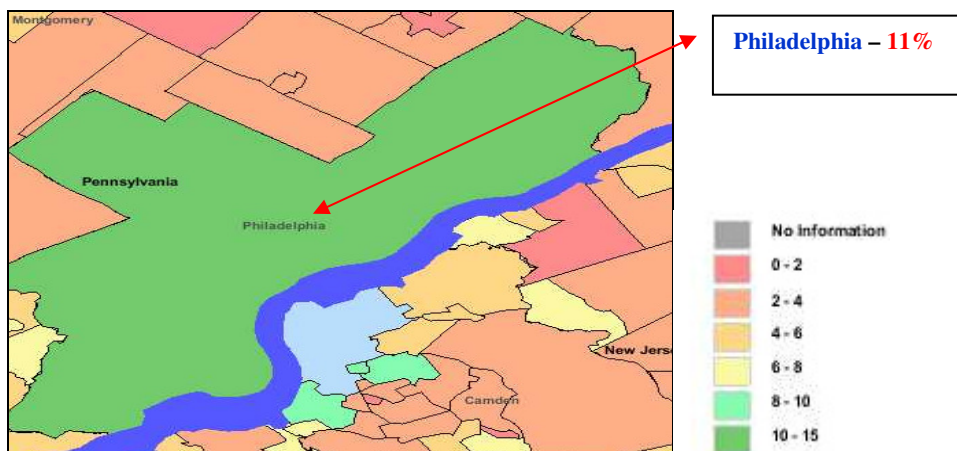
Figure 83 School Quality, Philadelphia City Public School District
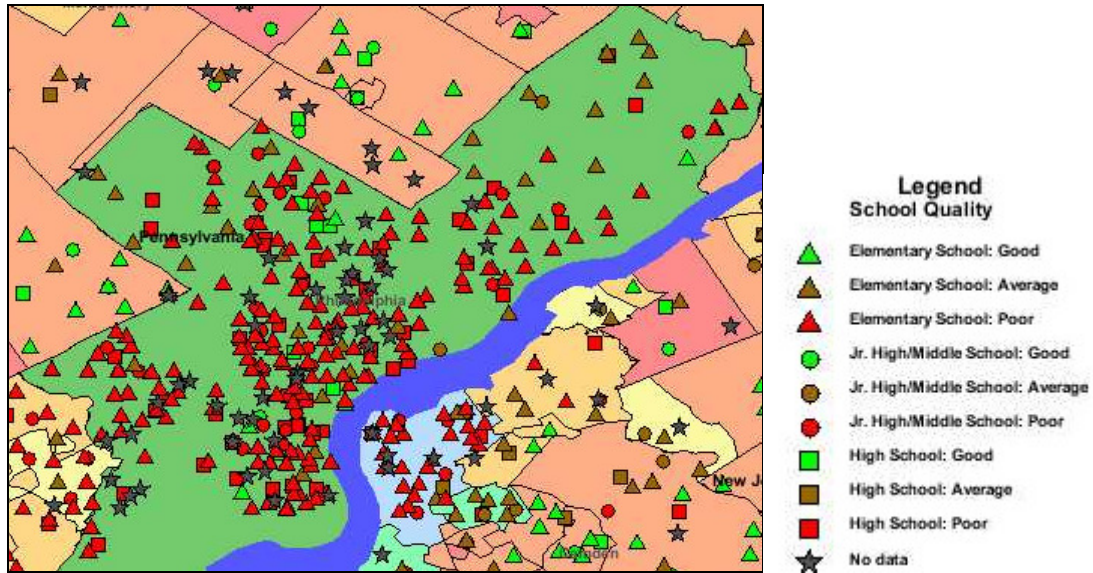
The school quality of Philadelphia's public schools was overwhelmingly poor.   As can be seen in **Figure 83**, a significant number of schools at all levels were poor performing and many schools had no data reported.

Appendix L: District of Columbia Public Schools

Comprised of almost 7.6 million residents, the Washington DC CMSA, ranked as one to the most populous CSMA in 2000. The District of Columbia accounted for nearly 5 million of the CSMA's total population. The District of Columbia CMSA was comprised of six cities and the District, one in Maryland (Baltimore) and five in Virginia (Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park).   The CMSA's geographical area is shown in **Figure 84** and **Figure 85**.

Figure 84 Washington, DC--MD--VA--WV PMSA; Washington--Baltimore, DC--MD--VA--WV CMSA
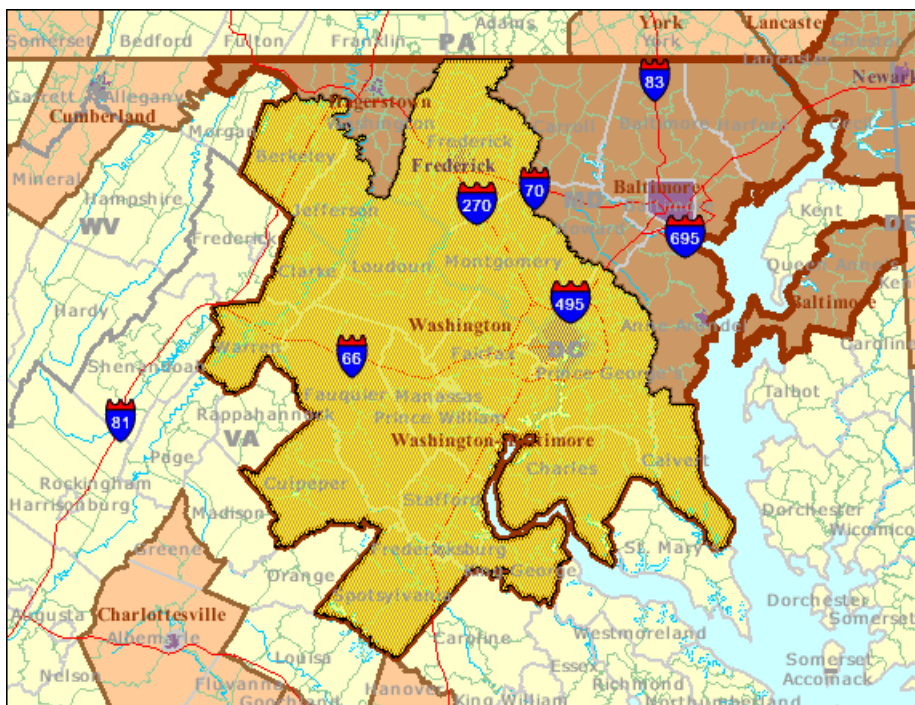
Most of the population lived in the core and inner suburbs (Washington, DC; Arlington; Alexandria; Fairfax County; Prince George's County; and Montgomery County). However, the

316

outer suburbs (such as Prince William and Loudoun Counties) have had the most rapid rates of growth.

Figure 85 Washington, DC MSA by Counties
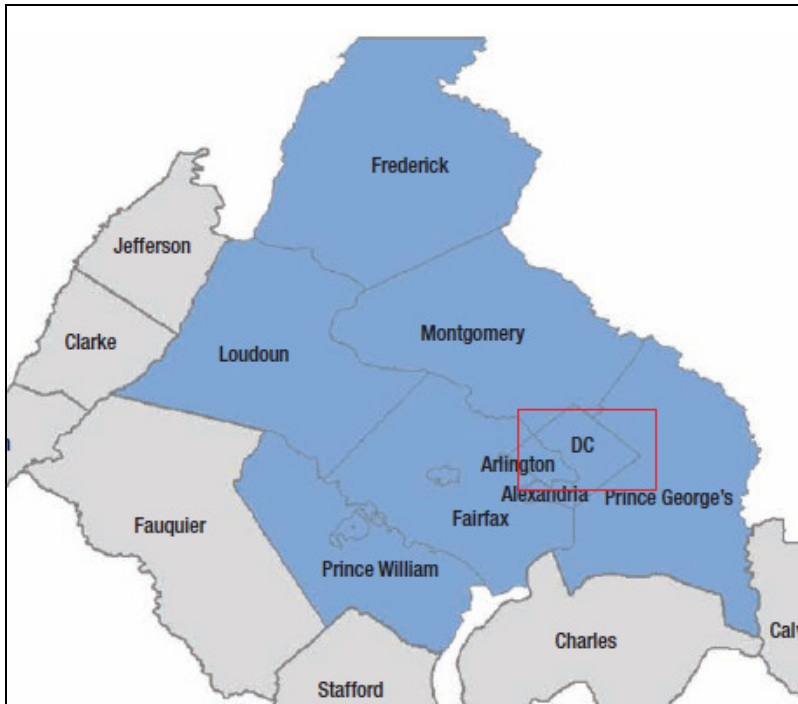
Source: National Center for Education Statistics and Brookings Institute Special Report [119]

From 1990 and 2000, the District and the city of Baltimore lost residents, 84,860 and 34,841, respectively. Twenty-seven counties were included in the District of Columbia CMSA, with Loudoun County, Virginia reported to be its fastest growing County. Loudoun County's population grew by nearly 97% between 1990 and 2000 (86,129 to 169,599).[120]

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[119] Special report, "Demographic and Economic Trends in the National Capital Region and their Effects on Children, Youth, and Families" by the Greater Washington Research at Brookings. January 2007.

[120] Source: US Census 2000 PHC-T-3. Ranking Tables for Metropolitan Areas: 1990 and 2000; Table 3: Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Population: 2000

Most of the population of the Washington region lives outside the District of Columbia and the same holds true for the immigrant population. In 2007, only 7 percent of immigrants in the region lived in the District. Fairfax (29%), Montgomery (27%) and Prince George's (15%) accounted for the majority of the immigrant population.

The poverty rate increased in the District of Columbia MSA by nearly 1% in 2000 when compared to 1990. The metro area's per capita and median income increased between 1990 and 2000. In 2000, the District of Columbia MSA recorded one of the highest median incomes ($60,731) of all of the selected areas. The District of Columbia MSA median income was second only to San Francisco ($63,297). The median income increased from $59,552 in 1990 to $60,731 (+1,179) in 2000. The per capita income increased from $27,169 in 1990 to $30,350, resulting in a change of +3,181. Economic prosperity in the area is indicated by the increases in per capita and median income levels as well as the slight increase (1%) in the metro area's poverty rate. These statistics suggest that some individuals with incomes in the lower brackets did not share in the economic prosperity, as did others in higher income brackets.

The District's population continues to be racially segregated. An examination of the region's census tracts clearly identified the separate residential neighborhoods in which whites, blacks, and Hispanic populations lived. As noted in **Figure 86**, **Figure 87**, and **Figure 88**, some of the neighborhoods were nearly 100% segregated, particularly in some neighborhoods occupied by whites and blacks.

Figure 86 Percent of Whites (Alone) Living in DC by Census Tract and School District

Whites

Data Classes
Percent
0.0 - 8.6
9.2 - 22.4
25.6 - 45.0
49.1 - 61.6
70.2 - 94.4
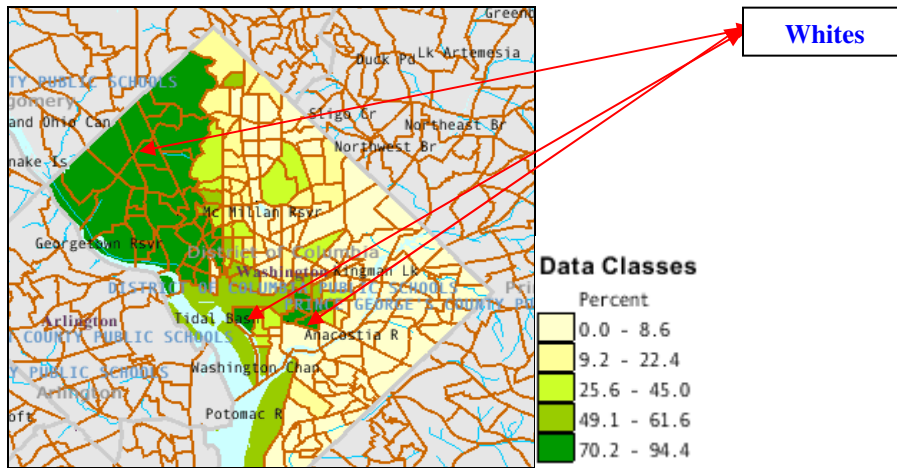
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Figure 87 Percent Blacks (Alone) Living in DC by Census Tract and School District

Blacks

Data Classes
Percent
0.0 - 14.2
19.7 - 41.7
45.6 - 68.2
70.0 - 86.9
88.1 - 99.4
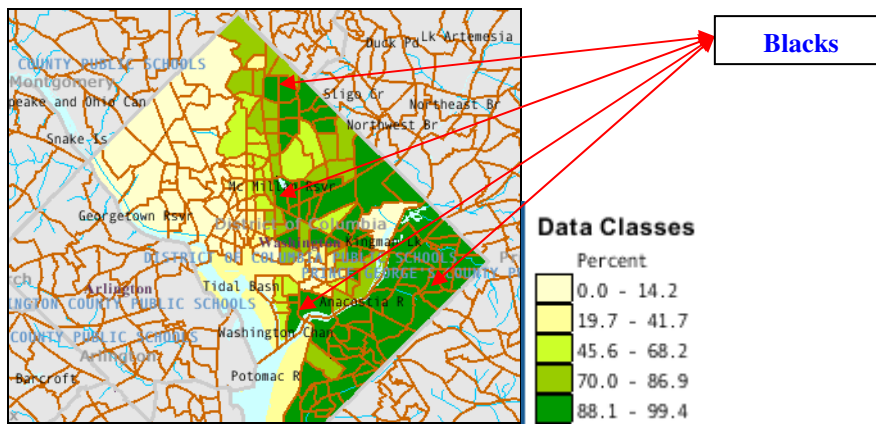
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Figure 88 Percent Hispanics (Any Race) Living in DC by Census Tract and School District
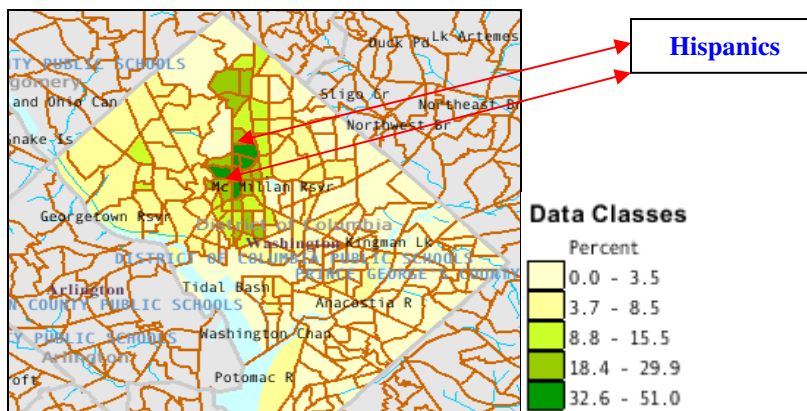
Hispanics

Data Classes
Percent
0.0 - 3.5
3.7 - 8.5
8.8 - 15.5
18.4 - 29.9
32.6 - 51.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P8

319

In 2000, the District's percent of vacant housing was about 10%. However, there were

areas in the region had vacant housing units that exceeded 50%. These neighbors are shown in

Figure 89.

Figure 89 Percent of Vacant Housing Units in DC by Census Tract and School District

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices H1, and H3.

320

District of Columbia School District

In 2007, the District of Columbia Council approved the shift of control of its school system to Mayor Adrian M. Fenty.   This approval gave the mayor control over the school district's budget, its key administrative functions, and the charge to modernize its declining facilities. The school superintendent reports directly to Fenty (Stewart and Labbe, 2007).

In 1999, the district enrolled nearly 71,000 students and operated 162 schools. In 2008, DCPS operated 143 school buildings with 15 million square feet of space. By 2007, the student population reduced to nearly 57,000, of which almost 56% were considered economically disadvantaged or eligible for free and reduced lunches. The percent of children eligible for free and reduced lunches in the District of Columbia is identified in **Figure 90**

Figure 90 Percent of Children Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunches in DC Schools
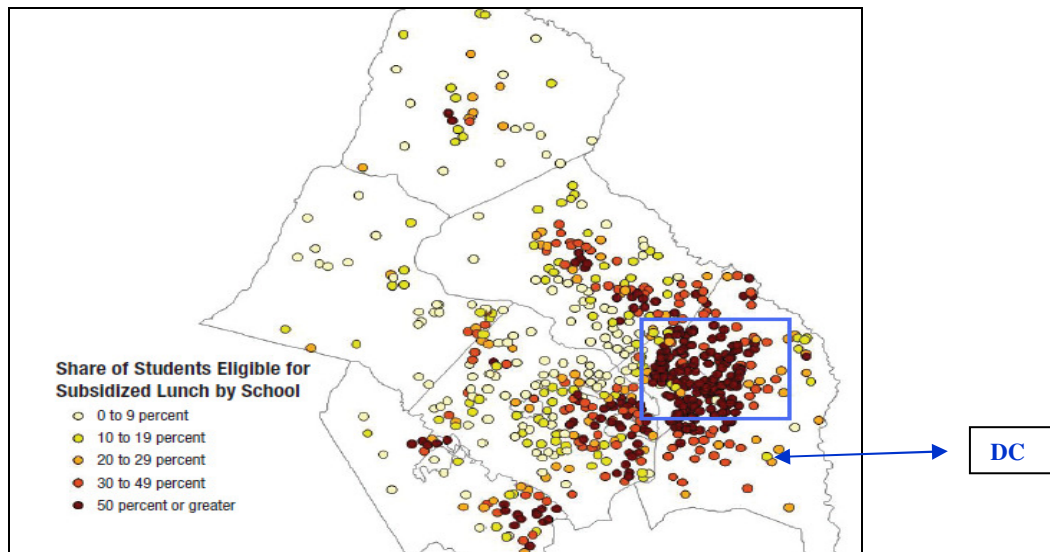
Source: NC ES (2005-06) and Brookings Institute Special Report

In 2007, the District's student population was majority 82% black and 6% white. Hispanics accounted for nearly 10% of the school division's population[121]. The racial composition of elementary school students is displayed in **Figure 91.** As is shown in **Figure 91**, white students resided in neighborhoods outside the Washington, DC area.

Figure 91 Elementary Students in Washington, DC Area by Race and Ethnicity
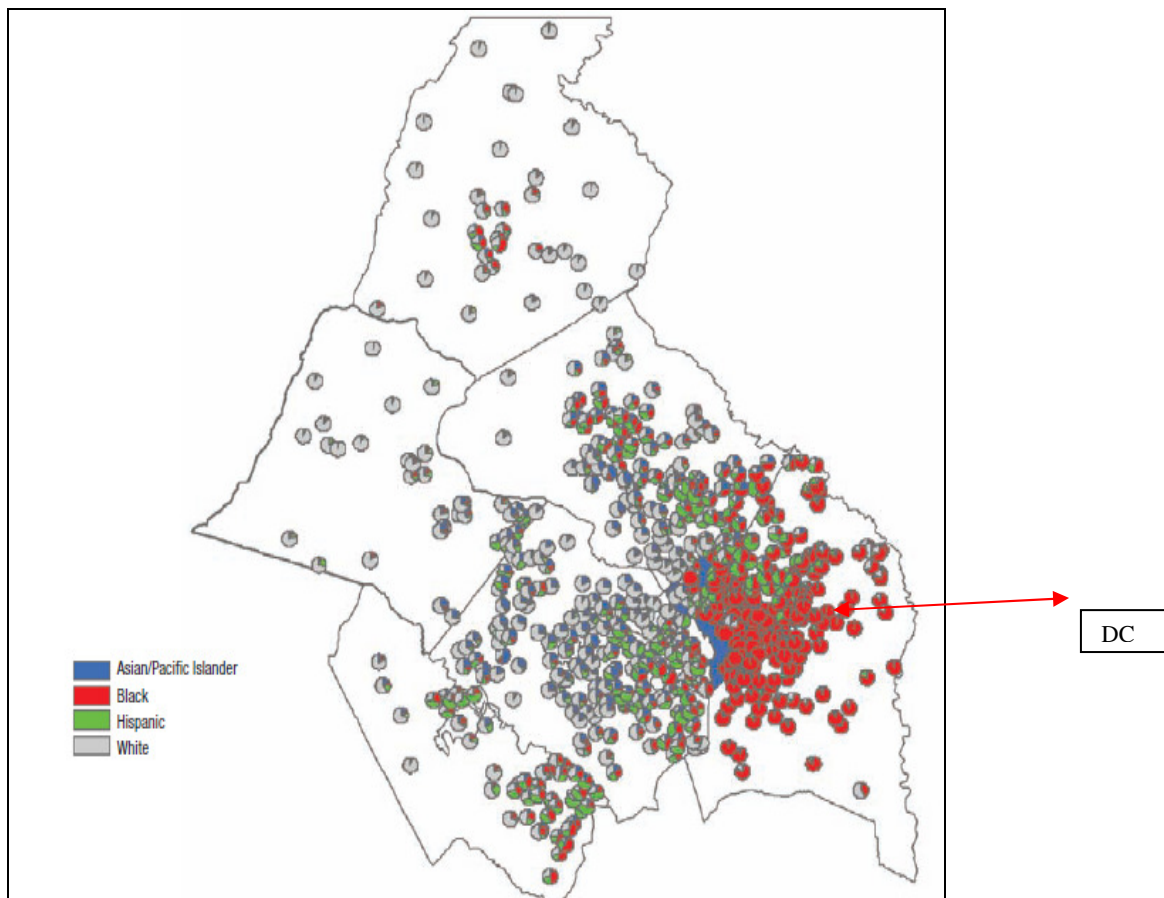
Source: National Center for Education Statistics and Brookings Institute Special Report [122]

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[121] Source: SchoolMatters.com, 2009.

[122] Special report, "Demographic and Economic Trends in the National Capital Region and their Effects on Children, Youth, and Families." Greater Washington Research at Brookings. January 2007.

Similar to the overall population in the City of Washington, the student population in the region lived segregated. For the most part, blacks, whites, and Hispanics are clustered in separate neighborhoods. **Figure 92** shows the race and ethnicity of elementary school students for the 2005-2006 school. Nearly 26% of the students in the City's school system lived below the poverty level. (See **Figure 93**)

Figure 92 DC Poverty Rate for Children under 18 Years

Poverty - Children Under Age 18 - 2000 (Percent)

- 32.01 - 54.00
- 24.01 - 32.00
- 17.01 - 24.00
- 12.01 - 17.00
- 1.00 - 12.00
- No data

Poverty Rate for Children <18 = **26.4%**
All People = **16.3%**
Washington, DC 2000

Figure 93 DC by Urban Area and Poverty Rate for Children under 18 Years

Urban Areas

Population as of 2000: 951,270

323

Abandoned Schools: District of Columbia

Over the last decade, school administrators of the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and parents have struggled to reach a consensus on the closure and disposition of underutilized and ineffectively designed school facilities. At a public meeting, parents voiced their opposition to Michelle Rhee's (Schools Chancellor) proposal to close 23 schools.   Hayes (2008) reported that the closure of 23 schools would result in the relocation of nearly 5,300 students and a number of special programs. Ms. Rhee estimated that the closures would result in estimated $23.7 million annually in costs associated with utilities, operational maintenance and staff, including principals, custodians and clerical employees. However, some have suggested that net savings would be much lower.

Many parents believe that the successful neighborhood programs that benefit the children and their community will be abandoned when the schools are abandoned. Some parents liken that these closures to uprooting a seed from its fertile ground with hopes of a successful transplant. Mayor Fenty stated that five of the 23 abandoned buildings would be leased to various city agencies and two to charter schools. One school will become a satellite office of the Department of Motor Vehicles and one will house social services programs. Public Works, the Department of Corrections, Fire and Emergency Medical Services, and the Department of Parks and Recreation are slated to reuse space in three closed schools (Haynes, 2008).

As depicted in **Figure 94**, in 2008, the school system had eight attendance areas or wards. Schools slated for closure are depicted in **Figure 94**. While no schools in Ward 3 will be impacted by the District's plan, the bulk of the closures will occur in Ward 5.   Six abandonments were

proposed in Ward 5, four in Ward 1, and three in Wards 6 and 8. Only one facility is to be

closed in Ward 2 (Labbé and Haynes, 2008).

Figure 94 Proposed School Closures in the District of Columbia
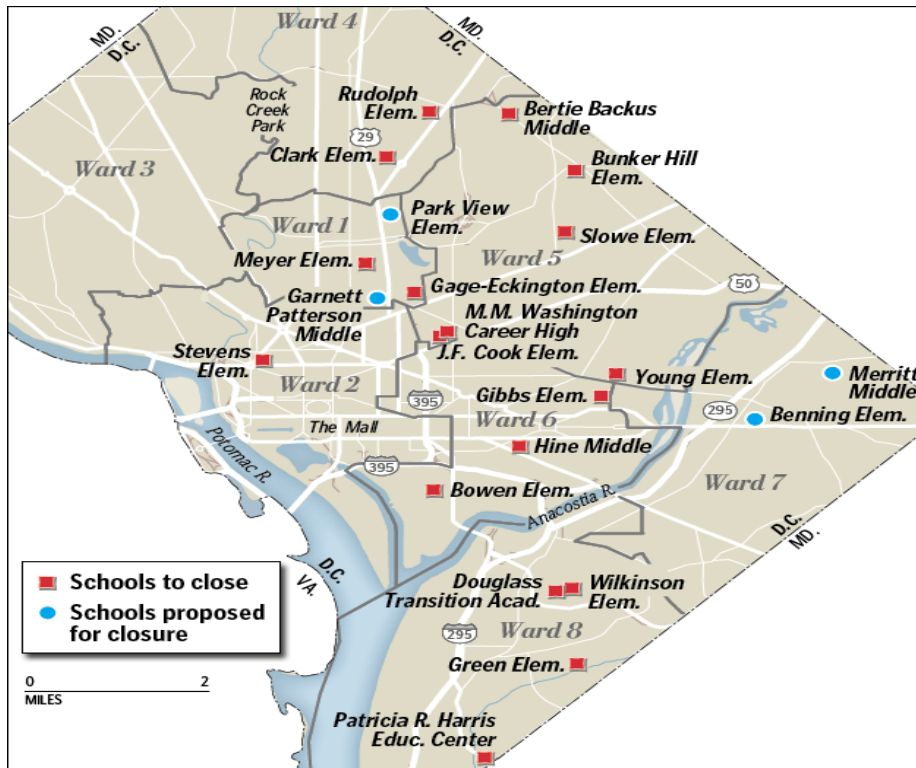
Source: Graphic by Mary Kate Cannistra, The Washington Post - February 1, 2008.

In 2002, a comparison of the district's eight Wards, indicated that Wards 2 (65%) and 3

(83%) have predominately White populations. Wards 4 (71%); 5 (88%); Ward 6 (63%); Ward 7

(97%) and Ward 8 (92%) had majority Black populations. Ward 3 reported the least number of

female householders with children (2.1%); Wards 5 (16.2%); Ward 7 (23.1%) and Ward 8

(33.1%) reported the most households headed by females with children.[123] Similarly, Wards 5

(20%); Ward 6 (21.1%); Ward 7 (25%); and Ward 8 (36%) posted the highest percents of

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[123] Source: Analysis of US Census Bureau data prepared by the DC Office of Planning/State Data Center.

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populations living below the poverty level.[124]   The median house value in Ward 3 ($449,000) was nearly five times that of the median house values in Ward 9 ($98,000) and three times that of the house values in Ward 5.

All Wards except for Ward 7 and Ward 8 had decreases in the unemployment rated between 2004 and 2006. The actual percent of unemployment for all Wards are displayed in **Table 62**.

Table 62 Percent Unemployment by Ward for the District of Columbia, June 2004, 2005, and 2006

Ward	Unemployment Rate 2004	Unemployment Rate 2005	Unemployment Rate 2006	Change 2004-02006
District of Columbia	8.6	7.5	5.4	**-3.2**
Ward 1	7.1	6.3	4.8	**-2.3**
Ward 2	6.4	3.8	2.9	**-3.5**
Ward 3	2.6	1.9	1.4	**-1.2**
Ward 4	7.3	5.8	4.4	**-2.9**
Ward 5	10.0	10.9	8.5	**-1.5**
Ward 6	8.9	8.7	6.6	**-2.2**
Ward 7	8.9	12.1	9.4	0.5
Ward 8	14.5	19.7	15.6	1.1
Source: DC Analyzer provided by the DC Department of Employment Services - Labor Force Information				

In 2000, the City of Washington had fewer whites living in central city than the surrounding suburban areas. On the region's 572,000 residents, whites accounted for nearly 31%. (See **Figure 95**)

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[124] Source: The poverty level for a family of four is $17,050. Federal Register, Vol. 65, No. 31, February 15, 2000, pp. 7555-7557

326

Figure 95 Percent of Whites Residing in the District of Columbia
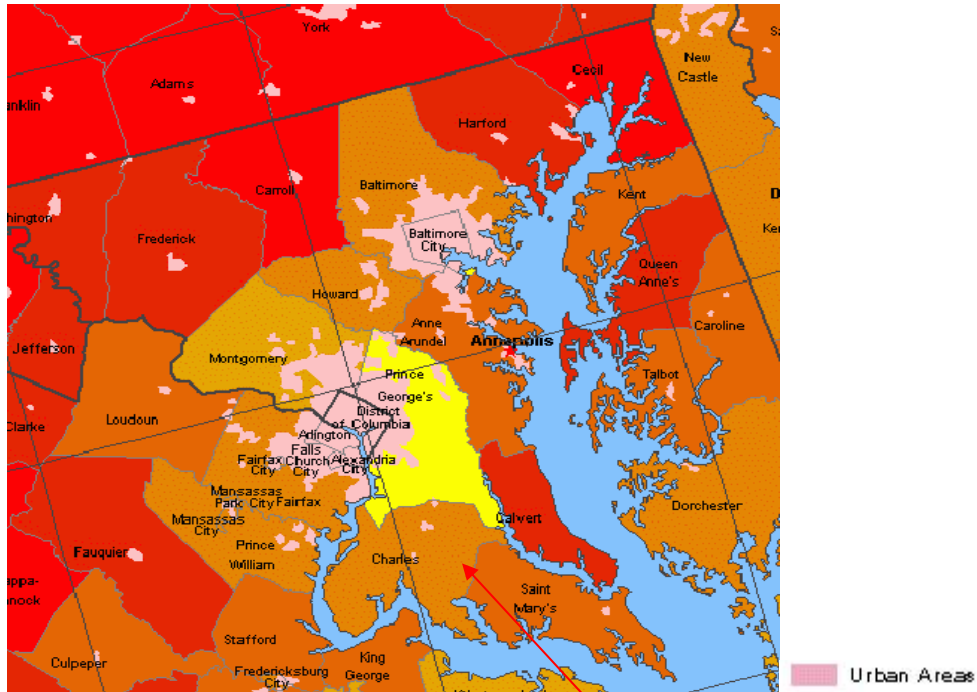
Percent of Population: White 2000
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

■	92.4 - 99.7
■	83.7 - 92.3
■	75.1 - 83.6
■	65.8 - 75.0
■	54.1 - 65.7
■	33.2 - 54.0
■	0.1 - 33.1
□	0
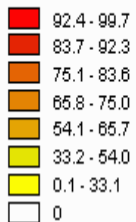
Race and Ethnic Population 2000
Percent of White Population 2000: 30.8
Total Population 2000: 572,059
County Name: District of Columbia
Urban Areas
Name: Washington Metro Area

Twelve elementary schools were identified as abandoned or proposed to be abandoned by the City of Washington. These schools, the neighborhoods (census tract) in which these were located, and selected descriptive statistics are depicted in **Table 63** and **Table 64**. The neighborhoods in which these 12 schools were located reported had unemployment rates that ranged from 1.9% in Neighborhood #54.01(Stevens) to 26% in Neighborhood #60.02 (Bowen). Of the neighborhoods in which abandonments occurred or were proposed to occur,

327

Neighborhood #60.02 (Bowen) had the highest percent of individuals living below the poverty

level (59%) and Neighborhood #34 (Gage-Eckington) had the highest percent of single female

households with children under 18 years of age who lived below the poverty level (74%).

Table 63 **Selected Stats for Neighborhoods with Abandoned Schools in City of Washington**

Abandoned School	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or <	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Harrison	44	38	20	3.1	$42,500	24
Meyer	35	50	36	4.7	$18,940	14
Gage-Eckington	34	74	40	7.5	$18,452	22
Rudolph	21.02	22	9	6.2	$36,489	9
Clark	26	72	8.5	3.4	$85,180	2.6
Slowe	93.01	15	14	7.1	$51,125	7.8
Young	89.04	55	36	7	$21,540	21
Bowen	60.02	64	59	25.5	$14,464	10.3
Gibbs	79.01	33	32	9.2	$24,327	14
Bunker Hill	95.03	0	7	3.7	$61,667	2.8
Green	73.04	63	44	10.6	$22,550	8.6
Stevens	54.01	0	15	1.9	$42,148	8.8

Neighborhood #54.01 (Stevens) had the largest population of white students (73%) followed by

Neighborhood #26 (Clark) at 30% of its total students.   As can be noted in **Table 64** most of the

abandoned schools had a student population that was majority minority and black students were

in the majority.

Table 64 Selected Stats for Neighborhood with Abandoned Schools in the City of Washington

Abandoned School	Census Tract	Student Enrollment	% Elem Students Enrolled	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
Harrison	44	657	40	58	24	13
Meyer	35	2049	12	83	11	2
Gage-Eckington	34	2569	9.3	91	3	3
Rudolph	21.02	1038	38	89	4	2
Clark	26	435	31	61	30	3
Slowe	93.01	847	37	71	18	6
Young	89.04	953	41	97	1	1
Bowen	60.02	365	67	96	1	1
Gibbs	79.01	1105	46	97	1	1
Bunker Hill	95.03	656	43	87	8	1
Green	73.04	1790	53	97	1	1
Stevens	54.01	555	2	8	73	5

The median percent of individuals in living below the poverty level for all Neighborhoods was 26%. For families lead by single females with children under 18 years of age, the median poverty rate was 44%. The median household income was $30,408 and the median rate for unemployment was 7%. (See **Table 65**)

Table 65 Selected Summary Statistics for Neighborhoods with Abandoned Schools in DCPS (A)

% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 or <		% Below Poverty Rate Individuals		% Unemployed		Median HH Income		% Vacancy Units	
Mean	40.5	Mean	26.7	Mean	7.5	Mean	36,615	Mean	12.1
Median	44.0	Median	26.0	Median	6.6	Median	30,408	Median	9.7
SD	26.6	SD	16.8	SD	6.2	SD	21,258	SD	7.1
Minimum	0.0	Minimum	7.0	Minimum	1.9	Minimum	14,464	Minimum	2.6
Maximum	74.0	Maximum	59.0	Maximum	25.5	Maximum	85,180	Maximum	24.0
						Sum	439,382		
Count	12	Count	12	Count	12	Count	12	Count	12

Source: Analysis, Poverty Status in 1999 by Census Tracts in the United States: U. S. Census Bureau, Summary File 3.

The mean and median statistics for race and student enrollment are identified in **Table 66**.

While white students represented a median of 6% of all enrolled students and Hispanic students

at only 3%, black students had a median representation of 88%.   Elementary school students had

a median representation 39%.

Table 66 Selected Summary Statistics for Abandoned Schools in DCPS (B)

Student Enrollment		% Elem Students Enrolled		% Black		% White		% Hispanic	
Mean	1,085	Mean	34.9	Mean	77.9	Mean	14.6	Mean	3.3
Median	900	Median	39.0	Median	88.0	Median	6.0	Median	2.0
SD	694	SD	18.8	SD	26.0	SD	20.9	SD	3.5
Minimum	365	Minimum	2.0	Minimum	8.0	Minimum	1.0	Minimum	1.0
Maximum	2,569	Maximum	67.0	Maximum	97.0	Maximum	73.0	Maximum	13.0
Sum	13,019								
Count	12	Count	12	Count	12	Count	12	Count	12

Source: Analysis, Poverty Status in 1999 by Census Tracts in the United States: U. S. Census Bureau, Summary File 3.

The overall poverty level for five of the twelve neighborhoods is identified in **Figure 96**. These

five neighborhoods represented the neighborhood that had abandoned elementary schools.

330

Figure 96 Poverty Level by Census Tract: District of Columbia (2000)
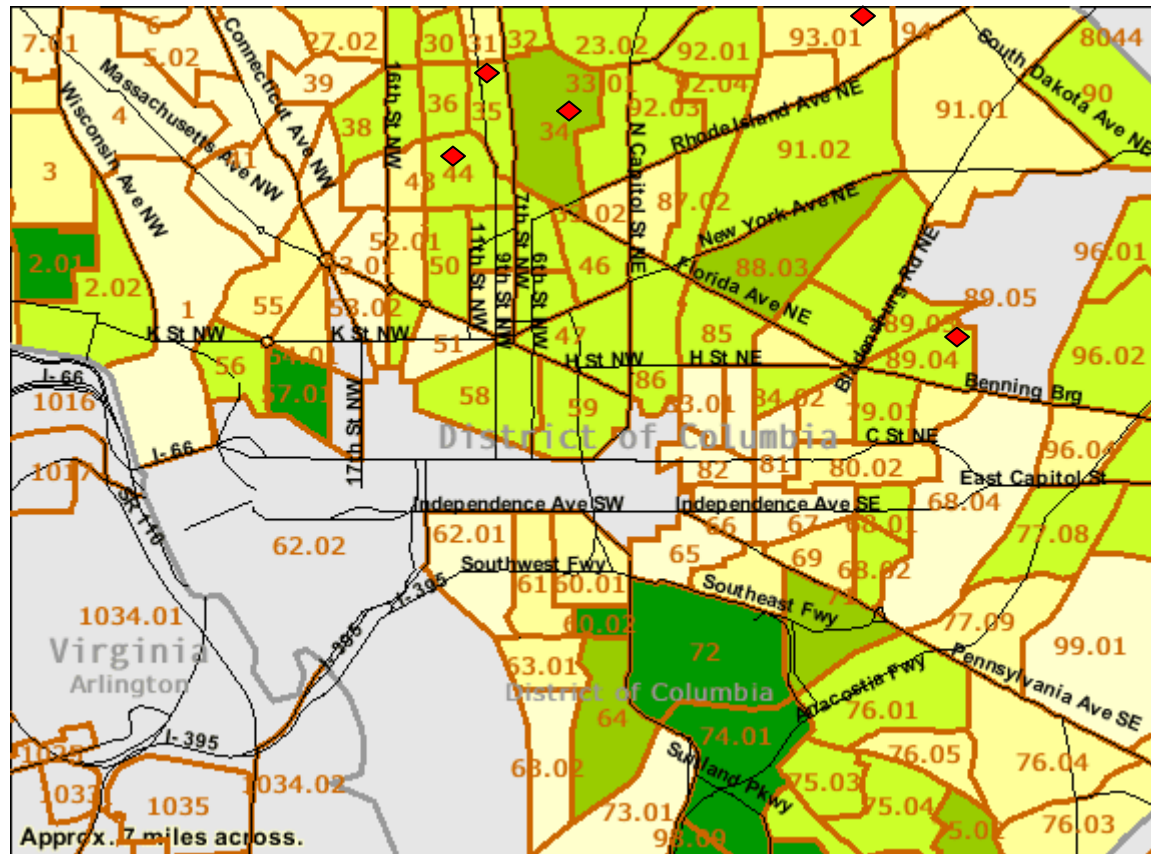
Data Classes

Percent

- 0 - 10.0
- 10.1 - 20.0
- 20.1 - 34.9
- 35.0 - 39.9
- 40.0 - 83.9

Boundaries

'00 Census Tract

*Abandoned Schools

Harrison -34   Gage Eckington   Meyer – 35   Slowe - 93.01   Young – 89.04

Appendix M: Detroit Public Schools

The Detroit CMSA, mapped in **Figure 97**, is home to nearly 5.5 million people. As such, the area ranks as one of the nation's most populous.[125] Despite the up and down population swings the Detroit CMSA, developed land grew by 26% of 287,000 areas between 1982 and 1997, but the area's population increased by only 104,000 (Brookings Institute, 2006).

Figure 97 Detroit CMSA

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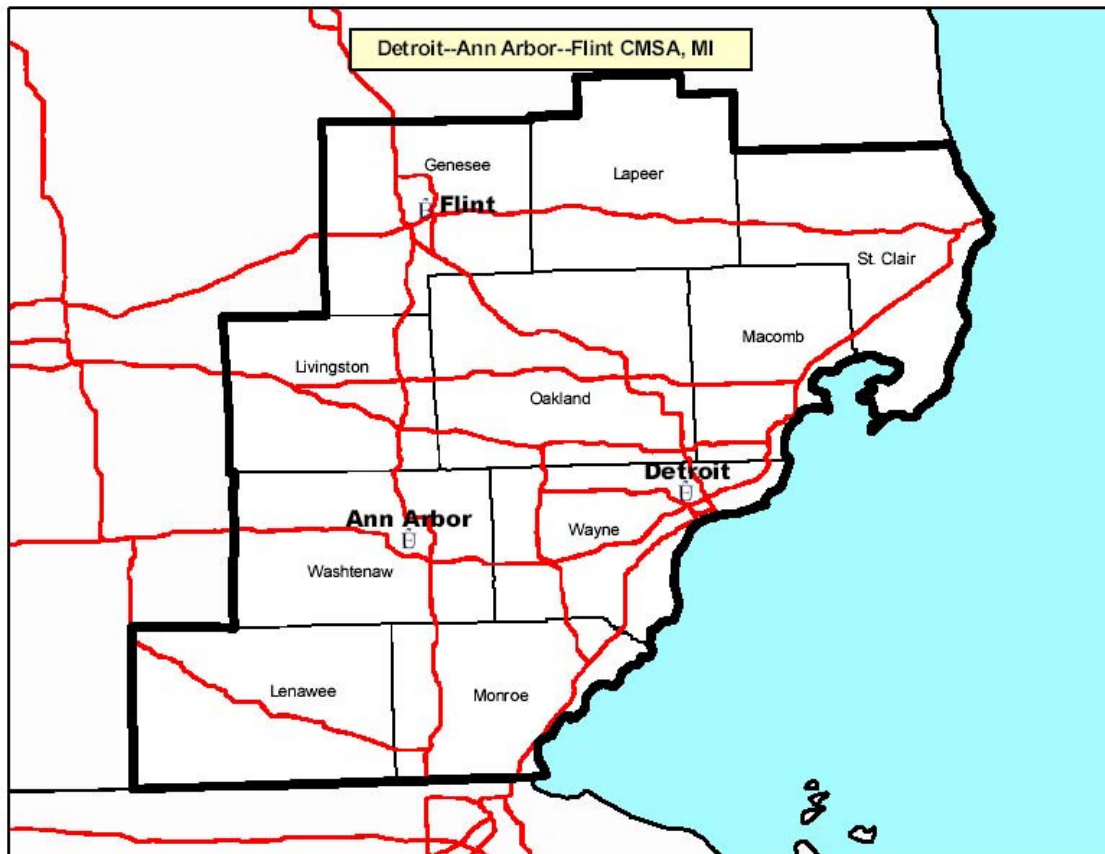
[125] Source: US Census 2000 PHC-T-3. Ranking Tables for Metropolitan Areas: 1990 and 2000; Table 3: Metropolitan Areas Ranked by Population: 2000

In 2000, the poverty level for children under age 18 in Wayne County, including Detroit, was 21%, while individuals in the County had an overall poverty rate of 14% (**Figure 98**)

Figure 98 Wayne County, MI-Poverty Level for Children under 18 Years

Median Household Income 2000: $40,488

Poverty - All People 2000: 14.4%

Poverty - Children Under Age 18 - 2000: 21.3%

County Name: Wayne
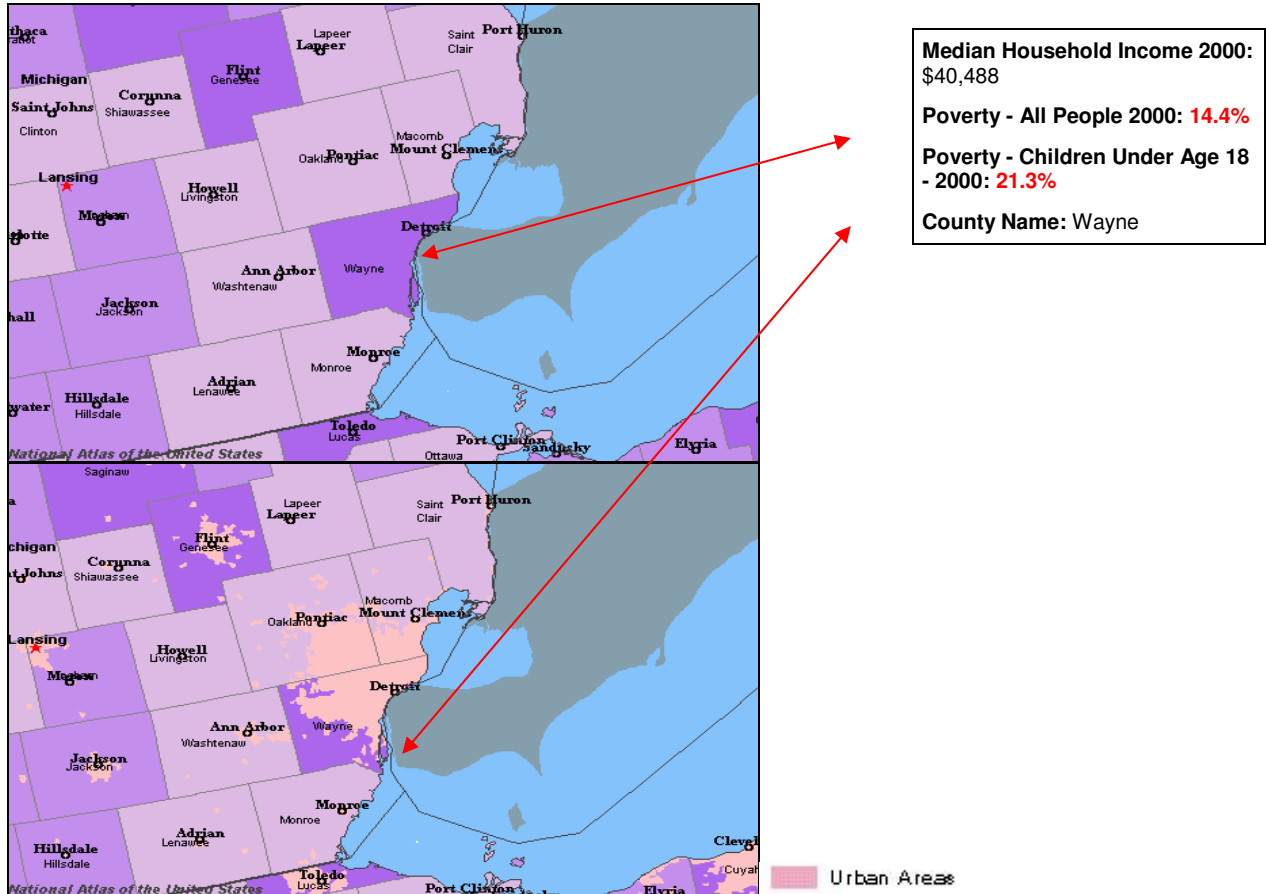
Detroit Public School District

As the total population continues to decline in the City of Detroit, the school district's student total enrollment continues to do the same. Since 1950, the city's population reduced from two million to less than 900,000. Detroit is home to one of the nation's fastest-shrinking major central city school district (Maxwell, 2007). As of 2005, the Detroit Public

Schools (DPS) had a student enrollment of 143,500, with a student/teacher ratio of 17 to 1. Seventy-four percent of the student population received free or reduced lunch daily.

During that same year, Chief Executive Officer, Kenneth Burney (at that time) announced a proposal to close 34 school facilities, with 20 to 30 more closures by the end of 2009. Burney also projected a student loss of nearly 10,000 per year in subsequent years. The closures were part of Burney's plan to cut more than $560 million in expenses from the DPS budget over five years, to include the loss of nearly 4,000 full-time school employees (McDonald, 2005). Twenty-three of the 34 schools to be closed were elementary schools, with students generally aged 10 and younger, who would have to be transported farther from their neighborhoods to attend classes.

During the 2008-2009 school year, the student enrollment is expected to decline below 100,000. The continued reductions in student enrollment will have adverse impacts on the financial condition of the overall school system. Bunkley (2008) reports that each lost student results in a $7,600 reduction in state aid. For the last decade, the district has been unsuccessful in its efforts to minimize its student losses. Detroit Public Schools currently has 40% fewer student than it had in 1997 and has closed dozens schools in recent years.

Like all other central city school divisions included in this study, DPS is surrounded by number of public school divisions that offer education options students and their families. These options are enhanced by the number of available travel options leading to and from the City of Detroit.

Figure 99 and **Figure 100** identify the proximity of other school divisions and the available travel routes that may contribute to shrinking number of students attending DPS.

Figure 99 Available Travel Routes in the DPS Area
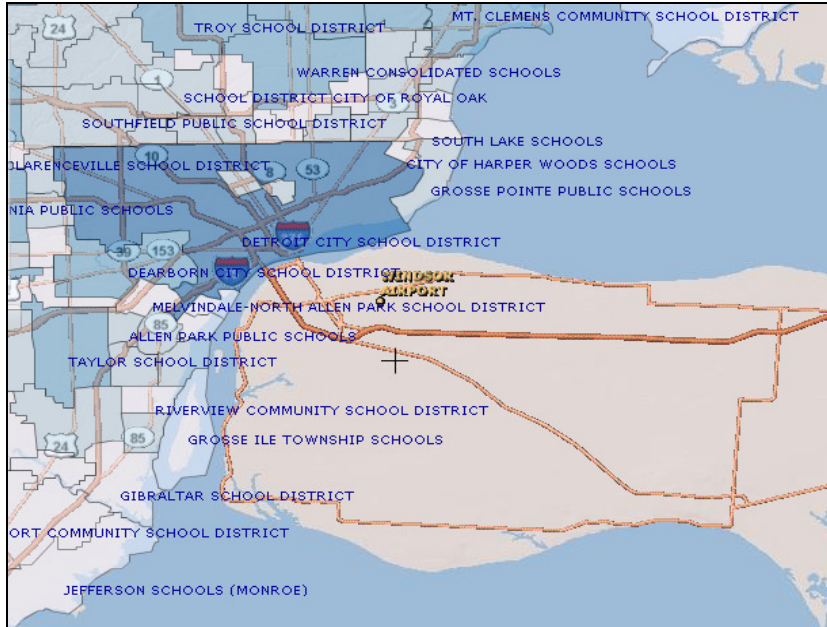
Figure 100 Public School Districts in Close Proximity to DPS

335
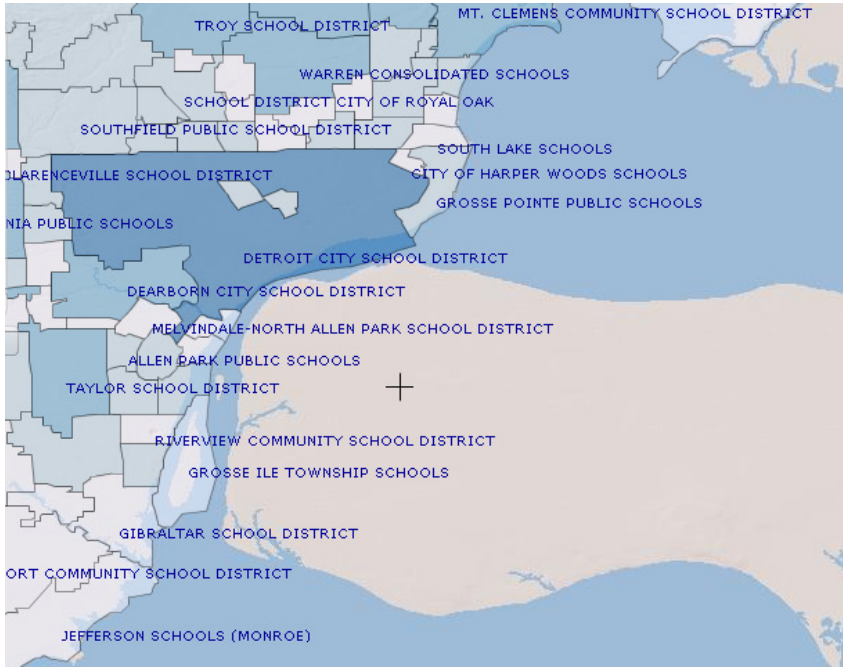
In 2007, the district maintained 194 school facilities, 130 of which were elementary schools. The average school age was 64 years. Despite the metro area's 52% white population (See **Figure 101**), the number of white students enrolled in DPS in small in comparison. The ethnicity of the student population was majority black (89%). Hispanics represented 7% and whites represented 3% (See **Figure 102**).

Figure 101 Percent of Whites Residing in the Detroit Metro Area
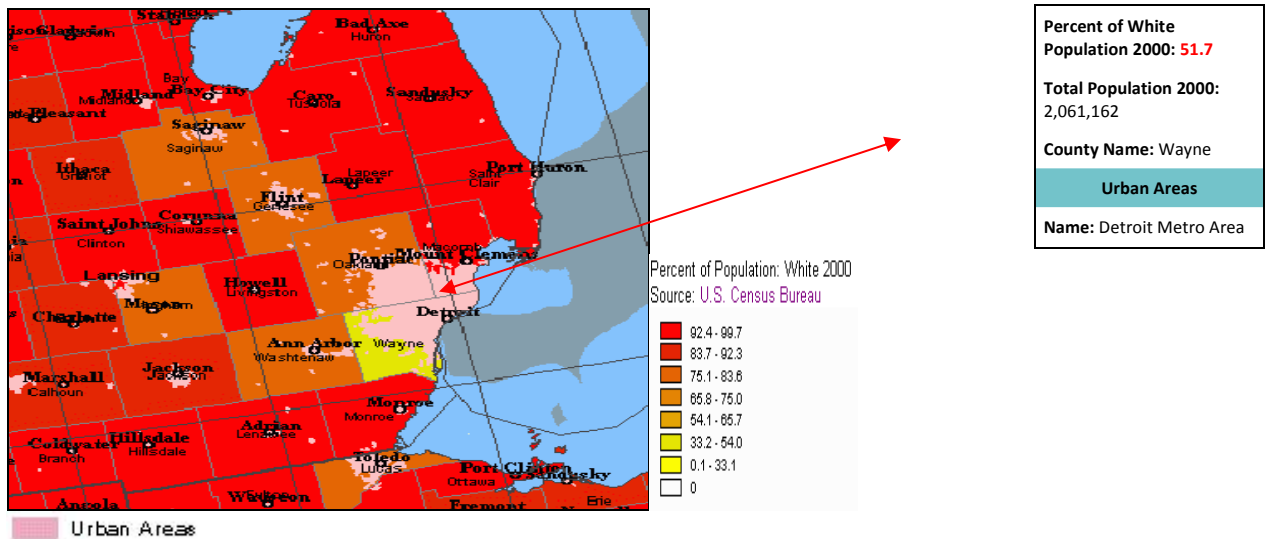
Figure 102 Student Racial Composition: Detroit Public Schools 2007
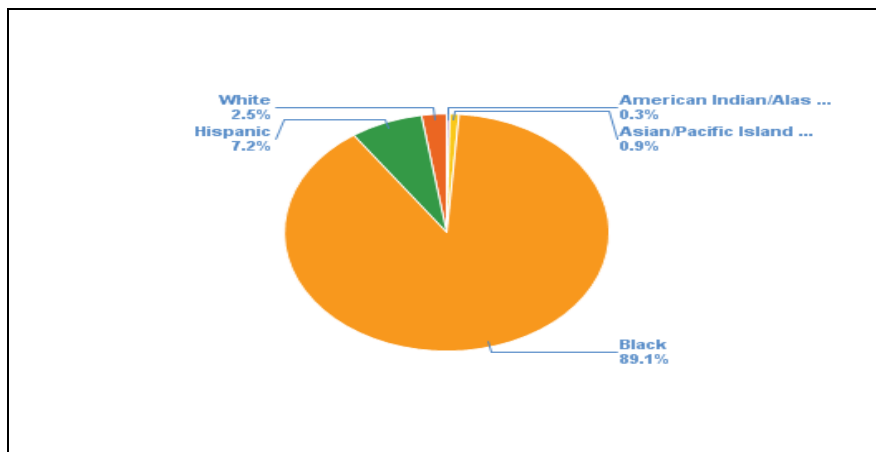
Source: SchoolMatters.com.

Many have described Detroit's student achievement levels as extremely poor and its financial outlook bleak. These factors contributed the termination of the district's superintendent, Connie Calloway in December 2009.   Mrozowski (2009) asserts that the school board cited poor performance as the reason for Ms. Calloway's ousting after only 18 months of service. During her tenure, administrators revealed massive fiscal problems, including a $140 million deficit for fiscal year 2008 that led the state to declare the school system in a financial emergency.

Recently, the newly appointed U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, stated he loses sleep over "the poor quality of education" Detroit students are getting. "I do worry a lot about Detroit," he said. "The dropout rate there is staggering. The quality of education is a travesty" (Hornbeck, 2009). The state's Governor has responded to Mr. Duncan's challenges to improve the system's education quality by hiring Robert Bobb and the district's new emergency financial manager.

As the emergency manager, Bobb will control the district's financial decisions, including balancing the budget and spending. He can also hire and fire staff and negotiate contracts. Mr. Bobb is the owner, president and CEO of LAPA, LLC, a private/public sector-consulting firm, has served as city administrator and deputy mayor for Washington, D.C., and as the District of Columbia's homeland security adviser. He also served as the city manager of Oakland, California and Richmond, Virginia. Effective mid-February 2009, Mr. Bobb will start in his new one-year term position at a salary of $260,000 and the responsibility for $1.2 billion budget. His hire in this position represents only the second time in Michigan's history that a school district's finances have been taken over (Mrozowski, 2009).

337

With proceeds from a 1994 $1.5 billion construction bond, Detroit Public Schools (DPS) closed 21 existing schools and opened 16 others between 2000 and 2003. The closures are part of a plan to cut more than $560 million in expenses from the Detroit Public Schools (DPS) budget over the next five years.

Detroit continues to struggle to find buyers or renters for its closed school buildings. Mark Schrupp, former deputy chief of facilities for the school district asserted, "There is no real strong market for these buildings" (MacDonald, 2007). These buildings are magnets for criminal activity. For example, Sanders Elementary, which closed in 2006, has incurred more than $1 million in vandalism damage. Schrupp further states that despite having all its windows boarded with wooden planks and a number of *No Trespassing* signs, the building's entrance to Ferry Elementary on Detroit's east side, which was closed in 2005, remains covered with graffiti.

As sprawl continues to expand county developments, some older suburban areas are, like inner cities, experiencing school abandonments. Livonia Public Schools, a county school district outside of Detroit, announced the closure of a number of schools, seven of which are elementary schools. These closures are a result of a lack of funding that is directly linked to continued decline in the district's student enrollment (Bouffard, 2005; Meyer, 2005). Livonia Public Schools is the largest school division in suburban Wayne County. Since1971, the school system lost nearly 20,000 students and was forced to reduce its general fund budget by $19 million as a result. The division's projections indicated a continuation of this trend. Karen Bouffard (2005) a reporter for The Detroit News, stated that other counties in the Detroit area are facing the same challenges. **Table 67** displays data that describes the neighborhoods in which elementary schools have been abandoned.

338

Press releases and reports that were issued by DPS and listed on the DPS website were reviewed, to include letters and debt reduction plans.[126] This plans identified a number of abandoned facilities and some that have been proposed to be abandoned, were reviewed. Robert Bob, DPS's new Emergency Manager, created the District's "Facility Consolidation and Reinvestment Plan". The Plan list 23 new proposed closures, which 12 are identified by their neighborhood in **Tables 67** and **68**.

Table 67 Selected Statistics for Abandoned Public Schools, DPS (A)

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 and <	% Below Poverty Rate Individual.	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Chandler	5124	37	30	8.3	24,821	10
Ferry	5184	68	48	11	17,475	25
Fox	5401	25	18	8.2	40,032	3
Hosmer	5124	37	30	8.3	24,821	10
Larned	5414	28	19	4.7	39,787	6.7
Lynch	5108	46	33	15	22,031	11.2
Marsh	5469	34	17	4.9	36,029	4.4
Newbery	5255	55	34	6.6	21,377	16.2
Scripps	5136	46	39	4.9	21,434	18.1
Vandenberg	5392	16	8	4.3	40,224	3.4
Woodward	5223	42	34	9	14,460	28

Neighborhood #5124 has two elementary school abandonments (Chandler and Hosmer). As noted in Tables 112 and 113, the majority of students (97%) are black and 37% of the single female households with children under 18 years of age lived below the poverty level. The median household income in this neighborhood was almost $25,000 and the unemployment rate was 8.3%.

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[126] DPS website: www.detroit.k12.mi.us, "2009 Closure and Reinvestment Plan".

339

Neighborhoods #5184 (Ferry) and #5223 (Woodward) had the lowest median household incomes, $17,500 and 14,500, respectively. These neighborhoods also had the highest percents of vacant housing units at 25% and 28%, respectively.

Table 68 Selected Statistics for Abandoned Elementary Schools, DPS (B)

Abandoned Schools	Census Tract	Student Enrolled	% Elem Students	% Black	% White	% Hispanic
Chandler	5124	594	60	97	1	0.8
Ferry	5184	533	52	75	18	1
Fox	5401	1479	45	93	3	4
Hosmer	5124	594	60	97	1	0.8
Larned	5414	973	47	72	25	1.3
Lynch	5108	530	58	90	9.2	1.5
Marsh	5469	500	57	95	3.9	1.1
Newbery	5255	649	63	69	15	16
Scripps	5136	810	50	93	5.5	0.3
Vandenberg	5392	1372	47	97	1.1	1
Woodward	5223	611	50	96	2.3	1.1

The number of students enrolled in the abandoned schools totaled nearly 10,000 students; the school enrollments ranged from 500 students to almost 1,480 students. The median student population attending school in the selected neighborhoods was 630 students. The median percent of elementary students attending the selected schools was 55%.

The racial composition for the selected schools was predominately black; the median percent of students was 94% black. While white students represent 4%, Hispanic students accounted for only 1%. **Figure 103** shows the significant number of neighborhoods in the DPS region where the residents are non-white.

Figure 103 Percent of Whites Residing in the DPS Region
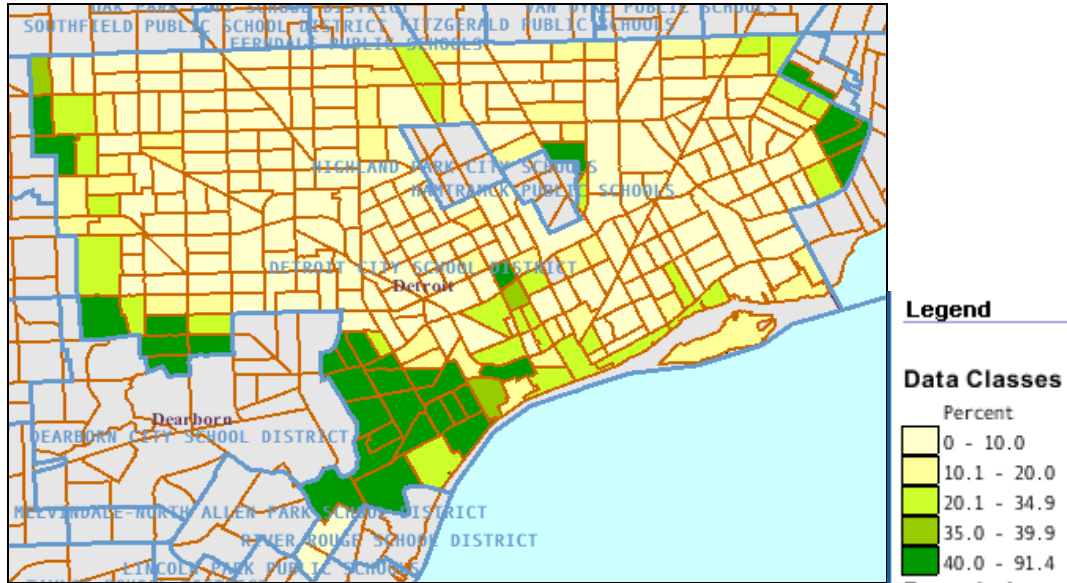
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, and P7.

Table 69 Selected Summary Statistics for Abandoned Elementary Schools in DPS

Student Enrolled		% Elementary Students		% Black		% White		% Hispanic	
Mean	831	Mean	53.9	Mean	89.3	Mean	7.2	Mean	2.5
Median	630	Median	54.5	Median	94.0	Median	3.5	Median	1.1
Standard Dev	364	Standard Dev	6.1	Standard Dev	10.8	Standard Dev	8.0	Standard Dev	4.4
Minimum	500	Minimum	45.0	Minimum	69.0	Minimum	0.9	Minimum	0.3
Maximum	1,479	Maximum	63.0	Maximum	98.0	Maximum	25.0	Maximum	16.0
Sum	9,967	Sum		Sum		Sum		Sum	
Count	12	Count	12	Count	12	Count	12	Count	12
% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child 18 and <		% Below Poverty Rate Individuals		% Unemployed		Median HH Income		% Vacancy Units	
Mean	39.5	Mean	28.4	Mean	7.8	Mean	27,203	Mean	12.8
Median	38.5	Median	30.5	Median	8.0	Median	24,380	Median	10.6
Standard Dev	13.8	Standard Dev	11.0	Standard Dev	3.1	Standard Dev	9,261	Standard Dev	8.2
Minimum	16.0	Minimum	8.0	Minimum	4.3	Minimum	14,460	Minimum	3.0
Maximum	68.0	Maximum	48.0	Maximum	15.0	Maximum	40,224	Maximum	28.0
Sum		Sum		Sum		Sum		Sum	
Count	12	Count	12	Count	12	Count	12	Count	12

341

The poverty rates ranged from 16% to 68% for single female households with children under 18 years of age, the median poverty rate for all selected areas was 39%. The median poverty rate for individuals in all selected neighborhoods was 31%. **Figure 104** identifies three of the neighborhoods included in the study. The "clustering" of many Qualified-Neighborhoods and Nearly-Qualified Neighborhoods can be seen as well. The income disparities can also be noted by the number of "pockets" or neighborhoods that had 0% to 20% poverty rates.

Figure 104 Poverty Levels by Neighborhoods in DPS Region

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 3, Matrix P87.
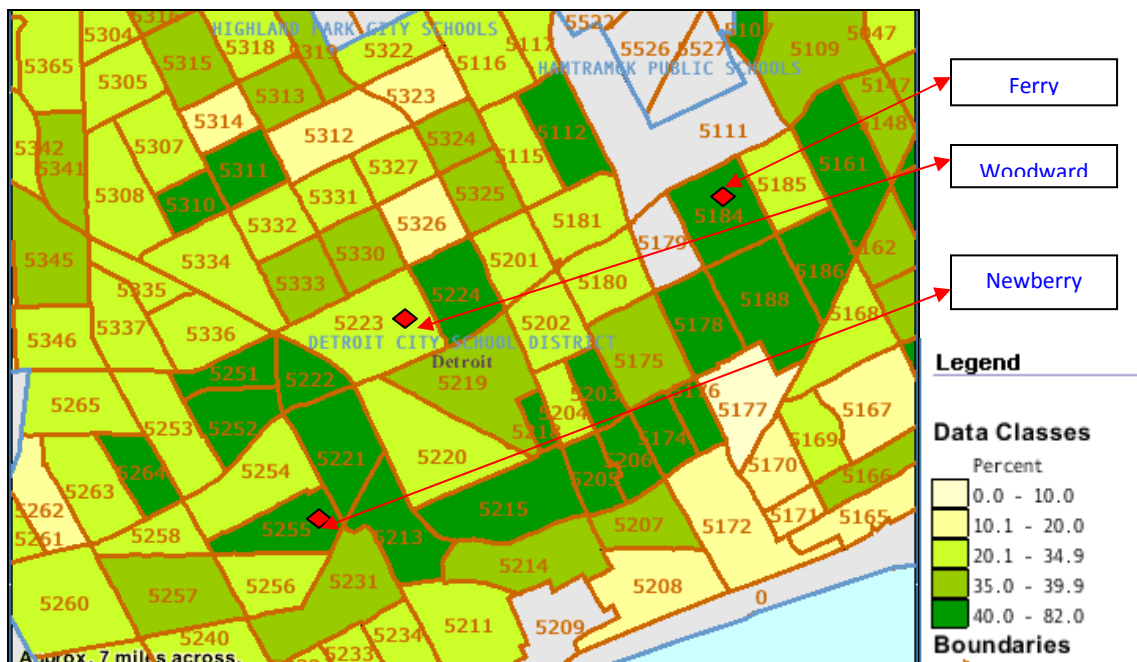
The median household income was $24,300 and the median unemployment rate was 8%. The median percent of vacant units in the selected neighborhoods was nearly 11%. The percent of vacant units by selected neighborhood (census tract) are shown in **Figure 105**.

342

Figure 105 Percent of Vacant Units in Detroit by Census Tract and School District
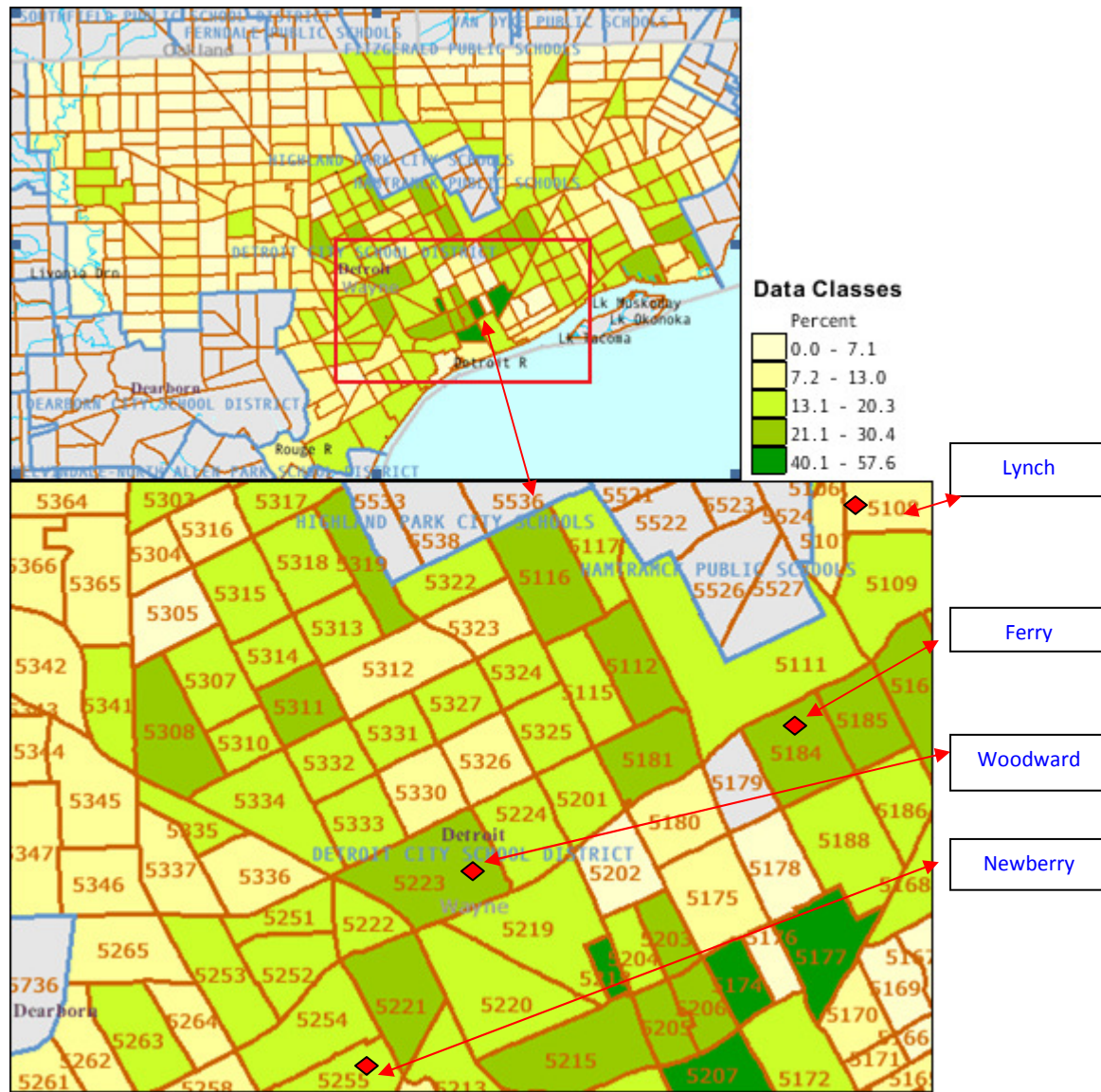
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices H1, and H3.

The quality of the schools by selected school districts is indicated in **Figure 106**.

343

Figure 106 DPS Area Schools by Level and School Quality
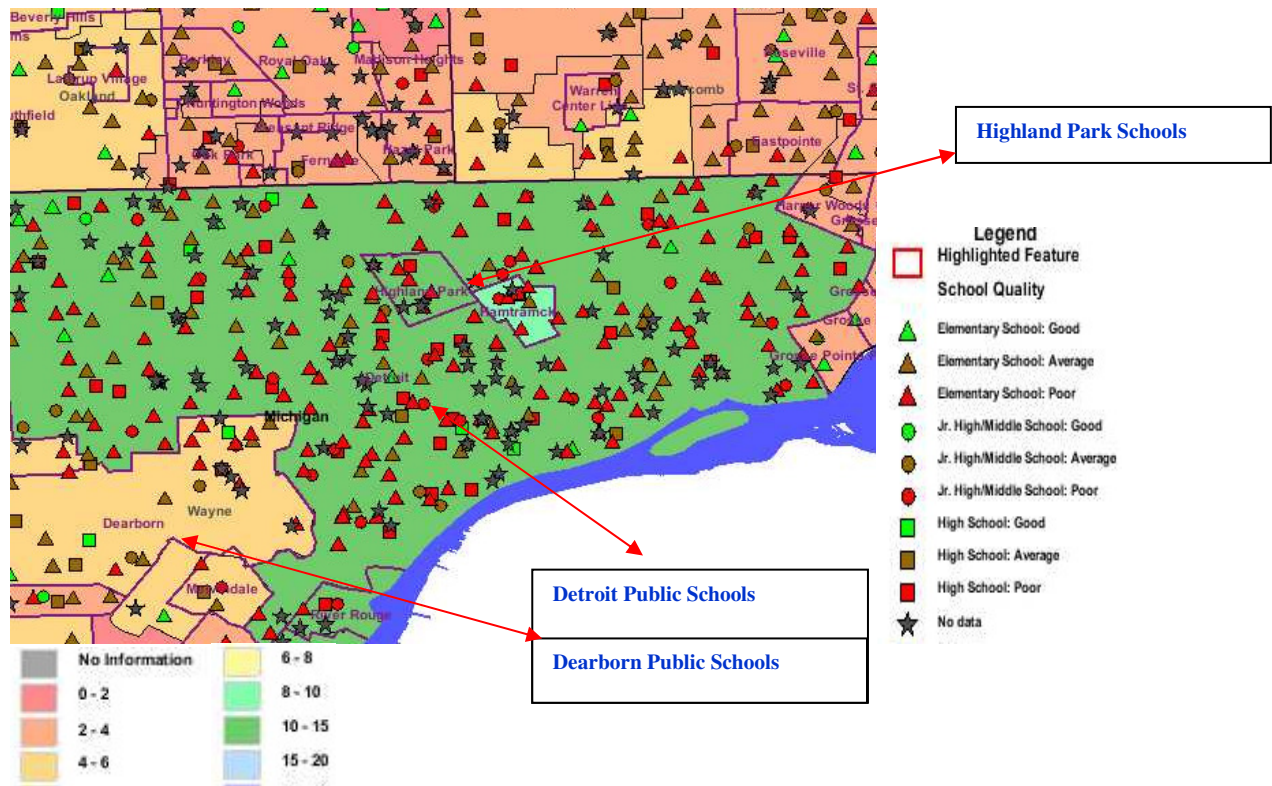
The majority of the schools in the Detroit Public Schools were classified as poor, and as noted consistently, a number of schools have reported no data. Although the surrounding school divisions do not have the number of poor quality schools as does Detroit, the numbers of good quality schools are few.

The racial composition in the DPS mirrors that of the City of Detroit's racial composition. For the most part, like the other regions included in this study, the populations live segregated racially. The racial "borders" can be seen in **Figure 107**.

344

Figure 107 Percent of Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics Residing in the Detroit City Schools Area
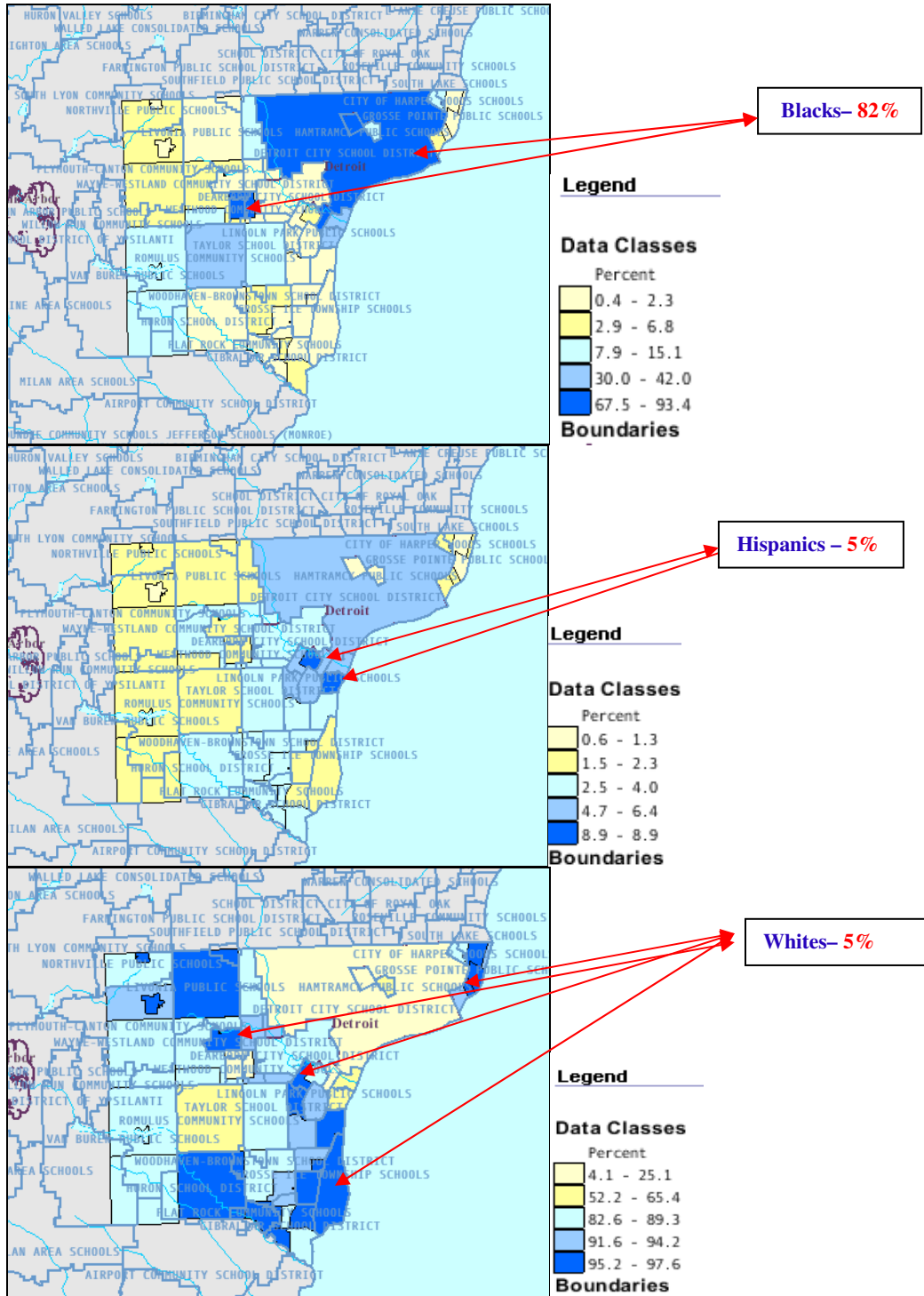
In this section I analyze and describe the neighborhood and school environments where a school is abandoned. Data indicate that 69 public school abandonments in target inner city public school districts (See **Table 70**). I compile the data for all individual school districts with vacant and abandoned schools and describe the combined summary statistics. I use these data and analyses to answer my research questions.

Table 70 Public School Abandonments in Target School Districts

Public School District	Number of Abandonments
Atlanta	5
New York	5
Los Angeles	2
Chicago	16
Dallas	6
Houston	6
San Francisco	5
Philadelphia	1
District of Columbia	12
Detroit	11
N =	**69**

For many children attending inner-city schools, particularly those residing in neighborhoods where schools are abandoned, lived in poverty. Summary statistics of the data for the neighborhoods with abandoned schools indicate that the median poverty rate for children under 18 years of age living in single female households was 44%. For the overall poverty rate for individuals in these same neighborhoods, the median poverty rate is 34%.   (See **Table 71**)

The median unemployment rate was 9% for the neighborhoods with abandoned schools, and the median household income was $23,112. The median percent of vacant units in these neighborhoods was 10%.

Table 71 Summary Selected Stats for Neighborhoods with Abandoned Schools – All Areas (A)

% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child <18		% Below Poverty Rate Individuals		% Unemployed		Median HH Income		% Vacancy Units	
Mean	46.1	Mean	34	Mean	9.0	Mean	27,717	Mean	13.4
SE	2.6	SE	2	SE	0.6	SE	1,989	SE	1.3
Median	44.0	Median	34	Median	8.6	Median	23,112	Median	10.3
Mode	42.0	Mode	34	Mode	4.7	Mode	24,821	Mode	10.0
SD	21.4	SD	18	SD	5.1	SD	16,519	SD	10.9
Range	100.0	Range	85	Range	24.5	Range	80,578	Range	65.8
Minimum	0.0	Minimum	6	Minimum	1.0	Minimum	4,602	Minimum	1.2
Maximum	100.0	Maximum	91	Maximum	25.5	Maximum	85,180	Maximum	67.0
Count	69.0	Count	69	Count	69	Count	69	Count	69.0

The median number of students enrolled in schools in these areas is 838, and the median percent of elementary students enrolled in those schools is 47. The racial composition of students residing in neighborhoods where a school is abandoned is majority minority. Data indicates that the median percent of blacks enrolled in neighborhoods where schools were abandoned is 86, while whites represent a median percent of 3 and Hispanics, the same. (See **Table 72.**

Table 72 Summary Selected Stats for Neighborhoods with Abandoned Schools – All Areas (B)

Student Enrollment		% Elem Students Enrolled		% Black		% White		% Hispanic	
Mean	1,112	Mean	43	Mean	68	Mean	13.2	Mean	14.0
SE	104	SE	2	SE	4	SE	2.4	SE	2.7
Median	838	Median	47	Median	86	Median	3.0	Median	3.0
Mode	594	Mode	45	Mode	97	Mode	1.0	Mode	1.0
SD	864	SD	14	SD	34	SD	19.9	SD	22.7
Range	4,569	Range	65	Range	99	Range	82.0	Range	91.0
Minimum	81	Minimum	2	Minimum	1	Minimum	0.0	Minimum	0.0
Maximum	4,650	Maximum	67	Maximum	100	Maximum	82.0	Maximum	91.0
Sum	76,723								
Count	69	Count	69	Count	69	Count	69.0	Count	69.0

Demographic data reveal that over the past several decades most metropolitan areas experienced shifts in their racial and ethnic compositions. My research indicates that not only are white populations continuing their flight to the suburbs and other areas outside core inner cities, recently a number of first-generation immigrants bypassed inner cities for residencies in the suburban areas. Middle and upper-income families of nearly all racial and ethnic backgrounds have moved outside core inner cities. Of the middle and upper-income families who remained city residents, most live in segregated neighborhoods and did not enroll their children in public schools.

Demographic data also identify patterns of racial and social segregation and isolation in primary cities. Core inner-city areas have majority minority populations, and many of the residents live in extreme poverty. In most cases, the school population mirror the characteristics of the neighborhoods in which the schools are located.

Based my analyses of data related to the poverty levels for residents in the selected neighborhoods where schools were abandoned, the majority of the populations in the neighborhoods and the public schools were minority. Demographic data also identify trends/patterns that suggested that more schools are abandoned in areas of extreme poverty, and as a result, these areas are more likely to have extreme needs that if left unmet may adversely impact the physical vitality and sustainability of the school systems, the neighborhoods, the cities, and the surrounding metro areas.

Table 73 Summary Statistics for Public School Districts by City

Public School District	Student Enrollment	%Elem Students Enrolled	% Black	% White	% Hispanic	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child <18	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Atlanta	3,973	48.4	95	3.3	2.2	35.4	29.2	12.3	20,990	12
New York	11,441	45	17	2	73	60	43	9.6	19,615	5.6
Los Angeles	3,312	45	36	23.5	34	43.5	25	8.15	29,585	5.3
Chicago	15,954	49	97	1	1	65.5	48.5	13.1	15,601	22.5
Dallas	8,082	51.5	61	2	20	50	30.5	8.3	23,115	10.5
Houston	5,357	48	12.4	29	24	36.4	26	2.8	27,679	10.3
San Francisco	6,391	32.5	8.7	49	6.5	35.1	10.2	3.2	60,036	3.4
Philadelphia	549	51	95	2	1	50	42	17	17,480	26
District of Columbia	13,019	39	88	6	2	44	26	6.6	30,408	9.65
Detroit	8,645	52	93	3.9	1.1	37	30	8.2	24,821	10
	76,723									

Public School District	Abandoned School	Census Tract#	Student Enrollment	% Elem Students Enrolled	% Black	% White	% Hispanic	% Below Poverty Rate FHH with Child <18	% Below Poverty Rate Individuals	% Unemployed	Median HH Income	% Vacancy Units
Atlanta	Anderson Park	83.02	671	48.4	98	0.08	1.2	32	20	12.1	$23,112	17
Atlanta	Arkwright	420	774	51	95	2.1	2.8	61	48.7	15.9	$13,880	12
Atlanta	Burgess	2090	1,678	44.3	80.8	16.6	2.2	26.7	18.2	12.3	$34,630	8.2
Atlanta	McGill	55.01	356	50.3	90.5	4.6	4.7	53.3	39	14	$16,198	21.7
Atlanta	Ragsdale	66.02	494	36.4	95.4	3.3	1	35.4	29.2	10.9	$20,990	9.7
New York	PS39	87	1,920	45	17	1.3	81	60	43	9.6	$19,615	7.3
New York	PS176	291	3,741	45	4	3	91	56	36	10	$21,826	2.3
New York	PS196	20	1,833	42	16	2	73	68	52	8.4	$11,963	5.6
New York	PS109	162	3,625	37	48	3	43	36	33	10	$23,211	2.4
New York	PS257	375.02	322	47	25	2	71	66	48	8.6	$12,304	8.6
Los Angeles	Anton (Roger)	63.01	1604	51	14	37	45	42	23	11	$28,505	3.9
Los Angeles	Ninety-Eight Street	2774	1708	39	58	10	23	45	27	5.3	$30,666	6.7
Chicago	Bunche	6711	391	49	95	1	1	51	44	12.9	$20,605	13.1
Chicago	Byrd	808	755	59	97	1	2	70	60	19.2	$4,602	35
Chicago	Colman	3816	250	45	100	0	0	100	91	17.2	$7,200	67
Chicago	Dodge	2709	81	49	97	3	0	19	41	12.1	$30,313	20
Chicago	Donoghue	3603	420	61	98	1	1	63	53	17.4	$11,563	41
Chicago	Doolittle	3511	1850	54	98	0	1	69	65	17.7	$10,274	25
Chicago	Douglas	3507	396	19	86	2	6	38	29	8.8	$10,295	17
Chicago	Farren	3818	303	44	98	1	1	68	40	8.5	$12,174	22.5
Chicago	Frazier	2908	157	33	98	0	0.3	88	58	13.6	$18,603	24.8
Chicago	Jefferson	2831	1474	10	33	33	6	42	34	3.7	$28,214	4.5
Chicago	Morse	2316	534	45	98	1	1	29	29	11.9	$24,095	10.1
Chicago	Raymond	3514	521	54	97	1	1	68	60	10.2	$11,593	9.8
Chicago	Riis	2832	376	43	56	32	7	79	39	11.5	$20,000	22.5
Chicago	Suder	2805	4650	55	90	2	6	33	56	13.3	$19,904	14
Chicago	Truth	805	1308	51	95	3	1	69	62	20.8	$12,600	34.2
Chicago	Wright	2315	2488	52	97	1	2	61	37	13.4	$26,096	12.8
Dallas	Lavillita	16	667	31	45	1	31	58	28	4.8	$31,065	14.3
Dallas	Austin	41	459	53	75	1	25	66	54	9.1	$14,341	11
Dallas	Marshall	59.01	1520	50	86	1	12	27	18	6.2	$30,527	3.4

Dallas	Buckner	93.04	1887	59	71	3	25	64	43	10.4	$18,425	15
Dallas	Harris	25	1671	57	41	3	55	42	33	7.6	$20,877	10
Dallas	McMillan	60.02	1878	23	51	32	10	33	26	9	$25,348	9
Houston	West Central	4115	1,062	18	10	82	9	28	6.5	1	$60,392	10
Houston	Argyle	4222	2,113	48	79	5	14	34	26	4.7	$26,271	11
Houston	Carnegie	3314	942	56	75	0.3	24	83	67	12.3	$8,056	7.5
Houston	Eighth Avenue	5105	772	45	12.4	29	51	57	34	2.8	$27,679	12.4
Houston	Holden	5111	468	50	10.3	36	54	36.4	14.4	2.4	$37,008	10.3
San Francisco	Milam	5106	966	54	10.4	11	77	42	37	4.1	$24,683	10.4
San Francisco	Cabrillo	477.02	869	35	1	40	4	38.2	5.8	1.7	$57,963	1.2
San Francisco	Diamond Heights	217	1,010	32	12	54	11	0	5.6	1.6	$72,804	1.8
San Francisco	Golden Gate	158	1,501	33	30	44	7	44	19	3.1	$45,962	3.3
San Francisco	Laguna Honda	301.01	1,207	12	3	64	6	32	12	3.6	$62,109	3.5
San Francisco	William R. DeAvila	166	838	12	7	76	6	0	8.4	3.3	$64,613	3.6
Philadelphia	Boone	138	549	51	95	2	1	50	42	17	17,480	26
District of Columbia	Harrison	44	657	40	58	24	13	38	20	3.1	$42,500	24
District of Columbia	Meyer	35	2049	12	83	11	2	50	36	4.7	$18,940	14
District of Columbia	Gage-Eckington	34	2569	9.3	91	3	3	74	40	7.5	$18,452	22
District of Columbia	Rudolph	21.02	1038	38	89	4	2	22	9	6.2	$36,489	9
District of Columbia	Clark	26	435	31	61	30	3	72	8.5	3.4	$85,180	2.6
District of Columbia	Slowe	93.01	847	37	71	18	6	15	14	7.1	$51,125	7.8
District of Columbia	Young	89.04	953	41	97	1	1	55	36	7	$21,540	21
District of Columbia	Bowen	60.02	365	67	96	1	1	64	59	25.5	$14,464	10.3
District of Columbia	Gibbs	79.01	1105	46	97	1	1	33	32	9.2	$24,327	14

District of Columbia	Bunker Hill	95.03	656	43	87	8	1	0	7	3.7	$61,667	2.8
District of Columbia	Green	73.04	1790	53	97	1	1	63	44	10.6	$22,550	8.6
District of Columbia	Stevens	54.01	555	2	8	73	5	0	15	1.9	$42,148	8.8
Detroit	Chandler	5124	594	60	97	1	0.8	37	30	8.3	24,821	10
Detroit	Ferry	5184	533	52	75	18	1	68	48	11	17,475	25
Detroit	Fox	5401	1479	45	93	3	4	25	18	8.2	40,032	3
Detroit	Hosmer	5124	594	60	97	1	0.8	37	30	8.3	24,821	10
Detroit	Larned	5414	973	47	72	25	1.3	28	19	4.7	39,787	6.7
Detroit	Lynch	5108	530	58	90	9.2	1.5	46	33	15	22,031	11.2
Detroit	Marsh	5469	500	57	95	3.9	1.1	34	17	4.9	36,029	4.4
Detroit	Newbery	5255	649	63	69	15	16	55	34	6.6	21,377	16.2
Detroit	Scripps	5136	810	50	93	5.5	0.3	46	39	4.9	21,434	18.1
Detroit	Vandenberg	5392	1372	47	97	1.1	1	16	8	4.3	40,224	3.4
Detroit	Woodward	5223	611	50	96	2.3	1.1	42	34	9	14,460	28
69			76,723	47	86	3	3	44	34	8.6	$ 23,112	10.3

Table 74 Summary Statistics for Total Select Public Elementary School

Appendix O: Survey Questionnaire

My survey is designed to collect primary qualitative and quantitative information about the abandonment of neighborhood public schools. Initially, only school districts located in the selected CMSAs and the Atlanta MSA were invited to participant in this study, but the field was expanded in an attempt to generate enough responses to provide for the generalization of the research findings.

Preliminary Survey Preparation

In an effort to save time and improve survey responses, electronic searches of the websites of select public school districts are conducted. Telephone calls are made to those school districts where information is not obtainable through my Internet searches. The goal of the preliminary survey is to identify district employees who are responsible for the determination of which schools will be abandoned and what will be the means of disposition of the vacant and abandoned facilities.

The survey invitees include chief financial or administrative officers, school planners, superintendents, directors or managers of facilities maintenance and operations. Email addresses and telephone numbers of perspective responders are collected and are listed in a directory. No individualized student, family, or district employee data were solicited or collected. All data collected, analyzed, and reported were presented in the aggregate. Therefore, no risks relevant to privacy, protection issues were of concern with this study.

An estimated 300 school district officials are emailed preliminary inquiries. My objective is to confirm or ascertain the names and email addresses of the most appropriate school

district employees to complete the questionnaire. Preliminary inquiries are expected to help to save time, to minimize misdirected surveys.

Internet (On-line) Survey

An electronic email is sent to 302 pre-determined district employees. (See **Exhibit 1** – Survey Cover Letter). District employees who are identified as the primary contacts for facilities management, new construction, and the disposition of abandoned facilities were invited to take the on-line, self-administered survey. The email identified the researcher, the research topic, as well as statements of purpose and significance, as well as a note of appreciation.

So that respondents are able schedule their time, an estimated survey completion time is indicated in the introductory message.   An offer to provide each respondent with a copy of the research findings is made as an incentive for participation. The Internet link to QuestionPro.com is included in the body of the electronic invitation. The link directs respondents to the website where the questionnaire is accessible, and where it can be completed and submitted electronically.

Once submitted, the survey responses are automatically recorded (in real time), entered, and stored in an excel database file. Five (5) days after the initial electronic message, a follow up email reminder is sent to all non-responders. Five (5) days following the first email reminder, a second email reminder is again sent to non-responders.

Federal and state funding has helped school districts provide Internet accessibility to most K-12 learning environments. As a result, the survey response rate is expected to be sufficient; easy access to the Internet makes school district employees ideal candidates for an on-line

354

survey.   For this reason and the fact that most email accounts are not shared, I feel that an on-

line survey is a reliable an effective means to collect data.

Sample *Survey Cover Letter*

Dear Prospective Survey Respondent:

I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. I am requesting your participation in a research study of the abandonment of public neighborhood schools. The purpose of this survey is to estimate the degree of school abandonment and to understand its impact on the physical and social structures of the neighborhoods in which these facilities are located. This project is purely an exploratory research study; it is not a sales solicitation in any way.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You are not required to respond to any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential. Data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. If you have questions about the survey or the procedures, please contact Belinda Saunders at 804-690-3917 or by email at the email address specified below.

Your opinions and insight are important. Without your input, I cannot hope to receive the best possible results. The approximate time required to complete the survey is 15 minutes. **Your response to this survey represents your voluntary participation.** As a means of expressing my appreciation for your participation in this study, you will receive an executive summary of the research findings.

Thank you very much for taking time out of your busy schedule to help me to understand this challenging issue.

Please start the survey now by clicking on the **"Continue"** button below.
saundersbc@vcu.edu

To minimize the number of survey questions and improve survey responses, relevant data

are collected from public records and are included and cited with my analyses of the individual

school district information (See Appendices Section). For example, total student enrollment and

other demographics are obtainable from the U S Census Bureau, school websites, and from the

State Boards of Education. With the exception of determining the total number of school

facilities maintained and operated by the school divisions, all questions were specific to

elementary schools. Elementary schools typically represent neighborhood schools, and therefore

are of primary interest for purposes of my research. The indicators of the survey are identified in

Exhibit 2 below.

Exhibit 2 **On-line Survey Indicators**

Quantitative Measures

Number of elementary schools in the school division
Number of abandoned elementary schools in the past five (5) years
Number of anticipated elementary schools in the next five (5) years
Average age of school facilities

Qualitative Measures

Perceptions of neighborhood schools
Perceived reasons for school abandonment
Perceived local government participation in the school abandonment processes
Opinions concerning the conditions of school facilities

Survey Questionnaire

1. How many school facilities does your school district currently maintain and operate?

2. How many elementary school facilities does your school district currently maintain and operate?

3. How many elementary school facilities have been abandoned (closed) by your school district in the past 5 years?

4. Please provide the names and addresses of all elementary school facilities your district has abandoned in the in the past five (5) years.

   (If you are not able to provide this information, please provide the name and telephone number of someone who is able to provide this information.)

5. How many elementary school facilities does your school district anticipate closing (abandoning) with the next five (5) years?

6. Please provide the names and addresses of all elementary school facilities your district expects to abandon in the next five (5) years.

   (If you are not able to provide this information, please provide the name and telephone number of someone who is able to provide this information.)

7. Does your school district currently have a Facilities Master Plan?

8. How many elementary schools does your district's Facilities Plan recommend for abandonment (closure) in the next five years?

9. Please select *all* reasons for which your school district has abandoned (closed) a school facility or facilities in the past 5 years.

   a. Budget deficiencies
   b. Building age and physical conditions
   c. Declining enrollment
   d. School population relocation to new facility
   e. School population consolidation
   f. Facilities assessment
   g. Other *(Please specify)*
   h. Not Applicable

10. Please select *all* reasons for which your school district anticipates the abandonment (closure) of a school facility or facilities in the next five (5) years.

    a. Budget deficiencies
    b. Building age and physical conditions
    c. Declining enrollment
    d. School population relocation to new facility
    e. School population consolidation
    f. Facilities assessment

357

g. Other *(Please specify)*
h. Not Applicable

11. Please identify all agencies and other governing bodies for which your school administration must obtain approval before your district is permitted to abandoned (close) a school facility?

12. Approximately how many elementary schools have been abandoned (closed) as a result of school consolidations or mergers?

13. Approximately what percentage of elementary school students are transported out of their assigned residential neighborhoods as a result of abandoned (closed) facilities?

14. How would you best describe the states of your school division's overall elementary school student enrollment?

    a. Declining
    b. Overcrowded
    c. Stable

15. What changes do you anticipate in the division's elementary student enrollment in the next five (5) years and why?

16. How many of your district's elementary school facilities would you currently classify as:

    a. Under-enrolled/underutilized?
    b. Overcrowded?
    c. In need of major repairs?
    d. Newly constructed or renovated?

17. How has your school district proposed to correct problems related to:
    a. Under-enrolled/underutilized?
    b. Overcrowded?
    c. Facilities need of major repairs?
    d. Newly constructed or renovated?
    e. Not Applicable

18. In the past five (5) years, how many elementary schools has your district:
    a. Abandoned but kept in the district's inventory?
    b. Abandoned and sold?
    c. Abandoned and demolished?
    d. Abandoned and leased?
    e. Abandoned but adaptively reused?

19. Please identify any educational and community activities that are held in your elementary school facilities beyond the hours of a normal school day?

20. In your opinion, what is the impact the abandonment of a school facility has or will have on any educational and community activities that are held in your elementary school facilities beyond the hours of a normal school day?

21. In your opinion, what impact has the abandonment of elementary schools had on your school division overall?

22. In your opinion, what impact has the abandonment of elementary schools had on the neighborhoods in which these facilities are located?

23. In your opinion, has the abandonment of schools in your division contributed to the decline of the neighborhood in which these facilities are located? *Why or why not? (Please explain.)*

24. What efforts has your school district implemented to preserve historic school buildings?

25. What is the average age of your district's elementary school facilities?

26. Please provide any additional comments that you feel are relevant to the abandonment of school facilities in your district.

Your input is greatly appreciated. Please click the "Submit" button below to complete this survey.
Thank you for participating.

VITA

Belinda C. Saunders was born on January 1, 1954, in Kinston, North Carolina, and is an American citizen. She graduated from Kinston High School, Kinston, North Carolina in 1972. She received her Bachelor of Business Administration from Averett University, Danville, Virginia in 1998. She received her Masters of Business Administration from Averett University in 2000.