

# **Confronting Complexities of Public School Integration:**

School District Leaders of Diversity and Equity Navigating the  
Professional, the Personal, and the Political

A Dissertation

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## **Dedication**

I believe that teaching and learning are fundamentally social endeavors, and I strive to remember and respect that educational research therefore always has a human face. I am truly grateful to the participants who have shared their experiences and perspectives with me and have trusted me enough to examine their practice. This work is a small effort on my part to recognize the incredibly important work that educators in K-12 schools and districts dedicate themselves to every day. I thank the group of diversity and equity leaders at the heart of this study for all that they do in advocating for students and families, promoting awareness and celebration of differences as assets for communities and schools in Minnesota, and for striving to create equitable learning environments for all children.

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## Chapter 1 : Introduction

This study of school integration policy examines discussions about how race, ethnicity and class operate in schools, and how concepts of diversity, opportunity, and educational equity are constructed in local and state discourses. Although many studies have examined policy implementation from the top-down, and from “bottom-up” (front-line) perspectives, I chose to situate this study from the middle, as an overlooked but essential part of the work done on school desegregation / integration in the state of Minnesota is conducted by a group of people positioned in intermediary roles. These district leaders are tasked with promoting diversity and equity initiatives in a complex policy environment, one in which economic priorities relative to educational funding are constantly shifting and changing demographics are changing broader social environments. Exploring new understandings of the role of diversity in education offers an important look at how such educational policies operate. This chapter reviews relevant aspects of the history of school desegregation / integration in the United States and introduces particularities of Minnesota’s state policy context. I will then move on to the rest of the dissertation, in which I show how local school district diversity and equity leaders act as intermediary policy actors, interpreting messages of ideology and policy purpose from local and state sources and responding with efforts to influence policy at both levels.

The United States is ostensibly committed to desegregated public schooling, as evidenced by the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision and subsequent efforts across states to legislate school integration. After a period of aggressive enforcement, however, many school districts were released from court-ordered mandates to address racial isolation of students. Concurrently, a demand for a return to neighborhood schools was heard in many communities, resulting in the dismantling of busing and magnet programs. Many school districts across the country are now more segregated by

race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status than they were in the 1960s (Clotfelter, 2004; Orfield & Lee, 2005). Despite research conducted over the last several decades suggesting benefits for student academic achievement in integrated schools (Coleman, 1967; Rumberger & Palardy, 2005), gaps in school performance (as measured by standardized exams) continue to highlight disparities (Education Trust, 2009) that many have attributed to the deleterious effects of racial and socioeconomic isolation (Charles, Dinwiddie, & Massey, 2004; Massey, Charles, Lundy, & Fischer, 2003; Massey, 2004). The 2007 *Parents Involved in Community Schools* U.S. Supreme Court decision, in which school assignment policies geared toward achieving racially balanced schools were found unconstitutional, has also significantly affected the climate of school integration policy across the country.

Minnesota is no exception to demographic trends toward increasing diversity (Institute on Race and Poverty, 2009; McMurry, 2001, U.S. Census 2010) that are reflected in public school populations, and the state presents a complex educational policy environment in which to study the development of school integration decision-making and implementation efforts. Racial isolation in public schools has been addressed through Administrative Rules 3535.0100-0180 (which are part of the Equal Opportunity in Education Rules) since the 1980s and the state Integration Revenue Statute (124D.86) since 1997. Minnesota also passed the first statewide Open-Enrollment law in the nation in 1991, and was at the forefront of the school choice movement with the opening of the first public charter school shortly thereafter.

Within this context, state funding is available to school districts that have racially identifiable schools within their boundaries or that are racially isolated relative to neighboring districts, and 139 districts were participating in a variety of activities funded by this revenue in 2010 (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010). Studies have shown great variety and inconsistency in the effect such efforts have had on addressing the interracial contact and improved achievement goals expressed in the statute, and have in fact shown that districts have a

financial disincentive to actually integrate their schools (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005). Intermediary actors in local districts play a key, but under-examined, role in the interpretation and implementation of school integration policy in Minnesota. Central office administrators in positions related to equity and diversity offer a key source of information in understanding sources of disjunction in this policy field.

The following sections of this chapter discuss aspects of the policy and social climate within which diversity issues in public education in Minnesota are situated and how sociocultural approaches to policy analysis can be used to better understand how school integration legislation is (mis)understood and enacted in the state. I then provide an historical overview of legal and legislative events and decisions that have shaped the policy field, followed by a review of the literature within which I position this study.

## **Historical Context and Overview**

The following section reviews past policies and events relevant to the contemporary context of school integration. Legal precedent and resulting legislation have been key to changes in public education nationally and at the state level. Supreme Court cases that have shaped the legal context are first summarized, followed by a discussion of events and legislation pertinent to school integration in the state of Minnesota.

### ***National Events in School Desegregation***

The Supreme Court case *Plessy v. Ferguson* was an important precursor to *Brown v. Board of Education* and subsequent school desegregation lawsuits. In the 1896 *Plessy* decision, the Court found that the establishment of “separate but equal” public facilities did not violate the rights of Black citizens under the law (Brown & Hunter, 2009). Upholding the (non)enforcement of Civil Rights laws, *Plessy* represented a prevailing sentiment at the time of the inferiority of African-Americans in the U.S. (Tate, Ladson-Billings, & Grant, 1993). The Fourteenth Amendment, which guarantees equal protection under the law to all citizens, was

key in this case and in the school desegregation lawsuits that followed. In *Brown I* (1954), the Court reversed its decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* and found that legally mandated segregation of schools was a violation of the equal protection clause (Brown & Hunter, 2009). Chief Justice Warren's opinion found that children of minority groups could not receive equal educational opportunities if segregated solely on the basis on race (Bell, 2004). The subsequent *Brown II* (1955) decision called for actual implementation of the original decision, and ordered the dismantling of segregated school systems (Brown & Hunter, 2009). Efforts were directed to begin with "all deliberate speed" but were met with great resistance in some parts of the country (such as Little Rock, Arkansas) and little urgency in others (Bell, 2004). Although the actual desegregation of schools by race following *Brown v. Board of Education* was slow and incomplete, the Court decision was clearly influential. The justices' interpretation of the law sought to "shape the sociocultural conscience of the nation" (Tate et al., 1993). Not unimportantly, these decisions addressed the fact that 40 percent of students in the U.S. attended *de jure* segregated schools at the time of the case and declared such separation unconstitutional (Clotfelter, 2004).

The *Brown* ruling "redefined the fundamental principles of equal access to public education for all Americans, as well as the responsibility of the state to protect equal educational opportunity for all of its citizens" (Anderson, 2006). The promise of this landmark case to achieve true desegregation of public schools or promote racial equality remains unfulfilled, yet its societal importance cannot be overlooked. (Clotfelter, 2004) stated that: "while school desegregation has been an imperfect revolution...it has been a revolution nonetheless" (p.10). The impact of the case on public opinion and as legal precedent has perhaps been much stronger than in effecting true and lasting change in education. This conflict between the symbolic and substantive function of the ruling has had far-reaching effects (McNeal, 2009). Numerically, many school districts across the country, particularly those in urban areas, are now equally as or more segregated than

they were before mandated desegregation programs in the 1960s and 1970s (Clotfelter, 2004; G. Orfield & Lee, 2007).

In 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court issued another decision that has significantly affected the climate of school desegregation policy across the country. In a split 5-4 vote, the majority found two race-based school assignment programs in the cities of Louisville, Kentucky (court case *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*) and Seattle, Washington (*Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District #1*) unconstitutional (*Parents Involved in Community Schools*, 2007). This decision overturned lower court opinions that had determined that the districts were not in violation of the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Citing the *Grutter* case that had upheld the value of diversity in higher education, the circuit court that heard the *Parents Involved* case found educational benefits to be gained from diverse learning environments at lower grade levels as well (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007). The Supreme Court, however, found the goals of the Seattle and Louisville programs to be insufficiently narrow in focus. In particular, the majority objected to the racial classification systems used in both districts; in Seattle students were labeled as “white” or “nonwhite” and in Jefferson County as “black” or “other” (*Parents Involved*, 2007). Both districts had adopted voluntary school assignment programs that used racial considerations in determining enrollment, but Jefferson County’s plan was an outgrowth of a court-ordered desegregation plan in the 1970s, while Seattle’s schools had never been subject to *de jure* segregation (*Parents Involved*, 2007). The *Meredith* case also primarily involved secondary school assignment, while *Parents Involved* focused on elementary schools.

Significantly, Justice Roberts declared in writing the majority opinion that although legally mandated racial segregation of schools is unconstitutional, the Constitution is not violated by racial imbalance (*Parents Involved*, 2007). Therefore, once Jefferson County schools were found to no longer be *intentionally* segregated, the use of race in school assignment decisions had to

be justified on different grounds. The majority found the definition of diversity used in the two school districts as overly limited and not sufficiently proven as essential to providing equal education in the districts (*Parents Involved*, 2007). Justice Breyer's dissent, however, described the local efforts in Louisville and Seattle as similar to many across the nation, designed to "bring about the kind of racially integrated education that *Brown v. Board of Education* long ago promised" and of the type that the court had repeatedly "required, permitted and encouraged" local authorities to undertake (*Parents Involved*, 2007, p. 109). Justice Breyer went on to describe many districts as stepping up integration efforts in response to increasingly racially isolated schools, noting for example that one in six black children attending public school in the U.S. in 2007 went to schools that were attended by 99-100 percent minority students (*Parents Involved*, 2007). Ultimately, the majority opinion allowed districts to establish school assignment decisions based on socioeconomic status rather than race, with goals that this would ultimately result in racially balanced schools.

### ***School Desegregation in Minnesota***

From the time of its founding, the young state of Minnesota established somewhat contradictory policies regarding racial equality and access to resources. After receiving territorial status, the legislature began to institute measures to restrict civic participation to white males in 1849 (Green, 1996). Importantly, however, these same decision-makers passed an act designed to fund (through taxes) and guarantee education for "all children and youth of the Territory" in 1849 (Green, 1996). This act was written at a time when the black population of Minnesota was very small and the territory's Native American population was already being increasingly isolated on reservations. When the population of black residents began to increase, so did discriminatory policies. By 1857, the St. Paul Board of Education passed a resolution to formally segregate black children in separate school facilities (Green, 1996). The all-black schools that were established were clearly inadequate and did not provide an educational experience equivalent to white students in other schools. In response to public

pressure, the St. Paul schools were officially desegregated (again) in 1869 by state legislative action (Green, 1996).

By the middle of the twentieth century, Minnesota's Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis had *de facto* segregated schools despite a legislative history of racial integration, as did many northern cities in the U.S.. Although *Brown v. Board of Education* had established a call for desegregation on the national level, action to implement the ruling lagged behind in most parts of the country. The school boards of both St. Paul and Minneapolis adopted desegregation policies in 1964 and 1967 respectively (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005). These programs focused on voluntary busing of students and were unsuccessful in substantively changing the racial isolation of students in city schools. In the 1971 U.S. District Court Case *Booker v. Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, Minnesota*, the Minneapolis Public Schools district was sued by students alleging violation of their Fourteenth Amendment rights to Equal Protection and Due Process because of efforts on the part of the school district to maintain segregated schools. Key to the plaintiffs' case was a school assignment system by neighborhoods, which in a city with widespread housing discrimination due to race would only serve to also create racially segregated schools (Forbes & Cunningham, 1996). The court found that the Minneapolis Public Schools were indeed segregated and mandated the creation of a desegregation plan which established two goals for elementary schools (to eliminate racially isolated schools and replace obsolete school buildings) and three for secondary schools which emphasized learning opportunities for junior high students and extending boundaries of junior high schools to obtain better racial and economic balance (Forbes & Cunningham, 1996). Other goals included increasing the number of minority faculty in all schools.

The Minnesota State Board of Education adopted a "15-percent rule" for *all* districts in 1973, which prohibited schools from having minority enrollments different from district-wide averages per grade level by more than 15 percentage points (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005). At the time Minneapolis' new plan

was developed in 1973, the student body of Minneapolis Public Schools was calculated to be 15.8 percent minority (Forbes & Cunningham, 1996). By 1977, this percentage had grown to 24.4 percent, according to district reports filed in compliance with the court order. This number reflected demographic changes in the metro area and continued to rise in subsequent years. After the *Booker* case mandated desegregation efforts, white students began to leave the district, a trend that continued for the next several decades (Green, 2005). The district petitioned the court several times to change the desegregation plan, arguing that the 35 percent limit of minority students in any one school was no longer obtainable and requesting an increase in the allowable percentage.

The original *Booker* lawsuit was dismissed by the Court in June of 1983, partly due to the fact that the Minnesota Department of Education had by this time established policies (ostensibly) targeted to ensure equal educational opportunities and eliminate racial segregation (Forbes & Cunningham, 1996). This included granting oversight responsibility on the part of the MDE to monitor desegregation efforts in the Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth public schools (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005). The Court additionally opined that the Minneapolis School Board and Superintendent were now strong supporters of desegregation efforts, a change from the early 1970s. Subsequent long-term planning for desegregation/integration efforts in the Minneapolis Public Schools in the late 1980s and 1990s included the creation of magnet schools within the district as a way to encourage integrated learning opportunities through family choice rather than forced busing or district assignment. Similarly, one expressed purpose of the first six magnet schools opened in St. Paul in 1985 was to achieve racial balance (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005).

The district's original desegregation plan in many ways resembled those recently overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Parents Involved*, in that more than 35 percent of the student body of any one school in Minneapolis could not consist of minority students (Forbes & Cunningham, 1996). Despite this guideline and the statewide 15 percent rule, demographic shifts that resulted in increased



concentrations of low-income students in Minneapolis, and in particular areas of the city, led once again to clear racial segregation in the district (Kraus, 2008). A 1993 district plan acknowledged the growing disparities in academic performance between students of color and white students in spite of previous desegregation efforts (Forbes & Cunningham, 1996). In September of 1995, the NAACP filed a class action lawsuit against the State of Minnesota and various officials and agencies on behalf of Minneapolis residents, claiming that the segregated nature of education in Minneapolis resulted in inherently inadequate and unequal learning opportunities compared to those available to suburban children (Forbes & Cunningham, 1996).

This lawsuit came soon after the district's decision to return to a policy of neighborhood school assignment of students, which at the time was supported by many community constituents. Although the board attempted to limit the population of any one school to no more than 70 percent one racial or ethnic group, this ultimately proved impossible and schools became increasingly segregated (Kraus, 2008). The NAACP lawsuit included condemnation of not only racial segregation, but socioeconomic segregation as well. Central to the plaintiffs' argument was Article XIII of the Minnesota State Constitution, which calls for the establishment of "a general and uniform system of public schools" (Kraus, 2008). Because neighboring communities did not have the same racial and socioeconomic concentrations as Minneapolis, the lawsuit claimed the broader school system did not meet this guideline (Kraus, 2008). The NAACP court case was unique among similar cases in other parts of the country in that it specifically noted socioeconomic concentration in addition to racial isolation (Kraus, 2008). Although the case in some ways foreshadowed issues highlighted in the 2007 national court cases to come, it clearly condemned the school district in question for not doing enough to limit segregation rather than criticizing a program in place to address such issues as in the *Parents Involved* and *Meredith* cases.

As a result of the NAACP lawsuit, the "Choice is Yours" program was established. Through this program, Minneapolis students who qualify for free or reduced lunch were given priority to attend suburban choice schools or choice magnet schools (Aspen Associates, Inc., 2008). Significantly, although the original lawsuit was filed primarily on behalf of African-American students in Minneapolis public schools district, student assignment in the Choice is Yours program was determined by socioeconomic status, not by race. This agreement, along with the new language of the state Desegregation/Integration Rule adopted in 2000, emphasized voluntary efforts to integrate schools rather than mandated numerical targets (Hawkins & Boyd, 2008).

Across the United States, legal school segregation by race was ended by the mid 1970s but subtler forms of segregation continued (Brown & Hunter, 2009). Minnesota's school demographics reflect this trend, with some areas now segregated to a greater extent than at the time of implementation of the first court-ordered desegregation efforts. Although only about 60 percent of students attending schools across the nation in the mid-2000s were white (as opposed to almost 80 percent at the time of the *Brown* decision), white students remain the most racially isolated of all racial groups in the United States (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007). Demographic trends have led to increased diversity in communities across the country, but schools are increasingly more segregated by race. Indeed, if existing patterns of re-segregation are not heeded as suburban areas across the country become more diverse, schools that have become integrated for the first time may not remain so for long (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007).

### ***Demographic Shifts in Minnesota***

Social and cultural changes associated with demographic shifts can result in expanded opportunities or reinforce existing inequalities. If those in power do not provide equal access to markets (for economic, cultural or social capital) unequal advantage is concentrated within certain groups (Massey, 2007). U.S. history includes many changes in market access and in social status, yet

structural and cultural inequalities remain. The importance of formal schooling has increased as knowledge becomes a more marketable resource, and unequal access to education (or disparities in educational quality) serve to further cement social stratification (Massey, 2007). Moreover, the measurable increase in racial isolation of students in many communities points to a need to recognize that such inequalities are in many instances increasing rather than decreasing, despite decades of attention to educational improvement. Although only about 60 percent of the students attending American public schools are white, most white students attend majority-white schools. Despite the increase in diversity in the nation as a whole, and in metropolitan areas in general, segregation of students from racial and socioeconomic minority groups and white students is most intense in central city schools (Orfield & Lee, 2005). These communities are also often those highlighted as underperforming by state and federal accountability measures, and viewed by the general public as "in crisis." Just as social and family dynamics outside of schools have been cited (or blamed) as causes of failure in inner-city schools, so too have class cultural processes in majority-white, upper-middle class suburban communities been shown to confer advantages on students attending those schools (Demerath, 2009 p. 14). Students that begin their "professional" lives as students in communities with greater access to capital in many forms are more likely to maintain this advantage through college and university attendance and in career attainment. The opportunity gaps that exist in public schools are also evident in other areas of social community life in the United States, and continue to widen.

The documented correlations between race and poverty in the United States have important impacts on schools, particularly when schools are locally controlled by districts and located in residentially segregated neighborhoods. In Minnesota's schools, clear connections are observable between schools attended by primarily non-white students and community poverty levels. Some school districts across the country have attempted to develop "race-neutral" school assignment policies using socioeconomic status as a sort of proxy for

race (Tatum, 2007). Such an approach has been recently been at the core of new school zoning proposals in at least one Minnesota community as well, and caused controversy and protest from a group of white parents. Given the "institutionalized longevity of racism" in United States history, it is important to recognize that "new mechanisms of racial subordination will emerge as others are eliminated" (Massey, 2007 p.55). The significance of race in understanding current educational inequalities cannot be overlooked. Proponents of race-aware school assignment policies point out that although creating attendance plans based on socioeconomic status will likely address racial segregation as well, it is important not to avoid addressing underlying issues of racism and discrimination that are not solely due to economic and associated class status.

## **Policy Overview**

### ***The Rule and the Statute***

Under Minnesota state law, school desegregation/integration programs are guided by Minnesota Administrative Rule 3535, parts 0100 to 0180 (hereafter "the Rule"), and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.86 (hereafter "the Statute"). The Rule falls under Chapter 3535, Equal Opportunity in Schools, and has a stated purpose that addresses nine areas, the first of which is to "recognize the primary goal of public education is to enable all students to have opportunities to achieve academic success" (Minnesota Administrative Rules, 3535.0100). The purpose of the Rule further seeks to commit Minnesota's public schools to support ideals of integration, prevent segregation, promote school choice, and provide equitable access to resources with the goal of addressing academic achievement (Minnesota Administrative Rules, 3535.0100). Section 3535.0120 of the Rule requires school districts to collect and submit to the state data regarding the racial composition of each school and grade level.

The Integration Revenue Statute deals with the distribution of funds from the state legislature to school districts and establishes oversight responsibilities with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Districts identified through

the requirements of the Rule develop proposed integration revenue budgets and submit them to MDE for review. The Statute also describes the necessary components of each program plan that funds will be used to implement (Minnesota Statute 124D.86). According to the MDE, districts that receive integration revenue must establish a community-based collaborative process to develop a desegregation plan that reflects the diversity of the district. Such plans typically include classroom and staff development activities designed to promote cultural awareness and opportunities for increased interracial contact and experiences for students (Minnesota Department of Education, 2010). The first Statute was adopted in the late 1990s and was accompanied by a significant increase in state spending on integration efforts (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005). The Statute was subsequently revised (most recently in 2010) to include additional goals related to student achievement.

Minnesota's reputation as an early adopter of the ideals of the charter school movement, and its statewide open enrollment school choice regulations, complicate integration efforts. Charter schools are not subject to the requirements of the Rule per the definition of "School" in the Rule (part 3535.0110), and therefore may be located in districts where the public schools are required to establish desegregation programs. Since the passage of the Open Enrollment Rule in 1991 (Hawkins & Boyd, 2008) families may elect to send their children to any school with available spaces, including outside students' home districts. The voluntary nature of participation in integration activities therefore reflects a prevailing climate of "choice" in Minnesota's education system, yet makes achieving true desegregation through legislative action extremely difficult.

The major findings and key recommendations of an evaluation of the Integration Revenue program conducted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor in 2005 were summarized as: "the Integration Revenue program needs more focus and oversight" (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005). More specifically, the report called for greater approval authority, evaluation efforts, and funding

control from the Minnesota Department of Education, and for the state Legislature to clarify the purpose of the Rule (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005). Growing concern over racial achievement gaps further expanded the debate over integration revenue, and many legislators called for the revenue to show impacts on student performance. The purpose and evaluation of the existing statute have been repeatedly debated in the legislature; specific language regarding the closing of racial achievement gaps was included in 2010. The existing language and proposed replacement are explored in detail in chapter four.

### **Constructions of Diversity, Culture, and Integration in Schools**

A general assumption (of the public, and many educators) that school segregation is a problem that was "solved" decades ago and is no longer of compelling interest in a policy sense shows the power of assimilative forces in U.S. society. Rather than continuing to highlight and address the isolation and disparities seen in public schools, courts and legislatures have removed mandates and relaxed rather than strengthened efforts to integrate schools. The ways in which American<sup>1</sup> education often perpetuates, rather than overturns, discriminatory aspects of American society are explored here.

#### ***Constructing (and Deconstructing) Race in the United States***

Critical Race Theory emphasizes that although racial differences among groups of people are socially constructed, they still determine an important element of human interaction in contemporary American society. As summarized by Ladson-Billings (1995):

Thinking of race strictly as an ideological construct denies the reality of a racialized society and its impact on 'raced' people in their everyday lives. On the other hand, thinking of race solely as an objective condition denies the problematic aspects of race: How do we decide who fits into which racial

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<sup>1</sup> Here I use "American" to refer to the United States, acknowledging this term as problematic in that it ignores the other countries of North and South America and affiliated territories.

classifications? How do we categorize racial mixtures? Indeed, the world of biology has found the concept of race virtually useless (p. 12).

Although Critical Race Theorists see racism and prejudice as subject to deconstruction in part because race is “not real or objective” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001 p.43), it is important in an analysis of school integration to identify the ways in which race categories are used in the field of education. The social construction of race in schools is significant in that “categories and subgroups are not just matters of theoretical interest. How we frame them determines who has power, voice, and representation and who does not” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001 p.55). In 1998, the American Anthropological Association issued a statement on race designed to represent generally accepted scholarly opinion on the topic. Important points in the document included the greater degree of genetic variation among people within the same “race” as between people of different “races,” and the subjective nature of categorizing people based on physical differences (American Anthropological Association, 1998). Historical patterns of discrimination are cited as having created current patterns of inequality that assign members of certain groups to perpetual low status based on a racial worldview (American Anthropological Association, 1998). The statement concludes: “inequalities between so-called 'racial' groups are not consequences of their biological inheritance but products of historical and contemporary social, economic, educational, and political circumstances” (American Anthropological Association, 1998).

A demographic report from the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Council also included the anthropological position that race exists only as a social construct and echoes the fact that racial identity assumptions have been “vigorously disputed” in recent decades (McMurry, 2001 p.1). Gibson and Jung (2002) described how racial categorization and survey strategies used by the U.S. Census have changed in reflection of “social attitudes and political considerations,” but also pointed out that they do not attempt to define race “biologically or genetically.” In Minnesota, most respondents who identified as

more than one race on the 2000 Census (the first year such a choice was available) chose combinations of white and American Indian, and white and African American (McMurry, 2001). These same reports also referred repeatedly to “nonwhite” populations (McMurry, 2001), however, indicating a continued assumption that “white” identity is the standard against which others are compared. Bell (2004 p.82) and others have criticized this “binary system” through which Americans tend to view race, as “black” or “white.” Other demographic documents have categorized respondents by ancestry, which provides a deeper image of the ethnic identities of people classified into broader race categories. The “Profile of Selected Social Characteristics” for the Twin Cities metro area from 2000 Census data included 28 categories, including “other ancestries,” generally organized by nationality; although changes to the existing categories were suggested for the 2010 Census, they were not adopted. The expansion of identification options shows that although society’s understanding of racial classification may be becoming more nuanced and complex, assumptions remain that race exists and is significant.

### ***Situating Race in Schools***

Within racialized social systems--defined by Bonilla-Silva (1997) as "societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races" (p.469), racialization occurs through structural mechanisms contained within the practices of families, the state, and other institutions such as schools. Bonilla-Silva (1997) has further suggested that using a framework of racialization to understand racism allows for discussion of both overt and covert racial behaviors (p. 475). Such racialization processes occur both outside and within schools and affect the experiences of students from all backgrounds. The construction of racial identity is a complex and constantly changing dynamic, but one that underlies educational practice, albeit often implicitly. Processes that are unrecognized, however, are also unchallenged; work by school district actors to address issues of white privilege and disrupt taken for granted assumptions associated with



students from different racial and ethnic groups is important to investigate, keeping in mind that such efforts are inherently problematic and localized. Omi & Winant's (1994) classic text on such dynamics, *Racial Formation in the United States*, sought to recognize "the enduring role race plays in the social structure-- in organizing social inequalities of various sorts, in shaping the very geography of American life, in framing political initiatives and state action" (p.vii). Anthropological analyses of processes of "othering" (Fine, 1994) have also provided an insightful lens into the complexities of social interactions that take place in schools. Of particular interest here are the ways in which students are categorized and racialized, while they simultaneously change these environments through individual and collective reactions to the power dynamics inherent in educational spaces. Similar to processes of racialization, these (re)constructions of racial spaces may be overt, covert, or both.

When investigating diversity and equity work in schools it is important to recognize what exists as a continuing paradox for many educators: that in order to accept difference, difference must first be acknowledged. Without exploring the nature of white privilege, for example, the predominantly white teaching staffs of most schools subtly (or not so subtly) perpetuate this privilege through a "colorblind" approach to student identity. Bonilla-Silva (2006) has termed such so-called colorblindness in broader U.S. society "racism without racists," and warns of increasing social stratification based on phenotype. White privilege in schools is also maintained through the disproportionate numbers of white students in upper-level tracked courses compared to their peers of color, creating unequal access to resources and highly qualified teachers (Mickelson, 2002). Complicating considerations of student segregation are issues surrounding the lack of racial diversity in the teaching faculty; most teachers are white despite the decreasing number of white students as a proportion of the total student population (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007). Furthermore, most of these white teachers themselves attended majority white schools segregated from peers of color, particularly in the North and Midwestern regions of the country

(Frankenberg & Orfield, 2007). The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership has estimated that only 3.3 percent of teachers in the state are people of color, compared to the student population in which students of color make up almost one quarter of students statewide (Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, 2010). Nationally, about 15 percent of teachers are people of color, compared to 41 percent of the national student body (University of Colorado Denver, 2010). Calls to recruit greater numbers of people of color to the profession cite the vast disparities between teacher and student populations in terms of racial and ethnic diversity and suggest that classroom success for students of color may improve with a more representative teaching staff, and when culturally relevant pedagogical approaches are used in instruction (Pytel, 2006; Wood, 2009).

### ***Intersections between Race, Class and Educational Achievement***

Ladson-Billings and Tate (2006) have discussed the prominence of property rights in U.S. social and legal history as significant, and state that “the intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity” (p.12). As local property taxes are a significant source of funding for public education in most parts of the United States, this connection is clear. Disparities in local wealth and segregated housing patterns are both fundamental issues to be considered in addressing school segregation. The idea of a “public good” also relates to concepts of property and local values, and in examining the idea of integration in this manner it is essential to address issues of institutionalized power structures, educational assumptions and measures of academic success as they relate to distribution of resources. Mitchell & Mitchell (2003) provided a useful framework for investigating the varied importance of different values afforded by public education as a good in society. In their conceptualization, at times when economic considerations are prioritized above political values, education is more likely to be supported for its provision of technical skill and knowledge, while "cultural awakening of identity and character development" is dominant when economic values are less important (Mitchell & Mitchell, 2003 pp. 129-130). The

different ways in which the value of integrated school environments is framed reflect the competing discourses of "human capital development" and establishment of "cultural legacy" (Mitchell & Mitchell, 2003 p.130)

Anyon (2005) echoed these connections between the economy of the United States and its public education system, and believes that a macroeconomic system that "chases profits and casts people aside (especially people of color) is culpable" (p. 3). In this sense, no amount of educational policy designed to improve academic opportunities for students of color will ever be fully realized in the absence of greater societal reforms to solve problems of unemployment, joblessness, and poverty (Anyon, 2005). Brown and Hunter (2009) have further discussed how public education does not respond to true market conditions, because consumer demands do not result in changes. Despite assumptions that all parents want the best for their children all the time, changes in educational quality are linked to state funding levels, not consumer demands (Brown & Hunter, 2009).

Response to court decisions such as *Parents Involved* may indicate a likely shift in focus toward efforts to improve academic performance of students based on socioeconomic status rather than racial/ethnic categories. Students in U.S. schools are already categorized by whether or not they qualify for free and reduced lunch, a program tied to the federal poverty line. The disproportionate number of children of color living in poverty in the United States, and the fact that as a measure of social class, socioeconomic status has long been tied to measures of educational achievement (Anyon, 2005), underline the fact that issues of race and economic advantage remain intertwined. Studies that have examined differences in academic performance consistently point to the impact of poverty in creating cognitive deficits, and the absence of racial or ethnic effects if socioeconomic conditions are accounted for (Anyon, 2005). Evidence clearly points to a valid focus on the part of educators in eradicating the effects of poverty on the education of children in public schools. A concern remains on the

part of many dedicated to addressing racial inequalities, however, that these issues will be overshadowed by a new focus on socioeconomic status. Anderson (2006) described poverty as “the most critical factor affecting the school achievement of African American, Latino, and Native American schoolchildren (as well as Asian American groups such as Laotians, Vietnamese, and Cambodians)” and that “...the resolution of this form of inequality has little to do with whether schools are segregated or desegregated and much to do with the continued subordination of racial minorities” (p.32).

The construction of Latinos, particularly those of Mexican descent, as a new "racialized other" in the United States occurred over many years but has taken on new economic importance since the dismantling of Jim Crow laws that blatantly discriminated against African-Americans (Massey, 2007). Waves of paranoid concern about the number of undocumented migrants to the U.S. have corresponded with periods of economic uncertainty and fear over job competition; economic studies have consistently disproved perceptions that "illegal Mexican immigrants" drain public resources. Undocumented workers annually contribute an estimated \$37 billion to the U.S. economy (U.S. Council of Economic Advisers); lower-skilled legal migrants working in service-sector jobs contribute billions more. Institutional and political structures that guarantee undocumented youth a K-12 education in U.S. public schools but block them from accessing higher education reproduce social stratification and guarantee a supply of workers for many jobs that require less technical skills or advanced training.

Other inaccurate and pernicious stereotypes affect Asian-Americans and represent another form of social production. The "model minority" myth is both reproduced in schools and used as a way to ignore the underperformance of certain groups of Asian students. Like any other racial category, "Asian" is an oversimplification that fails to acknowledge the vastly different backgrounds of immigrants from diverse countries. In the Minnesota context, home to one of the largest communities of Southeast Asian refugees in the country, the differences

between the life experiences of students who identify with different national and ethnic groups are important to consider. For example, the ethnographic work of Lee (2001) and Ngo (2010) has complicated assumptions and inaccurate positioning of Hmong and Lao students (respectively) in Midwestern U.S. school contexts. Members of a displaced diaspora are racialized and marginalized in unique ways (Bhabha, 1994), and Ngo explores this aspect of the students' identity construction by examining the ways in which they are alternately and simultaneously considered "Lao," "Asian," "Chinese," and "not-Hmong" by themselves and by others.

### ***Contemporary Discourses of Diversity and Multiculturalism***

West's (2002) proposal that discussions of cultural differences are signs of struggle that represent social contexts and illuminate power relations (p. 1) emphasizes how rhetoric embodied in policy documents and in practices of educational institutions merits examination. Disrupting the "taken for granted assumptions" (Levinson & Sutton, 2001) of these discourses requires complicating the categorization of groups in society as a whole, and in schools in particular. The social history of the United States includes constant tensions between assimilative forces (the enduring appeal of the "melting pot") and the promotion of pride in and maintenance of ethnic identities associated with roots in other nations (the so-called "salad bowl"). Multiculturalism as it is understood in broader American society is fraught with its own difficulties, rendering obvious the difficulty in creating multicultural schools. Despite (or likely, in part because of) changing demographics, organized efforts to restrict the rights of new immigrants, and maintain a governmental system increasingly composed of representatives of the minority rather than the majority, continue to appear. Integration as it has been understood on a broader societal level has historically meant assimilation, and this same expectation appears in schools when, for example, students are taught that English (and a particular version of English at that) is superior to other languages spoken at home. Attempts to disrupt assumptions of cultural superiority embodied in particular practices in schools are

often met with resistance by those threatened with the loss of an (unearned) advantage. In schools, this has happened when the discussion of multiculturalism is reframed as an overemphasis on "political correctness" that promotes lowered standards, rather than an effort to address issues of institutionalized racism (which "shouldn't" exist if policies promoting equality functioned as many want to assume they do).

### ***Educational "Accountability" and "Democracy"***

Some Critical Race Scholars have also identified the fundamental link between the form of democracy practiced in American society and capitalism as significant. Because governmental and legal structures in the United States were largely developed by successful capitalists, individual and civil rights have been disproportionately distributed to property owners (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). This history has led to both explicit and implicit relationships between property and education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). Property tax debates in diverse communities, for example, indicate resentment from more affluent community members whose high property values help pay for a public school system "whose clientele is largely nonwhite and poor" (Ladson-Billings, 2006 p. 17). In Minnesota, the state educational funding formula generally receives high marks for its attempts at addressing socio-economic inequalities, by taking into account the additional costs of educating students in poverty and who speak first languages other than English. Minneapolis and St. Paul therefore receive more per-pupil dollars than surrounding suburban districts, yet these districts continue to show lower graduation rates and test scores. This race-based "achievement gap" exists between Minneapolis and its suburbs as well as among schools within the district (Green, 2005).

Addressing the causes of this gap is a complex and debated endeavor. The original proposed wording of the state Desegregation/Integration Rule's purpose began with a recognition that while "there are societal benefits from schools that are racially balanced, there are many factors which can impact the ability of school districts to provide racially balanced schools, including housing,

jobs and transportation” (Minnesota Administrative Rules, 3535.0100). Subsequent changes, however, have emphasized school and district responsibilities more than community context. Anyon (2005) described the effect of such factors on urban educational policy, but has also cited trends toward areas of concentrated poverty in suburban neighborhoods, and an increase in racial minorities living beyond the center cities in large metropolitan areas. Although identifying the failure of policies that “...sustain urban minority poverty and metropolitan arrangements that spread resources unequally through regions” (Anyon, 2005 p.9) as formative of problems in urban neighborhoods and schools, she also describes a potential opportunity for communities to work together in order to address common challenges: “the spread of concentrated poverty outside the central core also suggests that coalitions between inner cities and urbanized, segregated suburbs would produce powerful political constituencies for education and other reform” (Anyon, 2005 p.9).

### ***Race and Educational Assessment***

One outcome of the *Brown* decision that should not be overlooked was the growth in academic research designed to document the benefits of interracial contact for students in public schools. The Coleman Report of 1966 has been frequently cited as the first of several to quantify gains in academic achievement for minority students in integrated learning environments (Clotfelter, 2004). Measuring academic achievement and school performance has continued as a constant theme, but the passage in 2002 of the No Child Left Behind Act (hereafter, “NCLB”) highlighted the issue as never before. Koyama (2010) described how the culture of schooling in the United States prefaced the adoption of NCLB by making “noteworthy, if not prominent” the “low academic achievement of individuals and selected groups--most recently poor and black children” (p. 26). Furthermore, “an [American] emphasis on individual merit and strict accountability” undergird the policy and place the burden of improvement on the very groups of students identified as disadvantaged (Koyama, 2010 p. 26).

NCLB has, among other things, mandated that each state establish standardized testing and data collection of student performance, disaggregated by subcategories, to be submitted annually to the U.S. Department of Education. Supporters of such increased "accountability" describe this as a move to improve educational equality and highlight how disadvantaged students have been shortchanged, not a method to perpetuate ideas that some groups of students are consistent "failures." The very act of labeling and measuring students by category, however, can be viewed as having this opposite effect. In this way, the aspects of NCLB purportedly geared toward improving equality contradictorily spotlight the "underperformance" of groups of students rather than of school districts. This situation mirrors adoption and resistance of desegregation plans implemented following the *Brown* decision, in which opponents staged visible protests targeting groups of students (such as that which occurred with the forced integration of the Little Rock, Arkansas schools), rather than the legal and political decision-makers responsible for the changes.

The "Adequate Yearly Progress" reporting requirements under NCLB classify schools in terms of whether or not they are showing improvement in achievement for subgroups of students in multiple categories. A report on the implications of NCLB's accountability metrics on racial equity found that "schools most likely to be identified as needing improvement are highly segregated and enroll a disproportionate share of a state's minority and low-income students" (Owens & Sunderman, 2006 p. 2). The report's authors further criticized the sanctions "based on market theories of school improvement" faced by schools that fail to meet AYP targets as having unclear ties to improved outcomes for students (Owens & Sunderman, 2006 p. 20). Ladson-Billings (2006, 2007) has also critiqued accountability metrics, and has suggested completely restructuring the debate over "achievement gaps" to one focused, rather, on what she terms an "education debt". Her discussion includes the cumulative and historical effects of inequitable socioeconomic factors related to education such as school funding formulas, income disparities between Black and White families, a "health gap,"



and housing access (Ladson-Billings, 2007). The language of the “achievement gap” places the burden of underachievement “on the students, their families, and in some cases individual teachers” and “constructs students as defective and lacking” and in need of “catching up”(Ladson-Billings, 2007 p. 322). Critical Race Theory has also been used to critique standardized testing in public education, by demonstrating how the standard of “merit” supposedly evidenced by such exams is by no means neutral when the context in which the tests are developed and conducted is considered (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Lipman (2005) further believes that educational accountability “is part of a process of undermining social solidarities” because it is contrary to an ethic of collective action and social responsibility (p. 321). In a discussion of the urban politics of globalization and supremacy, Lipman (2005) has described how schools can be used as elements of coercive governmental attempts to produce compliant behavior, and in particular intensify “...the incarceration, policing, and containment of people of color” (p. 317-318). The increasing racial, ethnic and socioeconomic segregation of schools is a social practice that reinforces systematic repression. Lipman (2005) argues that politically engaged ethnography can be used to link “micro with macro from an anti-imperialist, anti-neoliberal position” by studying relationships between cultural and social processes and policies in schools (p.319). By connecting local issues to shifts on a global scale, such research can look at ways to challenge the economic and social inequality in schools and examine democratic alternatives (Lipman, 2005).

## **Study Purpose**

The research conducted for this dissertation examines the commitments of the state of Minnesota and local school districts to diversity and equity in practice, and shows how changes in funding and revenue streams can create and/or expose fragility in these commitments. More specifically, I explored how

diversity and equity leaders in central district office positions operate as educational professionals and political actors. Investigating this topic requires considering whether integrated public schools are a reflection of greater community values of inclusion and integration, or rather function as accommodating “bubbles” in a society routinely divided by issues of race, ethnicity, class, language, and immigration status.

### ***Educational Policy Approaches to Diversity and Equity***

Most literature in school integration implementation studies has focused either on the impact of desegregation on student achievement (either by tracking changes post *Brown* and other related cases, or by focusing on the negative impacts of the isolation of poor students and students of color in urban schools), or positions the issue in terms of school choice. The current national educational climate strongly favors increased "choice," led by the federal Department of Education's Race to the Top program, which (among other things) rewards states for loosening regulations on charter school program expansion. The DOE also provides millions of dollars in start-up grants to districts that seek to establish magnet programs.

Voluntary integration strategies, such as magnet schools and other choice options, have been less effective than court-mandated busing programs which have been systematically dismantled in communities across the country (Tatum, 2007). Additionally, magnet school programs with long-standing community support that *have* been successful are threatened by transportation budget cuts and financial crises in many districts (Tefera, Siegel-Hawley, & Frankenberg, 2010). Federal policies advanced by the current administration offer additional funds to support the creation of new magnet programs, with potentially positive impacts on integration, but also heavily promote the establishment of charter schools, which have been found to be more segregated than traditional public schools (Tefera et al., 2010). A return to neighborhood schools in many districts resulted in swift resegregation, and the fact that housing policy for decades limited the options of certain groups of people, notably African-Americans,

implies that contemporary demographic patterns are not devoid of this racist legacy (Massey, 2007). Acknowledging that the current pattern of increasing racial and ethnic isolation in public schools in the U.S. is inextricably tied to past policy decisions implies that such patterns should be considered from a policy as well as social justice perspective.

Studies have shown that academic achievement of African American students tends to suffer in highly segregated school environments (Caldas & Bankston, 2003; Charles et al., 2004) and improve in more racially and socioeconomically integrated schools (Coleman, 1967; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Using the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district as a case study, Mickelson (2002) also found integrated learning environments to be "superior" to segregated schools. The "ambiguous" benefits of desegregation can also be attributed to problematic and incomplete implementation of the original policies (Mickelson, 2001), or failure to fully develop effective approaches before districts achieved unitary status in the courts and were released from legal obligations to aggressively seek redress of past *de jure* segregation. *De facto* segregation continues in many districts.

Processes of social stratification become "considerably more efficient and effective" when systematic spatial segregation isolates certain groups of people from others (Massey & Denton, 1993). Formal discrimination and exclusion from capital based on race and ethnic categories has only ended fairly recently in the history of the United States; unofficial social stratification persists (Massey, 2007). Mickelson (2001) summarized distinctions between different types of segregation as:

First-generation segregation generally involves the racial composition of schools within a single district, and has been the focus of national desegregation efforts since *Brown*. Second-generation segregation involves the racially correlated allocation of educational opportunities within schools typically accomplished by tracking (p. 216).

Although both types of segregation described have been ruled unconstitutional, inequitable practices clearly remain in the nation's public schools. Kozol's (2005)

*Shame of the Nation* provided an emotional exploration of the lives of poor children of color attending what he terms "apartheid schools" and condemned the continued separate but unequal education offered to children in the United States. Orfield and Lee (2005) argue that the most important reason that increasing segregation of schools is an issue of concern is the link between segregation by race and segregation by poverty; black and Latino students are much more likely than white students to attend schools with high levels of concentrated poverty (p. 8). The link between high-poverty schools and lower levels of academic achievement has been attributed to a variety of factors, including less experienced teachers and higher rates of teacher turnover, less rigorous curricula and limited course offerings, and lower levels of parent involvement in schools (Orfield & Lee, 2005).

### ***The Legacy(ies) of Brown and Related Cases***

*The history of public school segregation, desegregation, and re-segregation from the antebellum period to the present constitutes an American story of contradictory legal and social reforms- reforms that are liberal regarding standards of constitutional equality and conservative with respect to the subtle and institutionalized arrangements designed to sustain racial inequality and school segregation in day to day life (Anderson, 2006 p.30).*

The significance of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision may be most important for reasons other than its impact on creating integrated schools in the United States. Public perception that school segregation is an historical artifact rather than a contemporary social problem is part of the unintended legacy of such highly publicized court cases, and the lack of knowledge of subsequent complicating legal decisions. Despite its inclusion in discussions of the Civil Rights movement, many contemporary scholars now debate the motivation of those involved in the lawsuit and the Supreme Court's decision. As Ladson-Billings (2004) describes: "*Brown* has taken on a mythic quality that actually distorts the way many Americans have come to understand its genesis and function in society" (p. 3) and argues that rather than serving as evidence of

altruism and goodness in the United States, it is a product of a particular political and social period in the country's history. Bell's critique of the true meaning of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision is a classic example of the use of Critical Race Theory in examining legal aspects of educational policy (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). In Bell's (2004) analysis, the elimination of state-sponsored racial segregation in the 1950s was strongly motivated by the then government's desire to promote its democratic government as superior to communism. Tate et al. (1993) attributed the failure of the *Brown* decisions to effectively combat segregation due to the attempt to apply "an essentially mathematical solution to a sociocultural problem" (p. 260).

Since *Brown*, the fundamental question in many school desegregation lawsuits and other court cases related to affirmative action for members of historically disadvantaged groups has been whether or not diversity is a compelling state interest. Even in situations where diversity *has* been considered as such, defendants must prove that their plans have been "sufficiently narrow" to further such goals if racial information is used in, for example, school admissions policies. The Supreme Court's ruling in *Parents Involved*, for example, highlighted the majority opinion that the school assignment systems in place in Louisville, Kentucky and Seattle, Washington were not narrowly tailored toward this goal of establishing diverse schools (Thro & Russo, 2009). The majority opinion did emphasize that diversity does remain a compelling state interest, but one that must be proven to be a driver of particular policies; the final decision, however, has contributed to general confusion about whether school assignment policies can include any consideration of student race.

The *Gratz* and *Grutter* Supreme Court cases were seen as tests of the constitutionality of affirmative action in higher education. In *Gratz*, the Court found that the University of Michigan could not use race as a factor in the point system that determined undergraduate admissions, but in *Grutter* the Court found that the University of Michigan's Law School had shown that diversity was a compelling factor for the quality of education offered at the school, and could

be considered. Bell (2004) argued that the *Grutter* decision and Justice O'Connor's support of the University of Michigan's admissions policy was due to the fact that it was "an affirmative action plan that minimizes the importance of race while offering maximum protection to whites" (p. 151). Perhaps foreshadowing Justice Roberts' statement in the *Parents Involved* opinion that "the way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race" (*Parents Involved*, p. 41), in reflecting on the *Gratz* and *Grutter* decisions, Moses and Marin (2006) described the political debate surrounding affirmative action as one stemming from varied interpretations of the meaning of fairness and racism, as well as "from profound theoretical disagreements between those who believe that democratic ideals require affirmative action policy and those who believe that the same ideals require abolishing it" (p.4). Many school desegregation plans developed and implemented since the *Parents Involved* decision may represent a new form of affirmative action; one based on socioeconomic status rather than race, and therefore perhaps more palatable to a white power base.

Malen (2006) summarized the analyses of several authors who have examined the history of school desegregation efforts in the United States and concluded that school officials in many communities alternately failed to fully implement court-ordered plans or deliberately subverted the plans due to fears of social disruption (p. 99). Others diffused conflict by diluting policy or shifting responsibility for implementation. Malen (2006) calls for more research on school desegregation policy as the shifts in this field provide "natural laboratories for tracing how the 'politics of policy nullification' may evolve over time, as well as across communities" (p. 102). Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008) further describe a need for research that "explore[s] the complexity, interrelatedness, and nonlinearity of the district's roles" with regard to "advancing equity through systemic reform" (p. 341). Their review found a dearth of research on how policy initiatives for educational equity and social justice, and related leadership and organizational efforts, have affected district efforts (Rorrer et al., 2008).

The intent of this section has been to support two core assumptions that underlie the proposed study: (1) that the impacts of segregation on student experience and achievement are generally negative, and (2) that potential benefits exist for *all* students attending diverse and equitable schools. By investigating school integration policy through the lens of central office administrator interpretation and experience, this study identifies particular actors and contexts. Attempting to challenge the so-called “neutral” ways in which social issues are often discussed in educational policy requires "attend[ing] to the complexity of inequity," and addressing "whether current efforts actually result in greater disparities in access, outcomes, and/or power" (Rorrer et al., 2008 p. 344). The next chapter of this dissertation deals more specifically with policy implementation research and key aspects of such analyses, and references related studies and findings. As an overview, the research questions that guided the study are presented on the following page:

### Research Questions

- How and why do the actions of intermediary policy actors (here, directors of diversity and equity or equivalent positions in school districts) contribute to policy disjunction<sup>2</sup> in terms of legislative intent and local enactment?
- How do these actors' personal assumptions and commitments shape interpretation of policy and resulting practices?
- What are the cultural and policy messages received by actors in these positions that affect implementation of desegregation/integration policy in Minnesota? What are the most influential sources of these messages?
- How are broader social discourses (shaped by community influences), along with policy discourses (shaped through state legislative language and Department of Education administration), used to legitimize (or delegitimize) local actions or inactions?

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<sup>2</sup> Evidence that such disjunctions exist can be found in evaluation reports from the Office of the Legislative Auditor (2005, progress report in 2009) of the Integration Revenue Program.



## Chapter 2 : Situating and Studying Education in Sociopolitical Context

*Research is thoroughly enmeshed 'in' the social and 'in' the political and developments and innovations within the human sciences, like education, are intimately imbricated in the practical management of social and political problems. (Ball, 2006).*

*Among public policy arenas, educational policy is unique in its power to determine who has the right to become an educated person, as well as what bodies of knowledge and what cognitive skills count as properly educative. In no society that we know do the voices of all citizens weigh equally in the process, nor do such voices express uniform interests and values. (Levinson & Sutton, 2001).*

### Theoretical Lenses

In order to investigate the complex ways in which policy and practice overlap in education, as expressed in the excerpts above, research approaches that acknowledge the social and political complexities of the field must be employed. The following section discusses frameworks that can be used to elucidate the ways in which political realities contrast with the imagined ideals of integrated public education, and suggests ways to explore the cultural assumptions expressed in both subtle and overt discourses about school integration policy.

#### ***Anthropological Approaches to Policy and Educational Studies***

*Policies are inherently and unequivocally anthropological phenomena. They can be read by anthropologists in a number of ways: as cultural texts, as classificatory devices with various meanings, as narratives that serve to justify or condemn the present, or as rhetorical devices and discursive formations that function to empower some people and silence others. Not only do policies codify social norms and values, and articulate fundamental organizing principles of society, they also contain implicit (and sometimes explicit) models of society (Shore & Wright, 1997 p.6).*

From a sociocultural perspective, policy can be viewed as both “a practice of power” and a “contested cultural resource” (Levinson & Sutton, 2001).

Levinson (2005) has further stated that an inattention to politics in educational anthropology studies “mirrors a deeper American educational myopia” (p. 333). Levinson and Sutton (2001) described practice as “the way individuals and groups engage in situated behaviors that are both constrained and enabled by existing structures but which allow the person to exercise agency in the emerging situation” (p. 3). Shore & Wright (1997) posited that anthropology offers a way to examine how government policies work (or don’t) as instruments of governance, and how political discourse constructs meaning around particular subjects (p. 3). They further relate policy studies and anthropology by connecting a focus in both areas on issues of “norms and institutions, ideology and consciousness, knowledge and power, rhetoric and discourse, meaning and interpretation, the global and the local” (Shore & Wright, 1997) and define policy as a concept or cultural phenomenon that can serve as an object of anthropological study. By viewing such phenomena in this manner, the unique and disparate ways in which local actors interpret and enact programs designed at the state level can be identified and analyzed.

In this dissertation I relate the discussion of how policy works to categorize and classify individuals (Shore & Wright, 1997) to school integration policy, which addresses specific classifications of students based on race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status. School district initiatives that address diversity and equity reflect the “...implicit (and sometimes explicit) models of society” contained in policies that “...codify social norms and values, and articulate fundamental organizing principles of society” (Shore & Wright, 1997). A stated goal of integrated learning environments is to reflect the multicultural identity of larger communities; in many cases this is also related to goals of encouraging the development of cultural competency and citizenship behaviors seen as necessary for success in a globalized world. In this way, Minnesota’s school desegregation/integration policy can be seen as guiding the creation of such a “model of society.”

Further, anthropology is “particularly suited to analyzing how ideologies infiltrate the institutions and practices of everyday life” due to its awareness of multiple points of view and capacity to problematize the “taken for granted” (Shore & Wright, 1997). Analyzing policy implementation from a sociocultural perspective involves incorporating an anthropological lens in order to understand cultural assumptions inherent in educational policy design, and in identifying how problems are defined and addressed. Educational policy research can also explain the mechanisms by which power is distributed, wielded, and maintained by using an anthropological approach to expose how these hidden cultural assumptions drive the development of legislative mandates and their implementation. Understanding such power dynamics is essential to defining what policy does rather than merely what policy is (Levinson & Sutton, 2001). Examining the construction of social solidarity is an important part of analyzing educational policy (Levinson & Sutton, 2001). A purported commitment to multiculturalism and tolerance of difference is arguably a point of idealized social solidarity in diverse U.S. communities; the segregated state of our schools may provide contradictory evidence.

### ***Understandings of Culture, Capital, and Identity***

For present purposes, I adopt Varenne's (2008) succinct explanation of "culture" as an analytic concept "...that obliges us to confront the reality that human beings have transformed their conditions throughout their history" and that cultures "are not objects for possession" (p. 9). This admittedly broad definition is appropriate here because it both mirrors the anthropological understanding embodied in sociocultural approaches to policy studies, and emphasizes the fact of social construction--of concepts, terminology, and resulting policies and practices. It should also be noted that social construction of meaning involves both individual and collective meaning-making processes, and that individual identity is similarly situated in broader social contexts.

The ways in which internal and external influences interact to develop an individual's psychological process of identity development, and in turn how that

individual interacts with the world beyond herself, are simultaneously uniquely personal as well as generic within an identifiable context. If it is truly the "in-between spaces" where individual identities and society as a whole are defined (Bhabha, 1994) then these in-between spaces merit deep exploration.

Complicated constructions of citizenship, acculturation, and assimilation occur daily in the lives of students (and students from "minority" backgrounds in particular) as they navigate life in the United States within the context of its public schools. The difficulty in avoiding observing difference in student identities in ways that "merely acknowledge or celebrate--or worse... outright objectify and commodify" (West, 2002) is a fundamental challenge faced by educators working in increasingly diverse schools. Because no clear lines exist by which individuals can be "known" merely by association with a particular cultural group or identity category, as student populations in public schools change, so must the understandings of how identity is constructed by each individual remain flexible (Ngo, 2010). Ngo places such "identity work" in conversation with Taylor's (1994) "politics of recognition" in which the ways individuals are understood by themselves and others complicate categorization.

A myriad of inter-personal interactions occur in schools that construct the ecosystem of racism that continues to pervade these spaces: student-student, student-teacher, teacher-teacher; and additional inter-structural interactions impact these negotiations: families with schools, students and teachers with the educational system's administrative hierarchy, schools as units with state and federal neoliberal educational policies, appointed and elected educational leaders with governmental actors. Local community constructions of the value of "diversity" and responses (or non-responses) to racism may support or contradict national constructions of democracy and citizenship. The way that social relations, in addition to policies and structures, contribute to the establishment of mechanisms of exclusion should not be ignored (Fine & Weis, 2005).

### ***Examining Systemic Power through Critical Approaches***

Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital and the ways in which educational systems help reproduce social structures and maintain class privileges provides a useful lens for critical analyses of schools. Transfers of such capital maintain social stratification and prevent social mobility. As previously discussed, segregated schools concentrate students of color in high-poverty environments and limit access to social and cultural capital. Further, schools implicitly reproduce social and cultural messages about life and career expectations for certain groups of students through the structuring of inequalities. Apple (1996) has reviewed how some sociologists of education incorporated the critical turn in their work in the 1980s and 90s by examining the privileging of certain types of knowledge and power systems in formal curricula, particularly textbooks, while Levinson and Holland (1996) summarized critical educational studies as showing how schools are sites of cultural transmission in a decidedly non-neutral way that in effect codifies social inequalities.

Schools are often sites of "intense cultural politics" as they serve as resources supporting and promoting a particular view of society (Levinson & Holland, 1996 p.1). When cultural conflicts are present in the larger society and debate exists over the purposes of schooling, these tensions are transferred to schools. Cultural production and cultural contestation are simultaneous processes occurring in schools, and local forms of education are significant (Levinson & Holland, 1996). Analysis of hegemonic power in the United States has often focused on the impact of race and ethnicity in maintaining and perpetuating stratification and inequality (Levinson & Holland, 1996). American educational anthropology studies became particularly concerned with how race and ethnicity contributed to perceptions of cultural difference and disproportionate rates of school failure of minorities in U.S. society with the rise of Civil Rights movements in the 1960s and 70s (Levinson & Holland, 1996). In recent decades, however, scholars have called for a move beyond studies of

schools as sites of only cultural reproduction in the Bourdieu-ian sense but as sites of cultural production informed by and informing complex social processes.

Anyon's (2009) collection of studies using critical social theories as an approach to investigate educational experiences and processes provides examples of how such frameworks can provide additional perspectives. In the introduction to this volume, she described how theory can be used to plan research that "connects the ways in which social actors and conditions inside of school buildings, districts, and legislative offices are shaped and changed by what happens outside the classrooms, office, and official chambers they inhabit" and also illuminate "the larger political and social meanings of what occurs in educational institutions and systems" (Anyon, 2009). Koyama's (2010) investigation of how NCLB contributes to the labeling of schools and students as "failures" challenged educational researchers to further rethink and reposition work on such topics "within their sociocultural environments and to find policy enmeshed in multiple social processes across multilayered contexts." The influence of NCLB and other calls for measurable accountability on Minnesota's integration policy can be seen, however, in recent additions to policy language that explicitly link school desegregation goals to achievement.

### ***Frame Analysis and Policy Discourses***

Goffman's 1974 book titled *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience* is often cited as popularizing this approach in the field of sociology. Despite critiques that this work was based on structural perspectives (see Denzin & Keller, 1981), he defended frame analysis as "interpretive understanding of social interaction" (Goffman, 1981) and described it as a social process of cognitive identification and understanding. In subsequent decades, frame analysis has been popularized in other fields, often reflecting an epistemology that relies on identification of entire meaning systems. In a recent review of how framing as a concept has been taken up in media and communication studies, Vliementhart and Van Zoonen (2011) summarized the "sociological axioms" that underlie its use in analysis: frames are "multiple and can be contradictory of

oppositional,” they represent a “struggle for meaning between different actors that have unequal material and symbolic resources,” they result from situated and routinized social processes, and they are used differently by different social actors based on individual experiences and background knowledge (p. 105).

Work using this approach as part of policy analysis tends to categorize expansive sets of behaviors, systems, and texts into broad groups. For example, Bensimon's (1989) application of frame analysis to higher education identified four frames used by administrators as bureaucratic, collegial, political, and symbolic. Bolman and Deal (2008) applied the use of frames to organizational analysis across a variety of professional fields and identified what they call the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. As an analytic approach, frames have been very popular in examinations of social movement development (see Benford & Snow, 2000). These authors categorized the primary ways in which frames are applied (“core framing tasks” in their terminology) as diagnostic framing for problem identification and attribution, prognostic framing, and motivational framing (Snow & Benford, 1988).

Such approaches have also been applied to educational policy specifically. In her analysis of reading policy implementation in California, Coburn (2006) argued that framing processes are “crucial for motivating and coordinating action” and affect interpretation as well as authority relationships. Coburn’s work draws direct connections between framing processes and collective sense-making in educational policy implementation studies (see Spillane, Gomez, & Mesler, 2009; Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). In a study of how school sanctioning policies were understood by a range of school actors in urban high schools, Anagnostopoulos and Rutledge (2007) similarly used sociological understandings of cognitive schema to examine the construction, negotiation, and contestation of organizational change.

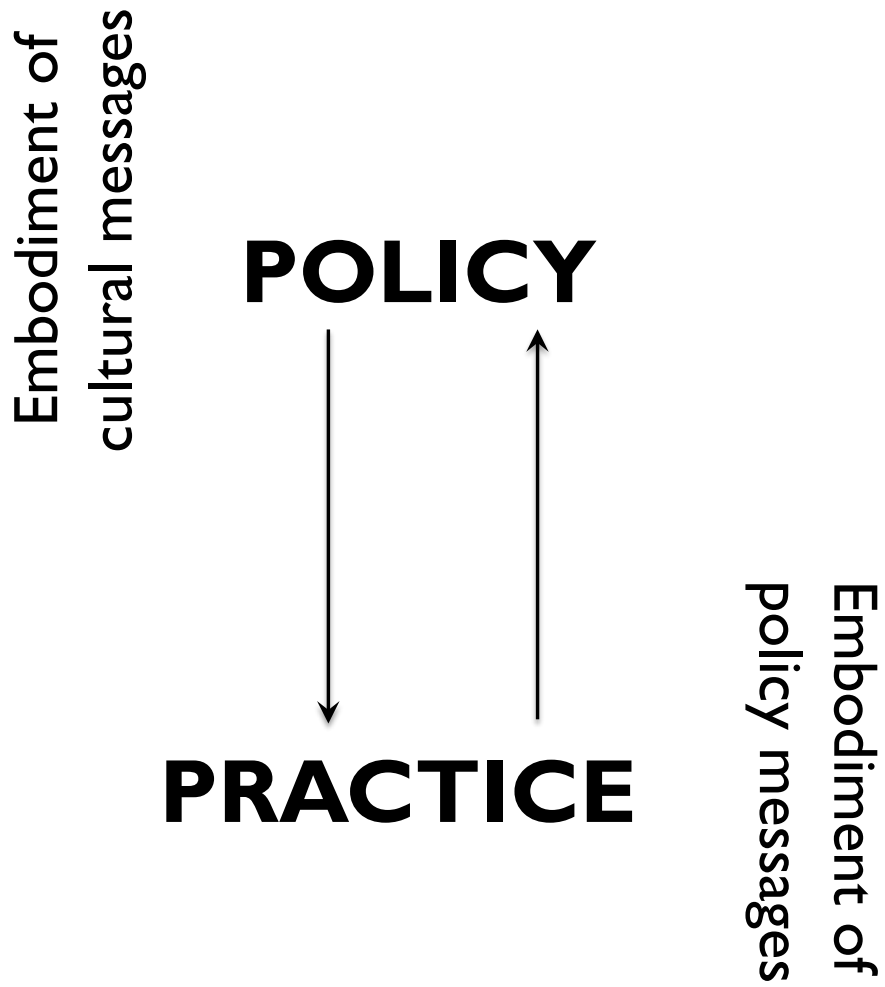
Critical discourse analysis is rooted in post-structuralism and places greater focus on the interpretation of text and use of language by individuals to construct meaning. Although individualized, this process is not solitary--as Gee

(2011) describes, “language has meaning only in and through social practices” (p. 12). “Framing” is a key part of Gee’s explanation of “situated meanings,” although he is more cautious in determining how and where to draw boundaries of such frames. Rather, he states that “context... is indefinitely large” but that deciding to establish limits on it (and in effect, adopt a particular “frame”) is necessary to provide validity for the analysis of a particular situated meaning (Gee, 2011). In Fairclough's (2001) framework for critical discourse analysis, “frames” describe idealized entities referred to by mental interpretive processes, but also the ways in which these entities interact with each other. “Framing” can therefore evoke a particular type of person, object, process, abstract concept, or series of events that involve a combination of these (Fairclough, 2001). Johnston (1995) created a bridge of sorts between frame analysis from a sociological perspective and frames as used in discourse analysis by describing how examining a corpus of documents or texts can peel away layers of collective behavior to identify individual meaning interpretation (p. 218). Scheff (2005) has also suggested a way to build on Goffman’s early work to highlight its usefulness in exploring relationships between micro and macro pathways in iterative analyses. He proposed that combining elements of discourse analysis with Goffman’s frame analysis offers a way to examine an “assembly of frames” and include the perspectives of multiple actors--both individuals and groups--in a complex model that shows mutual awareness (Scheff, 2005). The activities of school districts in developing local integration plans also contribute to the situated cognition of implementing agents within these organizations, as the social sense-making process takes place within a particular context (Spillane et al., 2002). The interpretive aspect of this process is evident in the differing ways integration policy is applied in districts in Minnesota. Convincing policymakers and implementers to adjust their interpretation, or adopt new strategies related to school desegregation and integration, necessitates an understanding of historical and contemporary influences on general assumptions in the field.



The use of critical theories to investigate the institutional roles and functions of school districts relative to equity and racial justice efforts remains largely unexplored (Rorrer et al., 2008). Such critical approaches can also be used to understand elements of positionality and individual behavior, and therefore provide additional insight into the role of intermediary policy actors in the implementation of integration activities in local school districts. In this investigation of school integration policy in Minnesota, I use critical sociocultural lenses to examine how the leaders at the heart of the study are positioned in a complex hierarchy of political power and competing ideologies. A simplified framework that indicates the interrelationships between policy and practice emphasized in sociocultural approaches to policy analysis (informed by Levinson & Sutton, 2001 and Shore & Wright, 1997) is presented on the following page in Figure 2.1. This approach bridges anthropological and sociological approaches to the study of social policy, and in taking an explicitly critical stance in its application I take care not to conflate understandings of “culture” and “society” but rather sociocultural analysis as something unique in and of itself.

Figure 2.1: A Sociocultural Approach to Policy Studies



Informed by the perspectives discussed to this point in the chapter, I now move to show how the study described in this dissertation speaks to and builds upon other research in the field of educational policy studies.

## **A Review of Relevant Educational Policy Studies**

In the next section of this chapter, I place the topic of school integration in the context of other educational research, and place literature that documents studies on the social and academic impacts of school integration and desegregation in conversation with policy implementation studies. Following Levinson and Sutton's call for a reexamination of the purpose and practice of educational policy research, this study seeks to contribute to the exploration and understanding of current school integration policy in Minnesota.

### ***Social Stratification and School Desegregation***

*Court-ordered school desegregation [was the] most ambitious and controversial social experiment of the last fifty years (Johnson, 2011).*

*Desegregation was a strategy for integration that didn't work (Kirkland, 2011).*

*We can no more be in a post-racial situation than we can be in a post-human situation (Torres, 2011).*

The perception held by many that public schooling is a crucial part of social and economic mobility in the U.S.—and that it is available in equal quantity and quality to any student who chooses to take advantage of the American meritocracy—is contradicted by the unequal positioning of students from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds from the moment they begin formal education.

Oakes' (1985) seminal study on tracking in schools revealed how such systemic practices maintain inequality and serve to create segregated spaces within seemingly diverse schools. Students of color have been consistently underrepresented in Advanced Placement and other college preparatory courses

in many school districts across the country. Tracking both reproduces status hierarchies through limiting of potential occupational choices to those students clustered in higher-level courses, and tends to produce higher academic achievement for groups of students that are less than representative of the population (Mickelson, 2002). In addition, students of color, particularly African-American students, are disproportionately over-identified to receive special education services, and under-identified for gifted and talented programs.

Discriminatory practices have in some ways shifted from overt to subtle over the last few decades in the United States, but racial stratification remains in communities (Massey, 2007) and in schools. Additionally, multiple sociological and psychological studies point to continued and persistent problems with racial discrepancies in terms of criminal sentencing and traffic stops by police officers, access to banking and housing resources, and other societal interactions affected by negative stereotyping and discrimination. Although surveys show that most Americans vocally oppose prejudice, legislation to promote racial equality and similar policy plans remain stalled in decision-making processes, and many whites continue to attribute the gap between race-blind principles and racially stratified outcomes to non-racial causes (Massey, 2007).

"Categorical inequalities" are created by the classification of people based on socially constructed or perceived characteristics (Massey, 2007). Although humans may be "psychologically programmed to categorize the people they encounter and to use these categorizations to make social judgments" (Massey, 2007), it is when a hierarchy is consciously or unconsciously ascribed to these categories that stratification results. These categories are internalized or contested by people according to the social advantage or disadvantage provided by their own classification, and these processes of contestation affect one's self-perception and attitudes toward others (Massey, 2007). From an economic perspective, "whether whites care to admit it or not, they have a selfish interest in maintaining the categorical mechanisms that perpetuate racial stratification."

Massey (2007) has further stated that:

*Despite the remarkable shift in white attitudes away from principled racism and the embrace of an ideal of equal rights, substantial numbers of white Americans continue to hold explicitly negative racial stereotypes, and an even larger number probably harbor implicit prejudices of which they are not fully aware (p. 74).*

In her book *Colormute*, Pollock (2004) discussed how the *removal* of race from conversations about inequality in education can also have a direct negative impact on efforts designed to improve opportunities for minority students. Her ethnographic study of how students and educators spoke (and didn't speak) about race in a California school took place in the context of the passage of Proposition 209, a statewide anti-affirmative action referendum. She noted that following the referendum's passage, all University of California recruitment materials replaced race terms with the word "disadvantaged," and that subsequent enrollment statistics showed a drastic decline in the number of already underrepresented groups in the student body (Pollock, 2004). In her assessment, "the erasure of race words had not erased racially patterned disadvantage itself" (Pollock, 2004).

As referenced in chapter one, students of color attending segregated schools tend to receive inferior educational resources, while isolated white students are not attending schools that accurately reflect the increasingly diverse nature of American society. When considering how schools prepare students for future lives and careers, integrated learning environments are supported both by those who promote a more utilitarian view of schooling and those who view honoring diversity as essential to democracy. Page's (2007) book *The Difference* described how diverse groups are better at problem solving and supported this theory with empirical research. Although his premise does not limit a definition of "diversity" to describe racial and ethnic differences, his work has been applied to education and is familiar to those working on issues of school integration. A sentence from the prologue of his book perhaps represents the appeal of his work to those in the field: "...rather than being on the defensive about diversity,

we should go on the offensive. We should look at difference as something that can improve performance..." (Page, 2007). Orfield and Lee (2005) also found that "students of all races who are exposed to integrated educational settings are more likely to live and work among people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds" (p. 11), the benefits of which are reflected in discourses of globalization that often reference the ability to navigate diverse social contexts as a beneficial job skill, and discourses of social justice that promote appreciation of diversity as necessary for successful citizenship in an era of changing demographics in the United States.

### ***Policy Implementation and Educational Research***

*Policy implementation is like the telephone game: the player at the start of the line tells a story to the next person in line who then relays the story to the third person in line and so on. Of course, by the time the story is retold by the final player to everyone it is very different from the original story. The story is morphed as it moves from player to player- characters change, protagonists become antagonists, new plots emerge. This happens not because the players are intentionally trying to change the story- it happens because that is the nature of human sense-making (Spillane, 2004).*

*In the actual working out of policy on the ground, the ideas that went into policymaking are reexamined and replaced, and the policy conflicts that first surfaced during enactment reappear. A policy with successful outcomes results not from getting first the ideas and then the implementation right, but from groping toward workable ideas as part of implementation. To put it another way, studying implementation is not second to studying policy success; it is a necessary part of understanding what policies can be successful (Lin, 2000).*

Implementation studies that analyzed local responses to educational policy gained popularity in the 1960s and 70s when increased government spending on education led to subsequent demands on the part of policymakers to determine effectiveness of the programs that were funded (Odden, 1991).

Although these early studies revealed many examples of failed implementation efforts (Odden, 1991), true understandings of why such failures occurred were limited. As policy implementation as a field of study evolved, the inclusion of local stakeholder interpretation expanded studies past “top-down” analyses and revealed how most educational policy was made with little input from front-line implementers (Odden, 1991). Initial studies of front-line implementation were also incomplete, however, and frequently assumed that individual self-interest may conflict with and lead to subversion of policymakers’ original designs (Honig, 2006). These studies showed that local context mattered, but did little to explain *how* (Honig, 2006).

Three key dimensions of policy design are highlighted by contemporary policy implementation studies: goals, targets, and tools (Honig, 2006 p.14). When considering the complex dynamics of factors that contribute to policy implementation in school districts, current research approaches emphasize contingent and changing aspects of capacity, resources, and leadership (Honig, 2006). Mazzoni's (1991) construction of an arena model to bound the sites in which political interactions and decisions are made is also useful in describing the ways in which power is exercised relative to school integration. Building from March and Olsen's (1989) and Mazzoni's (1991) analysis of the institutional arenas, (Malen, 2006) described sociocultural contexts as "infus[ing] the policy system with presumptions, preferences, and prejudices that advantage some and disadvantage others" (p. 89). Other work, such as Weaver-Hightower's (2008) policy ecology, seeks to apply critical and poststructural approaches to analysis of policy processes in ways that emphasize the complex and contradictory elements that disrupt understandings of policy players as bounded, rational actors. This ecology conceptualizes the interactions of individuals and groups of people, histories, traditions, places, and economic and political conditions with the specific texts and discourses that construct a particular policy (Weaver-Hightower, 2008).

(Spillane, 2004) applied his sense-making model to examine standards-based reform initiatives in Michigan and placed school districts in a policy-making as well as policy-implementing role. The ways in which local districts receiving integration revenue in Minnesota are tasked with designing localized plans are well suited to analysis through this lens. Although the state seeks to guide the purpose of integration efforts through language of the state administrative Rule, it is local school districts that enact initiatives such as attendance zoning or student assignment policies and enforce the plans they develop. Implementation research in other areas of social policy has also pointed to the importance of local context in understanding policy success or failure (see Lin, 2000), and the importance of context has been highlighted in other educational studies. In their examination of how a single-gender public schooling initiative was implemented in California, Datnow, Hubbard, and Conchas (2001) emphasized the interactions of state, district, and school level actors—and the social, political, and economic contexts in which they are situated—as key to understanding this approach to educational reform.

How implementation unfolds in the context of place, participants' starting beliefs and knowledge, and the specific demands of particular policies should be the aim of contemporary implementation research (Honig, 2006). An emphasis on tailoring goals and strategies to local needs and resources requires greater site knowledge and understanding (Honig, 2004), while non-normative aspects of policy may lead to inconsistent behaviors (Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Identifying the policy tools or instruments used in the implementation of particular policies can provide additional insight into local interpretation. McDonnell and Elmore (1987) exhorted researchers addressing educational reform efforts to study both *why* different instruments are selected by policymakers and *how* they operate locally. They defined four general classes of instruments as mandates, inducements, capacity-building, and system-changing efforts and summarized the actions required by each instrument (respectively) as rule-setting, conditional transfer of money, investment in future capacity, and granting or withdrawing



authority to individuals or agencies (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). The next section will explore McDonnell and Elmore's (1987) work and McDonnell's (1995; 2004; 1994) subsequent work in detail, as this policy tools framework will figure significantly in the document analysis described in chapter five. Additionally, school desegregation was one of the primary examples used by these authors to demonstrate how multiple policy tools can be combined in the implementation of a particular policy.

### ***School Integration and Policy Tools***

Minnesota's Desegregation/Integration Rule and Integration Revenue Statute involve elements of all four tools listed above, a situation which may in itself present a view of the complicated nature of implementation of such policy. Mandates require enforcement in order to effectively govern the actions of implementers, but assume that the required action is something that these actors should be expected to do (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Original court-ordered school desegregation programs are classic examples of educational policy mandates, particularly in light of the fact that without enforcement many districts would have refused to desegregate their schools. In Minnesota, the inclusion of the Rule under chapter 3535, Equal Educational Opportunity, implies that school integration is part of a larger set of expected behaviors on the part of local education agencies. Additionally, the mandates imposed by the NCLB Act requiring narrowing of the "achievement gap" affect other aspects of education and influence local implementation by creating a high-stakes context. Requiring schools and students to reach state-set levels of performance can both create unrealistic timelines for implementers and create disincentives to exceed minimum standards for compliance (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Local voluntary integration plans must be developed in Minnesota school districts as defined by the Rule; this mandate therefore defines the context in which implementation occurs. Without strong oversight or evaluation from the state, local integration

plan documents may, in Weaver-Hightower's (2008) words, "act in the capacity of policy" by "creat[ing] or uphold[ing] particular discourses" (p. 158).

Rather than evoke compliance, inducements are expected to produce value (as measured by performance) by transferring money to agencies; this tool is often chosen when local capacity is assumed to vary and coercion is seen as less effective in affecting performance (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). The voluntary nature of the use of much integration revenue and problems with clarity in the purpose of the Rule demonstrate a possible weakness of inducements in this policy area. Policymakers must determine how much variation they are willing to tolerate in the use of inducement money and how narrowly to prescribe how the money will be used (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Inducements are most successful when a problem exists primarily due to a lack of money (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Integrated education is clearly a much more complicated issue, and revenue alone is unlikely to fully address the underlying causes of segregation. The presence of local capacity to implement and understand policymakers' objectives is also key to the success of such instruments (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987), and inconsistencies in this area among districts using integration revenue point to the need for additional policy tools.

By investing in material and human capital, capacity-building efforts are imbued with expectation of future returns (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). The benefits of investment in capacity-building must often be measured in the short-term, however, often leading policymakers to use "immediate measures as proxies for their long-term effects" (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). In this way, the distant goals of capacity-building are often tied to the "proximate and tangible" effects of mandates and inducements (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987 p.139). In the local field of integration policy implementation, the ability of revenue-receiving districts to deliver culturally responsive, relevant, and competent instruction that increases academic achievement for all students requires building the capacity of educators. In order to achieve this goal, however, policy makers may require short-term evidence that funding is being used to organize professional

development workshops and classes with these goals, or show adoption of research-based, data-driven practices.

Capacity building is related to broader themes of democratic decision-making and educational systems as part of public good provision because as an instrument it assumes that “(a) in the absence of immediate investment, future materials, intellectual or human benefits will not be realized by society; and (b) that these longer term benefits are either worth having in their own right, or are instrumental to other purposes that policymakers regard as important” (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). Many seemingly straightforward mandates may in reality require a great deal of capacity building to be achieved; McDonnell and Elmore cited state graduation standards as an example of such a superficial mandate. Similarly, mandates to close the “achievement gap” require broader changes to teaching and structural capacity-building.

System-changing efforts are a fourth instrument described by McDonnell and Elmore (1987); such policy instruments involve the transfer of official authority among individuals and agencies and can have either narrowing or broadening effects. Transferring increasing amounts of federal and state education aid to charter schools is a local example of this tool, implemented in the name of “expanding school choice.” By publicly funding such institutions outside the traditional education system, competition among service-providers has increased. In addition, such schools are provided with levels of autonomy that grants them new types of authority in terms of administration compared to traditional schools. The exclusion of charters and private schools from the state Desegregation/Integration Rule directly affects the local field of integration. System-changing instruments “significantly change the nature of what is produced or the efficiency with which it is produced” (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987 p.143). Actions geared primarily at increasing efficiency focus on market forces such as competition, while other methods of changing decision-making power may operate within established democratic processes. Redistributing or granting new levels of authority to institutions can create new problems for policymakers,

however, as existing organizations may “blunt or co-opt system-broadening policies” (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987 p.144). The required collaborative nature of integration programming (with some decision-making responsibility placed upon local Community Councils) also complicates the assignment of power and authority within the policy field and resulting decisions may be interpreted quite differently by implementers than policy-makers intended. Spring (in Honig, 2004) has noted that, “collaborative education policies traditionally pose significant implementation challenges for school systems” (p. 70). Decision-makers at multiple levels would do well to pay attention to the tendency of system-changing policies to “devolve or degrade into incremental modifications of existing institutions and into more traditional mandates and inducements” (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987 p.144).

In a study of state assessment policies, McDonnell (1994) used Schneider and Ingram's (1990) proposed addition of a fifth policy tool, “hortatory” or “symbolic” policies to explain how assessment approaches were adopted as instruments of political persuasion. Following Schneider and Ingram’s description of such policies as reliant on positive imagery and designed to appeal to values, McDonnell (1994) showed how assessment policies often draw links between educational improvement and global competitiveness. Her definition of hortatory policies included two key characteristics: “...their reliance on persuasion rather than on rules, money, or authority to motivate action, and the need to be joined with other policy instruments to produce sustained effects” (McDonnell, 1994). She also used such an understanding to examine the ways in which so-called “Opportunity to Learn” standards-based policies were included in national educational policy agenda-setting documents in the 1990s (McDonnell, 1995) and analyzed the expansion of statewide testing requirements during the same decade; she then used these conclusions to predict potential impacts of the No Child Left Behind Act in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (McDonnell, 2004).

Finally, selection and implementation of policy instruments is dependent on the availability of resources and the presence of constraints in the policy

environment. McDonnell and Elmore (1987) defined six such resources and constraints as: institutional context, governmental capacity, fiscal resources, political support and opposition, information, and past policy choices. These aspects of implementation should be analyzed in order to answer questions relative to the motivations of policymakers in choosing particular instruments, as well as those regarding implementation successes and challenges.

### ***Studies of School District Administrators as Policy Actors***

Rorrer and Spillane have explored a variety of definitions of school district institutional actors in their work. Central office administrators are distinguished as organizational rather than institutional actors because they function as individuals within a larger organization (Rorrer et al., 2008), but structural aspects of each institution are key to understanding individual actor behavior. In defining entire school districts themselves as institutional actors, they assign greater capacity for policy change and adaptation (beyond implementation) to this larger unit (Rorrer et al., 2008).

Limited resources at the state level and traditions of local control over school policy are other factors that contribute to the significant impact these actors can have on implementation (Spillane, 2004). Within a particular policy context, individuals can be positioned in multiple roles simultaneously, with varying degrees of power in each; analyzing these power dynamics is key to understanding the particular "ecosystem" (Weaver-Hightower, 2008). The agency exhibited by individual actors is dependent on and can be explained by the type of relationships experienced between individuals and groups within the system as well as the influence of policy and institutional structures (Weaver-Hightower, 2008).

Honig's work has shown that central office administrators are often overlooked in educational policy implementation analyses, or positioned primarily as compliance monitors rather than cooperative partners in implementation. In her analysis of school-community collaborations, Honig (2003) showed how district level officials develop policies highly influenced by practice at school

levels, and helped highlight how policy does not travel in a purely linear fashion through the hierarchy. Equity can become a "defining, explicit value and a desired outcome" when advanced by the entire district (Rorrer et al., 2008), and intermediary actors in such districts are likely to share commitments to such values and support efforts to promote them. Spillane's work helps explicate how actors at different levels of a hierarchical system, like education, participate in "sense-making" with others, and how individual cognitive processes affect this process. The way that value commitments can become "a tipping point for change" (Rorrer et al., 2008) can be explored by observing the participation of diversity and equity coordinators and other educators working on integration-specific work in focusing attention on equity in districts.

Implementation can also be unsuccessful for contextual reasons. Educators and administrators "often fail to notice, intentionally ignore, or selectively attend to policies, especially those that are inconsistent with their own agendas" (Spillane, 2004). Furthermore, organizational disconnections within district offices serve to prevent the transfer of necessary information resources across actors. For example, Coburn et al.'s (2009) study of instructional decision-making by central office administrators found that "those who are most likely to have content expertise tend to be peripheral to central decision-making authority, and those with decision-making authority do not necessarily have content expertise" (p. 1146). This situation summarizes much of educational policy making at the legislative level as well, and highlights the many points within the hierarchy at which miscommunication or misinterpretation can occur. In the case of school integration policy, legislative decision makers craft statute language, the State Department of Education is granted authority to oversee the implementation of the Administrative Rule associated with the Statute, and local districts have their own complex "chains of command" based on size and structure. The actors who are key to this study come to their work in Diversity and Equity offices from different previous roles: some have worked as classroom teachers (with instructional expertise but less knowledge of the decision-making

process at the state level), while others have worked outside of education. Additionally, those who have worked within a particular district's institutional structure have insider knowledge that may or may not transfer to work in another district. The particular idiosyncrasies of equity work in each school system are shaped by a political tradition of local control and historically weak state oversight of integration work as well as the individual beliefs and values brought by these actors and shaped by professional demands and pressures.

Intermediary policy actors play a key role in the cyclical movement of reform ideas and changes in values within a school district. Rorrer et al. (2008) described the feedback process as one that is coterminous with "changes in maintaining an equity focus influence changes in instructional leadership, which, in turn, influences subsequent actions to maintain an equity focus, reorient the organization, or establish policy coherence. Consequently, the roles "coevolve with one another" (p. 340). Coburn et al. (2009) have further suggested that identifying how cognitive processes shape decision-makers' conceptual understandings is key to crafting change in districts because it elucidates how they "interpret evidence, frame problems, and select and argue for solutions" (p. 1145).

Organizational and political factors are influential in defining the specific contexts in which such sensemaking and framing occur (Coburn, Toure', & Yamashita, 2009; Rorrer et al., 2008) and institutionalization processes are responsible for shaping these factors (Rorrer et al., 2008). Rorrer et al. (2008) identified four main functions of school districts as institutional actors: providing instructional leadership, reorienting the organization, establishing policy coherence, and maintaining an equity focus (p. 314). Access to necessary resources such as curricular information, time, personnel, and technical assistance is important to include in analysis of district functions and reforms. A study by Coburn et al. (2009) echoed these findings, identifying "organizational structure, content knowledge, resource constraints, and the role of the superintendent" as influential in district decision-making processes (p. 1123).

According to their review of research in the area of district functioning, Rorrer et al. (2008) found two main themes within the emphasis on equity as a district value and role: "owning past inequity, including highlighting inequity in system and culture," and "foregrounding equity, including increasing availability and transparency of data" which serve to increase attention to student achievement across groups (p. 328). This new focus on equity has become a "pivot point for reform" (Rorrer et al., 2008). The ways in which school districts promote equity in practice are "...connected to their collective identity and their ability to create change by altering institutional scripts that tacitly and explicitly govern behavior of organizational members" (Rorrer et al., 2008).

Positioning each actor within each district in terms of local context is important in considering how comparisons and contrasts can be made between settings. Although ostensibly involved in the same general type of work, central office administrators focused on equity and diversity in various school districts in Minnesota encounter a variety of community supports, influences, and pressures. The flexibility and adaptability associated with loosely coupled systems (such as highly decentralized school districts) can actually be detrimental to reform; such systems require a combination with strict accountability measures in order to see successful implementation (Rorrer et al., 2008). This must be balanced, however, with efforts to avoid authoritarian leadership that is not associated with positive systemic change toward equity (Rorrer et al., 2008). Recognizing that decision-making in school districts is inherently political and influenced by both concrete and symbolic resources is key to understanding how to promote [or prevent] change at particular historical moments (Coburn et al., 2009). The potential crisis posed to a school district that attempts to transform its approach to equitable student achievement may create opportunities to alter roles within the organization (Rorrer et al., 2008). The work of equity leaders in districts is therefore an appropriate unit of analysis when attempting to explicate the ways in which actor roles both shape and are shaped by structural and institutional features.



The complexity with which district actors approach policy implementation is acknowledged as an essential part of Rorrer et al.'s (2008) framework of educational reform:

*...a key to understanding the roles districts serve in improving student achievement and advancing equity lies in deliberately setting aside our longings for a precise, 'one best solution' and abandoning random, isolated efforts to system educational reform and, instead, attending to what can be learned from the complexity and adaptability of districts as well as the interdependence of the roles they enact (p. 336).*

Spillane (2004) also described how the interpretive process is "fraught with opportunities for understandings to develop that do not reflect those intended by policymakers" (p. 7).

Spillane's (2004) cognitive model also suggests that policy failure at the local level may not come from deliberate sabotage, as previous implementation research has suggested, but rather "honest misunderstandings" (p. 8). Exploring elements of how information is used by school district central office personnel is important to understand sense-making processes and factors and to construct a more accurate picture of how decisions are made (Coburn et al., 2009). In their study of evidence-based decision-making about instruction at the district level, Coburn et al. (2009) confirmed the combined influence of individuals' preexisting worldviews and their collective understandings on developing professional perspectives. Problem and solution framing are significantly shaped by the way in which district administrators interpret the issue at hand (Coburn et al., 2009). Their study showed that "district decision makers draw on their preexisting working knowledge--especially their content knowledge--as they operate in this interpretive space" (p. 1143). Examining the influences on the policy actors at the focus of this study is therefore important in developing a full understanding of interpretation and implementation of school integration policy in Minnesota. Rather than seeking universal truths about implementation, research that explores the impact of interactions between people and places with policies can elucidate local knowledge constructions (Honig, 2006).

Lin (2000) attributed inappropriate policy implementation activities in her study of prisons to "a gap between the purposes and values supposedly embedded in a policy, and the purposes and values of those who implement it" and described how "policies pick up new meanings, new concerns and new purposes that their designers might not even have considered, much less intended," further supporting the importance of context in determining policy success (p. 39). Much in the way that identity construction is a process of cultural production in which positionality and social context interact to form a person's historically specific identity (Levinson & Holland, 1996), policy construction is also complex, contested, and incomplete. As discussed in earlier sections of this chapter and in chapter one, examining and deconstructing the ways in which identity-forming processes function in U.S. society, and how these processes are reflected in educational policy, is necessary in research on actor agency and behavior.

In generating an analytic framework from the works included in this discussion, this study approaches policies as texts that are at once created, interpreted, and implemented through discursive processes that involve multi-layered actions and interactions. Following Foucault, Ball (1994) has described policy as both text and discourse: "As text, a policy is a physical document with readable words.... In contrast, the view of policy as discourse entails the ways that policies 'exercise power through a production of 'truth' and 'knowledge.'"

Policy "wields significant control over what can be thought, said, and heard and by whom" due to its backing by governmental authority (Weaver-Hightower, 2008). The legitimacy provided by the state is either (or simultaneously) supported or undermined by local features of implementation. The "dismantling of desegregation" (Orfield & Lee, 2005) has been cited as an example of how social and discursive practices in combination with governmental policies create or maintain systematic exclusion of disadvantaged students from improved educational opportunity (Fine & Weis, 2005). The complex ways in which

intermediary school district actors participate in this discourse, and subsequently enact policy, is the focus of the study around which this dissertation is based.

The discourse used in particular policy fields establishes how policy then shapes practice. Exploration of the policy field of school integration allows for investigation of how societal and political structures interact with local values to construct and (de)prioritize "diversity" in education. The study described here explored how individual personal commitments and institutional capacity contribute to the success or failure of policies related to school integration efforts in Minnesota. Using anthropological approaches to explore the way public education in the United States is simultaneously situated in the worlds of policy, practice, and social imagination, and combining this mode of examination with critical analysis of the effects of (re)segregation of schools requires me, as a researcher, to "...bear witness and simultaneously act, as policies, politics, and practices shrink the educational horizon for so many youth" (Fine & Weis, 2005).

Building on the framework and research base explored in this chapter, I now move on to Chapter three, in which I provide an overview of the research methods and data collection strategies employed in this study of integration leaders as intermediary policy actors. Chapters Four, Five, and Six will explore findings from this study from the macro, micro, and meso levels, and implications for practice will be suggested in an epilogue of sorts, in the context of ongoing work on the part of these integration leaders.

## Chapter 3 : Study Design and Methodology

*What would educational policy studies look like if they re-conceptualized the notion of policy itself as a complex social practice, an ongoing process of normative cultural production constituted by diverse actors across diverse social and institutional contexts? (Kirkland, 2011).*

This study focused on building understandings of how intermediary school district actors<sup>3</sup> interpret and implement school integration policies in Minnesota. A combination of data collection, observation, and analytic methods were used to reveal how elements of individual and collective understanding lead to local knowledge construction, and how this knowledge impacts action. Naming these elements allowed for identification of trends or disconnects that exist within the network of policy actors at the focus of this study, and how these patterns intersect with larger state-level discourses. A qualitative, multiple case study design based on interpretive sociocultural methods and informed by critical perspectives was used to gather and (re)construct meaning relative to the questions that guide this research.

### Researcher Positionality

This investigation truly began many years ago, when I first began teaching at the K-12 level and gained new insight to my own experiences as a student in many different American school settings. Growing up an "Army brat," I attended an international school in Tunisia, a Department of Defense school on a NATO base in Belgium, and public schools in a lower-middle class Texas community and an upper-middle class Connecticut suburb. After college I started my teaching career in an urban public school in western Massachusetts, and then

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<sup>3</sup> Here I am specifically referring to school district central office administrators working in local school districts in positions with varied titles such as "Director of Diversity and Equity," "Director of Equity and Integration," or "Director of Diversity and Equal Opportunity."

taught in a Minneapolis public school for five years. The Minnesota school at which I taught was like those Kozol (2005) and others have termed an "apartheid school"— 98% of the students qualified for free and reduced price lunch, 99% of the students were people of color, and over 50% of the students were English language learners. At the time I was aware of the drastic differences between the overall demographics of the district and the demographics of the student population of the school in which I worked, but was not familiar with the larger educational policy context. I became involved with local union legislative committee activities as I sought to become better informed, and participated in two rounds of candidate review and nominating decisions during political elections. Disturbed by the effect of repeated budget cuts on support services and programs for ELL students and families, I decided that improving my Spanish language skills would allow me to better connect with the large Latino community at my school. After a summer of language study in Guatemala I recognized there was much I needed to learn culturally that went beyond grammar and vocabulary. During two years teaching at a private bilingual school in Colombia my Spanish-speaking abilities improved greatly, but I realized I had removed myself from one type of school segregated by race and class and entered another. The roots of social division, and how such division is expressed in classrooms, underlie school integration policy. These roots, much like many policies, are evidenced by sets of practices that can alternately obscure or highlight linkages between history and contemporary intentions.

This investigation was a small attempt on my part to highlight the complexities of a problem that is not uncommon to many parts of the world, but in a context that I hope I can understand more fully due to my membership in the local community. I have pursued my graduate studies at the University of Minnesota in a deliberate attempt to more deeply understand my experiences as a teacher in the state and to find a way to contribute to the search for solutions to educational problems. The parts of my professional and personal history recounted above serve to establish my familiarity with the context of education in

the state and to recognize my role as a participant-observer. Knowing that my actions as a teacher working in the contemporary U.S. public school context often served to maintain an approach to education that at times contradicts my espoused values is troubling, but important to note. Acknowledging my own assumptions and beliefs while finding a way to step outside them through reflective exercises has been a challenging but important aspect of this pursuit. I seek to keep in mind that ultimately, educational policy research is about students, and that conducting a study that is inherently related to a history of racism and discrimination in the United States requires a constant admission and awareness of my own privilege as a white middle-class woman advantaged by the system as it currently exists—as both a student and later as a teacher. I seek to tell the stories of others but not to assert them as my own, and observe where personal intersections may occur. I have come to this research from experiences attending and teaching in segregated public school environments, and I draw upon those as an observer and an investigator.

In the rest of this chapter, I describe the data that were collected over the course of this study, explain the modes of analysis that were employed, and demonstrate why an interpretive qualitative approach was appropriate in order to answer the questions presented at the end of chapter one.

### **Ethnographic Case Studies Approach**

Policy studies offer opportunities for ethnography reconsidered- rather than a traditional immersion in one geographical site for an extended period of time, these ethnographies acknowledge that policy is at work in multiple sites simultaneously, and acts upon and is acted upon by multiple players. In their initial collection of essays that explored critical anthropology of policy, Shore and Wright (1997) summarized this approach as one that “treats the models and language of decision-makers as ethnographic data to be analysed rather than as frameworks for analysis” and that in “excavat[ing] the prescriptive tones and normative assumptions that underlie policies, they examine how policy

discourses 'work' to control political agendas, and the complex ways in which policies construct their subjects as objects of power." In their updated work, the authors stated that:

Anthropology's contribution to policy studies goes far beyond its capacity to produce 'thick' ethnographic descriptions. It lies above all in its sensitivity towards the way in which policies work as instruments of governance, and its concern to explore how policies are understood by differently situated actors. (Shore & Wright, 2011, p.20)

I also attend to Van Maanen's (2011) claim that "ethnographies are politically mediated, since the power of one group to represent another is always involved" (pp. 4-5) in approaching the collection of data for this study of integration leaders. The overall design for this dissertation is an iterative case study of a professional organization of school integration leaders and the work of these leaders in three selected school districts in Minnesota, guided by a statewide survey and state-level document analysis. Case studies are appropriate when the unit of analysis can be bounded in particular temporal, social, or physical ways (Huberman & Miles, 1994). Research that is situated in public school districts lends itself to such a study because many facets of school organization are considered issues of local control. Although the focus of the study is the interpretation of a particular state statute, the ways in which this policy is enacted are distinctly local in nature, and examination at the district level is therefore appropriate. The cases that are included can be defined both by that which they have in common, and that which distinguishes one from the other (e.g. slight variations in school year schedules, geographic and demographic distinctions, other aspects of district responsibilities, and behaviors such as budgeting and reporting procedures). As qualitative research aims to "inductively build" understanding (Merriam, 1998 p.45), this research involved looking for broad themes from state-level data as well as local patterns.

Stake (1994) described six "major conceptual responsibilities of the qualitative case researcher" (p. 244). These include: (1) bounding the case, (2) selecting phenomena of interest, (3) seeking data patterns, (4) triangulating

observations and bases for interpretation, (5) considering alternative interpretations, and (6) developing assertions or generalizations about the case. Conducting case study research involves defining a linear plan but then immersing oneself in iterative processes of design, preparation, data collection, data analysis, and sharing of results (Yin, 2009). Case studies are a way of providing rich, contextualized data that help answer questions about varied, complex, social units (Merriam, 2009). In applied fields such as education, case studies have been shown to be particularly useful in informing policy (Merriam, 1998) and in the examination of contemporary events in which "relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated" (Yin, 2009 p.11).

Schwandt (2000) described social inquiry in a broad sense as a "distinctive praxis" in which "acting and thinking, practice and theory, are linked in a continuous process of critical reflection and transformation" (pp. 190-191). A belief in the idea that the construction of knowledge involves active personal and collective practices underlies social constructionist epistemologies (Schwandt, 2000). In such qualitative research, a combined inductive and deductive approach to analysis results in successive cycles of identification and subsequent verification of themes, patterns, and hypotheses (Huberman & Miles, 1994). In keeping with a constructivist approach to knowledge building, hints at "causality" in the analysis of this data gathered during this research were made with caution and the awareness that "causality is local...multiple...and retrospective" (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p.435).



## **Data Sources**

### ***Observation***

Observation was a key source of information for this study. I attended meetings of the professional organization MSIC (Minnesota School Integration Council) as often as possible from 2009 to 2013, almost all of the Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force meetings held from 2011-2012, and several hearings of the House and Senate Education Policy and Finance Committee at the state capitol during the 2013 legislative session. Additionally, I conducted site visits to each of the districts selected as case study sites, and many other schools and district offices when I had the opportunity. During these observational visits I took extensive field notes, often using the iPad app Audionote, which allowed me to take time-stamped field notes that were synced with audio recordings of meetings. Spending time "in the field" in educational settings was crucial for contextualization of the experiences of the educators at the heart of the study, and in building my own knowledge of the sites and communities in which they work. Additionally, such perspective was necessary in order to compare and contrast elements of practice and culture across cases. Following Wolcott's (1999) caution against calling all fieldwork a type of "participant-observation" (p. 44), I instead attempted to reconcile my outsider status in each particular community with my insider knowledge of public education in the state of Minnesota.

### ***Interviews***

Rubin and Rubin (2005) describe their "responsive interviewing" approach as one that allows for in-depth investigation and relies on "...the interpretive constructionist philosophy, mixed with a bit of critical theory and then shaped by the practical needs of doing interviews" (p. 30). I adopted this approach as part of an overall design guided by a sociocultural approach with analysis that attended to hierarchical power dynamics of an individual, collective, and political nature. Semi-structured interviews were a primary source of data for this study, as

questions of how intermediary policy actors construct and interpret meaning in their professional roles (and how these roles relate—or don't—to their personal value commitments) can only be answered legitimately by using the words of the actors themselves. As part of a multiple case study design, a broadly consistent protocol was used to support arguments of validity, and district officials working in selected sample sites were interviewed at least twice during the 2011-2012 school year. In addition to these formal interviews, I took field notes following numerous interactions with these participants as well as other integration leaders across the state. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of participants- I visited each of the three case study sites at least twice throughout the course of this research but had contact with participants at other points during the study. All interviews were transcribed verbatim, and were between 35 and 105 minutes in length. Transcripts were then uploaded and coded using the web-based qualitative data analysis program Dedoose ([www.dedoose.com](http://www.dedoose.com)).

### ***Statewide Survey***

A survey was conducted to collect input from as many integration leaders across the state as possible to develop a more comprehensive description of typical job responsibilities and time spent with particular stakeholders in local school districts. As the Minnesota Department of Education had not updated a list of people in these positions since 2009, I developed a database of sorts with the cooperation of the Minnesota School Integration Council. Beginning with the updated information provided from the membership rolls of this organization, I then cross-checked these names with the contact person listed on the budgets submitted to MDE in the spring of 2012. I then attempted to check the accuracy of these names for the districts for whom I did not have a direct contact through MSIC using school district websites and other public records. In cases where I could find no mention of a job position with “integration,” “equity,” or “diversity” in the title, and in which the person listed as the contact on the previous year’s budget was no longer on staff in the district, I directed the survey invitation to the Director of Teaching and Learning or Curriculum and Instruction (for larger

districts) or to the Superintendent (for smaller districts). Using the contacts noted on the budgets submitted to MDE proved to only be approximately 25% accurate—perhaps a sign of high turnover or attrition in these positions, or the fact that in many districts the position is only part-time. Emails were sent individually to each person on the list to avoid message-filtering software that may have read a mass emailed message as spam. A copy of the IRB consent form was attached as a PDF to each message and similar information was included in the welcome page of the survey. After sending out the first round of invitations, twelve email addresses proved to be incorrect and I followed a similar process to find a new contact to which to direct the survey. Following Dillman, Smyth, and Christian's (2009) suggestions for reducing survey error due to nonresponse, or problems with coverage or sampling, I used processes of “think-alouds” and piloting with representative educators and sought the input of MSIC in refining the instrument. This helped build trust with a key group of informants, and increased benefits and reduced risks of response for other integration leaders.

## **Qualitative Analysis**

An inductive process involving analysis of multiple sources and forms of data was used. I started with the analysis of interview transcripts, adding in selected survey data, and then compared these coded excerpts and frameworks with the results of document analysis and field note review.

### ***Interview Coding***

Verbatim transcripts of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with representative leaders in the three selected case study districts of Gateway Falls, Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone, and Sissteon Plains were prepared. These interviews ranged from 29 to 78 minutes in length and were recorded in a variety of locations. In order to encourage participants to answer questions frankly in a charged political environment, additional informal interviews were not audio-recorded. Rather, reflective note-taking was used to examine the context of each

conversation and to compare information or opinions heard in these exchanges with those reported by the same participant in formal interviews, or by peers.

Using an inductive approach, the seven in-depth interviews with key informants from selected case study sites were analyzed using the software program Dedoose. 150 codes and subcodes were identified during the preliminary analysis. A frequency analysis resulted in a list of 14 codes that appeared with 10-19 applications in the data, 8 codes that appeared with 20-29 applications, and 3 that were used more than 30 times. Through analysis of co-occurrence, 11 pairs of codes were identified that appeared in concert in more than five instances (two of these pairs occurred 15 times each). Finally, the initial list was examined for thematic relationships and combinations were arranged. Following this process, the original 150 codes and subcodes were collapsed to 10 primary codes and 54 subcodes. Two additional subcodes were added to accommodate data from open-response items on the statewide survey. This framework was then used to code additional qualitative data, including meeting notes, field notes from observational site visits, informal conversations with participants, and email text from relevant sources. The final codebook is presented in Appendix D.

### ***Statistical Analysis of Survey Responses***

A 26-item survey was developed and piloted with job-similar educators over the course of 2011-2012. The final version of the instrument was previewed by members of the Executive Board of MSIC, who offered useful input on adjusting the options available for some questions, and requested the addition of an item asking if these roles were 9-month or 12-month contract positions. MSIC agreed to “sponsor” the administration of the survey by allowing me to attach the organization’s name, and in return I concluded the survey with an announcement that a statewide conference would be organized in December 2012 and encouraged respondents interested in attending to contact MSIC officers. The final version of the survey (see Appendix C) was administered on-line using a Google Form. The survey was live for approximately 2 months, with two follow-up

reminder emails sent following the initial invitation. Of the 117 individuals contacted, 57 completed surveys were received, for a response rate of about 49%.

Responses to questions with categorical variables were re-coded for frequency analysis. Questions that asked respondents to note the appropriate range of hours they spent per week in (direct or indirect) contact with educators, students, other administrators, parents and families, and community members or outside organizations were also recoded. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were calculated for these items using SPSS. Paired t-tests were conducted on these items to explore whether differences in hours spent with particular types of constituencies were observable across urban, suburban, and rural school districts. Open-response items were coded qualitatively, with respondents' definitions of cultural competence, for example, imported to Dedoose for analysis.

Results of these statistical analyses were compared with interpretive coding and observations from case studies to determine if findings from these three locations were representative or anomalous compared to statewide trends demonstrated in survey responses. Survey and case study results are discussed in depth in Chapter 4.

### ***Document Analysis***

Issues of meaning-making are central to studies of policy interpretation. Here I briefly reiterate that examination of discourse was key to the analytic framework used to explore how policy actors made sense of and identified the multiple (and at times, conflicting) messages received from different sources. Guiding such exploration were questions such as: How do school district central office administrators working to coordinate "equity and integration" or "diversity and equity" initiatives come to understand their roles? How do they harmonize the discordant messages from local, regional, state and national sources? How do they interpret the rhetoric of the "local is global" in terms of promoting diversity for reasons of economic competitiveness? How do they situate themselves

politically relative to the role of schools in addressing social (in)justice? Policy actors are embedded in cultural constructions and "models of society" that shape their understandings; and the ways in which they act upon these understandings is how policy becomes practice. Rather than contribute to the reification of underlying concepts, I sought to complicate them by situating these actors within a complex field that incorporates multiple influences, defined and shaped by particular discourse(s). I also drew on the following questions posed by Shore and Wright (1997, p. 3):

- *What are the mobilizing metaphors and linguistic devices that cloak policy with the symbols and trappings of political legitimacy?*
- *How do policies construct their subjects as objects of power, and what new kinds of subjectivity or identity are being created in the modern world? How are major shifts in discourse made authoritative?*
- *How are normative claims used to present a particular way of defining a problem and its solution, as if these were the only ones possible, while enforcing closure or silence on other ways of thinking or talking?*

Keeping in mind the goal of connecting and interpreting meaning-making as it occurs at the local and state levels, illuminating the power dynamics inherent to policy development and implementation required a constant investigation of the ways in which actor agency and subjectivity were displayed through various texts. The roles of these actors in concert with and in response to the behaviors and speech of others within local communities and policy networks was defined, constrained, and at times even subverted by their own interpretation of education, policy, and integration.

The centrality of discourse as the evidence and process of human interpretation in social constructivist approaches (Schwandt, 2000) justifies the emphasis on rhetorical analysis included in this study. Collecting a wide variety of texts (spoken, acted, written) and systematically analyzing them to explore

meaning (as understood from both emic and etic perspectives) is essential in establishing an argument for the way in which policy is understood and acted upon at the local level. In order to incorporate a critical theoretical approach in this analysis, examination of explicit and implicit expressions of power is prominent in review and observation. Any work undertaken with a goal of informing social change must be aware of the social norms and local realities within which change agents construct meaning. As outlined by Levinson and Sutton (2001), a comparative sociocultural approach blends and builds upon the work of policy analysis and implementation studies, and various applications of critical theory and ethnography in educational settings, in order to move critique and analysis to a place of creating inclusionary dialogue and policy change.

A variety of document types were included in those collected for review. At the state level, the Integration Revenue Statute (124D.86) and the School Desegregation/Integration Rule (3535) were a starting point for the intended examination of discourse. Although brief, the role of such policy statements is significant because they document the role of the state in setting educational intent, and guide local action (whether or not they succeed in having such influence is a different aspect of analysis, but here I begin with identifying what messages may be inferred or uncovered through a critical reading of the text). Other documents with a statewide reach such as evaluation reports of the integration revenue program from the Office of the Legislative Auditor and other such reports available from MDE were reviewed. Annual reports submitted to MDE from each participating district were publicly available and were collected from each case study site. Other formal policy documents that were included in local analysis included minutes of school board meetings in which integration related programming was discussed, and other evaluation reports. Interpreting evidence of community values was also aided by immersion in local discourses, through reviews of coverage in a variety of community newspapers and other publications.

The use of a framework of multiple policy tools for was appropriate for the purposes of this analysis due to the muddiness of policy implementation in general, and the complicated nature of school integration policy in particular. Most public policies involve combinations of multiple instruments (McDonnell, 2004) and Minnesota's Integration Revenue program is no exception. As discussed in the earlier literature review section of this paper, evidence of McDonnell's five primary policy tools can be clearly identified in integration programming and planning. The role of values related to diversity and local cultural constructions of the role of schools in communities was central to the investigation at the heart of this study. The inclusion of hortatory policies, with their emphasis on a "values dimension" (McDonnell, 2004) was therefore a key element. Using this policy tools framework in conjunction with a form of critical discourse analysis required rejecting some of the more structural assumptions that underlie much of traditional policy analysis. As McDonnell (1994) has noted, hortatory policies are more than just symbolic; this feature implies that the evaluation and accountability requirements to which local school districts are held by federal and state reporting systems are significant. By examining such policies from a transparently critical standpoint, ways in which policy purpose appears disconnected from the way it is enacted can be explored for the new constructions of meaning that are evident, rather than an analysis that considers policy subversion or failure as intentional "spectacle" (see Edelman, 1988, 1995).

As with any analytic approach, weaknesses exist that should be identified at the outset. Rogers (2004) identified three common critiques of Critical Discourse Analysis: "(a) theory driven, (b) extracted from context, and (c) lack of attention to learning; Rogers suggests that these can be countered by using such an approach in studies "characterized by rigorous empirical methods" (p. xi). In combining the definitions of policy tools as expressed by McDonnell (2004) with a critical analysis of policy documents, I use these instruments as categories that serve as a starting point—one from which I hope to connect to ways in which educational policy has been examined by others. Acknowledging the usefulness



(and enduring quality) of the discussion of policy instruments, I seek not to problematize McDonnell's definition of these tools, but rather their selection by decision makers in Minnesota by using this framework to identify the perhaps contradictory, but assuredly confusing, way in which multiple instruments are combined in integration policy documents. Following Lewis, Enciso, and Moje's (2007) call for sociocultural researchers to "better understand the way that performances of social identity are cloaked in the fabric of power and ideology and economics" (p. 8), the approach here seeks to focus attention on the role of language in constraining implementation and promoting particular expectations of educational actors.

McDonnell and Elmore first defined their categories of four policy instruments (mandates, inducements, capacity-building, system-changing) based on "a) existing theories about the effects of governmental action; and b) observed patterns in the choices of policymakers" (1987, p. 136). McDonnell later expanded this framework to include "hortatory" policies based on similar observations of policy trends and studies in the field. Scollon (2008) posited the following assumptions about public discourse in a democratic society: (1) public discourse is always and inherently political, (2) stakeholders in the political process may operate from positions of power or from minority positions, and therefore, (3) all participants in public discourse as well as all citizens must face up to the difficult dilemma of trying to win, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, insisting on preserving open, free, non-coercive negotiation of their positions to enable democratic processes for making decisions" (p. vii). Gee (2011) described discourses as "ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people." Critical discourse analysis examines how subjects and objects are created and maintained through ideological contestations. Speakers and actors draw on value-based, ideological, evaluative classification schemes when expressing differences (Fairclough, 2001). The mode of inquiry discussed here focuses on policy instruments as such

a classification scheme. A combination of critical discourse analysis and a policy instruments framework therefore aims to identify how particular policy language promotes certain ideological beliefs and therefore categorizes particular groups of people as subjects and objects.

From a theoretical perspective, combining approaches such as a policy tools framework, which is more familiar to many in policy implementation studies, with critical discourse analysis is useful because sociocultural explorations of policy can be advanced in a way that more explicitly identifies the underlying assumptions about power and agency exhibited through policy. In such a way, discourse analysis can become an engaged way for researchers to become part of the policy process and promote social justice objectives, rather than a performance of “discourse analysis at a distance” (Scollon, 2008, p. ix). Moje & Lewis (2007) called for sociocultural research to take a more critical perspective in order to “articulate explicitly the dynamic and dialogic power relationships between the social and individual, the global and the local, the institutional and the everyday, in ways that will allow educators to provide more opportunities to learn for more youth in society” (p. xiii). Disrupting the “taken for granted assumptions” (Levinson & Sutton, 2001) of educational policy discourses requires complicating the categorization of groups in society as a whole, and in schools in particular. Policy documents themselves can be seen as a “dynamic site[s] for the construction of meaning” that not only reflect culture but also help to construct it (Allan, 2010, p. 13). Through an examination of such policies from a transparently critical standpoint, ways in which policy purpose appears disconnected from the way it is enacted can be explored for the new constructions of meaning that are evident. By looking at the contradictory ways different texts construct discourses about the role and importance of poverty in school desegregation/integration, the ways in which current policy approaches fail in addressing the problem can be further identified, and contribute to development of new proposals that more fully capture the many dimensions of social integration and are therefore more likely to succeed.

## ***Limitations***

Although case studies are well equipped to provide in-depth, thick description of a phenomenon, they may also be used to "oversimplify or exaggerate a situation" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, in Merriam, 1998 p.42). It is therefore incumbent upon the researcher to ensure that generalizations that are made clearly link data from multiple sources and adhere to high standards of reflection and checking for reliability and validity. Fundamental to ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research is ethical practice on the part of the researcher (Merriam, 1998). The qualitative and culturally focused nature of this research recognizes that researcher bias cannot be removed or discounted from the study, but must rather be accounted for and acknowledged. In order to uncover and disclose my personal assumptions I kept a reflective research journal throughout the process of data collection, analysis, and writing in order to effectively consider the effect of past experiences on my interpretations and conclusions. Lincoln & Guba (1985) listed reflexive journaling as a technique for establishing trustworthiness by means of addressing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability both during and after the data collection process. Throughout the collection of data, the "moral-political commitments" involved in "...understanding what others are doing or saying and transforming that knowledge into public form" (Schwandt, 2000 p. 203) must be repeatedly reflected upon and considered. Member checking and personal reflection during analysis processes were key in responsibly keeping these commitments.

More specifically, other strategies to maintain rigor in the study, and defend the reliability of conclusions, included careful attention to detail and checking of transcripts and field notes for accuracy and sequencing (Gibbs, 2007 in Cresswell, 2009). Validity may be approached through a variety of means (Cresswell, 2009); I used triangulation of data sources for themes identified, thick description (see Geertz, 1973) of findings and site observations, member-checking, and the inclusion of discrepant cases or data. As Huberman & Miles

(1994) stated: "triangulation is less a tactic than a mode of inquiry" that is built into data collection processes by deliberate checking of findings using multiple sources and modes of evidence (p. 438). The data collection strategies and plan for timing proposed here are intended to complement and mutually strengthen each other- in combination, many weaknesses of one technique in isolation can be compensated for by another.

The following three chapters present study findings. Chapter four examines the role of the state legislature in constructing policy language, chapter five explores the results of a the statewide survey and selected case studies, and chapter six uses observations and document analysis to situate the role of the integration leaders' professional organization in navigating this complex policy environment.

## Chapter 4 : State Policy Discourses

Particular discourses of policy and practice are central to the enactment of school integration programming in Minnesota. Drawing upon issue framing, policy implementation, and critical discourse analysis perspectives, this chapter shows how state policies in Minnesota promote certain discourses through the establishment of language in legislative documents and in oversight functions of the Minnesota Department of Education. In this chapter I also introduce two primary frames (“education as a public good” and “education as a social justice or right”) to examine the ways in which state decision makers--and those that participate in policy debates at the state level—construct alternate meanings of the purpose of integration funding. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 group the main sources of these constructed meanings as those from the state, the district integration leaders themselves, and those from local school districts and communities. Vliegenthart and Van Zoonen's (2011) call to researchers interested in frame analysis to pay particular attention to micro, meso, and macro processes and not focus only on individual interpretation or collective sense-making of frames is of particular use in this study because it examines the ways in which actors situated at the meso level of policy making and implementation navigate messages constructed at both the micro (local enactments) level and macro (legislative policy construction). As will be demonstrated, in this case the messages constructed at each level serve both diagnostic and prognostic framing purposes (see Coburn, Toure, & Yamashita, 2009). In this chapter I will explore the macro sources of information, in this case the Minnesota State Legislature and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). Chapter Five will examine the micro (local school districts in Minnesota), and Chapter Six will focus on the meso (the professional network of district integration leaders across the state).

**Figure 4.1: Education as a Public Good**

***Information Streams and Intermediary Policy Actors***

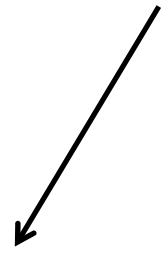
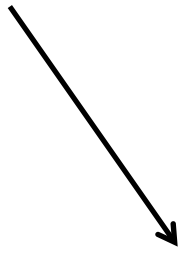
FRAME: Education as a Public Good

**Minnesota Dept. of Education**

Language of evaluation and oversight (hold districts accountable for use of money)

**Minnesota State Legislature**

Language of rights as the establishment of priorities (guidance through authority)



**INTERMEDIARY POLICY ACTORS**

Integration leaders interpret top-down policy message from state-level decision-makers and regulatory bodies and locally constructed ideologies of diversity and equity in schools



**Local School Districts**

Language of evaluation and oversight (hold districts accountable for use of money)

**Figure 4.2: Education as a Social Justice Issue and Right**

***Information Streams and Intermediary Policy Actors***

**FRAME: Education as a Social Justice Issue and Right**

**Minnesota Dept. of Education**

Language of gatekeeping and  
“hoop jumping”  
(things that must be done in order  
to get to the “real” work, i.e. budget  
approval process)

**Minnesota State Legislature**

Language of civil rights law-both  
HISTORIC (existing statutes and  
rules based on previous decisions)  
and  
AHISTORIC (things repeat themselves  
and power structures look similar)



**INTERMEDIARY POLICY ACTORS**

Integration leaders interpret top-down  
policy message from state-level decision-  
makers and regulatory bodies and locally  
constructed ideologies of diversity and  
equity in schools



**Local School Districts**

Language of “our kids” and what they  
deserve—the right to an education of  
quality that not only acknowledges and  
respects diverse backgrounds but also  
actively addresses institutionalized  
structural discrimination that leads to  
inequality

These frames emerged from interpretations of data collected from many sources over the course of several years. Although applied here to integration policy in a particular state, these issues are situated in a context in which basic understandings of the purposes and goals of public education are debated. The two frames used here broadly demonstrate two alternative meaning constructions, those that fall into more economic and neoliberal approaches to educational policy, and those based on social justice goals. Given the unequal distribution of power in terms of official policy-making in the area of integration, the analysis that follows shows how policy language developed at the state legislature functions as a top-down effort to reframe local practice. Questions that guided this process before the clarification of the two frames were:

- How are state level decisions relative to integration *actually* made? What actors are included or excluded? Which policy (the Rule or the Statute) figures more prominently in policy debates and why?
- What do MDE's actions and inactions suggest about its actual role (and the way in which the legislature delegates authority) in the distribution of policy messages to local school districts across the state?
- What are the state's priorities in terms of education—how is “equity” constructed or defined? What does it mean to propose replacing integration revenue with words like “innovation,” or refocus cultural programming on “literacy?”

The next section of this chapter examines the two state policies that directly address integration in Minnesota, and shows how both these frames are present (and potentially in conflict) in Statute 124D.86 and Administrative Rule 3535.0100. My examination of these documents was guided by the framework presented in Figure 4.3 (this framework was introduced and explained in Chapter Three as a mode of data analysis; the results of these analyses are presented in the present chapter).



### Figure 4.3

Table 1.

#### Framework for Inquiry: Linking a Policy Instruments Framework to Critical Discourse Analysis Approaches<sup>a</sup>

<i>Policy Tools (McDonnell &amp; Elmore)</i>	<i>Critical Discourse Analysis Approaches</i>	<i>Implications for Research</i>
Mandates	Imperative Modes (Fairclough)	Identification of what policy requires stakeholders to do and consequences for not acting in a certain way
Inducements	Implicit Authority (Fairclough)	Identification of policy “practices” as overall enactments of social structure and expected behaviors
Capacity-Building	Mediated Action in Critical Discourse Analysis of public policy discussions (Scollon)	Identification of how social actors take concrete actions in particular spaces and times in response to particular policies
System-Changing	Construction of Institutional Meanings (Fairclough)	Identification of specific changes in authority and power structures, how the assignment of power changes in response to policy
Hortatory	Identity recruitment through language (Gee)	Identification of what social values are prioritized through policy and in practice

*a. the organization of this table is adapted from Table 8.1 in Woodside-Jiron (2004, p. 177); that display demonstrates how a combination of lenses to inform critical discourse analysis was applied to a study of reading policy in California.*

### ***Administrative Rule Chapter 3535: Equal Opportunity in Schools***

Parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180 of the State Administrative Rule that directly addresses equal opportunity in schools deal with school desegregation and integration. The complete text of these parts is included in Appendix B; here I focus on an analysis of the first section, 3535.0100, which provides an overview of the overall purpose of these sections. This section is presented in Table 4.1 with line breaks selected to highlight particular ways in which meaning is constructed through the language used. Beginning with the nine separate components included in this purpose statement, it is significant to note the verbs selected by policy makers to describe what the Rule means to achieve. In four sections (A, C, D, E), the purpose statements begin with the word *recognize* (see lines 2, 10, 16, and 20). What these statements recognize, broadly, is the complexity of the context in which school integration efforts occur. Statements C, D, and E, with their intertextual references to school choice policies and school attendance zones, exhibit elements of hortatory policy by expressing the potential that parents, left to their own devices, will choose the best possible educational opportunity for their children. In combination, these statements also suggest that parents can only utilize such a choice if school districts counteract community factors that make it difficult for school districts to organize racially balanced schools, including housing, jobs, and transportation. Statement A, although similarly beginning with the word “recognize,” demonstrates implicit authority of the state in defining the overall purpose of education. Lines 4 and 5 read “is to enable students to have opportunities to achieve academic success” a part of the Rule that supports an idealized version of education--one that assumes that schools are capable of providing equal opportunity given current social conditions.

**Table 4.1: Excerpt of Minnesota State Administrative Rule Chapter 3535: Equal Opportunity in Schools, Sections 3535.0100 to 3535.0180: School Desegregation / integration**

*(organized with line breaks for discourse analysis purposes)*

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**3535.0100 PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180 is to:
2. **A.** recognize that
3. the primary goal of public education
4. is to enable all students to have opportunities
5. to achieve academic success.
6. **B.** reaffirm
7. the state of Minnesota's commitment to
8. the importance of integration
9. in its public schools.
10. **C.** recognize that
11. while there are societal benefits from
12. schools that are racially balanced,
13. there are many factors which can impact
14. the ability of school districts to provide racially balanced schools,
15. including housing, jobs, and transportation.
16. **D.** recognize that
17. providing parents a choice
18. regarding where their children should attend school
19. is an important component of Minnesota's education policy,
20. **E.** recognize that
21. there are parents for whom
22. having their children
23. attend integrated schools
24. is an important component of their children's education,
25. **E.** prevent
26. segregation, as defined in part 3535.0110 subpart 9,
27. in public schools
28. **G.** encourage
29. districts to provide
30. opportunities for students to attend
31. schools that are racially balanced
32. when compared to other schools within the district.
33. **H.** provide
34. a system that
35. identifies the presence of racially isolated districts and
36. encourage adjoining districts to
37. work cooperatively to
38. improve cross-district integration, while
39. giving parents and students meaningful choices, and
40. **I.** work with
41. rules that address
42. academic achievement, including
43. graduation standards under chapter 3501 and
44. inclusive education under part 3500.0550, by
45. providing equitable access to resources

There is little debate among educators or policy makers over this goal. Integration leaders, in fact, repeatedly referred to this statement—that the overall purpose of public education is to provide equal opportunity for all students attending schools in the state—during discussions of the integration revenue replacement Task Force. Their point, however, was to note the way in which integration funding serves a particular purpose in providing schools additional support to address the factors noted in section C (see line 15 of Table 4.1). The fact of residential segregation is one that, integration leaders argue, cannot be overcome by school district efforts alone. The state demonstrates an awareness of this with the inducement language used in section A to positively pressure citizens to make their own individual choices about schooling for their children, but suggest that integrated schools should exist as one of many choices.

Part B (lines 6-9) states that the Rule serves to *reaffirm* “the state of Minnesota’s commitment to the importance of integration in its public schools.” This phrasing is ahistorical in that it implies that such a commitment is an inherent part of the state’s educational policy, and constructs integration in an almost taken-for-granted positive manner. Reading this Rule without an understanding of the history of school segregation in the state, or the current debate around whether to continue to support integration efforts through state funding, could lead one to assume that support for integration is an agreed-upon goal in Minnesota. The dissonance between this portion of the Rule and the corresponding Statute will be discussed in following sections of this chapter.

The last four parts of this section (E, G, H, and I) begin with stronger and more active verbs: *prevent* (line 25), *encourage* (line 28), *provide* (line 33) and *work with* (line 40). Importantly, however, only section E identifies behaviors that are to be achieved primarily by state authority; it states that one purpose of this policy is to define segregation, and then to prevent it. Although worded as a mandate in deceptively simple terms, later sections of this Rule complicate the ways in which the state and local school districts are required to actively integrate

educational environments. Sections G and H contain language that suggests the policy tools of capacity-building and, to a certain extent system-changing, be used to provide these integrated environments. Section G (lines 28-32) “encourage[s] districts to provide opportunities to attend schools that are racially balanced...,” but if these schools do not already exist the district clearly must undertake other efforts before it can meet the requirements of this Rule. A great deal of capacity building may be necessary on the part of the local district and may involve a wide range of efforts: establishing magnet schools, adjusting attendance zones, implementing new hiring practices and educator development programs. Section H (lines 33-39) also invokes capacity-building tools by “encourag[ing] adjoining districts to work cooperatively to improve cross-district integration.” Such cooperative efforts may require the establishment of communication and decision-making structures that have not previously existed or addressing other structural barriers such as transportation systems and representative participation on school boards or other decision-making bodies. The extent to which this merely adjusts existing structures or creates new ones altogether distinguishes whether capacity-building tools are sufficient to meet the requirements of the policy or if system-changing should be employed. Section I (lines 40-45) returns to intertextual references to other policies (measuring achievement through graduation standards, and providing inclusive education, which broadly addresses cultural diversity, gender equality, and inclusion of persons with disabilities) and again implies the authority and ability of the state to “provide equitable access to resources” (line 45).

Although this has been a rather brief introduction to a lengthy and complex set of sections and subsections of the state of Minnesota’s “Desegregation / Integration Rule,” I now move on to explore the text of the corresponding state Statute. It is important here to note that all sections of the above Rule remain in place according to the language last reviewed in 2007 (except for section 3535.0170 which deals directly with funding and levies and was included in the changes of 2011 to be discussed later in this chapter). The fact that the Rule,

which contains the actual “power” of the state in defining and framing the context of school integration, has not been addressed during the last several years of debate is one that integration leaders frequently point to in identifying problems with the current system. When state lawmakers claim that programming funded by the Revenue Statute has been ineffective, educators often point to vague wording contained in the Administrative Rule to demonstrate where changes should be made to clarify meaning (and potentially close existing loopholes that have allowed for the use of funds in ways that are quite a stretch to link to integration purposes). As it stands, the Rule remains in place and school districts are therefore classified as “racially isolated” or schools determined to be “racially identifiable” according to the language it contains, and required to address these conditions--whether or not they are provided additional funds to do so or not.

***State Statute 124D.86: Integration Revenue***

State Statute 124D.86 was the policy in place during this study that guided the distribution of funds for integration purposes to qualifying school districts. Table 4.2 compares selected portions of the “old” and “new” Statute language side by side in order to demonstrate the ways in which policy mission creep is evident in the language included in these documents. Following several consecutive years in which educational policy committee members had proposed repealing the integration revenue statute all together, and redirecting these funds back to the Education General Fund, a compromise of sorts was reached with the maintenance of language promoting “interracial contact” and the additional inclusion of language specifically referring to “the academic achievement gap.” In Table 4.2, lines 1-7 of the “Use of Revenue” excerpt are identical, with significant changes evident starting with line 8. In the 2012 version, despite the addition of

**Table 4.2 Comparison of Excerpts from two versions of Minnesota Statute 124D.86**

Statute text published in 2008	Statute text published in 2012
<p>Subdivision 1. <b>Use of revenue.</b>            1. Integration revenue under this section            2. must be used for            3. programs established under a desegregation plan            4. filed with the Department of Education            5. according to Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180,            6. or under court order.            7. The revenue            8. must be used to            9. create or enhance            10. learning opportunities which are            11. designed to provide opportunities for            12. students to have            13. increased interracial contacts through            14. classroom experiences,            15. staff initiatives, and            16. other educationally related programs.</p>	<p>Subdivision 1. <b>Use of revenue.</b>            1. Integration revenue under this section            2. must be used for            3. programs established under a desegregation plan            4. filed with the Department of Education            5. according to Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180,            6. or under court order.            7. The revenue            8. must be used for            9. students to have            10. increased and sustained interracial contacts and            11. improved educational opportunities and outcomes            12. designed to close            13. the academic achievement gap between white students and protected students as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 3535.0110, subpart 4, through            14. classroom experiences,            15. staff initiatives, and            16. other educationally related programs,            17. consistent with subdivision 1b.</p>
<p>Subd. 1a. <b>Budget approval process.</b> part (2)            1. the budget            2. must indicate how            3. revenue expenditures will be            4. used specifically to            5. support            6. increased opportunities for            7. interracial contact;</p>	<p>Subd. 1a. <b>Budget approval process.</b> part (2)            1. the budget            2. must indicate how            3. revenue expenditures will be            4. used specifically to            5. support            6. increased opportunities for            7. interracial contacts and            8. improved educational opportunities and outcomes            9. designed to close            10. the academic achievement gap between white students and protected students as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 3535.0110, subpart 4,</p>

this language, the overall phrasing is more passive. Lines 8-13 of the 2008 version state that the revenue “must be used to create or enhance learning opportunities” that are designed to provide opportunities for interracial contacts, while lines 8-10 of the 2012 section says the revenue “must be used for students to have increased and sustained interracial contacts.” In 2008, the revenue “must be used to create” while in 2012 it merely requires “students to have” certain experiences, but doesn’t semantically emphasize that school districts must use this particular source of funding to *create* the opportunities- just that it should help students gain access to the opportunities. Further, the 2012 language repeatedly references the associated Administrative Rule, while it appears only once in the corresponding sections of the 2008 Statute. These intertextual inclusions go beyond “implicit authority” of policy discourse and rather place institutional authority front and center. Read in this way, the purpose of following the language of the Statute is to ensure compliance with the Administrative Rule more than to ensure the provision of particular learning opportunities for students in Minnesota public schools.

Although the updated language of the 2012 Statute seemingly increases the breadth of the policy, by using particular terms the Statute also specifically excludes certain relevant issues. In particular, the ways in which socioeconomic status and class stratification are connected to school segregation (as noted in the Rule in 3535.0100 section C), are ignored in this policy. Lines 15-21 of the excerpt shown in Table 4.3 are of particular interest in examining how integration policy in Minnesota fails to fully address the documented intersections between race, poverty, and academic achievement (see Hochschild, 2003). Although socioeconomic conditions are acknowledged in the State Desegregation/ Integration Rule as an underlying element of school segregation, they are omitted from this section of the Statute.



**Table 4.3**

**Excerpt<sup>a</sup> of Minnesota State Statute 124D.86 Integration Revenue**

*(organized with line breaks for discourse analysis purposes)*

- 
1. Subd. 1a. **Budget approval process.**
  2. Each year before a district receives any revenue
  3. under subdivision 3
  4. the district by March 15 must submit to the Department of Education
  5. for its review and approval by May 15
  6. a budget detailing the costs of the desegregation/integration plan
  7. filed under Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180.
  8. Notwithstanding chapter 14,
  9. the department may develop criteria for budget approval,
  10. consistent with subdivision 1b.
  11. The department shall consult
  12. with the Desegregation Advisory Board in developing these criteria.
  13. The criteria developed by the department must address,
  14. at a minimum, the following:

*Section one removed here*

15. (2) the budget must indicate
16. how revenue expenditures will be used
17. specifically to support increased and sustained interracial contacts
18. and improved educational opportunities and outcomes
19. designed to close the academic achievement gap
20. between white students and protected students as defined in Minnesota Rules,
21. part 3535.0110, subpart 4, consistent with subdivision 1b;

---

*a. The complete text of the statute is included in Appendix A.*

The text shown in Table 4.3 demonstrates that when funds are allocated to districts to support integration efforts, the measures of success or failure of this program are defined as closing achievement gaps (a concept that has itself been heavily disputed in educational research- see Ladson-Billings, 2006, 2007) between students categorized by race. “Protected students” are defined in the Rule (3535.0110, Subpart 4-see Appendix B) as:

*A. students who self-identify or are identified in the general racial categories of African/Black Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, Chicano/Latino Americans, and American Indian/Alaskan Native; and*

*B. multiracial students who self-identify or are identified as having origins in more than one of the categories described in item A or as having origins in one of the categories described in item A and in the category of Caucasian.*

Categorizing students solely by socially (and often, ambiguously) constructed categories of “race” is admittedly complicated, flawed, and inaccurate. Furthermore, other parts of these policy documents use the terms “white” and “Caucasian” interchangeably without troubling the histories of these terms. Without further defining these categories or clarifying how these data are used to determine student “success” or “failure,” this formulation of integration policy supports rather than dismantles systems that maintain social inequality. The exclusion of socioeconomic status here also does not reflect a national trend that has in fact led many districts to favor such classification, rather than use race or ethnicity, following the 2007 *PICS* Supreme Court case that overturned the desegregation plans of Louisville, Kentucky and Seattle, Washington. The inclusion of socioeconomic status in policy text does not solve this dilemma, however, as the measure typically used by school districts- qualification for Free and Reduced Price Lunch status- is itself problematic.

Given the complex and potentially contradictory goals of the existing Administrative Rule and Statute, it is perhaps unsurprising that when partisan control of the State Legislature shifted to Republican power, many lawmakers seized the opportunity to force changes to a policy area they viewed as inefficient

and ineffective. The next two sections discuss key events that have occurred in the last two years relative to integration policy at the state level.

### ***2011 Education Omnibus Bill***

Despite the compromises evident in the rewording of the Revenue Statute in 2010, following intense governmental gridlock in 2011 and a legislative session in which lawmakers chose not to address current shortcomings or proposed changes to the existing policy, the Statute was abruptly repealed in one line in the education omnibus bill that was finally passed during the emergency special session held in mid-July to end a statewide government shutdown. The last line included in Article 2 (“Education Excellence”) of this act is:

#### **Repealer (Section 51)**

*(sections a-c not included)*

(d) Repeals section 124D.86 (integration revenue) effective for revenue for fiscal year 2014.

Another section of the same document is noticeably vague in its references to integration, and is in fact the shortest section of the entire document.

**School segregation prohibited (Section 42).** States that Minnesota does not condone school segregation.

In obvious contrast to other policy language’s use of language that directs local practice, this sentence does little to promote imperative or implicit state authority. The passive sentence structure of “does not condone” rather than the active “prevent” indicated as a required action by the Administrative Rule creates distance between the institution of government and the act of segregation. Merely prohibiting something conceptually is arguably much easier to do than actually addressing a process that requires prevention. Further, by not defining “segregation,” the section places little importance on it as a social issue. Section 49 calls for the convening of the Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task Force (discussed in the next section of this chapter); here it is important to note that under “person responsible” the final version of this Omnibus Act was passed with “TBD by Commissioner” while all other sections were associated

with the name and contact phone number of at least one official at the Minnesota Department of Education. With the passage of this Act in 2011, the state effectively destabilized integration in many districts with tenuous budgets, and halted the expansion or development of projects in progress.

### ***Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force 2011-2012***

During the following year, much of the attention on integration in Minnesota was focused almost exclusively at the state level, as the Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force met over the course of several months to propose a new course for this revenue stream. Despite an ostensible commitment to improve a “failing” program, the state concentrated all its activities into organizing Task Force meetings at the Capitol building in St. Paul and MDE headquarters in Roseville; no additional data were collected through on-site observation of school districts around the state and only a handful of practicing educators were invited to testify before the task force. From the outset, many outside observers were skeptical of the Task Force’s charge—to come up with a plan that could be agreed by a majority of the appointees, despite their obvious differences in experience, perspectives, public roles and in many cases, publicly promoted ideological commitments. The educational expertise of the appointees also varied greatly. Many of the Commissioner’s appointees held or had formerly held positions as practicing educators (a former teacher and current equity coordinator, a retired principal, and a former superintendent) or had held elected office as either a state legislator or a school board member. All of these six participants had been directly involved in the establishment or implementation of integration policy at the state or local level. The House and Senate appointees were all individuals with long-term interests in education, but varied levels of formal involvement. Although these participants included a state senator with experience serving on the Education Policy Committee and a school board member from a suburban district, there were also two appointees known for their vocal and highly public commitment to conservative points of view relative to social issues. The Task Force was chaired by one “Democratic” appointee and

one “Republican” appointee (although many of the participants chose not to directly link themselves to one party or the other, partisan references were frequent on the part of observers and participants) and met officially nine times between November 2011 and February 2012.

The full text of the final Task Force Recommendations is included in Appendix E; particular elements are included in this section for examination in more detail. The first page of text in the final report includes the exact wording of the “Legislative Charge” that resulted in the formation of the Task Force. Most significantly for this study of integration leadership in the state, this “charge” removes “integration” and its associated goals of “sustained interracial contacts” altogether. The only two instances in which the word *integration* appears at all in this charge is in the name of the task force and in the phrase “develop recommendations for repurposing integration revenue funds...” A reading of the Legislative Charge language alone would seem to suggest that the very concept of integration had lost all support at the state level. Rather, the purpose of the task force is to:

*...consider how districts may effectively narrow and close the academic achievement gap and foster academic success for students by:*

- (1) pursuing academic achievement goals premised on continuous adapting of best teaching practices and efficient use of resources, and;*
- (2) identifying variables to show annual progress toward achieving student, school, and district goals for student’s [sic] academic success.*

This wording not only erases “integration” as a public educational goal in Minnesota, but also includes language linked to neoliberal constructions of schooling, among them “efficient use of resources.” Further, the state’s authority to direct and mandate the behavior of educational appointees and induce particular types of programming to be implemented at the local level is indicated

by the use of imperative constructions through the Legislative Charge. The word “must” appears six times in these few paragraphs:

*the commissioner of education **must** convene...*

*the advisory task force...**must** consider...*

*the commissioner **must** convene...*

*task force members **must** seek input...*

*task force members...**must** develop recommendations*

*the commissioner, on behalf of the task force, **must** submit a report...*

Other directive phrases include “...*the new program should ensure funding stability*” and “*the money shall be used...*”

In contrast, the tone of the final Task Force recommendations that begin on page 6 of this document is broadly positive, active, and, although the result of a legislatively mandated process, avoids relying on state-generated jargon and terminology. There is a notable inclusion of vocabulary and references to programs and systems more familiar to educators themselves than to state lawmakers. Unlike the reflexive references that support state authority evidenced by the intertextuality of the Rule and the Statute, the intertextual references of much of the Task Force Recommendations are to local practice. The three main recommendations use existing policy language and echo some of the mandate and inducement tools present in the Rule and the Statute, but also promote a vision that calls for capacity-building on the part of the Department of Education to provide improved oversight and guidance, and local school districts to provide educational options that include more voices in plan development and increased focus on student outcomes in program implementation. Perhaps most importantly, the recommendations immediately (re)include the word “integration” in a prominent position. Recommendation #1 reads: (bold and italics in original)

**Create the “Achievement and Integration for Minnesota (AIM)” program funded through *existing categorical revenue* to address the concerns with the current program while focusing uses of the revenue in a manner that can be easily tied to student achievement.**

The points that clarify this recommendation call for the state to “develop a revised integration rule that is grounded in our state’s history and law” and that addresses academic achievement while also paying attention to racial segregation in schools. Specifically, the report calls on the state to maintain the current language defining racially isolated and identifiable districts and schools and also reexamine the current exemption of certain educational settings from the Rule. Overall, this recommendation attempts to draw attention back to the broader social context in which educational policy is implemented, rather than narrowing the focus of all educational programming on the falsely oversimplified “achievement gap.”

The second recommendation directly addresses issues of oversight and evaluation, and the scope of responsibilities to be placed upon the state department of education:

**Ensure accountability and oversight at the Department (MDE) to ensure districts are effectively using, reporting, and measuring the effectiveness of the revenue uses by doing the following...**

Although this recommendation uses a discourse similar to that of the Legislative Charge (“accountability,” “effectiveness”), the specificity of the several sub-parts included demonstrate a more sophisticated understanding of the complexity of actually conducting program evaluation. These recommendations also seem to redirect responsibility for some elements of integration success back to the state, by calling on MDE to provide “an adequate number of AIM staff...to provide oversight, accountability, and technical support for districts receiving AIM revenue.” Authority enacted through mandates and inducements is evident in this recommendation, and MDE is given the power to “...withhold money if districts are not making adequate progress toward goals as defined by standardized assessments and making progress in reducing disparate demographic enrollment between districts or schools.”

The third recommendation included in this report offers the most concise list distributed by the state to date regarding suggested “best practice” uses of integration revenue. The broad recommendation reads:

**Clearly focus and define limited uses of AIM revenue. Districts must submit plans, develop measureable goals (consistent with 2e), and budgets that limit their use (districts may not supplant) within any of the following areas...**

These areas of action are to create conditions that will encourage a) innovative and integrated learning environments, b) family engagement, c) professional development, d) access to opportunity, and e) increase the diversity of teachers and administrators. A fourth recommendation is briefly that merely suggests further action on the part of policy makers in considering future plans:

**Examine the merits of one collaborative *Metropolitan Integration School District* that folds in the services of the existing integration districts to create efficiencies and eliminate duplication of services. This Collaborative Metropolitan School District serves all metro-area districts within the seven-county area that receive integration revenue.**

### ***State Practices of Regulation and Oversight: 2008-2013***

The Department of Education’s role throughout this contentious consideration of integration policy has swung between extremes of active support for local efforts and provision of reliable technical support, to a relationship with educators that is almost hostile, fueled by poor communication with school districts. At times MDE’s involvement in integration programming oversight has been literally faceless—after cutting the two full-time positions of staff members in 2010, the sole remaining coordinator position was left vacant for over half a year. During this time, integration leaders were left without a direct contact at MDE while awaiting budget approval for Fall 2010 programming, and were frustrated by the long delays in having even simple procedural questions answered. Despite the fact that the department had basically left local districts on their own to function independent of its support during this period, once a new



coordinator was appointed she and other officials seemed surprised and caught off guard by the resistance they met from some district leaders.

To the integration leaders, the department of education is seen at best as a means to an end, at worst yet another obstacle to their work. Although resigned to having to navigate a complex bureaucracy when submitting budgets and integration plans, the frustration expressed by these leaders is more a desire to be able to trust that the people at MDE responsible for integration oversight have their back. Instead, the department's lack of commitment to fill the position with someone with experience and understanding of how integration revenue is used at the local level has expanded the gap between this office and local districts. Officials who are able to communicate a commitment to improving education for all students and focus on improving educational opportunity for students of color beyond a focus on achievement test measures are able to garner the trust and support of these leaders. The current commissioner, for example, is spoken of highly by many educators.

### **Conclusions: Discourses of Exclusion and Erasure**

Even while appointing others to join in a seemingly bipartisan and participatory process to help develop new policy in the Integration Replacement Revenue Task Force Legislative Charge, the state continued to passively exert control over the policy arena. This authority was evident throughout the process of "replacing" the integration revenue statute by determining who was able to participate in negotiations, setting a schedule and deadline for report submission, and deciding when (*if*) to hold official hearings to consider passage of the Task Force Recommendations. Although part b of the Legislative Charge stated:

*The funding allocation for the new program should ensure funding stability for districts between the current integration program and the new program. The money shall be used for the purposes recommended and forwarded by the task force and approved and appropriated by the Legislature,*

the Legislature did not schedule a hearing to consider the Task Force Recommendations during the 2012 Session until mid-April (despite repeated

requests from Task Force members and integration leaders from around the state who were anxious to have a decision finalized on the future of the program). Near the end of the session the House Education Policy Committee finally heard testimony but failed to act on the recommendations, and a hearing was never scheduled in the Senate Education Policy Committee.<sup>4</sup>

I have to this point in the chapter combined elements of critical discourse analysis with a framework of policy tools in order to problematize power and meaning as expressed through legislation. Most public policies involve combinations of multiple instruments (McDonnell, 2004) and Minnesota's Integration Revenue program is no exception. Evidence of the five primary policy tools described by McDonnell can be clearly identified in integration programming and planning, but the policy documents that guide this program suggest that particular approaches are more likely to meet the approval of state officials. The repeated use of the words “must” and “shall,” for example, throughout the documents indicate the use of mandates, while the voluntary involvement of several districts in integration efforts is evidence of inducement. Through the inclusion of certain terms and the construction of particular phrases, state policy documents indicate a clear shift from the language of social justice and historical contexts of segregation to one that is more aligned with a contemporary educational focus on measuring achievement and linking school goals to workforce preparation.

### **A final exercise in exploring discourses of diversity and equity**

This examination shows how state-level school integration policy documents construct particular understandings of how educational policy should address historical and contemporary problems of racial and ethnic inequalities.

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<sup>4</sup> The Senate Education committee did, however, allow a vocal conservative Task Force member to present a separate publication entitled “Our Immense Achievement Gap: Embracing Proven Remedies While Avoiding a Race-based Recipe for Disaster” she had been working on for the Center of the American Experiment while also serving on the Task Force. Many of the ideas contained in this report are included in her Minority Report appended to the Task Force Recommendations.

I end this chapter with a brief attempt at addressing broader discourses that define the context in which Minnesota's integration efforts take place. This exercise also serves to introduce concepts and actors that will be explored in the next two chapters, which will take this analysis of state integration to the local and intermediary levels. Studying discourse involves identifying how language--expressed in texts--constructs social ideas. Political discourse in particular, as described by Faircough (1995, in Woodside-Jiron, 2004), illustrates how discourse has "constitutive power" and "...reproduces or changes the social world by reproducing or changing people's representations of it and the principle of classification which underlie them." School integration is annually debated in the Minnesota state legislature, and once the relevant state statute and administrative rule have been reviewed and revised, the Minnesota Department of Education assigns discursive significance to the concept of integration by assigning it to particular departments (recently, "School Choice"). At the local level, each school district receiving integration funding develops its own plan using language that both reflects state-wide rhetoric and includes local emphases. This multi-layered way in which the discourse of integration develops reflects Ball's (1993, in Ball, 2006) explanation of policies as "...representations which are encoded in complex ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways (via actor's interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context)" (p. 44).

Particular words that frame the discourse of school integration in Minnesota (and in most cases, also the wider scope of the United States) merit identification and explanation in any study of this policy field. Here I address the words "desegregation," "integration," and "culture," as examples of terms frequently employed in this discussion but that should be used cautiously with acknowledgement of their meanings as problematic and contested.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> These few paragraphs serve primarily as an explicative exercise, but I also wish to recognize that the list of words that could be chosen is seemingly endless, and that the

"Desegregation" as it is commonly understood refers to the deliberate, and state-sanctioned, separation of people from different racial<sup>6</sup> backgrounds. In the context of public education, the term brings to mind the court-ordered busing programs, in place in many parts of the country from the 1960s on, that physically moved students to schools in order to bring them together. Although the underlying purpose of such efforts included goals of equality espoused by civil rights activists, the implementation of these busing programs was incomplete at best, and reinforcing of inter-racial distrust at best. In many communities of color, "desegregation" came to be associated with the burden of sending children to schools far from their own neighborhoods (therefore limiting family access to schools) that did not reflect the students' own communities, and white advantage was preserved in many "desegregated" schools by establishing new barriers, such as academic tracking and limiting programmatic access. Furthermore, "desegregation" in its construction in the 1950s and 60s primarily focused on black and white students, and ignored children from other racial and ethnic categories. Setting aside the many issues associated with the fact that schools were segregated in the first place, "desegregation" is a word with negative associations for many, and in its linguistic construction represents a subtractive approach to social change, with the suffix "de-" representing the removal (ostensibly, of barriers to educational access) rather than the construction of something new (the act of building a bridge to create this access).

In Minnesota today, educators at the focus of this study work under a state statute that includes the term "Desegregation/Integration" but declare their own

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moment government-issued policies seek to define terms, they become debated and differentially interpreted at the local level. The policy studied here is inherently connected to the ways "education" is discussed in social justice language and in the neoliberal language of "accountability." An extremely brief initial list of examples includes: "reform," "choice," "disadvantaged," "measurable," "school success" or "school failure," and "achievement gap."

<sup>6</sup> "Race" as a concept and a term is used in an oversimplified way in this chapter, recognizing that the inclusion of references to race, ethnicity, and other categorizations used to classify people in society are complex, complicated, and require further (critical) analysis.

work as that of "integration." The name of the organization developed through grassroots efforts of those working on these efforts across the state is the "Minnesota School Integration Council," and its mission statement references "integration" and "educational equity" but does not use the term "desegregation." As with the term it seeks to replace, however, "integration" runs the risk of coming to be seen as another failed endeavor if not clearly defined. Although those directly involved in work with the policy are familiar with the term's history, and can distinguish between the goals of "desegregation" as more structural-change in nature and "integration" as related to cultural-change, anecdotal feedback suggests that these differences are not as evident to the broader community. Even educators working in districts receiving revenue through the program may be entirely unaware of the goals of the statute, or even that it exists<sup>7</sup>. Rather, the discourses of both "desegregation" and "integration" are subsumed in muddier conversations of "diversity," the local understanding and construction of which will be considered in the next chapter of this dissertation.

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<sup>7</sup> In my assessment, this ignorance is reflective of a larger issue-- the ways in which the rigid administrative hierarchy of public education at the district and state levels limits information access to front-line workers, in this case classroom teachers. Decision-makers at the legislative level also (generally) have very limited access to or conversation with these workers and further create a counterintuitive (but common to social policy and heavily researched) implementation problem in which those most responsible for enacting policy are often completely unaware of its existence, or at best, misunderstand its purpose.

## **Chapter 5 : Enacting Values in Local Practice**

Approximately 140 school districts received integration revenue from the state of Minnesota for the 2012-2013 school year (Minnesota Department of Education, n.d.), a little more than one-third of total districts. As outlined in chapter one, districts qualify for funds if they are racially isolated compared to the demographics of surrounding communities, or if racially identifiable schools are located within their district boundaries. Beyond administrative approval of the integration plans and budgets submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education and one comprehensive evaluation study conducted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor in 2005, little work has been done to understand how integration programming is implemented at the local level. Anecdotally, those in the field are aware that a range of interpretations of the requirements of the Rule and the Statute exist, and that each district is in effect “doing its own thing.”

I begin this chapter by attempting to provide some of this missing information based on the results of a statewide survey of integration leaders conducted in 2012. Following summary data that serve to provide an overview of the work these educators engage in across the state broadly, I explore the experiences of integration leaders in three communities in particular. Here I examine what brings people to this work (and keeps them in the field, or pushes them out), the way in which local decisions are made and influenced by particular local values, and identification of power players in districts that facilitate or impede the work of integration programming.

### **Overview of Integration Leaders in Minnesota**

As described in more detail in Chapter three, a statewide survey (see Appendix C for a complete list of survey questions) was administered that queried integration leaders about the nature of their professional positions, their work history in education, and their understanding of concepts related to integration and educational equity. Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 summarize data from analysis of selected survey items.

## ***Gender***

Approximately two-thirds of respondents were female, which is unsurprising as the majority of educators in the state are women. Given that men are disproportionately represented in administrative positions, however, the breakdown of respondents may also indicate ways in which districts creatively define these positions, creating hybrids of other district roles or leaving a role loosely defined and broadly titled; in some districts superintendents serve as the integration program director and programs are implemented in ways similar to other revenue streams or budget line items, while in others the position is seen primarily as direct-service provision to students and families and is more likely to be held by a former classroom teacher or social services expert. Although the results of a paired t-test comparing the means of the type of district (urban, suburban, or rural) were not statistically significant, a correlation of  $-.218$  indicates a weak relationship that suggests respondents were more likely to identify as male further from the central cities. When compiling a list of contact information for integration leaders statewide, I found that a greater number of male superintendents were assigned integration revenue oversight in smaller, rural communities.

## ***Race / Ethnicity***

This survey item was constructed as an open-response question, in which respondents were asked to identify their race and/or ethnicity in their own words. Table 5.1 indicates the 15 terms that were included, and the number and percent of total represented in the total *N*. Although not a random sample, the high response rate shows that feedback was elicited from almost half of all professionals working in these positions across the state. The results here suggest that integration leaders as a group are much more diverse than the broader pool of educators in Minnesota, a group which is predominantly composed of white, middle-class women. Although I had hypothesized that this may be the case based on my observations and anecdotal data from four years of interacting with these professionals, this finding is quite important in

demonstrating the ways in which racial and ethnic identities interact with professional goals and vocations, themes which were also indicated in analysis of in-depth interviews with smaller numbers of participants. These data further indicate that the gender, racial, and ethnic identities of the integration leaders in Minnesota contrast significantly with that of the state legislators responsible for policy decisions that directly impact these educators' daily work in local school districts.

### ***Professional Experience in Education***

Almost three-quarters of respondents have held their current position as an integration leader for less than ten years, with 40% in the position for five years or fewer (this item was also an open-response question, with data reported in Table 5.1 in five-year ranges for summary purposes). This finding aligns with the fact that the integration revenue statute itself was only enacted in the mid 1990s, and that demographic shifts across the state have led to a rapid increase in the number of districts qualifying for the funding. Total years of experience indicated by respondents, however, show that most integration leaders have entered this role from other positions in education. A large range of experience was reported: almost 10% of respondents reported having fewer than 5 years total experience, while three people reported 37 years of experience, and one person reporting 41 years working as an educator.



**Table 5.1: Summary of Responses to Survey Items 22-26**

Respondent Characteristics	
Survey Item	Number (%)
Gender <sup>a</sup>	
Female	38 (67.9%)
Male	18 (32.1%)
Race / Ethnicity <sup>b</sup>	
African	1 (1.8%)
African American	13 (23.2%)
American Indian	1 (1.8%)
American of African slave descent	1 (1.8%)
Anglo	1 (1.8%)
Black	5 (8.9%)
Caucasian	12 (21.4%)
European American	1 (1.8%)
Hispanic	1 (1.8%)
Hispanic / Latino	2 (3.6%)
Latino	1 (1.8%)
multiracial / biracial	2 (3.6%)
Native	1 (1.8%)
Native American	1 (1.8%)
White	15 (26.8%)
Years of Experience in Current or Related Position <sup>c</sup>	
0-5 years	22 (40.0%)
6-10 years	19 (34.5%)
11-15 years	9 (16.4%)
16-20 years	3 (5.5%)
21-25 years	1 (1.8%)
26-30 years	1 (1.8%)
Years of Experience in Education (Total) <sup>d</sup>	
0-5 years	5 (9.0%)
6-10 years	13 (23.6%)
11-15 years	15 (27.3%)
16-20 years	9 (16.4%)
21-25 years	6 (10.9%)
26-30 years	1 (1.8%)
31-35 years	2 (3.6%)
36-40 years	3 (5.5%)
40-45 years	1 (1.8%)

a) N=56, participants had the option to select an identity other than male/female but none did so

b) N=56, totals may equal more than 100% as respondents self-identified race / ethnicity- the terms included here are those chosen by respondents in open-response item

c) N=55, item question: How many years have you worked in your current position or other positions related to equity and diversity in public schools?

d) N=55, item question: Please list your TOTAL years of experience in education.

**Table 5.2: Summary of Responses to Survey Items 2- 4**

Position Characteristics

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Survey Item	Number (%) <sup>a</sup> N=56
Is your work in this position full or part time?	
Full time	46 (82.1%)
Part time	10 (17.9%)
Is your integration leadership position a 12 month or 9 month position?	
12 month	22 (39.3%)
9 month	22 (39.3%)
other	12 (21.4%)
Which of the following best describes the school district in which you work?	
Urban / central city	2 (3.6%)
Suburban	29 (51.8%)
Rural / Greater Minnesota	25 (44.6%)

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**Table 5.3: Results of Paired t-tests**

Paired Samples	<i>N</i>	Correlation	Significance
district type - direct admin. <sup>a</sup>	55	-.296	.028*
district type - fullpart <sup>b</sup>	55	.283	.036*
district type - other integration leaders <sup>c</sup>	55	-.274	.043*
district type - indirect admin. <sup>d</sup>	54	-.272	.046*
district type - gender <sup>e</sup>	55	-.218	.111
district type - workmonth <sup>f</sup>	55	-.181	.186
district type - direct educator <sup>g</sup>	55	-.170	.216
district type - community orgs. <sup>h</sup>	55	.079	.565
district type - indirect educator <sup>i</sup>	55	-.046	.739
district type - student contact <sup>j</sup>	54	-.013	.927

a) direct contact with other administrators in the district

b) full or part time position

c) other integration leaders in state

d) direct contact with other administrators in the district

e) gender as identified by respondents

f) 12 month or 9 month position in district

g) direct contact with educators

h) contact with community organizations

i) indirect contact with other administrators in the district

j) direct or indirect contact with students in district

\* indicates a statistically significant *p*-value at a level of <.05

**Table 5.4: Summary of Responses to Items 5, 7, 9, 11, 13**

Amount of Work Time Spent with Different Stakeholders

Stakeholder group	Hours spent per week in direct or indirect contact with stakeholder group (% response, N=56)							
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40
Educators (direct) <sup>a</sup>	21.4%	19.6%	8.9%	14.3%	3.6%	10.7%	7.1%	14.3%
Educators (indirect) <sup>b</sup>	23.2%	35.7%	14.3%	12.5%	5.4%	5.4%	1.8%	1.8%
Other admin (direct) <sup>c</sup>	37.5%	19.6%	17.9%	8.9%	5.4%	5.4%	3.6%	1.8%
Other admin (indirect) <sup>d</sup>	42.9%	33.9%	7.1%	5.4%	3.6%	3.6%	1.8%	1.8%
Students (any) <sup>e</sup>	25.0%	21.4%	8.9%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	8.9%	17.9%

survey item text

a) About how many hours per week do you have **DIRECT, IN PERSON** contact with **EDUCATORS** (i.e. teachers and support staff that work in classrooms or pull-out settings with children, either individually or in groups) working in schools in your district?

b) About how many hours per week do you have **INDIRECT** (i.e. phone, email or other external means of communication) contact with **EDUCATORS** (i.e. teachers and support staff that work in classrooms or pull-out settings with children, either individually or in groups) working in schools in your district?

c) About how many hours per week do you have **DIRECT, IN PERSON** contact with **ADMINISTRATORS** (i.e. central office staff, program directors, principals, superintendents etc.) working in your district?

d) About how many hours per week do you have **INDIRECT** (e.g. phone, email or other external means of communication) contact with **ADMINISTRATORS** (i.e. central office staff, program directors, principals, superintendents etc.) working in your district?

e) About how many hours per week do you have **DIRECT OR INDIRECT** contact with **STUDENTS** in your district as part of your job responsibilities?

### ***Professional Role***

As indicated in Table 5.2, integration leadership positions are both full and part-time, depending on district (for this reason, the survey was administered to a number less than that of the total districts receiving integration revenue; in several locations, smaller districts choose to pool their resources and hire a single coordinator for several communities). A paired t-test confirmed that a statistically significant correlation does exist between whether an integration leader's position is full or part-time and type of district (Table 5.3)—positions are more likely to be part-time in rural areas than in urban districts. This relationship is logical considering the integration revenue funding formula, which provides more per-pupil dollars to students in large cities, and the least amount of total funds to smaller communities.

Significant correlations were also found in analysis of time integration leaders spent with two particular stakeholder groups by district type; paired t-tests indicated that respondents closer to central cities are more likely to have more hours of direct contact with other administrators in their districts, as well as increased contact hours with other integration leaders. This finding makes sense as leaders working in urban and suburban districts in the Twin Cities Metro Area are less likely to be geographically isolated from other districts, and more likely to have a full-time administrative position that does not overlap with other responsibilities. Table 5.4 provides summary data of the amount of time all respondents reported spending in direct or indirect contact with teachers and other educational staff in their districts, other administrators, and students as part of their weekly job duties. Although these data suggest that most integration leaders have regular contact with other administrators as part of their professional responsibilities, they spend a great deal more time in contact with educators and students.

The types of activities conducted with these stakeholders, however, vary widely. Districts that receive state money through the integration revenue program address implementation of programs supported by these funds in a variety of ways. Even among those that have worked in the field for many years, knowledge of how these funds are used district-to-district is hard to come by. Without deliberate efforts to network with job-alike leaders in other parts of the state, many of these integration coordinators do their work in isolation. Additionally, this lack of familiarity with activities across districts creates situations in which they must continually advocate for and define their roles to other educators and administrators in their own districts. The following quotation, from an email exchange among these integration leaders, illustrates this point:

*[in response to what I have encountered so far] in my short time in this position I plan to remain focused on systemic racial equity transformation and not to get caught up in being the person called when things don't go well with families of color in discipline situations. I am having to spend significant time retraining staff of the Department of Educational Equity that that is not their primary role either, as this is how they have been used through the years prior to my start this year with lingering effects. (personal communication 2-19-13).*

This statement is demonstrative of the way in which these leaders—in the absence of a clearly defined role attached to the receipt of state integration funding—are often forced to describe their role as what it is *not*, rather than state exactly what it is they are there to do. And as the quotation above further describes, addressing issues of systemic inequality is a much larger and long-term endeavor than the “putting out of fires” so frequently noted as a responsibility by leaders in these positions. Being able to point to specific examples of programs implemented successfully in similar communities or with particular student populations is an important resource that these professionals desire and have asked the state department of education to provide. The distribution of the results of this survey to respondents is a small step toward helping provide comparative information regarding professional responsibilities,

but will be of little long-term use without a corresponding recommitment of support from the state legislature.

## **Case Studies**

### ***Introduction***

To further explore how these issues of professional roles and policy implementation impact integration leader activity on a daily basis, three school districts were selected for in-depth investigation over the course of this study. Although many different methods for classifying communities exist (see, e.g., Frankenberg's 2011 proposed typology of suburban districts), for the purposes of this study I broadly used the terms “urban / central city,” “suburban,” and “rural / Greater Minnesota.” The districts included here are selected as illustrations of experiences in these types of communities, but I do not mean to suggest that these particular locales are representative of all other communities similarly categorized in Minnesota. In the following section I explore each of the selected communities (using the pseudonyms “Gateway Falls,” “Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone,” and “Sisseton Plains”) separately, and then compare and contrast findings across districts and with results of the statewide survey. An overview of the three case study sites and how they compare with state averages across a range of characteristics is presented in Figure 5.1, and basic profiles of the integration leaders (all names used in this chapter are pseudonyms) in each of these districts are presented in Figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.1 Case Study Site Overview and Comparison with State Totals**

	State of Minnesota	Gateway Falls	Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone	Sisseton Plains
<b>District type (category)</b>	all	Urban	Suburban	Rural
<b>Total population (2010 U.S. Census)</b>	5,303,925	382,578	135,164	12,764
<b>Student enrollment (2011-2012 school year)</b>	~823,000	34,436	27,437	2,624
<b>Student demographics by race / ethnicity*</b>	Am. Indian: 2.2% Asian: 6.7% Hispanic: 7.1% Black: 10.2% White: 73.8%	Am. Indian: 4.8% Asian: 8.0% Hispanic: 16.6% Black: 35.6% White: 35.0%	Am. Indian: 0.9% Asian: 8.7% Hispanic: 6.6% Black: 10.3% White: 73.5%	Am. Indian: 0.2% Asian: 12.7% Hispanic: 44.0% Black: 6.0% White: 37.2%
<b>Student demographics by EL, Sp. Ed., and FRP**</b>	EL: 7.7% Sp. Ed.: 14.9% FRP: 37.2%	EL: 22.9% Sp. Ed.: 18.7% FRP: 65.5%	EL: 5.0% Sp. Ed.: 15.6% FRP: 20.0%	EL: 19.4% Sp. Ed.: 15.9% FRP: 65.1%
<b>Job Title</b>	N/A	Coordinator of Equity and Integration	Integration and Equity Coordinator	Coordinator of Integration
<b>District vision statement</b>	N/A	<i>"Every Child ready for College and a Career"</i>	<i>"Educating our students to reach their full potential"</i>	<i>"Excellence in Action"</i>
<b>Racially Isolated district relative to neighbors (2010-2011 school year)</b>	48 (statewide total)	Yes (compared to 5 bordering suburban districts)	No	Yes (compared to 5 bordering rural districts)
<b>Number of Racially Identifiable Schools within District (2010-2011 school year)</b>	51 (statewide total)	20	1	0
<b>Total Integration funds requested (FY 2012)</b>	\$93,936,000	\$16,800,000	\$4,049,256	\$534,831

\* racial/ethnic categories are those used by the Minnesota Department of Education in reporting data

\*\*EL= English Learners; Sp. Ed.= Special Education, FRP= Free and Reduced Price lunch



**Figure 5.2 Characteristics of Integration Leaders in Case Study Sites**

	<b>Gateway Falls</b>	<b>Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone</b>	<b>Sisseton Plains</b>
<b>job title</b>	Coordinator of Equity and Integration	Integration and Equity Coordinator	Coordinator of Integration
<b>pseudonym / gender</b>	<b>Hilary Fisher:</b> female <b>Greg Dowling:</b> male	<b>Frank Crawford:</b> male <b>Paula Elling:</b> female	<b>Jennifer Burkhardt:</b> female <b>Danica Wilson:</b> female <b>Khomy Srisaphong:</b> female
<b>race / ethnicity</b>	<b>Hilary Fisher:</b> African American <b>Greg Dowling:</b> African American	<b>Frank Crawford:</b> biracial (African American / white) <b>Paula Elling:</b> African American	<b>Jennifer Burkhardt:</b> white <b>Danica Wilson:</b> African American <b>Khomy Srisaphong:</b> Asian (Hmong)
<b>years professional experience in education</b>	<b>Hilary Fisher:</b> 10 <b>Greg Dowling:</b> 5	<b>Frank Crawford:</b> 12 <b>Paula Elling:</b> 17	<b>Jennifer Burkhardt:</b> 20 <b>Danica Wilson:</b> 6 <b>Khomy Srisaphong:</b> 2
<b>years in integration leadership position</b>	<b>Hilary Fisher:</b> 2 <b>Greg Dowling:</b> 5	<b>Frank Crawford:</b> 7 <b>Paula Elling:</b> 6	<b>Jennifer Burkhardt:</b> 7 <b>Danica Wilson:</b> 1 <b>Khomy Srisaphong:</b> 1

## Gateway Falls

*The visual disparities...are blaring. (Hilary Fisher)*

Gateway Falls is a central city with a population of just under 400,000 people, and is a vibrant cultural and economic center also known for its parks and recreational resources. It is located in the most populous Metro Area of the state, a seven county region that is home to approximately one-third of Minnesota's entire population. Over 32,000 students were enrolled in the district's 70 schools in the 2012-2013 school year. The school district serves a racially and ethnically diverse student body from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds (see Figure 5.1). Over 90 different first languages are spoken by students, and the district has one of the most diverse staff populations in the state as well.

Although many families and educators in the district tout its diversity as a strength, intra-district segregation has been a recognized issue in Gateway Falls for decades. Many schools in the district are repeatedly listed among the state's lowest performing, with those serving the largest numbers of African American and Latino students showing significantly poor levels of achievement as measured by standardized assessments. At the same time, several schools in the district are consistently high performing, equaling or surpassing rates of achievement seen in higher income neighboring suburbs. These schools tend to be those with the largest percentage of white students, and the lowest numbers of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch. Geographical distinctions are also apparent if a visitor chooses to drive through the city. The impact of the foreclosure crisis and economic recession of recent years is obvious in the city's historically black neighborhoods, a part of town also isolated by an industrial zone on the edge of downtown and the cross-cutting effect of a large freeway. At the opposite end of the city, million dollar lakeside homes are central to the neighborhood in which the city's highest ranked high school—noted by

Newsweek magazine as “the best high school in Minnesota”—is located. Although only a few miles apart, traffic patterns, public transportation routes, and social stereotyping prevent much regular interaction between these parts of the community. Similar to national statistics that show white students to be the most isolated from other groups, and particularly from black students, Latino and Asian students are more likely to attend schools in all parts of the city. Many schools on the South side of the city, however, serve primarily Latino students who speak Spanish as a first language, and several schools on the North side serve large numbers of first- and second- generation Hmong students who speak a variety of dialects from countries in Southeast Asia.

### ***General Characterization***

A visit to the district’s main webpage shows the words “Urban Education. Global Citizens.” alongside the Gateway Falls Public Schools logo. These phrases reflect a sense of identity and situatedness that distinguish the community from much of the rest of the state of Minnesota, which has few large urban centers, and links it to the world beyond even the United States. In contrast with some of its neighboring districts that tend to use less direct language when addressing issues of racial, ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic differences, the page describing the district’s integration plan states that the Gateway Falls Public Schools “has an opportunity to capitalize on its diversity. [GFPS] has a valuable asset in its diverse population with 70% students of color and 30% white students.” Overall, Gateway Falls’ approach to issues of integration is one of that accepts and acknowledges the ongoing struggle to provide equitable access and opportunity, and to meet the needs of all students that attend the district’s schools. The district in many ways anticipates criticism rather than support from the broader community, and struggles to draw attention to the positive impact its schools have for many students.

Despite the challenges it sometimes faces in convincing constituents and critics of the value of district initiatives, Gateway Falls’ integration plan is straightforward in its description of the value of programming funded through the

program, and cautious in promising particular outcomes. Summarized as “[GFPS]’s Commitment to Equity, Access and Integration,” an overview of the integration plan as appears on the webpage as:

*[GFPS] recognizes that a racially and culturally integrated academic environment contributes to the holistic learning experience of students. Learning in an integrated, diverse environment teaches our students about other cultures, provides opportunities for interracial and intercultural friendships, reduces prejudices and, if done right, helps equalize student outcomes such as graduation rates, suspension rates and enrollment in advance course.*

### ***Integration-revenue funded activities in district***

Hilary Fisher has worked as the Equity Coordinator of the Gateway Falls school district for just under 2 years. She was hired in 2011, the first year that an official integration-specific coordinator position was created. Appendix F shows the official job description for Fisher’s position in Gateway Falls, but she noted wryly in one interview that “...*there’s a gap between the job description and the actual role.*” Although much of the job description emphasizes oversight capacities and accountability mechanisms, the actual work involved in creating the relationships necessary to complete these tasks, or the required daily networking and problem-solving, are difficult to specify in a concise list. Several different initiatives are listed as part of the district integration plan, but three in particular were noted by Fisher in interviews, likely indicating that these programs are potentially the most time-consuming, or those most valued by her as a coordinator or other district directives. These programs are AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination, a college preparatory program popular in several districts in the Metro Area), a professional development program focused on developing teachers’ skills in implementing “culturally responsive and critical pedagogy,” and Check and Connect, a program that seeks to build positive one-on-one relationships with students and increase engagement and school attendance.

### ***Work Location in District***

The Office of Equity and Diversity is currently located upstairs in the new Gateway Falls school district office that opened in 2012. It was previously housed in a far corner of the old district headquarters, a former school building that had been converted to a maze of administrative offices. What was once accessible only by passing through a series of five doors down a series of hallways is now easily reached through a passcard-secured elevator. The director of the Office of Equity and Diversity has an office with a wall of windows that opens directly into a shared work space occupied by five other employees in the department, including Fisher. Greg Dowling, the executive director, has described the department as a “full-service diversity and equity office;” one that oversees compliance with equal opportunity laws, investigates charges of discrimination and harassment, and activities that include Fisher’s coordination of integration programming, a magnet schools coordinator, an LGBTQ programming coordinator, and cultural liaisons that work with a range of community populations.

### ***Individual Background***

Prior to taking this job, Hilary Fisher worked in a neighboring suburban district as well as another urban district in the state. Her undergraduate degree focused on communications, human relations, and ethnic studies rather than education specifically. After work in other areas of social service provision, she took a job working in the equity and integration office of a suburban community northwest of Gateway Falls, a position she held for seven years. She cited her history of growing up in Gateway Falls as well as a desire to work in a school system with more students of color as motivations for coming to work in the district:

*I really was drawn to being able to support more students of color...sometimes to me it felt like the needs of, of students of color [weren't prioritized in the suburban districts], it was really a fight to affirm the need, you know? Whereas here I'm like "well, nobody can deny it" you*

*know what I mean? And so...that....felt like one less, um, battle or....challenge I might have to navigate.* (personal communication)

A profile on a professional social network notes her experience working as a coordinator of AVID programming, collaborating with other administrators to “develop systemic ways to close the racial achievement gap” and experience serving as a facilitator and trainer for teacher and staff development. This list includes direct references to the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and the Intercultural Conflict Styles Inventory (ICS). These qualifications directly reflect language included in the job description for her position (see Appendix F) as required and preferred qualifications, including “studies in the fields of...intercultural relations, cultural diversity,” and “implementing cultural competence programs” in addition to leadership experience in positions that address diversity and equity and strong communication skills to work with a wide range of constituents.

Fisher distinguished her prior experience working in the suburbs as more “equity-focused,” while she believes there to be more of an emphasis to “operate through the role of integration” in Gateway Falls. These statements support Frank Crawford’s characterization of suburban communities with which he was familiar as being much more reluctant to discuss issues of racism and privilege than more diverse areas, as well as national trends that emphasize the role of socioeconomic status in defining and addressing issues of school segregation rather than race or ethnicity.

### ***Relationships with other Administrators***

As one of the largest school districts in the state, Gateway Falls also employs a large number of administrative employees. The one-page “fact sheet” summarizing key information about the district includes a list of 16 positions under the heading “Leadership;” these include a superintendent and four associate superintendents as well as other chief executive officer roles--among them Greg Dowling, the Executive Director of Equity and Diversity, Hilary Fisher’s immediate supervisor. Dowling has worked in this position since 2008,

after working for many years as an attorney and a consultant on diversity issues within corporate business and law offices. During my visits to the Gateway Falls district office, I often observed Fisher interacting with other administrators and witnessed the cordial relationships she described as key to her professional activities and goals. At one point when we were talking in the office cafeteria the superintendent stopped by our table to greet Fisher, who then graciously introduced the two of us. The large size of the district also means that with so many employees located in the central district office, Fisher interacts with other administrators on a daily basis even when not visiting schools directly. She does however, maintain contact with principals and teacher leaders whose work is housed in particular school buildings rather than the central office.

### ***School Board***

In sharp contrast to the school boards of many other districts, the board directors of Gateway Falls Public Schools have publicly responded to integration plans proposed by the office of diversity and equity with criticisms that they don't go far enough to address the obvious social inequities in the community that are reflected in the district's classrooms. When Dowling presented the district's new integration plan (of which Fisher was the primary author) to the board, the chairperson's comments focused on the fact that English Language Learner status is not included as a criteria in defining schools as in need of integration planning and revenue, a critique acknowledged by the coordinator but also one over which the district has no control. In general, social pressure in Gateway Falls tends toward expectation that school board directors will be agents of change, or at least appear to be in support of identifying and solving problems in the district. This also affects district employees that must present proposals to the school board--because public opinion often seems to expect that Gateway Falls' schools are failing its students and that current practice is flawed, district leaders are expected to be change-makers. This dynamic can of course result in a destructive cycle of innovation for innovation's sake, and new initiative fatigue on the part of educators that grow frustrated with drastic organizational and

curricular changes. Five school board directors are also members of the District Equity Leadership Team, which meets bimonthly to discuss issues affecting the district.

### ***Membership in Integration Collaborative***

Membership of Gateway Falls in the local metro area integration collaborative has been contentious for many years. The district has in fact formally announced its intention to leave the collaborative on two occasions, including during the course of this study. Concerns have been repeatedly raised that the student bodies of the integration-focused magnet schools funded through the collaborative do not accurately reflect the demographics of students attending central city schools in terms of race and ethnicity, students requiring special education services, and English Language Learner status. Additionally, the ways in which funds have been pooled by participating districts and services distributed among member districts has been a point of dispute. As a key member of the inter-district collaborative efforts between Gateway Falls and eleven suburban districts, its departure would have dramatic effects on these joint efforts. The Gateway Falls representative to the Joint Powers Board seemed to enter the position (a rotating one filled by current school board directors or superintendents) suspicious of the effectiveness of the inter-district collaboration, and perhaps its stated integrative goals generally. Over the course of 2012, however, her support shifted and she became a vocal advocate for Gateway Falls to remain in the collaboration while working to improve it, rather than leaving. In particular, the director's understanding of integration as more than an urban issue seemed to change, and she was able to articulate this new understanding to other members of the Gateway Falls school board directors.

### ***Future of Integration in District***

Gateway Falls voted to remain in the metro area collaborative on a provisional basis, provided the collaborative makes some changes. As the school board debated the merits of staying or leaving, the possibility of having to



develop a new integration plan that would require a new collaboration with outside districts was one that was a distraction in the opinion of the integration coordinators with whom I spoke. As things currently stand, the State Desegregation Rule requires that racially isolated districts such as Gateway Falls establish and maintain interdistrict plans to address segregation. Even if the integration replacement aid proposal had not passed during the recent legislative session, the district will still be legally obligated to meet this expectation. The eleven-district collaborative faces its own financial troubles if the integration revenue is no longer distributed by the state and a wholly new situation may arise in the next few months to be negotiated by all the parties involved.

### **Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone**

*We've got a culture of staying quiet about these issues... (Frank Crawford)*

The communities of Cedar Bend, Riverville, and Lakestone are independent cities that have one consolidated school district. The district's central administrative office is located in the city of Cedar Bend, approximately 30 miles south of that in Gateway Falls. Cedar Bend looks like many suburban communities across the country--it is a place designed for cars rather than pedestrians, with many strip malls filled with chain big box stores and subdivisions of large single-family homes. Emphasizing the geographically large range of the district, in our first interview Frank Crawford included the fact that it operates the second largest bus fleet in the state, after the public transit system centered in Gateway Falls. This district is the fourth largest in the state and serves approximately 28,000 students living in the outer-ring suburban communities located within its attendance boundaries at the edge of the seven-county Metro Area centered around Gateway Falls.

As shown in Figure 5.1, almost 75% of the students that attend schools in the Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone district are white, a statistic matching that of the state. The percentage of students receiving English Language Learner and special education services also closely mirror state averages, but the percentage

of students qualifying for Free and Reduced Price lunch is notably lower than the state average. Integration efforts in Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone began when one elementary school (located within the borders of the Cedar Bend community) was included on the state's list of racially identifiable schools in 2005. The district school assignment system in place at the time concentrated a group of students living in a lower income neighborhood that included a mobile home park in their neighborhood school. Mirroring national statistics, a strong relationship between lower socioeconomic status and being a person of color exists in the community, and this school's racial and ethnic demographics were significantly different than other elementary schools in the district. In response, the district created a STEM (Science, Technology, Mathematics and Engineering) magnet elementary school designed to draw students from around the district rather than just the nearby neighborhoods. The demographic distribution of the residents of Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone are aligned with the observations of Frankenberg (2011) that "economic segregation is highest in fragmented areas" and that poverty is unevenly spread in suburbia. The lack of affordable housing and uneven distribution of public transportation services are social structures that contribute to this fragmentation. Crawford discussed the proposed construction of a large housing development in Riverville as likely to further contribute to unequal wealth distribution in the community.

### ***General Characterization***

The schools in the district consistently rank in the top half of state lists of achievement data and performance scores (the first sentence of the "District at a Glance" information on Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone's website includes the phrase "state and nationally recognized" in describing the district). Considering the middle- to upper-middle class demographics of most families in the seven communities included in the district's boundaries, residents tend to be more invested in maintaining the current status of the district's schools rather than demanding radical changes. The website goes on to emphasize stability and predictability with the phrase "elementary schools are organized traditionally,

teaching methods are traditional and texts are adopted districtwide.” This contrasts with the previously described drive toward innovation seen in Gateway Falls. The idea that integration is something that the district “has to do” rather than an approach broadly agreed upon by many in the district was reflected in Crawford’s comments that suggested many educators and community members wished to avoid discussing topics that the majority white, middle class community found uncomfortable. Paula Elling described another perspective taken by some in suburban communities that also contributed to resistance to district-wide equity efforts; in schools whose demographics continued to reflect the “typical” community identity, educators just “didn’t feel the need” to do the work. Both leaders agreed that the Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone district was making progress in this area, but that this progress was in some ways happening in spite of a local culture that supported passive resistance to change.

### ***Integration-revenue funded activities in district***

The district’s website introduces integration and equity initiatives with technical legal phrasing: “Pursuant to MN Statute 124D.86, districts with racially isolated schools are required to develop and submit an integration plan to the Minnesota Department of Education that addresses educationally appropriate, voluntary ways to integrate schools.” The inclusion of the word “voluntary” emphasizes to readers that although external institutions require the district to implement an integration plan, the district is cooperative and has sought the input of community stakeholders.

In addition to the implementation of the magnet school, Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone supports several other efforts with integration revenue. Among programs focused on student experience is the “Young Scholars” program that addresses under-identification of African American, Latino and ELL students for gifted and talented programs in the district. ST’s stated goal is that success of this program will be evident when there is no longer a need for separate Gifted and Talented and Young Scholars programs. Other initiatives

exist to support enrollment of older students in Advanced Placement courses, and the AVID program is also in place at several secondary schools in the district.

Other funds are used to focus on educator and staff professional development. Elling noted the work of cultural family advocates, staff positions that provide support for all students but provide targeted services for Native American, Latino, African American, and Somali students and their families and work at various school sites as particularly important.

### ***Work Location in District***

*I'm really that person that works everywhere. In every department, literally, because it's all connected. (Frank Crawford)*

When I first traveled to the district central district office, I drove right past it as there was nothing to distinguish the building as an educational office center other than a small sign. Located in a commercial space highlighted by the presence of an old cinema sign, it is located in a parking lot that abuts a subdivision of that looks like many others in the community, tucked in amongst the farm fields that are slowly being taken over by home construction. The Coordinator of Integration and Equity's office is housed in the elementary teaching and learning department, near cubicles occupied by administrative assistants and is currently labeled with Paula Elling's name but not her job title. It is not outwardly obvious what her role, or the department's, are in the district management system.

On a professional social networking site, Frank Crawford's profile summarized his role as Integration and Educational Equity Coordinator in this way:

*Implement and give leadership to the ISD 196 Integration & Educational Equity Plan in a manner that aligns with Minnesota's Desegregation Rule and Inclusive Education Rule, provide system-wide leadership supportive of our district mission, and ensure equitable access and opportunity to resources and programs for ISD 196 students and families that support the district mission statement.*

This language closely reflects that included in the official job description for the position of Integration and Equity coordinator in the district (see Appendix G for the complete description), which enumerates and defines twenty one specific role responsibilities. Similar to the position description in the Gateway Falls district, these emphasize leadership skills, communication with multiple stakeholders, and personal familiarity with educator development programming.

Both Elling and Crawford described spending a majority of their time on the job at locations other than the central district office. Given the large size of the district geographically, this also means that they spend a good deal of time traveling to different communities and schools, which likely adds time to their schedules. Elling described visiting as many schools as possible on a regular basis as important to her successful transition as a new leader in the district, and Crawford described many schools as enthusiastically engaged in work he helped begin, but that staff people at the building level established and maintained. In schools where it has been difficult for the integration leader to build relationships and a presence for equity efforts, building leadership was often identified as the source of much resistance. At the district level, however, both described feeling welcomed by the vast majority of educators and other leaders. Elling recounted her experience of attending new teacher orientation in August of 2012 and observing that of four required sections that teachers went through in groups, one was focused on equity and matter-of-factly introduced new staff to racial and SES achievement gap data specific to the district and how they would be a part of efforts already in place geared toward reducing disparities. In Elling's words, *"that was phenomenal, because it kind of sets the tone that no matter where you're coming from or where you are on your journey, or even who you are, this is a priority in our district."*

### ***Individual Background***

Crawford and Elling are both career educators, and have held a variety of positions in the field. Crawford holds a Bachelor's degree in secondary social studies education, a Master's in education, and a Minnesota state administrative

licensure. He grew up in the Gateway Falls Metro Area, but in a northern suburban community—a place he vowed never to work because of negative perceptions of it as close-minded. Crawford worked as a Social Studies teacher for several years in the Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone district before leaving due to frustration combating pervasive racism. He described his experience working as a teacher of color in a predominantly white district as “...*racially charged; it was unsafe, it was just this climate of intolerance and no acceptance*” but also noted many ways in which the district had improved. Elling worked as an elementary classroom teacher in Gateway Falls (a community in which she also grew up and attended school as a child) for several years, before spending several years working at a variety of higher education institutions in the state of Minnesota in teacher preparation programs.

### ***Relationships with other Administrators***

Crawford described the superintendent of the Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone district as very supportive of integration efforts and noted that she had been an ally at both the local and state levels (the superintendent did, in fact, testify at the state integration revenue replacement task force hearings in support of integration funding). Elling mentioned having positive relationships with most other administrators with whom she interacted, but expressed frustration that her position was not considered a cabinet level one. The ways in which both leaders described influencing policy decisions at the local level indicated the use of relationship-building rather than positional authority in order to effect changes. In Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone, the superintendent has held more power than school board members in implementing diversity and equity policies and practice, and it therefore is feasible to imagine that building close ties with the person in that position will yield more success toward integration program goals than direct lobbying or persuading of the school board. The district’s integration plan was passed by the board of directors without changes during the last two cycles, with the support of the superintendent.

In Crawford's words, the fact that he and Elling are both African-Americans is also of great importance in doing their work in Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone, a district with very few people of color in leadership roles.

*People in positions like mine are essential to a district. To have someone that...solely wears the equity hat, in every meeting, in every department, to help bring that focus. [Be]cause unless there are people with a dedicated role, it's just 'we already do that.' It's assumed, and there's a missing level of knowledge, expertise, and commitment that just isn't there, otherwise. I mean, this is a field pervaded by white administrators, you know, who have good intentions, but so easily [will dismiss] an important perspective.*

### **School Board**

Crawford was upfront in his assessment of the school board as conservative and committed to avoiding controversy, a trait that also serves to maintain the status quo. Although the community has been growing more diverse, the board of directors is overwhelmingly composed of white men. Crawford described the board's approach to decision making as "they do things carefully, and they, you know, manage their issues." Although he expressed frustration about the entrenched character of many community leaders, including the school board, he also described the "hands-off" nature of the board's involvement as an opportunity to "do quite a bit."

### **Membership in Integration Collaborative**

Unlike Gateway Falls which is a large city surrounded by many smaller communities, Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone is a district already jointly formed from students from different suburban towns of fairly similar size. In this sense, inter-district collaboration is already occurring through the district's organization, but the relative homogeneity of these communities does not create opportunities for integration along racial, ethnic and socioeconomic lines as collaboration between Gateway Falls and its neighboring suburbs. Rather, the challenge in Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone is to avoid creating pockets of disadvantage

and segregation. In contrast with Paula Elling's previous work in a neighboring suburban collaborative in which resource sharing and cooperation were sometimes problematic, the inter-district nature of the school district lends itself to cross-boundary efforts.

### ***Future of Integration in District***

The establishment of a magnet school to address the issue of segregation in Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone has been hailed as a success by the integration leaders and highlighted as a positive example of how to effectively integrate schools in a way that satisfies multiple constituencies (in particular, white middle class parents are eager to send their children to this school, whereas in the past it had a reputation as poor performing and parents were able to utilize school choice to send their children to school in a different neighborhood) at the state level. In order to maintain the magnet school, however, the district receives funds from the federal Department of Education—money that is not permanent and that the district is expected to find ways to continue to support once the federal grant monies stop arriving. Whether or not community support will come, likely in the form of local tax levies, remains to be seen. Without the continued additional funding of state integration revenue, continuing what is widely agreed upon as an effective solution may be at risk of devolution.

Another challenge posed to integration in the district is proposed redrawing of school attendance boundaries, an issue that has been contentious in many districts in the state, including in communities similar to those in the Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone district. One suburban town in the western Gateway Falls Metro Area garnered statewide attention when a vocal group of (mostly white, upper middle class) parents threatened to send their children to a different school district rather than agree to a new school assignment system designed to limit the segregating effect neighborhood assignment was having on a particular elementary school due to a growing number of immigrant families moving to a particular part of town. The superintendent, who had worked in the district for twenty years, was a direct casualty of the controversy that erupted,



and was removed from her position and replaced. Recounting a similar conflict that occurred in the community where she lives, Elling said that boundary issues “bring out the worst in people.” Crawford’s comments repeatedly seemed to suggest that the district had a responsibility to implement changes in the name of equity that the local community would likely not be ready to support if asked directly, but that he considered essential for educational equity in the district. As he noted at one point when describing the need to get educators invested in work that framed diversity in a positive light and brought adults together to work for equity, *“it’s not about fixing the kids. The kids are fine.”*

### **Sisseton Plains**

*We’ve seen people move forward and have changes in their attitudes and their actions because of the work that’s been done here. (Jennifer Burkhardt)*

Sisseton Plains is a community of about 12,750 people located in the extreme southwest corner of the state. The school district serves the residents of Sisseton Plains as well as children living in four small surrounding towns. The drive from the University to the school district office takes around three and half hours, mostly on two lane highways where the strong winds that fuel the turbines that begin to spot the farm field-dominated landscape two hours outside the city buffet cars on the road. In this rural pocket of the state, Sisseton Plains is the economic and educational hub for many miles. A Campbell’s Soup factory was a primary draw to the city for many years, and now the largest employer in the community is a pork-processing plant. In addition to maintaining the economic base for long time residents, the plant has also been a major draw for the movement of migrants to the area. The community has also served as a host for refugee placement, further contributing to the growth of the immigrant population. A Census Bureau analysis identified Sisseton Plains as one of two “micropolitan” communities in the upper Midwest with the largest drop in overall white population, from 83% to 67% (Peterson, 2012).

The smallest of the districts included in these case studies, Sisseton Plains has just one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Like many other school districts in Greater Minnesota, rapid changes in demographics have been even more rapidly evident due to the small number of schools. Unlike families that have chosen to use options to leave schools in central cities like Gateway Falls (estimates are that over 10,000 resident children who would otherwise be assigned to public schools in the district instead attend charter schools, private schools, or open-enroll into other neighboring districts), Sisseton Plains schools are basically the only option for local residents. In just a little over a decade, the student enrollment in local schools has shifted from predominantly white to majority “racially diverse students” in Burkhardt’s words (see Figure 5.1). Although a strong Scandinavian farmer tradition can still be sensed in town, the main street now also includes several Mexican restaurants, shops with Ecuadorian and Guatemalan flags on signage, an Asian grocery store, and a shop catering to East African residents.

### ***General Characterization***

More than any other district included in this set of case studies, the line between community and school district was blurred in each visit I made to Sisseton Plains. A genuine sense of optimism and sincere commitment to promoting the benefits of diversity for communities and schools was evident in the way that the integration leaders discussed their work and the progress they had observed. Danica Wilson, one of the current co-coordinators of integration in the district was quoted in a newspaper article about racial change in Greater Minnesota that singled the community out as a positive example. She said that Sisseton Plains “has come a long way with being more open and understanding of many different cultures” (Peterson, 2012).

### ***Integration-revenue funded activities in district***

Among the districts included in these case study examinations, Sisseton Plains was unique in its focus on direct service provision to students and families,

rather than emphasizing professional development for educators and staff in the district. In part, Jennifer Burkhardt attributed this to the fact that the district was already heavily involved in addressing educator needs with other funds, and the integration office was therefore able to focus their efforts elsewhere. She said that when Sisseton Plains first qualified for integration revenue from the state, *“because of the rapidly changing demographics, our district [was already using] their own staff development to address that topic, so we didn’t necessarily need to add to that.”* Several cultural liaisons are on staff to address the particular needs of immigrant groups with significant numbers of residents in the community.

### ***Work Location in District***

Although a full-time executive director position has existed since the establishment of the collaborative in 2003, the uncertainty of continued funding from the state has had a direct effect on the administrative structure of integration programming in the county-wide collaborative centered in Sisseton Plains. I first met Burkhardt in her position as the coordinator of integration at the State Office Building at a meeting of the Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force meeting in January of 2012. She had testified in an earlier meeting about the impacts of integration revenue-funded programming in Greater Minnesota, and had traveled to the capital for a second time to follow the progress of the Task Force in developing recommendations for the legislature. She had been suggested to me as a possible participant in my study by someone who described her as a long-term educator passionate about speaking up for districts in rural communities, and well-informed and involved in political procedure. When I later traveled to Sisseton Plains, she was candid in our first interview that she intended to apply for the position of Community Education Director when her mentor retired. This position would be a promotion, as the county integration collaborative activities are included under the Community Education department and she was excited for the opportunity. When I returned for a second visit later in the spring, she had accepted the position, but was unsure how the process of

hiring a replacement would be organized by the collaborative. By the time I returned for a fall visit the collaborative had decided that—rather than hire a new coordinator for a position that would potentially be de-funded during the next fiscal year—they would divide the responsibilities between two existing employees. Burkhardt participated in the interview with the new directors, clearly still invested in the success of integration-focused programming in the district.

### ***Individual Background***

Jennifer Burkhardt was born and raised in Sisseton Plains; the new directors Danica Wilson and Khomy Srisaphong both spent most of the childhoods in the community as well. Burkhardt left to attend college in Iowa (where she studies English and Education) and then returned, married a man also from the community, and now has three teenage sons enrolled in Sisseton Plains middle and high schools. She completed a Master’s degree from a local university, and received her MN State community education director certification through a Metro Area university. Her professional social network page notes “educational leadership” and “community outreach” as principal skills and expertise.

Danica Wilson has worked for the collaborative for six years as the Youth programs coordinator, work she continues in addition to the administrative responsibilities involved in serving as a co-director with Khomy Srisaphong. Her current position is listed as “Integration and Youth Development Coordinator” at the county integration collaborative. She began working at the collaborative as an Americorps volunteer, was hired on as a full-time outreach coordinator following that position, and has worked full-time for the integration office while pursuing and completing a Master’s degree in school counseling.

Khomy Srisaphong has worked as the parent and family programs coordinator for the county integration collaborative for the last two years, a position she heard about through her sister-in-law’s involvement with the collaborative as a Lao cultural liaison. She contrasted her experience of having been one of only a few students of color in her elementary school to the much

more diverse student population in Sisseton Plains schools now. She is modest in acknowledging that she speaks several languages and provides significant interpretive support to parents who attend family events. All three leaders indicated that activities organized through the integration office were “community-focused and family based.”

### ***Relationships with other Administrators***

The district’s small size would suggest that integration personnel may have an easier time connecting with other administrators in the district, but examination reveals the actual situation to be more complex. The integration collaborative office’s close proximity the Community Education administrative offices, for example, and the fact that the current director of that department led the district’s integration efforts for many years, almost guarantees collaborative opportunities. The leaders report some difficulty in developing strong ties at the school building level, however, mostly due to misunderstanding about the role of the integration collaborative in enhancing efforts already in place and developing new programs that can support the school’s goals. One anecdote in particular is telling: as part of the integration collaborative’s efforts to help students prepare for college, Wilson encouraged several students to apply for fee waivers to take the ACT exam (students that qualify for Free and Reduced Price lunch are eligible to register for the exam and request that the school district cover the cost). It turned out that on average, only two students per year had typically requested these waivers, despite the fact that over 60% of the student body met the requirements. When students (encouraged by Wilson to advocate for themselves and to take the ACT to broaden the range of colleges and universities to which they could apply) went to the high school office to request waivers, the integration leader received an upset phone call from the guidance counselor’s office. The conversation left Wilson with the impression that the high school was not interested in requesting additional waivers for students, because increasing the number of students taking the exam might result in a drop in average score. Wilson, Srisaphong, and Burkhardt were all visibly frustrated

when recounting this episode, as they felt it represented a disconnect between their efforts to expand student access and opportunity and other educational professionals they had assumed would be similarly motivated. By not encouraging students to take the exam, and making an issue over the fact that low-income students were coming forward requesting the opportunity, Wilson described the high school's approach as "putting up a barrier *again* for disadvantaged students, to be successful." In summary, Burkhardt stated that "we're advocating for equity and access to opportunities, and...it's not always well received."

### ***School Board***

Most of my conversations with stakeholders in Sisseton Plains seemed to indicate that the school board was less influential in the development of policies at the local level than in the other two case study sites. Having met several school board members from surrounding districts as well at a county collaborative Joint Powers board meeting (made up of locally elected school board directors from each of the member districts), it seemed to me that serving in such a capacity was a form of community service, and that these roles are served by community members with a particular interest in schools, rather than stepping stones to other elected offices or attempts to become involved in politics per se. In an article discussing the impact of immigration on the community, Vezner (2011) noted that despite rising numbers of Latino residents, "there hasn't been a Hispanic city council or school board member in memory." This problem of disproportionate representation is an issue in Sisseton Plains as in many other communities in the state.

### ***Membership in Integration Collaborative***

Information about county-wide school integration efforts is easily accessible from the Sisseton Plains main school website. Prominently noted are the names of the seven smaller communities with whom Sisseton Plains collaborates with "to provide integrated activities that will create multicultural

awareness and understanding.” The webpage also describes the mission of the school district integration consortium as “promot[ing] students [sic] success and community acceptance of differences by providing opportunities for students, families, and staff from diverse backgrounds to learn from and with one another.” This language directly reflects that of the integration revenue statute as it existed prior to the addition of text directly referring to elimination of racial achievement gaps as a targeted goal of revenue use. “Closing achievement gaps” is, however, listed as one of the five main areas to which the integration collaborative targets funds, along with “cultural awareness,” “student achievement,” “parent involvement,” and “professional development.” Even in the midst of the state-level debate about whether to maintain, alter, or abolish integration revenue, the county integration collaborative centered in Sisseton Falls has grown. A new school district elected to join the collaborative in the spring of 2012, demonstrating the region’s growing awareness of the need to support the changing needs of students attending their schools, and a desire to share resources across boundaries.

### ***Future of Integration in District***

When asked about their perception of activity relative to integration revenue at the state level and their thoughts about where the program was going on a broad level, Danica Wilson said she tried to stay focused on what they are trying to accomplish in the current year, but was keenly aware of the uncertainty caused by the lack of legislative action. She noted the impact that losing the funding may have on the stakeholders served by their programming, and recognize that other resources were not readily available in the community of Sisseton Plains to fill the gap that would be left behind: *“in a year, we might not be here. And how is that going to affect the students, the families, the community?”*

## **Common Themes and Conceptualizing Broader Implications**

Examination of the experiences of integration leaders in Gateway Falls, Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone, and Sisseton Plains revealed distinct local differences as well as shared understandings and common struggles. In this chapter's final section I further compare and contrast across the three case study settings and relate findings to broader trends revealed in the statewide survey.

### ***Professional Preparation and Experience***

Of the seven leaders interviewed for these case studies, all had at least a Bachelor's degree, most held Master's degrees in education, and one is an attorney. These leaders are well educated with a great deal of experience and training in their field; as the results of the statewide survey demonstrate, this level of expertise is typical rather than unusual for those holding these positions.

### ***Professional Role in District and Contact with Stakeholders***

All three districts included as case studies have full-time integration leadership positions. In each of these locations leaders work in close proximity to other administrators and have regular contact with educators in local schools. In Sisseton Plains, integration coordinators have a greater level of direct student contact, while the leader in Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone spends the greatest amount of time coordinating professional development for teachers and school staff. The leader in Gateway Falls is involved in district-wide decision-making administrative processes than the leaders in the other two districts. Differences in physical location in each district also likely influence the amount of contact these coordinators have with parents, guardians, and other community members. The Gateway Falls school district office was the only one I was able to access using public transportation. In fact, parking is in shorter supply than demand, but a bus stop is located directly across the street from the building's main entrance and is only a fifteen-minute ride from downtown Gateway Falls. On one visit to Sisseton Plains, I had lunch in the town's central business district, worked in a cafe for an hour, and then walked back to the integration collaborative offices for a meeting



with students. It took me less than fifteen minutes to return to the office, walking through residential neighborhoods of smaller ranch-style single-family homes. In Sisseton Plains, the integration collaborative is housed in a former elementary school, along with the community education, adult basic education, and family and community outreach programs.

### ***Leadership Practice***

The expression of authority by each of these leaders is impacted by situational capacities. In Gateway Falls, the director of the department of equity and diversity in which Hilary Fisher's position is located is a Cabinet position. Frank Crawford noted having a close working relationship with the superintendent of Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone, but Paula Elling expressed frustration that her position was not included in the superintendent's cabinet. "Educational Equity" is included as one of that district's four key strategies and goals, with a list of interventions geared toward the implementation of "a systemic process that increases achievement for all students by addressing equitable access to opportunities in our schools and programs." These prominent references in each district may indicate genuine commitments to promoting the benefits of diversity and working toward equitable practice and equality of outcomes for all students. The lack of the inclusion of the word "integration" in any of these examples--even though many of the activities described as part of this equity work are currently funded directly through state integration revenue--may suggest more complicated attitudes toward the concepts of integration and segregation. As Elling stated:

*I think that it's, I, I guess I feel like it's a way to...provide some balance to school districts that...are really ill-prepared to work with students of color. But I think that the shame and the irony is that, in that, is that a district even like [Gateway Falls]...who've, and they've always, I mean for a very, very long time been very integrated, still don't have it right.*

## ***Cultural Competency***

Proponents of multicultural education seek to dispel prejudices and misperceptions through curricula that emphasize positive aspects of diversity. Multicultural education as an approach has itself been diluted, however, as goals of creating significant, lasting, change were pushed aside in favor of easier to implement strategies, such as the "Heroes and Holidays" approach: rather than drafting and enforcing strong policies to address racial discrimination and promote equity in schools, "Culture Days" and related celebrations often serve as a dim substitute for true changes to the white-dominant status quo.

Critics of the ways in which such superficial practices have been enacted in schools in the name of multiculturalism point to these behaviors as ways of attempting to appropriate such pedagogies as proxies for true integration. The original intent of "multicultural education," however, is deeper and has broader goals than mere awareness-raising. In fact, it is unlikely that districts that truly embraced such principles would continue to maintain school assignment systems that support racial isolation and segregation, as such an approach necessitates an investigation of how schools interact with the larger community. In 2007, a panel of prominent multicultural educators drafted a set of four principles that could be used by "educational practitioners, policy makers, and future researchers" to connect home and community culture with schools and recognize the multiplicity and changing nature of such diversity (Banks et al., 2001 p.5). These principles recognize that:

1. Learning is situated in broad socio-economic and historical contexts and is mediated by local cultural practices and perspectives.
2. Learning takes place not only in school but also in the multiple contexts and valued practices of everyday lives across the life span.
3. All learners need multiple sources of support from a variety of institutions to promote their personal and intellectual development.
4. Learning is facilitated when learners are encouraged to use their home and community language resources as a basis for expanding their linguistic repertoires." (Banks, 2007 p.5)

Ladson-Billings (1995) argued that the development of "a sociopolitical or critical consciousness" should be a tenet of culturally relevant teaching along with strong academics and cultural competence (p. 483) and has written about how this type of pedagogy is performed in classrooms. In the context of multicultural learning environments, culture is here assumed to be a "continual process of creating meaning in social and material contexts" rather than a "static, unchanging body of knowledge 'transmitted' between generations" (Levinson & Holland, 1996 p.13). Levinson and Holland's (1996) concept of the "cultural production of the educated person" seeks to describe how structural constraints of educational institutions bound the formation of subjectivities and agency within the school context (p. 14). Elling described her approach to developing these capacities in educators through professional development efforts as one that included efforts to build teachers' knowledge of themselves as well as their students:

*Because one, culturally responsive teaching it's really a pedagogy, it's really about what's going on in the classroom. And cultural competency, I think it's really about that personal journey. So it's what's in your heart, and who are you as a person? It first gets at your actions, and then probably at your beliefs, and values. And that's, it's different kind of work. They can be done at the same time, but, I think they both have to be done (personal communication).*

### **Connecting Integration with other District Initiatives**

All the leaders profiled in these case studies referenced achievement goals in their districts relative to test scores, graduation rates, and students' preparation for careers and college as related to their integration efforts. Although they were unanimous in support of these goals, including closing of "achievement gaps," they were wary of having these goals supercede other purposes of integration. As mentioned in chapter four, a tension exists between leaders' support of such goals as good for all students and simultaneous strong feelings that raising achievement and ensuring success are already the state's—

and each school district's—responsibility. Integration goals were expressed by many of those in this group as more about building the cultural awareness and “positive interracial relationships” as described in statute because those conditions contribute to positive learning environments in ways that are often overlooked by proponents of achievement goals.

In keeping with Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone's achievement oriented population and student body, the district's own description of itself begins with “District X is a state and nationally recognized...public school district...” Further supporting an emphasis on recognition and measurement of “success” is the fact that several schools in the Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone district applied for and received designation as “Celebration” and “Reward” Schools. The Minnesota Department of Education's website explains what these terms mean:

Each year, schools across the state receive a Multiple Measurement Rating. This rating looks at each school's proficiency, growth, achievement gap reduction and graduation rate. High performing schools with ratings in the 87th - 100th percentile are designated as Reward Schools. Another group of schools whose scores are in the 60th - 86th percentile, and who are expertly documenting their efforts to increase student achievement are designated as Celebration Schools. (“Minnesota Department of Education 2012 Reward Schools,” 2012)

Of the districts included as case studies, Gateway Falls had by far the largest number of schools, but only one appeared on the state's list of “Celebration and Reward schools.” None of the three schools in Sisseton Plains appeared on the list. In the Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone district, however, four schools ranked as “Celebration” schools, and two were ranked as “Reward” schools. Importantly, all six were elementary schools. As described in chapters one and two, elementary schools tend to draw students from a smaller area and neighborhood schools in racially fragmented suburbs are some of the most segregated in United States communities. Communities like Sisseton Plains may have residential areas fragmented by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, but with only one school for students to attend at particular grade levels the schools themselves are (at least superficially) integrated. In Gateway Falls,

residential segregation and high rates of poverty overall exist, and many of the most achievement-oriented families find ways to utilize school choice systems to open-enroll their students into neighboring (suburban) districts or send them to private schools in the Metro Area. Recognition systems based primarily on (arguably arbitrary) standardized assessments do not accurately represent who lives in a community, or reflect the neighborhoods. Families that choose to keep their children in Gateway Falls' schools are often acutely aware of this and in fact tend to rank their own children's school experiences highly, regardless of state rankings. White, middle class Gateway Falls families that may be outwardly similar to many of those that reside in Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone and send their elementary school students to these "Celebration and Reward Schools" but keep their students in so-called "inner city" schools cite less tangible benefits as priorities for their children--among them the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of classmates and to learn about other cultures and languages. Whether or not families are comfortable discussing the dichotomous choice of "diversity v. achievement" that is often presented when this situation is oversimplified, is dependent on many factors. The reality is, however, that it is much easier to avoid talking about issues of race and disadvantage when they are not as obvious in one's everyday life, or at a child's school. When we discussed the identity of Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone, Frank Crawford described this situation:

*...in larger suburban districts—not urban, but suburban districts—these issues are masked. By other words, by language...by lots of other things. And so people don't understand the systemic nature and interconnectedness of things as clearly as they do when it's just so obvious in a small town.*

## **Conclusions: Local Discourses**

The experiences of leaders in the districts of Gateway Falls, Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone, and Sisseton Plains are at once reflective of broader statewide discourses and efforts and unique stories of how situated meanings are created at the local level. Using the frames presented in chapter four (Figures 4.1 and 4.2), leaders' personal commitments are best described by the social justice frame. As politically savvy actors, however, they have found ways to frame their work in ways that appeal to those influential forces at the local level that view education as a public good and economic concern. Briefly, this framing results in the following messages:

- In urban districts: integration helps close achievement gaps
- In suburban districts: Integration is also good for white students
- In rural districts: Integration is a way to embrace change for economic survival of communities in Greater Minnesota.

In the next chapter, I explore the ways in which integration leaders across the state of Minnesota have created a way to draw upon their collective knowledge to organize a professional network involved in decision- and policy-making processes at the local and state levels.

## **Chapter 6 : Leading from the Middle**

School district integration leaders in Minnesota are positioned in an intermediary role, receiving policy directives from state policymakers and messages about the value of education and diversity from local communities. As presented in chapters four and five, these messages are complex and at times contradictory. Navigating this context requires these educators to pay attention to both the macro and micro levels of policy making and implementation, and balance job responsibilities that range from direct service provision to students and families to testifying at legislative committee hearings. In this chapter I will demonstrate that these leaders serve a crucial role at the meso level in the interpretation and enactment of integration efforts, primarily through an examination of the actions of these leaders in the formation of a grassroots professional organization known as the Minnesota School Integration Council (MSIC) with explicit political goals.

### **Integration Leaders as Policy Entrepreneurs**

Having established that school integration policy in Minnesota is enacted and debated in a complex hierarchy of power that privileges particular constructions of education, students, and justice, I now apply analytic frameworks from policy implementation literature to examine how integration leaders have acted as explicit policy actors at the state and local levels. Using Kingdon's (1995) description of agenda-setting processes, informed by Cobb and Elder's (1995) issue definition and agenda setting framework, and Mazzone's (1991) arena model, this analysis examines the ways in which efforts to highlight the issue of school integration on both the governmental and systemic agendas are pursued simultaneously. Although the authors cited here do not all position their work as explicitly critical in examining political power structures, the sociopolitical awareness of the integration leaders at the center of this study makes this analysis inherently critical in nature. This awareness is most obvious through their participation in the development and maintenance of a formal

professional organization, called the Minnesota School Integration Council, or MSIC. In a climate of economic uncertainty and political divisions, the need for input from educators on matters of social justice is evident.

The formation of MSIC has itself produced a new body of documents and social practices that offer additional insight into how knowledge is produced and shared among actors connected through formal and informal networks. The following section of this chapter provides an overview of the history of this organization, and explores the agenda-setting efforts of its members, who have organized with the purpose of focusing legislative attention and influencing reform.

### **MSIC**

*The Minnesota School Integration Council (MSIC) is a statewide organization committed to equity and excellence for all. MSIC exists to convene and advocate on all matters related to integration and educational equity in the state of Minnesota.*

The above text is taken from the 2012 mission statement and bylaws of MSIC. In four years of observation and interaction with members of the Minnesota School Integration Council, I repeatedly noted the dedication to educational equity shown by their work, and the political sophistication exercised in their interactions locally and at the state level. Although they frequently used language about program implementation that reflected the “education as a public good” frame (see Figure 4.2) and were genuinely committed to many activities that identified goal of career readiness and diverse workforce preparation, when it came to their personal motivations almost all the leaders with whom I interacted had a singular social justice orientation (see Figure 4.3). The insistence on the use of the term “opportunity” gap rather than “achievement” gap, for example, points to a desire on the part of these integration-focused educators to contribute to a reframing of the local discourse relative to academic achievement. Such efforts attempt to place the burden of change on policy structures and institutions rather than on individual students and schools.



Through their words and actions, the members of MSIC show a belief in the power of school integration, and a belief in the “rightness” of their work. Eaton (2009) has described racial integration and social cohesion as “works-in-progress” that “won’t ever die, because the values of opportunity for all are embedded in our collective sense of America as a fair and decent nation” (p. 399). Even when noting institutionalized racism in local school board practices, and repeatedly testifying about the benefits for students of color of programs funded through the state Integration Revenue program to rooms full of predominantly white legislators, these educators believe that opportunity can and should be equally provided to students regardless of personal background. I reference the two frames presented in chapter four again here in order to demonstrate the ways in which integration leaders construct new meanings while working together; Coburn et al. (2009) describe frame analysis as “an approach to studying the *process* by which these problem definitions emerge and change in social interaction and negotiation” (pp. 1118-1119). A recent example of collective meaning-making and message framing is the following statement, developed at the most recent organizational board meeting to find a brief phrase to use to promote their agenda to policy makers and local districts:

*Equity is what we do, integration is a strategy we use to achieve it.*

### ***Organizational History and Activity pre-2010***

The origins of the Minnesota State Integration Council can be traced to an informal conversation among several district integration leaders after the final presentation at the Statewide School Integration Conference sponsored by MDE in 2009. At the time there were two full-time employees at MDE responsible for integration programming, and statewide conferences had been organized for several years consecutively. The meeting was held at the conference center on the UMN St. Paul campus and included presentations by national speakers (including Bonnie M. Davis, a former teacher who leads professional development trainings across the country based on her book *How to teach kids who don't look like you*, and professor Thea Abu El-Haj from Rutgers University),

and was well-attended by educators from around the state of Minnesota. Following the meeting, there was palpable energy among leaders inspired by the opportunity to network with job-alike educators and a shared desire to channel momentum from the meeting into continued action. A group of about ten people stayed to discuss the possibility of creating a professional organization that would help distribute information and pool knowledge resources.

An organizing group was formed that planned and facilitated a retreat during which invited representatives from districts across the state drafted bylaws for the organization to be known as the Minnesota School Integration Council (initially referred to by the shortened “MN-SIC” and later simplified to “MSIC”). The group was officially established as a non-profit organization in 2010, and developed logos, an Internet presence through the use of social networking platforms, and followed a formal process to develop bylaws and elect officers to the executive council and board of directors.

### ***2010 Task Force and Presentation of Recommendations to Legislature***

When the state legislature officially changed the language of Statute 124D.86 in 2010, a provision was also made to commission a Task Force that would elicit input on integration activities and propose changes to the integration revenue program based that would address concerns of the legislature and the problems highlighted in the 2005 Legislative Auditor’s report. The legislature did not allocate any funds to organize such a task force, however, and MSIC stepped in voluntarily to do so itself. Eventually, 27 educational officials and community leaders<sup>8</sup> were invited to participate in four meetings from October 2010 to January 2011 as representative experts on equitable education for diverse groups of students. These meetings were informed by feedback received during five public listening sessions that were held in the communities of Willmar, Rochester, Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul and focused on three areas of interest: "Purpose of Integration, Integration Policies, and Integration Practices."

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<sup>8</sup> see page 6 of Appendix H for a complete list of participants

The listening sessions were structured to present contextual information and to facilitate conversations among attendees.<sup>9</sup> After gathering suggestions and perspectives from these meetings, the Task Force “experts” worked with MSIC to develop a set of recommendations for changes to Minnesota’s approach to school integration. The final report from this task force, titled “Every Child, Every Day: Educational Equity through Integration” was released in January 2011 and is discussed in greater detail in the following section of this chapter.

### ***Analysis of MSIC Task Force Activity as Agenda Setting***

Kingdon (1995) described three process streams that can be influenced by stakeholders interested in influencing social change through governmental means: problems, policy, and politics. In attempting to raise the profile of school integration as an issue on the agenda of state education policy decision-makers, MSIC has developed strategies that attempt to influence all three of these streams and that have agenda-setting intentions. As Kingdon (1995) stated, "problem recognition is critical to agenda setting" (p. 198). In their attempts to both highlight and shape the definition of school integration as a policy problem, MSIC educators are acting in their position as an interest group to influence elected officials and involve "hidden participants" from a variety of affected public groups. Their targeted efforts to directly impact state Statute and Administrative Rule language, however, is in keeping with behaviors described in Kingdon's model as "policy entrepreneur[ship]."

The political stream refers to the influence held by those actors who are in decision-making positions. Kingdon (1995) described influences on this stream as a combination of public mood and elections. The results of the 2010 election cycle in Minnesota had significant implications for education policy; the State House of Representatives and Senate were controlled by the Republicans (the first time this had happened since the 1970s), while the governor’s seat was held

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<sup>9</sup> I volunteered to assist at the public meeting held in North Minneapolis and facilitated an hour-long discussion with approximately 12 community members about what they identified as priorities that policy-makers should consider in terms of school integration.

by a Democrat; under such circumstances building bipartisan support for particular educational initiatives is essential. Key elected officials mentioned by educators in the field as involved in the political stream of school integration policy are, however, all current members of the DFL party. These include the Chair of the House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee and several of its members, key members of the K-12 Education Finance Committee, and the Vice Chair of the Senate Education Budget and Policy Division. The results of the 2012 election returned a DFL legislative majority to both the state House and Senate, which increases—but certainly doesn't guarantee—the likelihood of the Governor's budget getting passed without the gridlock of 2011.

Kingdon (1995) also distinguished between visible and hidden participants in the agenda setting and alternative specification processes. MSIC is positioned in an intermediary role and is attempting to gather input from both relatively high profile participants (experts seen as influential in the policy making hierarchy) in the Task Force meetings, and to hear the often ignored voices of community members and parents during Community Listening Sessions. The MSIC participants themselves are positioned as both visible and hidden participants, depending on the context and step in the policy making process. The ultimate goal of efforts to influence the various policy streams is to get a desired issue to the governmental agenda, where decisions are made. It is often necessary for a "policy window" to open in order for a group to bring its issue to this decision agenda level (Kingdon, 1995).

Cobb and Elder (1995) distinguished between actor behaviors and issue definition on the systemic and governmental agendas; the first emphasized public perception and the latter institutional and formal capacity to effect changes in policy. Similar to Kingdon's (1995) discussion of policy windows, the authors have suggested that multiple external and internal events or changes can serve as "trigger mechanisms," and transform policy problems into issues that can then be brought to the attention of actors with access to the policy making agenda. In order to gain access to "institutional gatekeepers" with significant influence over

the decision-making process, interest groups must be strategic and gain visibility (Cobb & Elder, 1995).

Mazzoni's (1991) arena model conceived of the movement of "people, information, and influence flow back and forth" across the boundaries of four arenas: subsystem, commission, leadership, and macro. The subsystem arena is the target of MSIC's eventual policy recommendations, as the legislators mentioned earlier are all members of influential educational policy committees. The public listening sessions and meetings with task force members show strong interaction with the macro, or public, arena as well. In Mazzoni's model, the subsystem arena is characterized as stable and slow to change, while the macro arena is much more dynamic. It therefore makes sense that MSIC would attempt to influence the more flexible macro arena to exert pressure on the more status-quo oriented subsystem arena.

School integration is a policy issue that has waxed and waned in terms of legislative, legal, and popular attention over the last few decades. MSIC's efforts in leading the Task Force that produced the "Every Child, Every Day" document sought to raise the profile of this topic in both the eyes of the public and state decision-makers in Minnesota. Cobb and Elder (1995) described efforts to garner "widespread attention or at least awareness" (p. 99) as one method of moving an issue from the systemic to institutional agenda, and this appears to be part of the organization's strategy. Making specific policy suggestions to members of the Education Finance Committee is clearly an attempt to influence the formal, governmental agenda. The role of institutional gatekeepers (Cobb & Elder, 1995) is an important aspect of this analysis, as power and legitimacy differentials exist in the hierarchy of public education and state political structures. Kingdon's (1995) policy streams and participant framework is useful in identifying ways in which influence is varied and available in punctuated bursts, or "windows of opportunity." The simultaneous efforts of MSIC to influence both public opinion and governmental agenda provide a unique window into grassroots efforts to effect policy change.

MSIC's activities prior from 2009-2011 closely align with Kingdon's (1995) description of the behaviors of policy entrepreneurs in their attempts to focus attention on their issue of interest and shape a particular definition of the problem they hope to solve. Although they are interested in maintaining funding for the educational activities they promote, they are also motivated by personal values and beliefs regarding educational "equity and excellence" and committed to investing personal time and effort to effect change at the policy-making level. The discourse surrounding school integration observed at the meetings organized MSIC contrasts with that in state policy documents. The overall minor changes that appeared in revised versions of the Statute and Rule are evidence of the typical incremental pace of change in the subsystem arena (Mazzoni, 1991). The conversations about this topic that occur in the broader macro arena reflect a more emotional positioning of the topic and contains rhetoric that calls for justice and equality, in the spirit of civil rights legislation. The abrupt "erasure" of the Revenue Statute (described in chapter four) was rapid and dramatic, but not unexpected given the fact that much decision-making on policies, particular informal communication and consideration, happens away from the public eye.

MSIC achieved its goal of drafting a set of specific policy recommendations developed with a broad range of diverse stakeholder input, and this is indeed an accomplishment for a fledgling organization run entirely by volunteers with outside full-time responsibilities to local public school districts. This deliberate attempt to go beyond job descriptions that generally prioritize implementation and limit policy development to local levels shows an unusual commitment to system change. The "Every Child Every Day" document also clearly demonstrated the attempts of MSIC to frame the issue of school integration as a social justice issue. In the first few pages of the document, the use of phrasing that evokes the argument of diversity as a compelling state interest (a point of considerable debate during the 2007 *PICS* and *Meredith* Supreme Court cases), and the prominent inclusion of the following quotations link MSIC's goals to broader messages of civil rights:

*This Nation has a moral and ethical obligation to fulfill its historic commitment to creating an integrated society that ensures equal opportunity for all of its children (Justice Kennedy).*

*We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.).*

In stark contrast with the “Legislative Charge” language examined in chapter four of the 2011-2012 Task Force, this document emphasizes the fact that it used a “participatory process to provide opportunity for rich dialogue and deep examination of the issues”—language that suggests that participants were *invited* rather than *appointed*. MSIC is referred to in this document as an organizational and assistive force, but not a top-down authority:

*To support the work of the task force, MSIC facilitated...*

*The recommendations in this report reflect key issues and opportunities that emerged from listening to many voices.*

Therefore, although MSIC recognized itself as an expert in the field and imbued with enough expertise to take on the task of conducting a series of statewide meetings, selecting and gathering invited representatives, and presenting recommendations for policy and practice to the legislature, in this document the organization does not prioritize its own status. Rather, the discourse used in the report shows efforts to construct the appearance of a collective voice.

In terms of content, the recommendations repeatedly show an emphasis on creating integrated environments first, and addressing “achievement gaps” as a secondary goal; this is in keeping with the newly adopted mission statement that identifies integration as a strategy to achieve educational equity. Obvious attempts are made throughout to marry the two frames, and suggest ways that these goals can be met by similar efforts, rather than existing in opposition to one another. Table 6.1 shows a summary of selected phrases from the *Every Child, Every Day* document that reflect the two frames introduced in chapter four, and

demonstrate the way in which MSIC makes compromises to support efforts to further its larger agenda.

Finally, five key recommendations were suggested in the *Every Child, Every Day* document. The full text of these recommendations is included in Appendix H; the general areas are listed below:

- Clarify purpose of integration policy
- Establish and enforce accountability measures
- Identify and support effective practices tied to results
- Seek partnerships and support collaboration
- Distribute resources to meet outcomes



**Table 6.1: Excerpts from *Every Child, Every Day: Educational Equity through Integration* (MSIC, 2011), organized by frame**

<b>Educational Equity as a Social Justice Issue</b>	<b>Educational Equity as a Public Good</b>
<p>Access to equitable, high quality education for all children is a critical obligation of a just, democratic society. (p. 7)</p>	<p>Well-prepared students are a long-term investment in the health and stability of our region. Minnesota’s future success is directly linked to our ability to prepare citizens that can thrive in a diverse, global marketplace. (p. 7)</p>
<p>Teachers and school leaders need preparation and support to meet the unique educational needs of a diverse student population. (p. 8)</p>	<p>To address educational disparities and disparate outcomes, Minnesota must engage in focused, intentional efforts that prepare all learners for a state, national, and global economy. (p. 8)</p>
<p>Beyond physical or proximal integration, our actions must also prepare children to reach a level of cultural competence that will allow them to thrive in a diverse world. (p. 9)</p>	<p>Integrated schools have been shown to raise achievement and reduce achievement gaps between white students and students of color. (p. 9)</p>

### ***Activity 2011-2012***

Following a frustrating 2011 legislative session, in which repeated requests to hold a hearing on their “Every Child Every Day” recommendations met with limited response, most MSIC members continued in their jobs in a “business as usual” fashion- the change in statute language inspired some conversations about focusing local resources in slightly different ways, but most districts that were due to submit budgets did not significantly alter their integration plans. Although repeal of the integration revenue program was proposed during the 2010 and 2011 legislative sessions, these proposals were not met with broad support. Therefore, most MSIC members were taken by surprise at least regarding the timing, when the statute was repealed during the legislative special session in July of 2011. That fall, anxiety was evident during meetings of MSIC at the beginning of the 2011-2012 school year as MDE remained unresponsive to districts’ requests for predictions of how the repeal of the statute would impact their current budgets and integration plans. The group was encouraged by selection of one of their own members to the Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force, and closely followed the activities of the Task Force, with several members attending meetings and testifying in support of the value of integration for improved educational experiences for students in Minnesota’s schools.

Following the presentation of the Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force’s final recommendations to the House Education Finance Committee on April 16, 2012, MSIC members began to pressure their local representatives to push for a hearing on the recommendations in the Education Policy and Finance Committees, and a flurry of email correspondence among members took place between formal MSIC meetings. The Executive Board held several of its own meetings in order to strategize and develop an official response to the Task Force recommendations, which was delivered in the form of a one page brief entitled “Achievement and Integration for Minnesota: MSIC Response to the Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task Force Recommendations”

(Minnesota School Integration Council, 2012, see Appendix I for full text of this document). The response began with a direct request for state decision-makers to “reform the Integration Revenue Program” using the recommendations of the Task Force. Emphasis was placed on the following phrase: “We request action in the current session to create the ‘Achievement and Integration for Minnesota’ (AIM) program recommended by the bi-partisan Task Force, for the good of our whole state” (Minnesota School Integration Council, 2012). This phrase embodies a sense of authority on the part of the organization, as it presents itself as endowed with the legitimacy necessary to “request” action from the legislature.

The document contains some similar phrasing as that included in the “Every Child, Every Day” report, including references to compelling state interests, and directly references that report and links it to the AIM recommendations:

The *Achievement and Integration for Minnesota* (AIM) program is aligned with the recommendations outlined in *Every Child, Every Day*. Both provide increased oversight and accountability, and a focus on measurement and results. Both promote collaboration and shared learning among school districts across the state, increasing effectiveness and efficiency of district efforts.

Overall, however, the document is markedly different in tone from the *Every Child, Every Day* report; this one is organized in short bulleted points, with references to recommendation sections and subsections, for example:

We support local establishment of goals, and accountability and reporting to local communities (1.a.iv.)

There is also a greater inclusion of language that references the education as public economic good frame; the following words appear, among others:

*oversight, accountability, evaluation*  
*measurement, results, metrics*  
*standardized, merits, quality*

The reformulation of the new, briefer, MSIC mission statement in 2013 may reflect a similar attempt to shape the organization’s communication in a more “policy brief” manner.

During the spring of 2012, the organization was referred to by name in a conservative public figure's attack on integration as wasteful government spending by radical liberals. Although not all leaders agreed with this characterization of their organization, MSIC members generally seemed to find this recognition validating as it acknowledged their existence as a key player in the school integration dialogue at the state level.

### ***Integration Leaders' Conceptualizations of Rule and Statute Language***

When asked to characterize the current state of school integration in Minnesota, participants in this study were upfront in offering their own critiques and frank acknowledgment of the shortcomings of the Rule and the Statute in their current forms. Hilary Fisher's assessment of the integration revenue statute in its current form is that it is, in a word:

*Antiquated. Most people would say it's antiquated. It misses the need. And in some ways it makes it very difficult then, to address the need that emerges...Based on data, and using these guides [that are available] right now. But that's, that's our reality and we're kind of being asked to do something that's impossible to do.*

Part of what Fisher described as "antiquated" is the way in which the Rule defines schools as "racially isolated" or "racially identifiable" and the problematic categorization of students included as "protected class." These discussions mirror larger debates in education over the meaning and value of diversity and integration, conversations that become more complicated when numbers are attached. Greg Dowling articulately summarized a key element of the "numbers" problem:

*So we need to figure out how do we redefine [integration]. The other piece of it about how we define, um..."students of color" or "diversity." One of the examples that I always use if I have 25% Asian, 25% Latino, 25% African American and 25% African, uh, I would still have a racially identifiable school, although there's much diversity within that school. "...we determine it by the percentage of white students in our schools. I think we need to look at, as we, you know, modify the*

*Rule for today's times, look at how we define that as well. Uh, and then the other thing would be that we as practitioners have to do a better job of showing the value of what we do.*

Beyond criticism of the policy language itself, the leaders also point directly to problems with oversight of the program by MDE. In particular, these leaders were particularly exasperated by legislators' repeated calls for increased oversight of the integration revenue program but lack of establishment of the infrastructure needed to provide additional guidance. The need for more specific evaluation criteria and an improved budget approval process were included in the Legislative Auditor's Report in 2005 (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 2005), but most leaders in the field agreed with this assessment. They, in fact, reported finding it difficult to get timely feedback on budget proposals and integration plans from MDE—partially due to severe understaffing in the department responsible for integration programming oversight—and a promised evaluation plan that was to be introduced in the fall of 2012 was never released. In August of that year, an announcement was sent to all districts receiving integration funding that basically “summoned” representatives to attend required meetings organized by MDE. The meetings were abruptly cancelled with two days notice with an unclear explanation, and never rescheduled. This action on the part of MDE has done little to instill faith on the part of local district leaders that the department has any additional information as to what is likely to happen during the legislative session, although the Commissioner was appointed by the current governor and his proposed budget supports the recommendations from the Task Force to establish the “AIM” program.

In spite of the fact that they recognize problems with the integration revenue program in its current form, integration leaders are nearly unanimous in their support for reforming rather than eliminating it. They agree that the initiatives proposed as alternative uses of the integration revenue during the Replacement Task Force hearings (innovative literacy programming, for example) are valuable, but that integration programming fills a vital need. When

asked for his perspective, Dowling said that educators need to be able to describe how what they does has a cultural, and not just a structural impact on student learning:

*It doesn't matter that I integrated the school, [we have] to integrate the environment, the culture, we have to do a better job as practitioners saying that "well this is cool we integrated, but there are these other things we have to look at and monitor (personal communication).*

The political awareness of integration leaders is such that they concede that problems exist, but in the absence of a suitable alternative believe that the existing program is better than the current possibility--nothing. Despite clear limitations, and awareness that current practice is far from perfect, these educators describe it as a tangible way to address the intangible:

*It [integration revenue] helps us address something that's out of our control. ... It not only gives us permission, but it gives us support to address it. Which is critical. Because it's...it's playing this social balancing act, which is critical to our democracy (personal communication with Frank Crawford).*

### **Activity During 2013 Legislative Session**

Representative Mariani<sup>10</sup> introduced HF247 (the bill to implement the task force recommendations under a new statute titled "Achievement and Integration for Minnesota") in February of 2013, and MSIC members have been in attendance at each meeting held at the legislature; two have testified in support of the Task Force recommendations, including the current president of MSIC. During a hearing at a joint meeting of the House and Senate Education Finance Committees in February, two members of the Task Force (including the former integration leader ST, who flew in from Washington D.C. to attend the hearing) presented the "AIM" recommendations. They encouraged the committees to move forward in preserving the revenue stream with a focus on integration and equity, but emphasized their support for implementing it in a different way--one

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<sup>10</sup> House Representative Carlos Mariani (D, St. Paul) was a member of the Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force in 2011-2012, and is currently a co-chair of both the House Education Policy Committee and the House Education Finance Committee

that would meet the legislative call for “innovative uses” of the funding, and address the evaluative and oversight weaknesses documented over the last few years.

Following the February 19, 2013 vote of the House Educational Policy Committee to approve the movement of HF247 to the Education Finance Committee, I went to lunch with four MSIC members who were present during the hearing. Their general response to the hearing was one of guarded optimism that they would be able to continue doing equity work on behalf of students and families in their districts, but frustration with the lack of diversity in committee membership and in positions of legislative decision-making power.

## Conclusions

Currently, the future of integration revenue in the state of Minnesota is in flux. The need for policies that explicitly address educational inequities, however, remains of great concern in schools. Three general conclusions from this study of how school district integration leaders operate within a complex policy environment and challenging social climate are presented below, introduced with selected quotations from MSIC members.

### ***The Pessimistic:***

*The members of the [Education Policy] committee don't get it.*

In the span of just a few years, MSIC members have had firsthand experiences with the way in which practice can rapidly be affected by practice. When short-sighted policy decisions are made away from public discussion or debate, or dramatic shifts in ideological political power occur at the state level, immediate impacts on resource allocation and resulting service provision can be felt.

### ***The Pragmatic:***

*We are tireless in trying to be the voice for people who maybe don't have a voice at the table.*

The capriciousness with which policy windows truly open poses a challenge for policy entrepreneurs, particularly interest groups that attempt to influence policy change outside of the inner circle of power decision-makers. The 2012 shift in partisan power in the state legislature may mean that legislators that are proponents of passing the AIM recommendations in order to preserve some form of integration revenue in Minnesota will be able to use their collective influence to push the current bills through the House and Senate Educational



Policy and Finance Committees; the minority party may be able to block this action by using other political maneuvers. The government shutdown of 2011 is a reminder of how intransigent the process can be at times. However, MSIC members have learned a great deal about ways in which organized and networked school leaders can help focus policy discussions. The ways in which they have focused on framing the issue of school integration and looking for language of compromise suggests a level of political sophistication that may result in successfully preserving integration revenue in at least some form beyond the end of this fiscal year.

***The Optimistic:***

*I'm the keeper of the flame. That's what we are. We're keepers of the flame.*

The members of MSIC have demonstrated a passion for justice alongside their political savvy, and like many educators, repeatedly decide to stay in the field and keep working because they believe what they are doing is important for children. As Eaton (2009) described in her book about the efforts of committed educators in Connecticut, “civil rights stories are not narratives of easy victories but of slogging onward to meet the all-American ideals of cohesion and equal opportunity” (p. 399). Ultimately, the collective organizing of MSIC creates not only a way for integration leaders to exert political influence, but to support each other in work that is often isolating and extremely challenging. The ability to be re-energized and provided with additional tools and information is a reason leaders are drawn to this work, and to the organization.

In this dissertation I have strived to report the persistent work that leaders of diversity and equity in the state of Minnesota pursue. Although their successes have at times been in spite of state level policies and practice, they have had documentable impacts on policies and practices at the local level--and by

continuing to organize and make their voices heard in multiple arenas, their influence has the potential to be long-lasting. Using anthropological approaches that envision policies as “assemblages” (Shore & Wright, 2011), the behaviors and discourses observed at each level of policy interpretation and implementation take on new importance. This study examines a particular group of intermediary policy actors who play a crucial role in ensuring that educational policies ostensibly geared to improve equity are enacted in ways that do just that—in the case of MN right now, they are fighting the appropriation of a policy rooted in social justice by neoliberal reinterpretations of not only action-oriented efforts of “desegregation” or “integration,” but concepts of *diversity* and *equity* more broadly. These are abstractions that are grounded in individual experience and collective identity, and are of crucial importance in addressing issues of unequal educational opportunity.

## **Implications for Practice and Research**

In this final section, I briefly review implications for practice that can be drawn from the findings of this dissertation and suggest areas for further research. As the current legislative session is ongoing, I (along with the integration leaders at the heart of this study) await an answer about the future of state funding and resulting local programming past the end of this fiscal year. I will complete this section upon the close of the current legislative session this spring.

### **Implications for practice:**

- 1) Educational leaders must constantly balance their personal commitments with professional responsibilities. The ways in which MSIC members sought to move back and forth between the frames of educational equity as a social justice issue and educational equity as a public good through testimony, conversation, and language choice in document clearly demonstrates the skill necessary to do this successfully.
  
- 2) Disjunctions exist between front-line implementers and policy makers in diversity and equity policies in Minnesota. A clear need exists for MDE to effectively address the gap between lawmakers and educators at the school district level.
  
- 3) Active engagement with policy making can aid in collective sense-making--but may not impact the decision-makers. MSIC has identified and filled a need for integration leaders across the state to network and improve practice. Their testimony at the state level often appears to fall on deaf ears, however, and the relationship with MDE is neutral at best and hostile at worst.

## **Remaining Questions and Areas for Future Research**

When an overwhelmingly white group of policy makers repeatedly dismiss the concept of “integration” as less than valuable, or discuss it as if a nice idea, but secondary to the “real work” of education, people interested in racial equity in public schools should be alarmed. The dedicated and organized work of MSIC and other educational advocates can only go so far if their appeals fall on deaf ears.

Questions remain about the intersections between local policy documents and state policy language. Having analyzed the state Rule and Statute in depth, I plan to apply the same framework to the new policy language likely to be approved during the current legislative session, and then compare and contrast this document with local district integration plans. My goal in such a (re)analysis is to show in more detail how local language reflects, appropriates, or reinterprets state policy, guided by the following questions:

- 1) How closely are local integration plans aligned with state policy language?
- 2) How closely does local practice follow the integration plan filed with MDE?
- 3) How are values imbued throughout the construction of meaning in each school district, and each interaction between legislative decision-makers and their (in)actions relative to integration policy?

An additional question about local practice is:

- 4) How is integration work prioritized differently or valued in districts where the leadership role is a Cabinet-level position versus in those districts where it is not?

Questions that remain about practices at the state level include:

- 1) How tenuous is support at the legislative level? Are the minority Education Policy Committee representatives truly as determined as they seem to be to erase any reference to race and racial issues in policy, or are they posturing to maintain support from conservative business and efficiency-oriented constituents?
- 2) What is the actual role of the department of education in this whole process? Are they gatekeepers or facilitators?

Finally, and more broadly, how does acknowledging the multiple layers of educational hierarchy that must be navigated in order to effect policy change point to broader issues of balancing professional responsibilities and personal commitments? To accurately examine policy, researchers need to consider actor positionality, institutional power, and individual privilege. Finding the spots in the power network where the hierarchy is not as rigid is just as important as recognizing and taking advantage of the appearance of “policy windows” to create change.

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## Appendix A: Minnesota State Statute 124D.86

### 2012 MINNESOTA STATUTES

#### 124D.86 INTEGRATION REVENUE.

Subdivision 1. **Use of revenue.** Districts must use integration revenue under this section for programs established under a desegregation plan filed with the Department of Education according to Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180, or under court order. The revenue must be used for students to have increased and sustained interracial contacts and improved educational opportunities and outcomes designed to close the academic achievement gap between white students and protected students as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 3535.0110, subpart 4, through classroom experiences, staff initiatives, and other educationally related programs, consistent with subdivision 1b.

Subd. 1a. **Budget approval process.** Each year before a district receives any revenue under subdivision 3, the district by March 15 must submit to the Department of Education, for its review and approval by May 15 a budget detailing the costs of the desegregation/integration plan filed under Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180. Notwithstanding chapter 14, the department may develop criteria for budget approval, consistent with subdivision 1b. The department shall consult with the Desegregation Advisory Board in developing these criteria. The criteria developed by the department must address, at a minimum, the following:

(1) budget items cannot be approved unless they are part of any overall desegregation plan approved by the district for isolated sites or by the Multidistrict Collaboration Council and participating individual members;

(2) the budget must indicate how revenue expenditures will be used specifically to support increased and sustained interracial contacts and improved educational opportunities and outcomes designed to close the academic achievement gap between white students and protected students as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 3535.0110, subpart 4, consistent with subdivision 1b;

(3) components of the budget to be considered by the department, including staffing, curriculum, transportation, facilities, materials, and equipment and reasonable planning costs, as determined by the department; and

(4) if plans are proposed to enhance existing programs, the total budget being appropriated to the program must be included, indicating what part is to be funded using integration revenue and what part is to be funded using other revenues.

Subd. 1b. **Plan components.** Each year a district's board must approve the plans submitted by each district under Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0160 and 3535.0170, before integration revenue is awarded. If a district is applying for revenue for a plan that is part of a multidistrict council, the individual district shall not receive revenue unless it ratifies the plan adopted by its multidistrict council or approves a modified plan with a written explanation of any modifications. Each plan shall:

(1) identify the integration issues at the sites or districts covered by Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180;

(2) describe the community outreach that preceded the integration plan, such that the commissioner can determine whether the membership of the planning councils complied with the requirements of Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180;

(3) identify specific goals of the integration plan that is premised on valid and reliable measures, effective and efficient use of resources, and continuous adaptation of best practices;

(4) provide for implementing innovative and practical strategies and programs such as magnet schools, transportation, research-based programs to improve the performance of protected students with lower measured achievement on state or local assessments, staff development for teachers in cultural competency, formative assessments, and increased numbers of teachers of color that enable the district to achieve annual progress in realizing the goals in its plan; and

(5) establish valid and reliable longitudinal measures for the district to use in demonstrating to the commissioner the amount of progress it has achieved in realizing the goals in its plan.

By June 30 of the subsequent fiscal year, each district shall report to the commissioner in writing about the extent to which the integration goals identified in the plan were met.

Subd. 2. **Separate account.** Integration revenue shall be maintained in a separate account to identify expenditures for salaries and programs related to this revenue.

Subd. 3. **Integration revenue.** Integration revenue equals the following amounts:

(1) for Independent School District No. 709, Duluth, \$206 times the adjusted pupil units for the school year;

(2) for Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, \$445 times the adjusted pupil units for the school year;

(3) for Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, the sum of \$445 times the adjusted pupil units for the school year and an additional \$35 times the adjusted pupil units for the school year that is provided entirely through a local levy;

(4) for a district not listed in clause (1), (2), or (3), that must implement a plan under Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180, where the district's enrollment of protected students, as defined under Minnesota Rules, part 3535.0110, exceeds 15 percent, the lesser of

(i) the actual cost of implementing the plan during the fiscal year minus the aid received under subdivision 6, or (ii) \$129 times the adjusted pupil units for the school year;

(5) for a district not listed in clause (1), (2), (3), or (4), that is required to implement a plan according to the requirements of Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180, the lesser of

(i) the actual cost of implementing the plan during the fiscal year minus the aid received under subdivision 6, or

(ii) \$92 times the adjusted pupil units for the school year.

Any money received by districts in clauses (1) to (3) which exceeds the amount received in fiscal year 2000 shall be subject to the budget requirements in subdivision 1a; and

(6) for a member district of a multidistrict integration collaborative that files a plan with the commissioner, but is not contiguous to a racially isolated district, integration revenue equals the amount defined in clause (5).

Subd. 4. **Integration levy.** A district may levy an amount equal to 37 percent for fiscal year 2003, 23 percent for fiscal year 2004, and 30 percent for fiscal year 2005 and thereafter of the district's integration revenue as defined in subdivision 3.

Subd. 5. **Integration aid.** A district's integration aid equals the difference between the district's integration revenue and its integration levy.

Subd. 6. **Alternative attendance programs.** (a) The integration aid under subdivision 5 must be adjusted for each pupil residing in a district eligible for integration



revenue under subdivision 3, clause (1), (2), or (3), and attending a nonresident district under sections 123A.05 to 123A.08, 124D.03, and 124D.08, that is not eligible for integration revenue under subdivision 3, clause (1), (2), or (3), and has implemented a plan under Minnesota Rules, parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180, if the enrollment of the pupil in the nonresident district contributes to desegregation or integration purposes. The adjustments must be made according to this subdivision.

(b) Aid paid to a district serving nonresidents must be increased by an amount equal to the revenue per pupil unit of the resident district under subdivision 3, clause (1), (2), or (3), minus the revenue attributable to the pupil in the nonresident district under subdivision 3, clause (4), (5), or (6), for the time the pupil is enrolled in the nonresident district.

**History:** 1Sp1997 c 4 art 2 s 18; 1998 c 389 art 2 s 4,5; 1998 c 397 art 2 s 164; art 11 s3; 1999 c 241 art 1 s 7; art 9 s 26,27; 2000 c 489 art 2 s 6-10; 1Sp2001 c 6 art 2 s 47; 2002 c220 art 3 s 2,3; 2002 c 377 art 5 s 1; 1Sp2003 c 9 art 2 s 31-35; 2007 c 146 art 1 s 25; 2009c 96 art 2 s 52-54; 1sp2011 c 11 art 2 s 51

**NOTE:** This section is repealed by Laws 2011, First Special Session chapter 11, article 2, section 51, paragraph (d), effective for revenue for fiscal year 2014.

**downloaded from:** <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=124d.86>

## Appendix B: Minnesota Administrative Rules Chapter 3535, Equal Opportunity in Schools

### SCHOOL DESEGREGATION / INTEGRATION

#### 3535.0100 PURPOSE.

The purpose of parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180 is to:

**A.** recognize that the primary goal of public education is to enable all students to have opportunities to achieve academic success;

**B.** reaffirm the state of Minnesota's commitment to the importance of integration in its public schools;

**C.** recognize that while there are societal benefits from schools that are racially balanced, there are many factors which can impact the ability of school districts to provide racially balanced schools, including housing, jobs, and transportation;

**D.** recognize that providing parents a choice regarding where their children should attend school is an important component of Minnesota's education policy;

**E.** recognize that there are parents for whom having their children attend integrated schools is an essential component of their children's education;

**F.** prevent segregation, as defined in part 3535.0110, subpart 9, in public schools;

**G.** encourage districts to provide opportunities for students to attend schools that are racially balanced when compared to other schools within the district;

**H.** provide a system that identifies the presence of racially isolated districts and encourage adjoining districts to work cooperatively to improve cross-district integration, while giving parents and students meaningful choices; and

**I.** work with rules that address academic achievement, including graduation standards under chapter 3501 and inclusive education under part 3500.0550, by providing equitable access to resources.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s 124D.896*

**History:** *24 SR 77*

**Posted:** *September 26, 2007*

#### 3535.0110 DEFINITIONS.

##### Subpart 1. Scope.

As used in parts 3535.0100 to 3535.0180, the terms defined in this part have the meanings given them.

**Subp. 2. Enrolled American Indian students.** "Enrolled American Indian students" means students who live on or off a reservation and are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe. Enrolled American Indian students have dual status as protected students under subpart 4 and members of sovereign nations.

**Subp. 3. Commissioner.** "Commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Education.

**Subp. 4. Protected students.** "Protected students" means:

**A.** students who self-identify or are identified in the general racial categories of African/Black Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, Chicano/Latino Americans, and American Indian/Alaskan Native; and

**B.** multiracial students who self-identify or are identified as having origins in more than one of the categories described in item A or as having origins in one of the categories described in item A and in the category of Caucasian.

**Subp. 5. Racial balance.** "Racial balance" means the increased interaction of protected students and white students within schools and between districts that is consistent with the purposes of parts [3535.0160](#) to [3535.0180](#).

**Subp. 6. Racially identifiable school within a district.** "Racially identifiable school within a district" means a school where the enrollment of protected students at the school within a district is more than 20 percentage points above the enrollment of protected students in the entire district for the grade levels served by that school.

**Subp. 7. Racially isolated school district.** "Racially isolated school district" means a district where the districtwide enrollment of protected students exceeds the enrollment of protected students of any adjoining district by more than 20 percentage points.

**Subp. 8. School.** "School" means a site in a public school district serving any of kindergarten through grade 12. For purposes of parts [3535.0160](#) to [3535.0180](#) only, school does not mean:

- A. charter schools under Minnesota Statutes, section [124D.10](#);
- B. area learning centers under Minnesota Statutes, section [123A.05](#);
- C. public alternative programs under Minnesota Statutes, section [126C.05](#), subdivision 15;
- D. contracted alternative programs under Minnesota Statutes, section [124D.69](#);
- E. school sites specifically designed to address limited English proficiency;
- F. school sites specifically designed to address the needs of students with an individualized education program (IEP); and
- G. secure and nonsecure treatment facilities licensed by the Department of Human Services or the Department of Corrections.

**Subp. 9. Segregation.** "Segregation" means the intentional act or acts by a school district that has the discriminatory purpose of causing a student to attend or not attend particular programs or schools within the district on the basis of the student's race and that causes a concentration of protected students at a particular school.

A. It is not segregation for a concentration of protected students or white students to exist within schools or school districts:

- (1) if the concentration is not the result of intentional acts motivated by a discriminatory purpose;
- (2) if the concentration occurs at schools providing equitable educational opportunities based on the factors identified in part [3535.0130](#), subpart 2; and
- (3) if the concentration of protected students has occurred as the result of choices by parents, students, or both.

B. In addition to the factors in item A, it is not segregation for concentrations of enrolled American Indian students to exist within schools or school districts:

- (1) if the concentration exists as a result of attempting to meet the unique academic and culturally related educational needs of enrolled American Indian students through programs developed pursuant to the federal government's trust relationship with American Indian tribes or through an agreement with an American Indian tribal government; and
- (2) the concentration exists as the result of voluntary choices made by American Indian parents, enrolled American Indian students, or both.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s [124D.896](#)*

**History:** *[24 SR 77](#); L 2003 c 130 s 12; L 2011 1Sp11 art 3 s 12*

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### **3535.0120 DUTIES OF DISTRICTS.**

**Subpart 1. Report.** A school district shall annually submit to the commissioner, concerning each school site within its district, a report that includes:

- A. the racial composition of each school within its district; and
- B. the racial composition of the grade levels served by each of the schools.

The report shall be submitted according to the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) deadlines as established annually by the commissioner and noticed to all districts.

**Subp. 2. Data collection.** A district shall collect for all students except American Indian students in subpart 3, the information required in subpart 1 by using one of the following racial identification procedures in the following order:

- A. parent or guardian identification;
- B. age-appropriate student self-identification, when parent or guardian identification is not an option;
- C. if parent, guardian, or student self-identification methods are not possible, sight counts administered by the principal or designee, pursuant to written guidelines developed by the district.

**Subp. 3. American Indian students.** In districts where the American Indian population is ten or more students, the parent education committee under Minnesota Statutes, section [124D.78](#), subdivision 1, in consultation with the American Indian parents the committee represents, may select as their identification procedure one of the following:

- A. parent or guardian self-identification;
- B. the process for identification specified in United States Code, title 20, section 7881; or
- C. the racial identification procedure used by the district for other students.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s [124D.896](#)*

**History:** *[24 SR 77](#)*

Posted: *September 26, 2007*

### **3535.0130 DUTIES OF COMMISSIONER.**

**Subpart 1. Review of data.** The commissioner shall review the data provided by a school district under part [3535.0120](#) within 60 days of its receipt. If the commissioner determines that there is a racially identifiable school within a district, or if the commissioner receives a complaint alleging that a district is engaged in acts of segregation, the commissioner shall request further information to determine whether the racial composition at the school or schools in question results from acts motivated at least in part by a discriminatory purpose. The commissioner's finding of a discriminatory purpose must be based on one or more of the following except that the commissioner shall not rely solely on item D or E, or both:

- A. the historical background of the acts which led to the racial composition of the school, including whether the acts reveal a series of official actions taken for discriminatory purposes;
- B. whether the specific sequence of events resulting in the school's racial composition reveals a discriminatory purpose;

C. departures from the normal substantive or procedural sequence of decision making, as evidenced, for example, by the legislative or administrative history of the acts in question, especially if there are contemporary statements by district officials, or minutes or reports of meetings that demonstrate a discriminatory purpose;

D. whether the racial composition of the school is the result of acts which disadvantage one race more than another, as evidenced, for example, when protected students are bused further or more frequently than white students; and

E. whether the racially identifiable composition of the school was predictable given the policies or practices of the district.

**Subp. 2. District information.** In order to determine whether a racially identifiable school exists as the result of acts motivated by a discriminatory purpose, the commissioner shall request and the district shall provide the following information related to the factors described in subpart 1:

A. information about how students are assigned to schools within the district, including:

(1) for schools which have been newly added or renovated or if attendance zones have changed, a description of what the attendance zones were and what the racial composition of each zone was at the time the school was planned and added or renovated;

(2) a description of the assignment and transfer options at each of the schools serving the grade levels in question, and the outreach efforts that were made to ensure parents received information about and were able to understand the availability of those options; and

(3) a comparison of the racial composition of the attendance area of the school in question as it relates to the composition of the district as a whole;

B. a list of curricular offerings;

C. a list of the extracurricular options available at each of the schools serving the grade levels in question;

D. a list that breaks down, by race and school, the teachers assigned to all of the schools serving the grade levels in question and, considering the average percentage of teachers of color in the district, an explanation of any concentration of teachers of color assigned at a school at issue;

E. a list that shows how the qualifications and experience of the teachers at the racially identifiable school compares to teachers at the sites which are not racially identifiable;

F. evidence that the racially identifiable school has been provided financial resources on an equitable basis with other schools which are not racially identifiable;

G. a comparison of the facilities, materials, and equipment at the racially identifiable school with schools that are not racially identifiable;

H. information that would allow the commissioner to determine whether the extent of busing is disproportionate between white students and protected students; and

I. any nondiscriminatory circumstances that explain why a particular school has exceeded the districtwide enrollment of protected students by more than 20 percentage points.

**Subp. 3. Integrated alternatives.** If the enrollment of protected students at a school is more than 25 percent above the enrollment of protected students in the entire district, or if the enrollment of protected students exceeds 90 percent at any given school, whichever is less, the district must provide affirmative evidence to the commissioner that

all students in that school have alternatives to attend schools with a protected student enrollment that is comparable to the districtwide average.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s 124D.896*

**History:** *24 SR 77*

Posted: *September 26, 2007*

### **3535.0140 RESPONSE OF DISTRICTS.**

School districts shall respond to the commissioner's request for information under part 3535.0130 within 60 days of its receipt. If supplemental information is requested by the commissioner, the district must respond within 30 days of the receipt of the request.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s 124D.896*

**History:** *24 SR 77*

Posted: *September 26, 2007*

### **3535.0150 DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN FOR MANDATORY DESEGREGATION; ENFORCEMENT.**

**Subpart 1. District plan.** If the commissioner determines that segregation exists, the district shall provide a plan within 60 days that proposes how it shall remedy the segregation. The plan shall address the specific actions that were found by the commissioner to contribute to the segregation. The plan shall be developed in consultation with the commissioner. If the commissioner rejects any or all of the plan, the commissioner shall provide technical assistance to help the district revise the plan. However, if the district and the commissioner cannot agree on a plan within 45 days after the original plan was rejected, the commissioner shall develop a revised plan to remedy the segregation that the district shall implement in the time frame specified by the commissioner. A finding of segregation, or a finding that the district's initial plan is inadequate, shall be based on written findings of fact and conclusions of law issued by the commissioner.

**Subp. 2. Remedy.** If the commissioner has made a finding of segregation, student assignments based on race that are made to remedy the finding of segregation are permissible in a plan for mandatory desegregation, so long as they are narrowly tailored to remedy the act of segregation.

**Subp. 3. Extension.** The commissioner may extend the time for response from a district under parts 3535.0140 and 3535.0150 if compliance with the deadline for response would impose an undue hardship on the district, for example, if the information is not easily ascertainable or the plan requires a complex remedy that includes consultation with outside sources.

**Subp. 4. Enforcement of desegregation.** If the district fails to submit data required by the commissioner, fails to provide or implement a plan to remedy the segregation, or fails to implement a plan developed by the commissioner as provided in subpart 1, the commissioner must:

A. notify the district that its aid shall be reduced pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 127A.42;

B. refer the finding of segregation to the Department of Human Rights for investigation and enforcement; and

C. report the district's actions to the education committees of the legislature by March 15 of the next legislative session with recommendations for financial or other appropriate sanctions.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s 124D.896*

**History:** *24 SR 77*

Posted: *September 26, 2007*

### **3535.0160 INTEGRATION OF RACIALLY IDENTIFIABLE SCHOOLS NOT THE RESULT OF SEGREGATION.**

Subpart 1. Notice to district of plan including voluntary measures.

A. If a racially identifiable school reviewed under part 3535.0130 is not the result of segregation, the district shall be notified that it must develop and submit a plan to the commissioner for review that provides options to help integrate the racially identifiable school. The format of the plan shall be determined by the commissioner.

B. A racially identifiable school is not required to develop and submit a plan if the school is racially identifiable only as a result of:

(1) a concentration of enrolled American Indian students that exists as a result of attempting to meet the unique academic and culturally related educational needs of enrolled American Indian students through programs developed pursuant to the federal government's trust relationship with American Indian tribes or through an agreement with an American Indian tribal government; and

(2) the concentration exists as the result of voluntary choices made by American Indian parents, enrolled American Indian students, or both.

A racially identifiable school with a concentration of enrolled American Indian students is required to develop and submit a plan if the school is also racially identifiable as a result of the enrollment of other protected students excluding the enrollment of American Indian students.

**Subp. 2. Community collaboration council.** The district shall establish and use a community collaboration council to assist in developing the district's plan under this part. The council shall be reasonably representative of the diversity of the district. In communities with ten or more American Indian students, representation from the American Indian parent committee under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.78 is required on the community collaboration council. If a district has an existing committee whose composition reasonably reflects the diversity of the district, for example, school site councils or district curriculum advisory councils, that committee may be used to provide the planning required by this part. The community collaboration council shall identify ways of creating increased opportunities for interracial contact, and establish goals for meeting this objective. After identifying these opportunities and goals, the council shall develop a plan for integration at each school that may include, for example, options under subpart 3.

**Subp. 3. District plan.**

A. After receiving the plan required under subpart 2 from its community collaboration council, the district shall provide a plan to the commissioner that describes how the goal of increased opportunities for interracial contact between students will be met, and the integration efforts the district plans to implement at each racially identifiable school. The plan shall be written and adopted by the end of the academic year in which the district received notice under subpart 1, or six months later, whichever is longer. The plan shall include:



- (1) the extent of community outreach that preceded the plan;
- (2) integration issues identified;
- (3) action goals of the integration effort;
- (4) how the action goals will be or are being accomplished.

B. All plans under this part must be educationally justifiable and contain options for intradistrict integration that may include, for example:

- (1) duplicating programs that have demonstrated success in improving student learning at schools that are racially identifiable;
- (2) providing incentives to help balance racially identifiable schools, for example, providing:
  - (a) incentives to low-income students to transfer to schools that are not racially identifiable;
  - (b) transportation; and
  - (c) interdistrict opportunities and collaborative efforts with other districts;
- (3) providing incentives to teachers to improve the distribution of teachers of all races at schools across the district, including:
  - (a) staff development opportunities;
  - (b) strategies for attracting and retaining staff who serve as role models; and
  - (c) strategies for attracting and retaining staff who have a record of success in teaching protected students, low-income students, or both;
- (4) greater promotion of programs provided at racially identifiable schools designed to attract a wide range of students;
- (5) providing smaller class sizes, greater counseling and support services, and more extracurricular opportunities and other resources at racially identifiable schools as compared to schools that are not racially identifiable or at schools with a higher concentration of low-income students; and
- (6) providing programs promoting instruction about different cultures, including options uniquely relevant to American Indian students, including, for example, American Indian language and culture programs under Minnesota Statutes, section [124D.74](#).

The format of the integration plan shall be consistent with, and if possible included into, a district's comprehensive plan.

**Subp. 4. Commissioner's duties.**

A. The commissioner shall:

- (1) evaluate any plans developed under this part at the end of each academic year after which a plan is implemented to determine whether the collaboration plan was implemented and whether the goals have been substantially met;
- (2) each academic year after a plan is implemented, report to the house and senate education committees any reduction in the percentage of protected students at racially identifiable schools; and
- (3) each academic year after a plan is implemented, report to the house and senate education committees if the enrollment of protected students remains constant or increases at racially identifiable schools.

B. The commissioner may recommend financial incentives that are aimed at compensating or rewarding districts for programs or activities that have been successful.

C. The commissioner may recommend legislative action to address the condition of racially identifiable schools within the district.



**Subp. 5. Timeline.** Each integration plan shall remain in place for three years from the date of review by the commissioner, unless earlier modified by the district and reviewed by the commissioner. Schools that are newly identified as racially identifiable or that were included in a plan under this part but remain racially identifiable after three years from the date of review by the commissioner shall be subject to the procedures outlined in parts [3535.0130](#) to [3535.0160](#).

**Subp. 6. Schools that did not meet earlier goals.** Schools that were included in a plan under this part but remain racially identifiable after three years from the date of review by the commissioner shall work in consultation with the commissioner to develop a new plan that shall include an analysis of why the previous plan did not achieve its goals, a list and explanation of new or continuing barriers to achieving the plan's goals, and a new plan and rationale for achieving the goals of the plan.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s* [124D.896](#)

**History:** [24 SR 77](#)

Posted: *September 26, 2007*

## **3535.0170 INTEGRATION OF RACIALLY ISOLATED SCHOOL DISTRICTS.**

### **Subpart 1. Evaluation.**

A. The commissioner shall annually evaluate the enrollment of protected students in each district to determine whether the district as a whole is racially isolated. If the commissioner determines that a district is racially isolated, as defined in part [3535.0110](#), subpart 7, the commissioner shall immediately notify the district and its adjoining districts. The commissioner may also send notice to other districts that are not adjoining if the commissioner determines that it would be geographically feasible for such districts to participate in cross-district planning. Districts that are not adjoining may choose whether to participate in the cross-district planning.

B. A racially isolated district shall not be required to follow subparts 2 to 8 if the district is isolated only as a result of the enrollment of American Indian students whose unique academic and culturally related educational needs are being addressed by district programs and the district has established a parent committee under Minnesota Statutes, section [124D.78](#). A district racially isolated as a result of the enrollment of American Indian students shall be required to follow subparts 2 to 8, if the district is also racially isolated as a result of the enrollment of other protected students excluding the enrollment of American Indian students.

**Subp. 2. Establishment of multidistrict collaboration council.** Upon receiving notice under subpart 1, the isolated and adjoining districts shall establish a multidistrict collaboration council, as provided in subpart 3, to develop a plan under this part. The council shall work as provided under subpart 5 to identify ways to offer cross-district opportunities to improve integration.

**Subp. 3. Membership of multidistrict collaboration council.** Each isolated district and each of its adjoining districts shall appoint individuals to participate in the multidistrict collaboration council. The council shall be reasonably representative of the diversity of the participating districts. If any of the participating districts have an American Indian parent committee formed under Minnesota Statutes, section [124D.78](#), a representative of those committees shall also be appointed.

**Subp. 4. Alternatives to a multidistrict collaboration council.**

A. Participating districts that are members of joint powers boards that have advisory councils meeting the requirements of subpart 3 may use those joint powers boards and advisory councils in lieu of creating a new council under subpart 2.

B. Participating districts that have an existing committee whose composition reflects the membership requirements of subpart 3, may use this committee in lieu of creating a new council under subpart 2.

**Subp. 5. Council cooperation and plan.** The multidistrict collaboration council shall identify ways of creating increased opportunities for interracial contact and establish goals for meeting this objective. After identifying these opportunities and goals, the council shall develop a joint collaboration plan for cross-district integration that may include the incentives contained in subpart 6, item B.

**Subp. 6. District plan.**

A. After receiving the plan required in subpart 5 from its council, each district shall review, modify if necessary, and ratify the integration plan. Each district shall provide a plan to the commissioner that describes how the goal of greater opportunities for interracial contact between students will be met and that describes the interdistrict integration efforts the district plans to implement. The plan shall be completed and ratified no longer than 12 months after the district receives notice under part 3535.0180, subpart 1. The plan shall include:

(1) the extent of community outreach that preceded the interdistrict plan;

(2) cross-district integration issues identified;

(3) goals of the integration effort; and

(4) how the goals will be or are being accomplished.

B. All collaboration plans under this part must be educationally justifiable and contain options for interdistrict integration that may include, for example:

(1) providing cooperative transportation that helps balance racially isolated districts;

(2) providing incentives for low-income students to transfer to districts that are not racially isolated;

(3) developing cooperative magnet programs or schools designed to increase racial balance in the affected districts;

(4) designing cooperative programs to enhance the experience of students of all races and from all backgrounds and origins;

(5) providing cooperative efforts to recruit teachers of color, and encouraging teacher exchanges, parent exchanges, and cooperative staff development programs;

(6) encouraging shared extracurricular opportunities, including, for example, community education programs that promote understanding, respect, and interaction among diverse community populations; and

(7) documenting, in districts with ten or more American Indian students, how American Indian students are able to participate in program options uniquely relevant to American Indian students, including, for example, language and culture programs under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.74, and how the students may participate in the district's voluntary integration efforts.

**Subp. 7. Limits on participation in multidistrict collaboration councils.** Notwithstanding subpart 2:

A. an isolated school district shall not be required to be part of two or more collaboration councils;

B. adjoining districts shall not be required to be part of two or more collaboration councils;

C. two adjoining racially isolated school districts shall not be required to participate together on the same collaboration council;

D. if a racially isolated district is a member of a joint powers board under subpart 4, its adjoining districts shall not be required to participate on the joint powers board; and

E. if an adjoining district is a racially isolated district exempted from subparts 2 to 8 under subpart 1, item B, the district shall not be required to be part of an interdistrict collaboration council and shall not be required to provide a plan of interdistrict integration efforts to the commissioner.

**Subp. 8. Timeline for reports.** Once a multidistrict collaboration plan has been filed with the commissioner, it does not need to be renewed for a period of four years from the date of filing.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s [124D.896](#)*

**History:** *[24 SR 77](#)*

Posted: *September 26, 2007*

### **3535.0180 EVALUATION OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS.**

The commissioner shall biennially evaluate the results of collaborative efforts under part [3535.0170](#) to determine whether the collaboration plan was implemented and whether the action goals have been substantially met. After reviewing the results, the commissioner shall report to the house and senate education committees whether a district implemented its collaboration plan and substantially met its action goals. The commissioner may also make recommendations for appropriate legislative action.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s [124D.896](#)*

**History:** *[24 SR 77](#)*

Posted: *September 26, 2007*

## Appendix C: Survey on Equity and Diversity Coordination in Minnesota Public Schools

**1. What is your current job title relative to integration work?**

- Director of Equity and Integration
- Director of Equity and Diversity
- Integration Leader
- Integration Program Coordinator
- Other:

**2. Is your current position full time or part time?**

- Full time
- Part time
- Other:

**3. Is your integration leadership position a 12 month or 9 month position?**

- 12 month position
- 9 month position
- Other:

**4. Which of the following best describes the school district in which you work?**

- urban or central city
- suburban
- rural or Greater Minnesota
- Other:

***Knowing that it is unlikely that a typical week exists in your position, please give your best estimate of the number of hours per week spent on the following activities related to your work with equity and integration.***

### **INTEGRATION WORK TIME SPENT WITH EDUCATORS**

**5. About how many hours per week do you have direct, in person contact with EDUCATORS (i.e. teachers and support staff that work in classrooms or pull-out settings with children, either individually or in groups) working in schools in your district? (check one)**

- 0 to 5 hours per week

- 6 to 10 hours per week
- 11 to 15 hours per week
- 16 to 20 hours per week
- 21 to 25 hours per week
- 26 to 30 hours per week
- 31 to 35 hours per week
- 36 to 40 hours per week

**6. When you have direct, in person contact with educators, what are your typical activities? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- One on one discussion
- Classroom observation
- Facilitating professional development activity or meeting
- Recurring group discussion (with other educators in same building, e.g. PLC or other structured learning group)
- Recurring group discussion (with educators from multiple school sites, e.g. PLC or other structured learning group)
- One time group discussion or meeting
- Attending a staff-wide building or district meeting for observation purposes
- Attending a staff-wide building or district meeting for presentation purposes
- Coaching

**7. About how many hours per week do you have indirect (i.e. phone, email or other external means of communication) contact with EDUCATORS (i.e. teachers and support staff that work in classrooms or pull-out settings with children, either individually or in groups) working in schools in your district? (Please check one)**

- 0 to 5 hours per week
- 6 to 10 hours per week
- 11 to 15 hours per week
- 16 to 20 hours per week
- 21 to 25 hours per week
- 26 to 30 hours per week
- 31 to 35 hours per week

- 36 to 40 hours per week

**8. What modes of indirect contact with educators do you use most frequently?**

**(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- Phone call (individual)
- Conference call
- Email exchange (one on one)
- Email exchange (group)
- Document sharing (e.g. through Googledocs, a wiki, etc.)
- Moodle site
- Skype or other videoconferencing software
- Fax
- Mail (school or regular postal service)
- Social networking site (e.g. Facebook)
- Blogs or newsletters (electronic or paper)
- Other:

**INTEGRATION WORK TIME SPENT WITH STUDENTS**

**9. About how many hours per week do you have direct OR indirect contact with STUDENTS in your district as part of your job responsibilities? (Please check one)**

- 0 to 5 hours per week
- 6 to 10 hours per week
- 11 to 15 hours per week
- 16 to 20 hours per week
- 21 to 25 hours per week
- 26 to 30 hours per week
- 31 to 35 hours per week
- 36 to 40 hours per week

**10. What modes of direct OR indirect contact with students do you use most frequently? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- One on one discussion

- Classroom observation or classroom visit
- Recurring group activity or discussion (with other students in same building)
- Recurring group activity or discussion (with students from multiple school sites)
- One time group discussion or meeting
- Supervising or organizing other group activity
- Phone call (individual)
- Conference call
- Email exchange (one on one)
- Email exchange (group)
- Document sharing (e.g. through Google Docs, a wiki, etc.)
- Moodle site
- Skype or other videoconferencing software
- Social networking site (e.g. Facebook)
- Fax
- Mail (school or regular postal service)
- Other

#### **INTEGRATION WORK TIME SPENT WITH ADMINISTRATORS**

**11. About how many hours per week do you have direct, in person contact with ADMINISTRATORS (e.g. central office staff, program directors, principals, superintendents etc.) working in your district? (Please check one)**

- 0 to 5 hours per week
- 6 to 10 hours per week
- 11 to 15 hours per week
- 16 to 20 hours per week
- 21 to 25 hours per week
- 26 to 30 hours per week
- 31 to 35 hours per week
- 36 to 40 hours per week

**12. When spending time in direct, in person contact with administrators, what are your typical activities? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- One on one discussion
- Observation

- Attending a recurring group discussion or meeting
- Attending a one time group discussion or meeting
- Attending a staff-wide meeting for observation purposes
- Attending a staff-wide meeting for presentation purposes
- Coaching
- Leading a group discussion or meeting for progress-monitoring purposes
- Leading a group discussion or meeting for planning purposes
- Leading a group discussion or meeting for other reasons
- Other

**13. About how many hours per week do you have *indirect* (e.g. phone, email or other external means of communication) contact with ADMINISTRATORS (e.g. central office staff, program directors, principals, superintendents etc.) working in your district? (Please check one)**

- 0 to 5 hours per week
- 6 to 10 hours per week
- 11 to 15 hours per week
- 16 to 20 hours per week
- 21 to 25 hours per week
- 26 to 30 hours per week
- 31 to 35 hours per week
- 36 to 40 hours per week

**14. What modes of *indirect* contact with administrators do you use most frequently?(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

- Phone call (individual)
- Conference call
- Email exchange (one on one)
- Email exchange (group)
- Document sharing (e.g. through GoogleDocs, a wiki, etc.)
- Moodle site
- Skype or other videoconferencing software
- Social networking site (e.g. Facebook)



- Fax
- Mail (school or regular postal service)
- Other

**INTEGRATION WORK TIME SPENT WITH OTHER INTEGRATION LEADERS**

**15. As part of your regular job responsibilities during year, how frequently do you have contact with JOB-ALIKE colleagues working in other districts? (Please check one)**

- Daily
- About every other day
- Once a week
- Every other week
- Once a month
- About once every other month
- Once every three months
- Three times a year
- Twice a year
- Once a year
- Other

**16. In the space provided, please list the type of activities typical to your contact with other JOB-ALIKE colleagues:**

**INTEGRATION WORK TIME SPENT WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, FAMILIES, AND GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS**

**17. As part of your regular job responsibilities during the school year, how frequently do you have contact with people working for organizations that are not part of the public school system? (Please check one)**

- Daily
- About every other day
- Once a week
- Every other week

- Once a month
- About once every other month
- Once every three months
- Three times a year
- Twice a year
- Once a year
- Other

**18. In the space provided, please list the type of activities typical to your contact with outside organizations:**

**19. In the space provided, please list the type of activities typical to your contact with students' parents, guardians, or other family members:**

**20. In the space provided, please list the type of activities typical to your contact with MDE, DOE, Legislative Representatives, local employee unions, or other governmental organizations:**

### **FINAL QUESTIONS**

*These questions relate to broader goals of cultural understanding, measuring racial equality in schools, and individual identity. Please answer in whatever way you feel comfortable.*

**21. Improving cultural competency is a goal of many districts receiving integration revenue. In your own words, please define the term "cultural competency."**

**22. What evaluative tools do you use (if any) in your current position?**

**23. How many years have you worked in your current position or other positions related to equity and diversity in public schools?**

**24. Please list your TOTAL years of experience in education:**

**25. How do you describe your race or ethnicity?**

**26. How do you describe your gender?**

- Female
- Male
- Other

## Appendix D: Codebook

### Frequency analysis

#### **Codes with 10-19 applications:**

- achievement gap (5 interviews, 13 tags)
- AVID (5 interviews, 10 tags)
- comparing district to neighboring districts (5 interviews, 15 tags)
- diversity as a noun (5 interviews, 12 tags)
- insecurity (5 interviews, 11 tags)
- impacts for families (5 interviews, 15 tags)
- impacts for teachers and other non-admin staff (5 interviews, 12 tags)
- networking with other integration leaders (6 interviews, 18 tags)
- interaction with other administrators (7 interviews, 14 tags)
- personal goals (5 interviews, 10 tags)
- political activity (5 interviews, 14 tags)
- sources of policy information (7 interviews, 19 tags)
- staff positions funded through integration revenue (7 interviews, 19 tags)
- working with other community organizations or institutions (5 interviews, 13 tags)

#### **Codes with more than 20-29 applications**

- building relationships with colleagues (6 interviews, 24 tags)
- community responses to demographic changes (5 interviews, 22 tags)
- future of integration funding in district and state (7 interviews, 21 tags)
- job responsibilities (6 interviews, 22 tags)
- knowledge of and understanding of integration (7 interviews, 28 tags)
- membership in a collaborative (6 interviews, 28 tags)
- professional goals (7 interviews, 27 tags)
- use of integration funds (6 interviews, 25 tags)

#### **Codes with more than 30 applications**

- activities in district funded through integration funding (7 interviews, 32 tags)
- impacts for students (7 interviews, 31 tags)
- professional and educational background (6 interviews, 37 tags)

## Code Co-Occurrence Analysis

- Activities in district funded through integration revenue / professional goals (15)
- Activities in district funded through integration revenue / connecting integration and academic achievement (6)
- Activities in district funded through integration revenue / AVID (7)
- Business model of education / knowledge of and understanding of integration (6)
- Community response to demographic changes / references to race or ethnicity as factor impacting community identity (9)
- Racially identifiable / knowledge of and understanding of integration (7)
- Personal goals / professional goals (7)
- Professional and educational background / knowledge and understanding of integration (15)
- Professional goals / knowledge and understanding of integration (7)
- use of integration funds / comparing districts to neighboring districts (5)
- sources of policy information / political activity (5)

## Thematic Similarities

- Meanings and Uses of Language
  - defining word diversity
  - use of word diversity
  - equality v. equity
  - explicit use of policy language
  - defining culture and elements of culture
- Student Experience
  - impacts on students (see subcodes- tracking, college prep)
  - achievement gap / measuring student outcomes
  - special education
  - activities funded with integration revenue (student specific)
  - student agency and voice
- Relationship building and Program Implementation
  - with colleagues
  - with teachers and building staff (cultural family liaisons)
  - with students
  - with families and parents
    - impacts for families
  - with communities (interactions with other community orgs, etc.)
    - impacts for communities
  - networking with other integration leaders
  - interactions with other administrators
  - support for languages other than English
- Politics and Politicking
  - sources of policy information (legislature, MDE, Task Force)
  - political activity (on part of integration leaders-MSIC-Task Force)
  - local school boards / attendance zones and boundary
  - decision-making strategies
  - power dynamics
- Constructing Concepts of Integration
  - “integration isn’t working”
  - the Rule and the Statute (positive / negative aspects of integration)
  - membership in collaboratives
  - social justice
- Implementing Integration
  - activities funded through integration revenue (all subcodes)
  - changes in practice due to funding
  - evaluation
  - uses of integration funds
  - structural change to promote integration
- Leaders’ Individual Experiences
  - describing emotional responses
  - personal responses to political activity at state level

- family ties to community
  - personal goals
- Characteristics of Leaders
  - professional background and education
  - job responsibilities
  - length of time in position
  - official job title
  - professional goals
- Larger Context
  - demographic shifts in communities / community response to demographic change
  - comparing districts to each other
  - connecting education and economic advantage / business model of education / economic efficiency
  - educational service provision funding issues (in general)
  - employers in community
  - other schools in communities
  - poverty
  - references to race and ethnicity as community factors
  - size of community
- Case study specific info.
  - describing GFPS, CB-R-LPS, SPPS

**Appendix E: Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task  
Force Recommendations**

Integration Revenue Replacement  
Advisory Task Force  
Recommendations

February 15, 2012

As required by  
2011 First Special Session, Chapter 11



## Legislative Charge

### **INTEGRATION REVENUE REPLACEMENT ADVISORY TASK FORCE.**

(a) The commissioner of education must convene a 12-member advisory task force to develop recommendations for repurposing integration revenue funds to create and sustain opportunities for students to achieve improved educational outcomes. The advisory task force, among other things, must consider how districts may effectively narrow and close the academic achievement gap and foster academic success for students by:

(1) pursuing specific academic achievement goals premised on continuous adapting of best teaching practices and efficient use of resources, and;

(2) identifying variables to show annual progress toward achieving student, school, and district goals for student's academic success.

(b) The funding allocation for the new program should ensure funding stability for districts between the current integration program and the new program. The money shall be used for the purposes recommended and forwarded by the task force and approved and appropriated by the Legislature.

(c) The advisory task force is composed of: six members appointed by the commissioner of education, three members appointed by the speaker of the house, and three members appointed by the Subcommittee on Committees of the Committee on Rules and Administration. The commissioner must convene the first meeting of the task force and offer assistance to the task force upon request. Task force members must seek input from organizations and individuals whose expertise can help inform the work of the task force and must develop recommendations to improve the academic achievement of students.

(d) The commissioner, on behalf of the task force, must submit a report to the Legislature by February 15, 2012, recommending how best to allocate funds previously allocated under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.86, to achieve improved educational outcomes for students.

## **Task Force Members**

### **Commissioner's Appointees**

Helen Bassett, West Metro Education Program and Robbinsdale School Board Member  
William Green, Professor, Augsburg College and Former Minneapolis Superintendent  
Myron Orfield, Executive Director, Institute on Race and Poverty, University of  
Minnesota Betty McAllister, Retired Middle School Principal, Nobles County Integration  
Collaborative  
State Representative Carlos Mariani, representing St. Paul  
Scott A. Thomas (**Task Force Co-Chair**), Educational Equity Coordinator for the  
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District

### **House Appointees**

Robert A. Erickson, Lakeville School Board Member  
Katherine Kersten, Center for the American Experiment Fellow  
Peter A. Swanson (**Task Force Co-Chair**), Attorney, Golden Valley

### **Senate Appointees**

Reverend Robert Battle, Senior Pastor of Berean Church of God in Christ, St. Paul  
Arthur Brown, University of Minnesota Family Development Research Associate,  
Minneapolis  
State Senator Pam Wolf, representing Spring Lake Park, Fridley, Mounds View and  
Blaine

## **Meetings and Information**

The Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force met on November 15 and 29, December 13 and 20, January 10, 17, 24 and 31, and February 7.

The Task Force received written and oral submissions from parents, students, teachers, and concerned citizens. The Task Force also invited several experts and stakeholders to appear and provide information. The list of these presenters is as follows:

### **Minnesota Rule 3535**

Anne Parks, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) Integration Specialist

### **Statewide Integration Revenue Program**

Judy Randall, Office of the Legislative Auditor

### **Demographic Changes in the State**

Tom Gillaspy, State Demographer

### **Education Finance**

Tom Melcher, MDE Program Finance Director

### **Metropolitan Area Integration Collaboratives**

Dan Jett, WMEP and Pat Gleason, Wayzata Mark Robertson, NWSISD Jerry Robicheau, EMID; Cristina Gillette, EMID Board Chair; Robert Rostron, former EMID student

### **Minneapolis and St. Paul**

James Burroughs II, Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS); Jim Grathwol, MPS Lobbyist; Shana Olagbaju, Integration Coordinator, MPS

Valeria Silva, St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS); Michelle Walker, Chief Accountability Officer for SPPS; Mary Gilbert, SPPS

### **Greater Minnesota Integration Collaboratives**

Sharon Johnson, Nobles County Integration Collaborative

### **2010-11 Integration Task Force Report and Recommendations**

Kathy Griebel, Minnesota School Integration Council

### **Review of Integration Revenue**

Teresa Graham

### **Legal Perspectives on Integration**

Cindy Lavorato Margaret Hobday and Daniel Shulman Derek Black, Howard University Law School John Brittain, District of Columbia Law School

### **Social Impact and Increase of Achievement through Integration**

Linda Tropp, University of Massachusetts at Amherst Thomas Luce, Institute for Race and Poverty, University of Minnesota David Armor, George Mason University Roslyn Mickelson, University of North Carolina–Charlotte

**Literacy Programs**

Christy Hovanetz, Florida’s Foundation for Excellence in Education

**Magnet Schools of Minnesota**

Kim Rasch, President, Magnet Schools of Minnesota Gretchen Peel, Principal, Weaver Lake STEM Liesl Chatman, Director of Professional Development, Science Museum of Minnesota

**AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)**

Maria Cobb, Minnesota State Director Jill Ashley-Grochowski, AVID District Director, Northwest Suburban Integration School District Barb Knudsen, Director of Teaching and Learning, Lakeville Public Schools Stacy Wells, AVID District Director, Lakeville Public Schools

**Partnering for School Success Cultural Guides**

Pangjua Xiong Victoria Campoverde Nadifa Osman

**Literacy Programs**

Mike Savage, Eden Prairie Public Schools

**Districts with Racially Isolated School(s) Receiving Integration Revenue**

Jane Berenz, Superintendent, Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan School District

**Voluntary District Receiving Integration Revenue**

Eric Anderson, Equity and Integration Coordinator, Stillwater Area Schools

**Districts Not Currently Receiving Integration Revenue**

Keith Dixon, Superintendent, Centennial School District Dan Huffman, Business Affairs, Centennial School District

**Charter/Private Schools**

Eric Mahmoud, Harvest Prep John Alexander, Groves Academy Mary Donaldson, Concordia Creative Learning Academy

**Citizen Speakers**

Eric Celeste, Dr. Jennifer Marker Johnson, Loren Towle, Sara Osman, Kristen Konop, Katie Radford, Sadia Ahmed, Eva Mitchell, Aneesa Parks, Ahmed Jama  
Materials presented to and from the Task Force were posted following each meeting. These documents may be viewed at the following link.

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Welcome/AdvBCT/IntegRevReplaceTaskForce/index.html>

**Task Force Recommendations**

Based on the information gathered and discussion at meetings, the Task Force recommends the following:

**1. Create the “Achievement and Integration for Minnesota (AIM)” program funded through *existing categorical revenue* to address the concerns with the current program while focusing uses of the revenue in a manner that can be easily tied to student achievement. The new program must do the following:**

- a. Develop a revised integration rule that is grounded in our state’s history and law, is sustainable, but also addresses a new vision that is measured beyond reading, writing and math and includes a more complete measure of achievement and access to opportunity.
  - i. Maintain language that prohibits intentional segregation in schools.
  - ii. Maintain current language defining racially isolated districts.
  - iii. Maintain current language defining racially isolated schools.
  - iv. All district plans must be locally developed and establish clear student achievement goals that address racial disparities, as well as other measureable goals to which they will be held accountable and report to their respective communities.
  - v. Reexamine the current exemption of Area Learning Centers (ALC’s) within the Rule.

**2. Ensure accountability and oversight at the Department (MDE) to ensure districts are effectively using, reporting, and measuring the effectiveness of the revenue uses by doing the following:**

- a. An adequate number of *AIM* staff (are available) to provide oversight, accountability and technical support for districts receiving *AIM* revenue.
- b. Ensure progress monitoring, efficiency, and evaluate the effectiveness of the program overall.
- c. Convene districts receiving revenue annually to facilitate training on uses, effective practices, and measurement of *AIM* revenue.
- d. MDE will create an evaluation process that does the following:
  - i. Evaluate the successes and failures of current initiatives in order to provide feedback and support for improving districts use of *AIM* revenue to achieve goals.
  - ii. Evaluate the cost-effectiveness of districts use of *AIM* revenue to provide opportunities to achieve goals.
  - iii. Inform policy discussions at state and local levels by analyzing districts’ ability to efficiently and effectively use *AIM* revenue to achieve integration and achievement goals.
- e. Require annual external evaluation and reporting to ensure progress monitoring of districts.
  - i. Districts must develop metrics in collaboration with MDE, to which their programs will be measured within their plans and have them approved by MDE.
  - ii. Metrics must include (at minimum) academic growth based on standardized assessments (i.e., NWEA, MCA), graduation rates, attendance, and parent surveys.
  - iii. MDE will withhold money if districts are not making adequate progress towards goals as defined by standardized assessments and making

progress in reducing disparate demographic enrollment between districts or schools.

iv. Develop structures for support, feedback and intervention.

**3. Clearly focus and define limited uses of AIM revenue. Districts must submit plans, develop measureable goals (consistent with 2e), and budgets that limit their use (districts may not supplant) within any of the following areas:**

- a. ***Innovative and integrated learning environments***, including magnet schools, which promote *all* of the following: integration, achievement through innovative approaches to instruction and learning, and school choice for parents.
  - i. Resources can only be used for budget items related to the unique setting the school provides.
  - ii. Create opportunities to scale up innovative practices and interventions that increase achievement of protected-class students.
  - iii. Full-Day Kindergarten and preschool programming for families who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
  - iv. Operating a "student choice" system, (i.e., applications, parent notices, placing students, etc.).
  - v. Transportation for programming/public school choice.
- b. ***Family engagement*** that promotes involvement in the academic life and success of the student. This includes:
  - i. Parent classes to support successful navigation of school systems that empower parents to be involved in the life of the school community and achievement of their students.
  - ii. Family Liaisons who help bridge the cultural divide between home and school environments.
  - iii. Recruiting and engaging parent leaders from underrepresented communities for leadership roles within schools and districts.
  - iv. Promotion of public school choice information.
- c. ***Professional development*** that is focused on increasing the achievement of students of color and low-income students. This *may* include the following:
  - i. Focused literacy instruction training.
  - ii. Culturally Responsive Teaching.
  - iii. Inquiry, differentiation, and assessment training.
  - iv. Focused Math Recovery training.
  - v. Training for instruction of rigorous (advanced-level) courses.
  - vi. Deliver formal and informal training to staff that prepares them to provide instruction across race and culture.
  - vii. Professional development programs which present multiple perspectives on issues and respect the right of conscience.
- d. ***Access to opportunity*** programming that is proven to increase access to rigor, and focuses on college and career readiness for underserved populations (including low-income). Funding would support programs *like, but not limited, to*:
  - i. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
  - ii. Dual Enrollment or College in the Schools
  - iii. ACT/SAT classes and test
  - iv. Gifted and Talented preparation programs (i.e., Young Scholars)
  - v. Academic camps

- vi. Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)
- e. **Increase the diversity of teachers and administrators.**
  - i. Develop and implement recruitment and retention programs that attract candidates from diverse backgrounds, who have been admitted to a teacher preparation program, and provide support and cooperative training with earned financial assistance with the expectation that upon successful completion of the program, the individual would teach for at least two years in a Minnesota public school.

**4. Examine the merits of one collaborative *Metropolitan Integration School District* that folds in the services of the existing integration districts to create efficiencies and eliminate duplication of services. This Collaborative Metropolitan School District serves all metro-area districts within the seven-county area that receive integration revenue.**

### **Fiscal Principles for Recommendation**

1. Cap the existing revenue program at the current level.
2. Level the fiscal disparities between demographically similar districts:
  - a. Reduce the disproportionality between tiers starting in FY 14.
  - b. Create incentives for districts to cooperate to reduce racial enrollment disparities using voluntary measures (public school choice).
3. Set aside .02 percent (%) of revenue to ensure oversight and accountability at the Minnesota Department of Education.
  - a. Consistent with 2, e, iii, MDE will withhold revenue for districts not making progress towards goals.
4. Create a fiscal model that is predictable over time and stable in two-year increments.
5. Define percentages of allowable expenditures in statute:
  - a. At least 80 percent (%) of revenue is spent on students.
  - b. Twenty percent (20%) spent on professional development and administration.
    - i. Administrative costs may not exceed 10 percent (%).

ATTACHMENT A

### **Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task Force Minority Report of Peter A. Swanson**

Although I am co-chair of the Integration Revenue Replacement Task Force, this minority report represents my individual opinion. I voted against the final report and am submitting this minority report reluctantly, as I do believe the majority report represents improvements over the current system. The task force expanded its schedule to include

additional meetings and was able to come to remarkable consensus on many issues before running out of time. The final report does include many of the ideas that I brought forward and with which I agree. Mindful of the many positive aspects of the final recommendations, I believe there are too many details left open to interpretation that could ultimately undermine the great work of the task force. For the following reasons, I respectfully dissent.

#### UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

The final recommendations include a fiscal principle that we should “level the fiscal disparities between demographically similar districts.” If the racial composition of a district (or adjoining district) continues to be the sole factor for determining how much per-pupil Achievement and Integration funding a district receives, there is a financial incentive to continue to be racially isolated. Even if racial composition is used to set the initial tiers for per-pupil funding in FY 14, districts should not be punished financially for reducing racial enrollment disparities as the funding levels continue to flatten and equalize over the years.

When encouraging districts to cooperate to reduce racial enrollment disparities, care should be taken that districts do not use Achievement and Integration funds to enact non-voluntary, race-conscious enrollment rules. This is true even if such measures are generally allowed by statute, rule, or court decisions. Achievement and Integration funding should not result in a student being denied admission to the school of their choice because of the student's skin color.

Finally on the issue of unintended consequences, the final recommendations suggest a number of metrics, but only the lack of progress on two of them result in the Minnesota Department of Education withholding Achievement and Integration funds – standardized assessments and reducing disparate demographic enrollment. Including these two different goals should not water down the focus on one of them, namely achievement. A district should not be able to make up for a lack of progress on academic achievement and retain full funding by making progress only on reducing racial isolation.

#### DEFINING FUNDS SPENT ON STUDENTS

Current Minnesota Department of Education budget guidelines provide that “[a]t least 60 percent of a district’s proposed budget must have direct student value through initiatives such as research-based programs to improve the performance of protected students with lower measured achievement on state or local assessments or out-of-school time programs that have clear academic value.” The increase to 80 percent in the task force final recommendations is a very positive development, provided that “direct student value” is codified in statute and means what it says. The “innovative and integrated learning environments” described in paragraph 3a appear to include both direct student value and administrative costs. All of the programs described in the majority recommendations should be categorized in statute as either direct student value, professional development, or administrative expenditures.

#### BUSING

The percent of Achievement and Integration funding that districts spend on transportation should be scrutinized and capped in statute. If busing is deemed to be



spent “on students,” that could significantly reduce the portion of the 80 percent of funding that is spent on achievement. Moreover, there is a difference between 1) a district containing a racially isolated school, and 2) an entire district that is racially isolated. It makes some sense for the former, within limits, to bus students within the district. When the entire district is racially isolated, intra-district busing makes less sense. It is important to note that The Choice is Yours program, which buses students between districts, is a separate budget item and is not funded with Achievement and Integration funds.

#### MISSION CREEP

Through the work of the task force, along with the 2005 report of the Legislative Auditor, it is clear that Integration Revenue under the old program means many different things to different people. Presentations to the task force included positive results from programs ranging from Girls in Science to special education. It was often stated that students need to prepare to compete in a “global environment.” Programs designed to sensitize Caucasian students were funded with Integration Revenue ostensibly because the programs make a more welcoming environment for minorities, which, in turn, is supposed to increase integration and shrink the racial achievement gap. It is important to note that these programs are thankfully not included in the majority's recommendations. Districts may choose to fund such programs with other dollars, but programs potentially of benefit to all students (we all have to compete in a global environment, for example) should not be funded with revenue that is only available to certain districts at disparate levels.

#### DO NO HARM

People have a right to choose to associate with whatever groups they want. When government steps in to encourage more interaction between the races, at least it should not make the situation worse. Programs and curricula that are targeted at a single race should not be funded with Achievement and Integration revenue. This is true even if it is currently permitted by statute, administrative rule, and court precedent, or if the programs are nominally open to all races. Such programs can create a “school within a school” that gives the outward statistical appearance of integration, but actually lessens the interaction between races. If the programs are legal and desirable, districts can fund them with other dollars.

#### FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE

The final recommendations include provisions that would prevent individual teachers from being forced to attend one-sided, ideological presentations under the guise of professional development. This protection of Freedom of Conscience should be included in the Achievement and Integration legislation.

## **Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task Force Minority Report of Katherine Kersten**

Minnesota's racial and ethnic academic learning gap is a disaster. In fourth grade reading, our state's black and Hispanic children lag three years behind their white peers—reading at essentially a first grade level. In recent years, only Washington, D.C. has consistently had a wider gap in this respect. At higher grades, the story is even worse.

On the 2011 MCA-II's, 55 percent of our state's white eleventh grade students were proficient in math—hardly impressive—while only 16 percent of black students and 22 percent of Hispanic students scored proficient. In high school science, 61 percent of white students were proficient, but only 21 percent of black students and 27 percent of Hispanic students performed at that level. Ninety-five percent of our white students graduate from high school in five years. Tragically, only half of our black and Hispanic students do.

In 2012, the lives of tens of thousands of Minnesota children are blighted by their inability to read, write, do math and master the rudiments of science. In today's "information society," academic deficiency of this kind will confine these young people to the lower rungs of our society. It will constrict their life chances, bar them from self-sufficiency and prosperity, and prevent them from joining the middle class. In short, it will keep them from achieving "the American Dream."

As Minnesotans, we need to confront the toll that educational failure of this kind imposes:

- 43 percent of Americans with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty, while only 5 percent of those with strong literacy skills do, according to the National Institute for Literacy.
- 70 percent of Americans with the lowest reading skills have no job or only a part-time job.
- 70 percent of inmates in our prisons can't read above a fourth-grade level.

The Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task Force was charged with addressing the urgent crisis this learning gap represents. Yet the Task Force never made the gap its priority. In fact—though we heard presentations on many topics (including a whole morning devoted to potential lawsuits against the State of Minnesota)—we never had a presentation on the nature and extent of the learning gap.

The reason: Many task force members had a different priority. Their passion—their sense of urgency—centered on putting our state's students in racially balanced settings. This is a good thing. But it pales in comparison with the difficult, classroom-centered work required to help struggling youngsters master reading and math.

The learning gap springs from socioeconomic and family risk factors that leave many poor, minority youngsters deficient in the skills and knowledge required for academic success. These children need multi-faceted, classroom-centered educational reform to learn more effectively. They need an intense emphasis on fundamentals; targeted

assessment and intervention; and a school climate that emphasizes order, discipline, high expectations, accountability and incentives for success.

In fact, these are the very traits associated with “beat the odds” schools like Harvest Preparatory School in Minneapolis and Concordia Creative Learning Academy in St. Paul, which have achieved remarkable results with poor and minority students.

For decades, Minnesota’s education establishment has taken a different approach to improving these youngsters’ academic performance. It has adopted strategies that view children—and education—through the lens of race and racial balance. This approach has a dismal track record of failure in terms of boosting academic achievement. For example:

- Schoolchildren in Minneapolis and St. Paul were bused on the basis of race for many years at great expense, yet *in both districts the learning gap remains a yawning gulf*. Just last year, the St. Paul public schools rejected a policy of racial balance, after a year-long study determined that minority students perform as well or better at neighborhood schools than at expensive magnet schools.
- Low-income Minneapolis students who attend school in ten suburban districts through “The Choice Is Yours” program have *scored lower* on state tests than their low-income peers who remained in Minneapolis public schools.
- The track record of Twin Cities-area “integration districts”—set up to create racially balanced magnet schools that would reduce the learning gap—is so disappointing that the Minneapolis school district recently announced its intention to withdraw from one (WMEP), and some suburban districts have pulled out of another (EMID). In January 2012, EMID leaders proposed a budget that would remove all integration funding from EMID’s two magnets—Crosswinds and Harambee—because these schools’ academic performance has failed repeatedly to meet expectations.

This litany of failure is powerful evidence that policies inspired by the same, race-based vision---as the Task Force’s is---will do little for struggling children in the future.

The Task Force report includes some positive elements. For example, it provides more specificity about how districts can spend the funds than in the past. It also includes provisions aimed at leveling funding differences between districts. These are both good things. In general, however—given the reality of the way the public education establishment works—the recommendations represent a perpetuation of the status quo, with a few bells and whistles.

The Task Force report creates an aura of accountability. For example, it provides that “MDE will withhold money if districts are not making adequate progress” towards goals the districts choose themselves. However, the report provides that MDE will judge school districts’ performance in terms of both academic goals *and* racial and ethnic balance goals. The reality is that racial and ethnic balance in schools—mislabeled “integration”—is one of MDE’s primary objectives. As a result, the department is likely to make this the controlling variable in doling out funds, unless the legislature requires that improved academic achievement be the centerpiece.

The Task Force report creates an illusion of accountability. It includes neither standards nor enforcement mechanisms that MDE must use to evaluate school district performance and eligibility for funds. As a result, MDE will choose its own criteria for deciding whether a district should continue receiving money. The department's track record in this regard—i.e., withholding money from districts that fail to improve academic achievement—offers little grounds for hope that the MDE will make real academic progress a condition for receiving funds. On the contrary, MDE's natural reaction is often to award *more* money to a failing district.

The Task Force's recommendations to the legislature are—to put it mildly—a tepid response to Minnesota's catastrophic learning gap and the educational crisis it represents. Yet perhaps this is not surprising.

As I said at one task force meeting, "We need to remember that the voices in this meeting room are those of the 'haves'. The 'have-nots'—the children in desperate need of serious reform—are not represented here." (Neither were the voices of school districts that currently receive no integration funds.)

The fact is, almost everyone in the Task Force meeting room—including the ever-present lobbyists—represented the educational status quo, the "powers that be." Little is likely to change as a result of the Task Force's recommendations. The establishment's favorite programs and approaches are likely to continue—and so is our failure to move the needle on academic achievement enough to give poor, minority children the hope of a better life.

The Task Force's inability to manifest a sense of urgency proportional to the seriousness of the gap may shed light on why our state has such a monumental gap in the first place. We are good at averting our gaze from a fundamental truth: If we want young people to have meaningful inter-racial experiences, the most effective way to do this is by empowering them academically.

In this respect, it's important to remember the words of Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton in her 1996 State of the City address. At the time she spoke, the Minneapolis School District was spending \$8 million each year to cover the costs of school desegregation.

"Every day, Minneapolis children are bused a total distance equal to a trip to the moon," Sayles Belton declared. But the city's children, she advised, would "be better served if we spent the money on strategies that would get them, at age 18 or 21, not to the moon but to the door of a well-paying employer."

## Appendix F: Gateway Falls Integration Leader Job Description

**Required Education:** Graduate Degree  
**Required Experience:** Open

### Position Description

**Department:** Diversity & Equal Employment Opportunity

**Position Code** - Coordinator of Educational Equity and Integration

**Work Hours:** 40 hrs wk/52 wks yr

### Position Description:

**JOB SUMMARY:** The Coordinator of Educational Equity & Integration (CEEI) is responsible for addressing educational integration and equity issues within “Gateway Falls” Public Schools. The CEEI is also responsible for the oversight and implementation of the district Integration Plan.

### ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

1. Work in collaboration with district leadership to develop philosophy, practices and strategies around integration and educational equity.
2. Provide leadership in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a district wide Integration Plan.
3. Serve as the district liaison with the state department to represent the district’s interests, stay abreast with changes in the desegregation/integration laws and to ensure district compliance.
4. Facilitate the development, implementation and monitoring of district policies and procedures related to equity, access and integration.
5. Work in collaboration with the Academic Leadership Team in reviewing policies and practices related to equity and access for students in high poverty and racially isolated schools.
6. Work in collaboration with the Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement in the development of policies and practices that ensure equity and access in student placement practices.
7. Works in collaboration with all academic departments to ensure that integration and equity goals are infused in every aspect of planning and development. .
8. Advise the School Board, Superintendent of Schools, and Senior Management on equity, access and integration issues.

9. Develops, oversees and manages the federal and state desegregation/integration budget.

10. Participate in outreach activities, representing the district in community, governmental, cultural and special interest groups, in matters related to the advancement of the strategies in the District's Integration Plan.

11. Attend meetings as a representative for "Gateway Falls" Public Schools with the West Metro Education Program (WMEP).

12. Facilitate the work of the District Equity Leadership Team (DELT) and the development of the District Equity Plan, and ensure alignment with the district's Integration and Strategic Plans.

13. Partners with the Director of Diversity and Equal Opportunity in the design, development and implementation of a professional development program to increase employee awareness on issues of integration, equity and cultural competence.

14. Coordinate the planning, marketing, implementation, supervision and continuous evaluation of any new initiatives recommended by the District Equity Leadership Team.

15. In collaboration with the Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement, work with families and students to facilitate the improvement of an equitable and integrated learning environment.

#### **ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Performs related work as assigned.

#### **JOB QUALIFICATIONS**

##### **Required:**

1. Four year college degree required. Education, intercultural relations, social work or related field preferred.
  2. Demonstrated leadership qualities, diplomacy, facilitation, coordinating and liaison skills.
  3. Extensive knowledge of equity and integration issues, trends and best practices, and cross-cultural communication.
  4. Experience in cultural proficiency education for adult and K-12 learning.
  5. Experience in developing, implementing and evaluating programs in a cultural proficiency context with an emphasis on gaining consensus. Specific experience should include working with the protected classes.
6. Ability to communicate with students, parents, co-workers, supervisors, the community and other key stakeholders in a positive and responsive way that is consistently welcoming in order to establish and maintain strong working relationships.

7. The ability to effectively communicate with diverse groups and deliver high quality written and verbal presentations.
8. Proven project management skills, including experience in program development, implementation, and evaluation methodologies.
9. Proven experience creating and managing a budget.
10. Outstanding experience in understanding and valuing differences and in exhibiting initiative and a proactive approach.
11. Ability to incorporate data management and continuous improvement into job responsibilities.
12. Proven experience and ability in conflict resolution specific to issues of equity and integration.

**Preferred:**

1. Graduate degree or studies in the fields of education, intercultural relations, cultural diversity or a related field.
2. Demonstrated success in developing and implementing cultural competence programs for administration, staff, students and families in pre-k12 setting.
3. Proven track record of promoting, developing, and facilitating successful equity and integration strategies and/or programs to all levels of employees throughout an organization.
4. Knowledge of district policy, state and federal laws and court decisions related to desegregation and integration.
5. Understanding of multicultural education in the areas of child and youth development.
6. Basic knowledge of child and adult learning styles.
7. Experience in developing comprehensive organization wide integration plan.
8. Demonstrates an appreciation of diversity in all interactions and job functions.

**WORKING CONDITIONS/PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Normal office environment; and
2. Intermittent travel to other school district sites.

**Appendix G: Cedar Bend-Riverville-Lakestone Integration  
Leader Job Description**

**Integration / Equity Coordinator**

**Qualifications:**

- Current Minnesota teaching license
- Classroom teaching experience
- Masters degree
- Administrative licensed (preferred)
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Certified District Director (preferred)
- IDI Qualified Administrator (preferred)
- Commitment to culturally responsive teaching
- Demonstrated leadership skills
- Life-long learner
- Excellent organizational skills
- Ability to work strategically with big picture/vision and also details/logistics
- Excellent communication, collaboration, interpersonal skills
- Excellent problem-solving skills
- Strong initiative and high energy

**Responsibilities:**

1. Coordinate District 196 initiatives related to diversity and inclusion.
2. Coordinate equitable learning opportunities (PreK-12) in alignment with equity action plan in the District 196 strategic plan.
3. Work cooperatively with school administrators and provide leadership for staff in integration/educational equity programs.
4. Communicate with the Minnesota Department of Education regarding the integration plan.
5. Facilitate and monitor evaluation of the integration plan.
6. Convene and provide direction to the Community Collaboration Council as required by the Minnesota Desegregation Rule.
7. Maintain knowledge of federal guidelines and laws relating to student assignment plans as they relate to integration.
8. Collect and analyze data on student population transfers as related to school choice and make recommendations for choice options
9. Develop and maintain contacts with a range of community organizations regarding issues of integration and educational equity.
10. Collaborate with other districts on educational equity issues.
11. Serve as the district's spokesperson to all school and community outreach programs involved in the development or promotion of the integration/equity initiatives.
12. Develop and disseminate information to the public on issues related to educational equity through written reports, and oral presentations.



13. Budget development and management within policies and procedures established by the School Board.
14. Request and implement grant monies from state, federal and philanthropic sources in addition to district budgets and integration revenue.
15. Work with the Teaching and Learning Department's assessment center to analyze data & support programs that accelerate learning to close the achievement gap.
16. Work with curriculum coordinators to provide direction for cultural inclusion in curriculum materials.
17. Provide training to district staff and new teachers on equity focused and culturally responsive instructional practices.
18. Implement and certify the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, implement and support the AVID curriculum, hire, train, and supervise AVID tutors, and coach elective teachers as a trained and certified District AVID Director.
19. Hire and train, supervise and lead Cultural Family Advocates and develop a working protocol to assist schools and families.
20. Recruit and retain staff of color in District 196 by facilitating and implementing recruitment strategies in partnership with Human Resources staff.
21. Performs such other tasks and assumes related responsibilities as the Director of Teaching and Learning assigns.

## **Appendix H: Every Child, Every Day: Educational Equity through Integration**

# Every Child, Every Day

Educational Equity through Integration

## A Final Report and Recommendations of the Statewide Task Force on School Integration

*Presented by the Minnesota School Integration Council  
January 2011*



*"This Nation has a moral and ethical obligation to fulfill its historic commitment to creating an integrated society that ensures equal opportunity for all of its children. "*

Justice Kennedy

*“We are caught in an inescapable  
**network** of mutuality,  
tied in a single garment of **destiny**.”*

*Whatever affects one directly,  
affects all indirectly.”*

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**



This is the final report and recommendations of the Statewide Task Force on School Integration presented by the Minnesota School Integration Council.

**Minnesota School Integration Council Leadership**

Kathy Griebel, President  
East Metro Integration District

Scott Thomas, President-Elect  
Independent School District 196

**Minnesota School Integration Council Board of Directors**

- Wendy Barutt
- Ayanna Farrell
- Eric Fort
- Leslie Kelly
- Charlie Leuze
- Becky Marquez
- Nanette Missaghi
- Jeff Alden Pope
- Dinna Wade-Ardley
- Beth Webb
- Stacy Wells

## BACKGROUND

In light of Minnesota's rapidly changing demographics, an examination of current desegregation policy is long overdue. Critique of the current policies, including the 2005 evaluation report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor, shows a need to clarify outcomes of the integration revenue program and identify measurable indicators of success.<sup>1</sup>

### Minnesota School Integration Council

The Minnesota School Integration Council is a statewide organization committed to equity and excellence for all. Minnesota School Integration Council (MSIC) exists to *convene* and *advocate* on all matters related to integration and educational equity in the state of Minnesota. With the knowledge and support of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), MSIC convened a statewide task force on school integration. This report reflects the findings and recommendations of the task force.

### Statewide Task Force on School Integration

MSIC identified task force members interested in addressing school desegregation and integration policies, integration revenue uses, and the academic achievement gap among groups of students. The task force met four times from October 2010 to January 2011. For further information about the work of the task force, visit the Task Force website:

<http://integrationtaskforce.blogspot.com>



The primary work of the task force was to:

- a. *conduct a comprehensive review* of the current Minnesota Desegregation Rule and Minnesota Statute, section 124D.86, governing the use and allocation of revenue; and
- b. *develop recommendations* for amending Minnesota's Desegregation Rule and Minnesota Statute section 124D.86.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Legislative Auditor, "Evaluation Report: School District Integration Revenue" (State of Minnesota: November 2005)

#### Task Force Process

MSIC utilized a participatory process to provide opportunity for rich dialogue and deep examination of the issues. National and local experts provided data and resources for review and consideration. The process included significant outreach to invested school districts and community partners.

To support the work of the task force, MSIC facilitated five regional listening sessions. These public meetings provided a forum to include a variety of perspectives related to essential questions guiding the work of the task force. Listening sessions were held in Willmar, Rochester, Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul. Over 150 students, parents, and community members provided input and perspective to inform the task force. Task force members heard from school districts, integration collaborative, community organizations, businesses and student groups. Listening sessions focused on the following areas of study:

- a. Purpose of Integration (What are our values?)
- b. Recommended Policies (What outcomes do we want?)
- c. Effective Practices (How do we achieve our desired outcomes?)

In addition to the listening sessions, the task force gathered input through an online feedback survey. Over 200 respondents from across Minnesota completed the survey. Respondents were 70% female and 90% white. A majority of respondents were affiliated with a school or school district - parents, students, teachers, administrators, and school board members. Seventy percent of respondents were from the metropolitan area and 30% from greater Minnesota.



Task force members reviewed demographic data, examined social science research, and studied current practices – local, regional, and national. The recommendations in this report reflect key issues and opportunities that emerged from listening to many voices.

*“There is no  
power for  
change greater  
than community  
discovering  
what it cares  
about.”*

Margaret Wheatley

## TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The following individuals served on the Statewide Task Force on School Integration:

Margie Aranda  
Willmar Area Multicultural Market

Les Heitke  
City of Willmar

Roger Banks  
Council on Black Minnesotans

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minnesota has a compelling interest in creating an integrated society that ensures equal opportunity for all of its children. Integration is one key strategy that will move our state toward achieving equitable outcomes for all learners. Strong integration policy is a critical component of a larger agenda focused on eliminating disparities and creating educational equity and opportunity for all Minnesotans.

### Educational Equity and Excellence are the Goal

Access to equitable, high quality education for all children is a critical obligation of a just, democratic society. A 2004 report by the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota, confirms the impression that “equal opportunity – a cornerstone of the ‘Minnesota Way’ – continues to drive residents of the state. They continue to be committed to making sure that everyone has the same chance at a high quality life and that Minnesota ‘works for everyone.’”<sup>2</sup>

We have ample evidence that Minnesota’s educational system doesn’t work for all children. In aggregate, Minnesota’s students have higher achievement than students in most other states, as evidenced by high rankings in standardized tests, college entrance exams, and graduation rates.<sup>3</sup> However, beneath these successes are well-documented educational disparities among racial and ethnic groups.<sup>4</sup> These “achievement gaps” demonstrate an uneven distribution of opportunity in the system. Reducing these disparities is essential from social, political, and economic positions. Well-prepared students are a long-term investment in the health and stability of our region. Minnesota’s future success is directly linked to our ability to prepare citizens that can thrive in a diverse, global marketplace.



<sup>2</sup> Stan Greenburg, Anna Greenburg, and Julie Hookin. “The Changing Shape of Minnesota: Reinvigorating Community and Government in the New Minnesota.” (Minneapolis: Hubert H. Humphrey Institute, 2004, p. 6)

<sup>3</sup> The Itasca Project and Minnesota Business Partnership, “Minnesota’s Future: World-class Schools, World-class Jobs” (Minneapolis: 2005)

<sup>4</sup> Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, “2009 State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Executive Summary” (Minneapolis: MMEP, 2009)



To address educational disparities and disparate outcomes, Minnesota must engage in focused, intentional efforts that prepare all learners for a state, national, and global economy. Equity is defined as *high expectations and access to meaningful and relevant learning for all students so that outcomes are not predictable or disproportionate by protected class status*. Excellence is achieved through high standards that ensure that all students grow to reach their highest levels year after year and are college or career-ready as high school graduates. In order to accomplish this, measurements are needed to monitor system-wide progress in promoting equity and excellence.



#### **Integration is Key Element to Addressing a Complex Issue**

Reaching the goal of equity and excellence will require all oars to pull together. School districts need multiple strategies and resources to address educational disparities and create access to opportunity for all learners. The State's general educational formula includes revenue to support the educational needs of various populations: basic skills, extended time, gifted and talented, compensatory, and limited English proficiency. Addressing race equity requires *separate policy* and *targeted funding* to work in concert with other programs. Well-crafted integration policy will provide school districts with necessary tools and resources to reduce racial isolation and prepare all our children to thrive in a diverse world.

Integration serves as a key structure of opportunity and a foundational element for transforming schools, districts, and communities. To achieve the full benefit of integrated learning, schools and districts must address structures and systems that serve as barriers to opportunity. Teachers and school leaders need preparation and support to meet the unique educational needs of a diverse student population. Policymakers should examine all aspects of the educational experience through a lens of equity, excellence, and opportunity.

**Racially Integrated Schools Provide Significant Benefits to Students and Communities**

There is a well established body of research identifying the negative effects of racially segregated schools including lower academic performance and lower participation in higher education. Conversely, integrated schools have been shown to raise achievement and reduce achievement gaps between white students and students of color. Benefits of integrated schools and classrooms include both academic and social outcomes. Integrated learning environments more fully prepare all students, including white students, for our increasingly diverse workplace and society.<sup>5</sup>

A racially integrated school provides significant benefits to students and communities. True integration extends far beyond student assignment. It requires much more than bringing students from different backgrounds in proximity to one another. True integration creates a diverse and inclusive environment within the school, the curricula, and the classroom. A significant body of social science research show that students in racially diverse classrooms benefit in several ways: deeper ways of thinking, higher aspirations – both educational and occupational, and positive interactions with students of other races and ethnicities. Beyond physical or proximal integration, our actions must also prepare children to reach a level of cultural competence that will allow them to thrive in a diverse world.

There is no question that many urban and rural areas in Minnesota are racially segregated; and meaningful racial integration is difficult. In these communities, it is as, if not more, important to be mindful of the harms that attend racially isolated schools. Equal educational opportunity demands that children of all backgrounds, no matter where they live, be prepared and able to succeed and participate fully in the civic and democratic life of this nation. That means getting high quality teachers, staff, facilities, and other resources to students in need, no matter where they attend school.



<sup>5</sup> Myron Orfield, Thomas Luce, Baris Gumas-Dawes, Geneva Finn and Eric Myott, “A Comprehensive Strategy to Integrate Twin Cities Schools and Neighborhoods” (University of Minnesota Law School: Institute on Race and Poverty, October 2009)

*“Desegregation is negative, removing only prohibitions and a short term goal.*

*Integration is the positive acceptance of desegregation and a long term goal.*

*Integration welcomes the positive participation of [nonwhites] into the total range of human activities.*

*Integration is genuine intergroup, interpersonal doing.”*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
*The Ethical Demands for Integration*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Following a comprehensive review of the current Minnesota Desegregation Rule and Minnesota Statute, section 124D.86, governing the use and allocation of revenue, the Statewide Task Force on School Integration developed recommendations in five key areas:

Clarify purpose of integration policy

Establish and enforce accountability measures

Identify and support effective practices tied to results

Seek partnerships and support collaboration

Distribute resources to meet outcomes



## CLARIFY PURPOSE OF INTEGRATION POLICY

The purpose of integration policy is to assist school districts in reducing racial isolation and promoting school diversity. Strong integration policy is linked to educational outcomes for all students.

**Recommendation #1:** Maintain only the components of the current Desegregation Rule prohibiting intentional segregation; repeal the remainder of the current rule and statute.

**Recommendation #2:** Establish new policy and program (Educational Equity through Integration Program) to address integration as a strategy to achieve equitable educational outcomes. Require all districts to participate in the program. The Educational Equity through Integration Program shall address the following outcomes:

- a. Equitable academic outcomes
- b. Access to opportunities
- c. Intercultural learning
- d. Racial balance
- e. Strong communities

**Recommendation #3:** Establish the following definitions for the Educational Equity through Integration Program.

**Protected students.** "Protected students" means:

- a. students who self-identify or are identified in the general racial categories of African/Black Americans, Asian/Pacific Americans, Chicano/Latino Americans, and American Indian/Alaskan Native; and
- b. multiracial students who self-identify or are identified as having origins in more than one of the categories described in item A or as having origins in one of the categories described in item A and in the category of Caucasian.





**Equity.** “Equity” is defined as high expectations and access to meaningful and relevant learning for all students so that outcomes are not predictable or disproportionate by protected class status.

**Excellence.** “Excellence” is achieved through high standards that ensure that all students grow to reach their highest levels year after year and are college or career-ready as high school graduates. In order to accomplish this, measurements are needed to monitor system progress in promoting equity and excellence.

**District.** “District” means a public school district serving any of pre-kindergarten through grade 12.  
District does not mean:

- a. charter schools under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10;
- b. area learning centers under Minnesota Statutes, section 123A.05;
- c. public alternative programs under Minnesota Statutes, section 126C.05, subdivision 15;
- d. contracted alternative programs under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.69;
- e. school sites specifically designed to address limited English proficiency;
- f. school sites specifically designed to address the needs of students with an individual education plan (IEP);
- g. secure and nonsecure treatment facilities licensed by the Department of Human Services or the Department of Correction, section 125A.515; and
- h. Sovereign nation schools located on federally designated American Indian reservations.

*“A truly integrated education is not just about putting students together, as important as this might be. It is about building, if not a beloved community, at least a democratic one.”*

john powell



## ESTABLISH AND ENFORCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

Increased accountability and attention to results is vital to achieving educational equity through integration. All partners – state, district, and school – need clearly identified metrics against which to evaluate progress and measure success.

**Recommendation #4:** Establish clear and definite state level measures, oversight, and accountability to track district implementation of the Educational Equity through Integration Program.

**Recommendation #5:** Establish an Office of Educational Equity through Integration at the Minnesota Department of Education. Create a cabinet level position to signal substantial commitment to the issue. Responsibilities of the Office include providing equity oversight, establishing accountability procedures that align with metrics for measuring success, and developing structures for feedback, support and intervention.

**Recommendation #6:** Utilize the Office of Educational Accountability to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the Educational Equity through Integration Program.

**Recommendation #7:** Require the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to establish criteria against which participating school district submit effective integration plans and budgets that align to program outcomes. Require the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to approve integration plans using a peer review process, monitor results, and provide ongoing support and feedback to districts. Establish timelines and procedures for integration plan and budget submission and approval.



*"We come then to the question presented: Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other "tangible" factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunities? We believe that it does."*

—quote from the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* U.S. Supreme Court decision

**Recommendation #8:** Require districts utilizing transportation as part of their integration plan to include an annual transportation plan and projection aligned to program outcomes.



**Recommendation #9:** Establish metrics for measuring success and progress. Monitor indicators at the school level. Identify statewide and regional benchmarks for elementary, middle school, and high school. Require districts to address a minimum of two outcomes (Equitable Academic Outcomes and at least one other) within the integration plan.

Outcomes	Proposed Metrics
Equitable academic outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increased achievement while eliminating predictability for protected class students</li> <li>b. Increased graduation rates for all with special emphasis on protected class students</li> <li>c. Reduced drop-out rate for all with special emphasis on protected class students</li> </ul>
Access to opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Proportional enrollment in college prep classes</li> <li>b. Increased college and career readiness for all with special emphasis on protected class students</li> </ul>
Intercultural learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increased interracial collaborative learning opportunities</li> <li>b. Decreased racial prejudice</li> <li>c. Increased intercultural competence for students and faculty</li> <li>d. Increased comfort in racially diverse settings</li> </ul>
Racial balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increased diversity of student body</li> <li>b. Increased diversity of faculty</li> </ul>
Strong communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increased civic engagement for all with special emphasis on protected class students</li> <li>b. Increased family involvement for all with special emphasis on protected class students</li> </ul>

**Recommendation #10:** Require districts to publish an annual report articulating progress toward measurable metrics. Establish time period for achieving goal and benchmarks. Require the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to provide increased levels of support and oversight for districts that fail to achieve results.

## IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT EFFECTIVE PRACTICES TIED TO RESULTS

In order for true integration to emerge, a two-pronged approach is necessary. *Structural shifts* address the arrangement of schools and flow of students in a district or region. *In-school strategies* address the policies and practices that affect students and staff.

**Recommendation #11:** Require participating districts to develop plans aligned to outcomes. Employ practices that are results-based and encourage innovation. Require districts to address a minimum of two outcomes (Equitable Academic Outcomes and at least one other) within the integration plan. Integration plans must be approved by the Office of Educational Equity through Integration. Implement a peer review process for integration plan approval. Consider the following evidence-based and innovative approaches:

### *Structural shifts*

- a. Assignment plans
- b. Special programs (e.g. magnet schools)
- c. Intra and inter-district student transfer plans

### *In-school strategies*

- a. Effective professional development to enhance cultural competence and equip school staff with the skills and knowledge to create safe, supportive, and inclusive classrooms and schools
- b. Programming to improve college and career readiness
- c. Integrated curriculum and culturally responsive instructional strategies that engage students from a wide variety of backgrounds and promote critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving
- d. Opportunities that promote social interactions among students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds outside of schools
- e. Diversification of school staff (teachers, administrators, support staff)
- f. Programming to address within-school segregation and tracking
- g. Race-conscious policies





## SEEK PARTNERSHIPS AND ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION

Effective integration efforts are not done in isolation. Working to promote racial integration within the limits of a school district's boundaries can be challenging when the student population in the district is overwhelmingly white or students of color. Successful cross-district collaboration is an important component of statewide integration policy. In addition, integration strategies must address the relationship of school, housing, and fiscal policy. Education is part of a web of inter-institutional agents and arrangements. Finally, it matters who makes decisions. People of color need to be at the table sharing power and responsibility. This includes positions of leadership at the State Department, in school districts, and in classrooms.

**Recommendation #12:** Create an advisory committee comprised of agencies directly impacting the integration and equitable achievement of Minnesota students. Require the head of the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to serve as ex-officio member of the advisory committee. Ensure that the committee membership is racially and ethnically diverse. Conduct regular public hearings on integration implementation around the state.

*"We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their color."*

Maya Angelou

**Recommendation #13:** Require the Office of Educational Equity through Integration to develop a repository for innovative and effective practices. Support development of a statewide cadre of equity and integration leaders to provide expertise, feedback, and technical assistance.



**Recommendation #14:** Encourage and incent cross-district planning and resource sharing. Encourage collaboration between local school districts and other entities (i.e. government agencies, charter schools, institutions of higher education, non-profit organizations, and businesses).

**Recommendation #15:** Maintain community collaborative councils that are representative of district demographics, to assist districts in developing integration plans and evaluating progress toward outcomes.

## DISTRIBUTE RESOURCES TO MEET OUTCOMES

Intentional integration efforts require categorical funding tied to educational outcomes. The funding formula must address variability in district need while maintaining appropriate incentives for districts to reduce racial isolation and prepare children to thrive in a diverse world.

**Recommendation #16:** Maintain a categorical funding source (Educational Equity through Integration Aid) to support integration efforts that meet the identified outcomes.

**Recommendation #17:** Maintain appropriation for integration transportation grants to provide pupil transportation services to students who participate in student transfer programs (e.g. Choice is Yours, magnet schools) or inter-district student exchange programs (e.g. classroom partnerships, inter-district summer school) that are part of an approved integration plan.

**Recommendation #18:** Require districts to develop annual integration budgets directly aligned to approved integration plans. The revenue must be used to address a minimum of two outcomes (Equitable Academic Outcomes and at least one other) within the integration plan and may not be used to supplant. Outcomes include the following:

- a. Equitable academic outcomes
- b. Access to opportunities
- c. Intercultural learning
- d. Racial balance
- e. Strong communities



**Recommendation #19:** Implement a responsive formula that aligns funding to a district's integration responsibilities. Generate categorical funding on district-wide pupil units. Provide integration funding in a mix of aid and levy. A district's integration revenue equals the lesser of the actual cost of implementing the integration plan during the fiscal year minus the aid received. A district's integration aid equals the difference between the district's integration revenue and its integration levy. Annually calculate integration revenue based on the total of the following categories:

- a. Percent of protected class students district-wide
- b. Percentage of district schools enrolling greater than 30% protected class students
- c. Incentive-based factors (e.g. participation in a regional integration collaborative, progress toward outcome metrics)

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Minnesota Department of Education  
Nobles County Integration Collaborative  
Ramsey County Library, Roseville  
Rochester Diversity Council  
Rochester Public Schools  
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# Appendix I: MSIC Response to Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task Force Recommendations



## Achievement and Integration for Minnesota

### MSIC Response to the Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task Force Recommendations

The Minnesota School Integration Council (MSIC) urges the Governor and Legislature to reform the Integration Revenue Program using the framework developed by the Integration Revenue Replacement Advisory Task Force. We request action in the current session to create the “Achievement and Integration for Minnesota” (AIM) program recommended by the bi-partisan Task Force, for the good of our whole state.

MSIC believes Minnesota has a compelling interest in creating an integrated society that ensures equal opportunity for all of its children. Integration is one key strategy that will move our state toward achieving equitable outcomes for all learners. Strong integration policy is a critical component of a larger agenda focused on eliminating disparities and creating educational equity and opportunity for all Minnesotans.

#### Every Child, Every Day

In 2010-2011, MSIC convened a statewide task force on school integration to review the current Minnesota Desegregation Rule and Integration Revenue Statute and develop policy recommendations. These recommendations were released in a 2011 report—*Every Child, Every Day*.

The *Achievement and Integration for Minnesota* (AIM) program is aligned with the recommendations outlined in *Every Child, Every Day*. Both provide increased oversight and accountability, and a focus on measurement and results. Both promote collaboration and shared learning among school districts across the state, increasing effectiveness and efficiency of district efforts.

#### Response to Advisory Task Force Recommendations

We support local establishment of goals, and accountability and reporting to local communities. (1.a.iv.)

The current exemption of Area Learning Centers within the Desegregation Rule has led to extreme examples of racial segregation across Minnesota. We support the elimination of this exemption, in order to provide equitable access to opportunity and quality education. (1.a.v.)

We support an adequate level of AIM staffing to provide oversight, accountability, and technical support for districts receiving AIM revenue. (2.a.)

An evaluation process, with metrics that go beyond standardized assessments, to include a more complete measure of access to opportunity, is crucial for AIM to succeed. (2.d, e.)

We support defining and limiting uses of AIM revenue for innovative and integrated learning environments (including magnet schools), family engagement, professional development, access to opportunity, and increasing diversity of teachers and administrators. (3)

We support examining the merits of establishing regional collaborative districts to create efficiencies and eliminate duplication of services. In addition to looking at one metropolitan integration district we also suggest investigating collaborative opportunities in greater Minnesota. (4)

#### Response to Fiscal Principles

We disagree with the recommendation to cap the revenue program at the current level. As evidence-based practices are implemented, and as the state becomes more diverse, we may find it in our collective interest to increase AIM revenues in the future. (1)

The Minnesota School Integration Council (MSIC) is a statewide organization committed to equity and excellence for all. MSIC exists to convene and advocate on all matters related to integration and educational equity in the state of Minnesota.