The Challenges of Urban Education

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University of San Francisco

The Challenges of Urban Education

A Field Project Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Teaching English to Students of Other Languages

By

Sokha Bunly

May 2018
The Challenges of Urban Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS
in
TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

by

Nachi Ranly

MAY 2018

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this field project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

[Signature]

[Instructor / Chairperson]

[Date: May 5, 2018]
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Michigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flint, Michigan</th>
<th>Ann Arbor, Michigan</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>97,386</td>
<td>120,782</td>
<td>325,719,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Household Income</strong></td>
<td>25,650</td>
<td>57,697</td>
<td>59,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Value of Owner Occupied Housing Unit</strong></td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>250,200</td>
<td>184,700 (United States Census Bureau, 2017)</td>
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</table>

**Table 2** Flint, Michigan     Ann Arbor, Michigan     United States  
Michigan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Flint, Michigan</th>
<th>Ann Arbor, Michigan</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Persons Living in Poverty</strong></td>
<td>41.9%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People Under 18 years old</strong></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>22.8% (United States Census Bureau, 2017)</td>
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</table>
### Table 3 Age Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Flint</th>
<th>Ann Arbor</th>
<th>Detroit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>102,434</td>
<td>113,934</td>
<td>713,777</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>8,177</td>
<td>4,868</td>
<td>50,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>7,570</td>
<td>4,531</td>
<td>49,550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 14 years</td>
<td>7,298</td>
<td>4,284</td>
<td>52,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 to 19 years</td>
<td>8,705</td>
<td>13,146</td>
<td>65,632</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 to 24 years</td>
<td>7,735</td>
<td>23,091</td>
<td>54,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 29 years</td>
<td>6,953</td>
<td>12,112</td>
<td>43,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 34 years</td>
<td>6,490</td>
<td>8,166</td>
<td>42,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 39 years</td>
<td>6,402</td>
<td>5,888</td>
<td>46,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 44 years</td>
<td>6,363</td>
<td>5,466</td>
<td>46,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 49 years</td>
<td>7,091</td>
<td>5,669</td>
<td>46,907</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 to 54 years</td>
<td>7,509</td>
<td>5,650</td>
<td>51,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 59 years</td>
<td>6,035</td>
<td>5,667</td>
<td>45,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 64 years</td>
<td>5,107</td>
<td>4,784</td>
<td>37,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 69 years</td>
<td>3,328</td>
<td>3,280</td>
<td>25,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 to 74 years</td>
<td>2,532</td>
<td>2,176</td>
<td>18,002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 to 79 years</td>
<td>2,147</td>
<td>1,906</td>
<td>15,176</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 to 84 years</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>1,633</td>
<td>12,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years and older</td>
<td>1,373</td>
<td>1,617</td>
<td>11,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5,691</td>
<td>6,330</td>
<td>39,658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>6,446</td>
<td>5,167</td>
<td>45,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
<td>#N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>2398.742</td>
<td>5103.519439</td>
<td>15697.8799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 (United States Census Bureau, 2017)
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my mom Bunly Samel for her unwavering love and support throughout my entire life and academic career. I also want to thank Brian and Brenda for their love and guidance throughout my life. I want to thank the both of you for instilling in me a passion for social justice and great love for humanity. I also want to thank Jesus for being my everything and giving me comfort when I needed it most.

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The Challenges of Urban Education

Abstract

This paper will attempt to address the challenges faced in urban education. By analyzing issues such as demographics, racism, new racism, equality, equity, privatization and gentrification I hope to open further discourse on longstanding false pedagogy concerning urban education. I aim to scrutinize the underlying problems of urban schools and the perspectives held by the general public.

When people think of urban areas and urban education they conjure up an image of poor schools in violent neighborhoods. It is true that many urban schools are in fierce areas where crime is prevalent, however, we must look beyond this and see other urban schools such as Emerson Elementary an affluent school in the urban city of Long Beach, Ca. This school meets or exceeds all standards and is centered in an urban area.

I believe that once people see the challenges urban areas face, they can begin to understand the true causes of urban poverty, teacher attrition rates and health concerns. I hope that this paper will bring these issues to light.
Chapter I - Introduction

Statement of the Problem

In the public sector, schools are confronted with many challenges that serve to undermine the mission of educating the American youth. Urban schools face a plethora of issues stemming from economic, social, political, environmental factors. These issues are magnified for high-poverty urban students and English Language Learners.

Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of this paper is to examine the unsurmountable challenges of urban students and English language learners in the American public-school sector. I hope that this paper will bring the issues facing our urban youth back into public conversation. Today, headlines are filled with dire warnings of failure by the American school system. Topics such as: race, immigration, socioeconomic class and privatization are a part of the discourse on education. By examining our urban schools, I hope that the public will understand the difficulties that urban districts, school, teachers, students and communities encounter. The intended audience for this project are those who have an interest in school and school policies.

Theoretical Framework:

This project is rooted in the question of how we address the challenges of urban schools in a sustainable way. By analyzing current data from researchers on urban population, demographics, race, educational reform and poverty I want to bring forth the role that in education policies play in urban education.
The Challenges of Urban Education

Significance of the Project:

My interest in the difficulties of urban education and English language learners stem from current events, previous courses and personal experience. The current political landscape is explosive regarding immigration issues and education. These concerns have spilled into our literature and Paris and Winn’s *Humanizing Research* addresses many topics that piqued my interest. These reasons why I wanted to research the factors that contribute to the negative rhetoric of urban education and English language learners.

Limitation

The limitation of this study is the lack of original statistics. All studies, statistics and quantitative data mentioned in this paper were found in articles, books and databases conducted by other scholars. It is hoped that I will have my own field statistics in future research.
## Definition of Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adequacy</td>
<td>Sufficient resources to all students which will ensure that every child will have an acceptable and satisfactory education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attrition</td>
<td>the action or process of gradually reducing the strength or effectiveness of someone or something through sustained attack or pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bussing</td>
<td>transporting students to schools outside their neighborhoods and at times across metropolitan cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic</td>
<td>statistics of demography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>in education means the same fair treatment of all students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>in education is the idea that those who need more receive more to ensure the same success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New racism</td>
<td>an ideology that denies racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race to the Top</td>
<td>A federally funded competitive program that was created to motive comprehensive educational improvements in the United States during the Obama administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Hood Plan</td>
<td>This was a nickname given to a redistribution and recapture of property taxes by wealthier property districts to poorer property districts in 1993 by the state of Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Areas</td>
<td>any population or terrain not in an urban area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Areas</td>
<td>densely developed areas that contains 50,000 or more people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter II - Review of the Literature

Introduction:

Urban and Rural

The word urban area has many negative connotations such as poor, dirty and overcrowded; however, according to the United States Census Bureau urban areas are defined as areas which “consists of densely developed territory that contains 50,000 or more people” (United States Census Bureau, 2012). In this definition there are no negative meanings attached. It is just an area with fifty thousand people or more. Henze (2009) argues that a “small shift in language use by few individuals” can gradually change and pervade into the mass public (p.21). If the public could shift their definition of urban area to the one provided by the Census Bureau many stereotypes would vanish. Language is powerful and it “shapes or influences how we think about the world” (Henze, 2009, p. 20) Moreover, the term rural just means any area that is not urban—this does not have a positive connotation of beautiful rolling hills and fields of golden wheat—it just means a population of less than fifty thousand people (United States Census Bureau, 2012). Of all public-school children, the data shows that one in six are enrolled in an urban school (Imazeki, 2002, p. 122)

Demography and Demographics

Kaplan and Owings (2013) suggests that demography is merely a description of “recent statistical changes in the characteristics of human population, such as gender, race, ethnicity, income, educational attainment, mobility, disability, location, or other vital data” whereas, demographics are the statistics (p. 15-16).
The Challenges of Urban Education

The demographic terrain of urban schools is changing. It is estimated that “820,000 legal and illegal immigrants settle in the United States” each year and twenty percent of all school children have foreign born parent(s) (Vesely & Crampton, Financing Urban Schools, 2005, pp. 168-169). Findings from the U.S. Census indicate that of the twenty percent, 88% of Asian American children and 65% of Latino children have foreign born parent(s) (Lew, 2012, p. 146).

In a study conducted on California, Texas, Wisconsin and New York in the 1998-1999 academic year, California alone had 84.4% of students attending urban schools. Texas followed with 76.0%, New York had 56.0% and Wisconsin had the least at 42.0% attending urban schools (Vesely & Crampton, An Assessment of Vertical Equity in Four States: Addressing Risk Factors in Education Funding Formulas, 2004, p. 117).

In 2010, there was 55,850 students enrolled in public K-12 schools an increase from 53,373 in 2000 (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 20). However, what is interesting is that from 2000 to 2010 the school enrollment of Latinos increased by 4%, Asian/Pacific Islanders increased by 1%, African American rates were unchanged and White non-Latino enrollment rates decreased by 6% (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 21). In the same study by Kaplan and Owings (2013) they estimate that twelve percent of undocumented immigrants are “school-ages, more than 1 million such children may currently be attending U.S. schools” (p. 21).

Summary

Urban schools are like the assorted colors and shades of a painting palette. Each color or shade represents issues like racism, poverty, physical environments, lack of healthcare, limited access to healthy foods, parent choice of schools, English language
The Challenges of Urban Education

learners and teacher attrition; however, when we consciously exam the issues we can make gradual changes that will transform the public’s view of urban school. In addition to these negative issues, urban schools have beautiful colors such as, diversity, bilingual education, opportunities for growth and community. In the following sections I will present all the above-mentioned challenges confronting urban schools and explain why I believe urban schools should be seen in a positive light.

Chapter III: Methods of Collecting Data

The methods used to collect data for this paper were strictly from primary and secondary sources from books, articles and statistical data provided by federal or state government websites.

Chapter IV: Thesis

Poverty

Poverty is a dependable marker of academic failure (Vesely and Crampton, 2004, p. 112). Urban areas have a commonality of underinvestment in jobs, housing and healthcare which perpetuate the cycle of poverty and undesirable living conditions. In the 1960s and 1970s many affluent families left urban areas to live in suburban neighborhoods and many good paying jobs left urban cities which depleted income and job opportunities. For instance, Flint,\(^1\) Michigan was once a thriving city filled with blue collar jobs provided by the nearby General Motors plant. However, due to General

\(^1\) In 1908, General Motors established their first plant in Flint, Michigan. Flint is 60 miles northwest of Detroit
The Challenges of Urban Education

Motors downsizing in the 1980s and 1990s many people were laid off and factory jobs outsourced to Brazil and China (Bradsher, 1997). As a result of downsizing and outsourcing, urban areas like Flint city were unable to support middle class families (Manna & Pelletier, 2016, p. 193).

In many cases once a large factory like General Motors or Buick leaves jobs are not replenished and economies did not bounce back. In the most recent Census², Flint city reported that 41.9% of the population lived in poverty whereas the national rate was 9.8% (United States Census Bureau, 2017). According to the same Census, the median household income in Flint was only $25,650 whereas the national median income was $59,039 (United States Census Bureau, 2017). In fact, the Midwest³ also saw an increase in annual median household income, however, Flint was still well below the Midwest median annual household income of $58,305 (United States Census Bureau, 2017).

It is not only blue-collar workers who are living in poverty. Sadly, a study by Levin-Waldman (1999) found that one in ten people holding a four-year college degree are working for wages along the poverty line (Anyon, 2005, p. 36). In the 2000 U.S. Census results indicated that “only 7.8% of women, and 16% of men earned at least three times the official poverty level” (Anyon, 2005, p. 19). Simmons (2016) maintains that the “present economy functions to create inequality” (p. 168). The present economy is one that demonizes unions and workers’ rights. Currently, there is a movement going on called the Fight for 15. This is a call for Americans to rally behind a minimum wage that is a living wage.

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² See Table I
³ The United States Census Bureau reported that the highest median household incomes were in the Northeast $64,390 and the West $64,275 followed by the Midwest $58,305 and the South $53,861.
The Challenges of Urban Education

Simmons (2016) points out that many people working full-time are victims of “exploitation and marginalization” because they must live in some of the most dangerous parts of American cities while working at the most underpaid jobs (p. 166). These companies that underpay and mistreat workers are companies like retail stores, fast food chains, and household names. They underpay workers to the point that many “need public benefits such as SNAP⁴” to live (Simmons, 2016, p. 177). In order to qualify for SNAP benefits in the state of California a family of four can make up to $4,100 a month in wages (California Department of Social Services, 2018). Whereas in the state of Texas, a household of four can only make $32,620 annually which is a little over $2,719 monthly (Benefits.gov, 2018). This means that employers are paying full-time employees well below the national median income of $59,039 (United States Census Bureau, 2017). In the 2004 U.S. Census, a family of four on the poverty line had an income of $18,850 annually (Anyon, 2005, p. 18). Surprisingly these numbers represent families that have full time employment, not seasonal or temporary work.

Many urban schools are in the poorest neighborhoods. These neighborhoods have a smaller tax base which impoverish our school districts and according to Vesley and Crampton (2005) “yields fewer dollars for the same tax effort (rate) than that of more property-wealthy communities” (p. 165). Furthermore, high-poverty neighborhoods have higher rates of low paying jobs and less business. For example, in Flint City, Michigan there are only 12,400 manufacturing⁵ jobs for a population of 97,386 (Gillespie, 2016) (United States Census Bureau, 2017). Furthermore, between 1979-1999 the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that only one in three manufacturing workers were able to find

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⁴ SNAP is the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program which was formally the food stamp program.
⁵ This is down from 126,000 manufacturing jobs in 1996.
The Challenges of Urban Education

employment after being displaced (Hira & Hira, 2008, p. 130). Also, the median values of owner occupied housing unit in Flint is only $30,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2017). Furthermore, about fifty miles away lies Ann Arbor, Michigan which according to the same census has a median value of owner occupied housing unit of $250,200 (United States Census Bureau, 2017). The same census shows the huge disparity in resident age population. Young adults between the age of twenty to twenty-nine leave towns like Flint because there are few employment opportunities whilst nearby Ann Arbor has over ten thousand more residents in the same age group⁶. Data by Snyder and Dillow (2011) indicate that 44.6% of all public-school students qualify for reduced priced or free lunches (p. 81). According to Brown (2007) “federal policy in recent years has shown increasingly less commitment to eradicating child poverty” (145). When schools are met with high rates of poverty all other challenges follow.

⁶ See Appendix 1
The Challenges of Urban Education

It is said that poverty exacerbates academic failures because when children are hungry they cannot learn. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, food and shelter are the first level of need. In a recent study UNICEF reported that twenty-three percent of American children are living in poverty. As an advanced nation we have the highest rate of childhood poverty following Romania (Ravitch, 2013, p. 94). Vesely and Crampton (2004) states that in 1999, over thirty percent of Black (33.1%) and Hispanic (30.3%) children live in poverty, whereas only 9.4% of White children live in poverty (p. 112). By 2010 the national poverty rate among children rose to 20.6% (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 24).

Figure 1:
Data taken from the United States Census Bureau 2017

Figure 1: Two Michigan Cities

It is said that poverty exacerbates academic failures because when children are hungry they cannot learn. According to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, food and shelter are the first level of need. In a recent study UNICEF reported that twenty-three percent of American children are living in poverty. As an advanced nation we have the highest rate of childhood poverty following Romania (Ravitch, 2013, p. 94). Vesely and Crampton (2004) states that in 1999, over thirty percent of Black (33.1%) and Hispanic (30.3%) children live in poverty, whereas only 9.4% of White children live in poverty (p. 112). By 2010 the national poverty rate among children rose to 20.6% (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 24).
Many states and school districts have tried to address the problem of poverty in schools through countless approaches. One approach carried out by the state of Texas is called the “Robin Hood” approach. This was a direct result of *Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby*. The lawsuit claimed that there was “discrimination against students in poor school districts” (Roza, Guin, Gross, & Deburgomaster, 2007) and that the state was in direct opposition of article seven section one of the Texas constitution. The constitution states that “A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools” (Texas Constitution, 2018) Here, the state mandated that there must be “suitable provision for the support[...] of public free schools” yet the state did not provide this and in 1993, *Edgewood v. Kirby* prompted the state of Texas to dictate that areas with higher property taxes and richer property would subsidize areas that were poorer by a recapture of tax (Texas Constitution, 2018). The state of Texas hoped that by designing and instilling such policies the inequalities brought forth by poverty would be reduced (Roza, Guin, Gross, & Deburgomaster, 2007, p. 69).

### Healthcare Concerns

Poverty touches all aspects of life and can result in a lack of healthcare and both emotional and social health concerns. When people cannot afford to eat it is reasonable to

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7 See Appendix II  
8 Recapture of tax from property rich areas to the state, where the state redistributes the tax dollars to poorer schools/school districts. Another option that wealthier districts had was to make arrangements with impoverished districts and directly send funds over instead of having the state as a middle man.
say that healthcare is not a priority. According to Kaplan and Owings (2013) children living in poverty have higher rates of chronic health concerns (p. 25). Children living in poverty face health concerns as early as the prenatal period because of a lack of prenatal care by mothers. Ravitch (2013) writes that children born in poverty are more likely to have a low birth weight, are born preterm and are less likely to receive regular checkups (p, 96). Low birth weight babies have a greater risk of “subnormal growth, illnesses, and neurodevelopmental problems” (Xu, 2005, p. 122).

Besides physical challenges, studies indicate that there is a correlation with low school performance, problems in social adjustments and “deficits in cognitive ability” (Xu, 2005, p. 122). Kaplan and Owings (2013) maintains that babies born with low birth weight have a greater risk of asthma, hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and heart attack (p. 26). Xu (2005) expands onto preterm babies and states that babies born preterm may be more inclined to behavioral issues and mental and physical disabilities (p. 122). Emotional and social health concerns associated with poverty include anxiety, unhappiness, extreme levels of stress. As a result, of high stress children in urban areas are more likely to have behavioral problems in contrast to their higher socioeconomic peers (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 27).

**Physical Environment**

Children living in high-poverty urban areas are more likely to live in unsafe conditions. Urban neighborhoods may contain many old buildings and structures that expose toxins like lead to its residents. Studies suggest that in poor neighborhoods, children of low socioeconomic class are two times more likely to have high-levels of lead
inside their bloodstream. Elevated levels of lead are “associated with long-term neurological and cognitive impairment” (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 27). Exposure to excessive air pollution and second-hand smoke may exacerbate asthma in children (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 27). According to Obiakor and Beachum (2005) the “plight of urban education becomes a reflection of the structural inequalities that create these environments” (p. 13).

Besides structural inequalities, an unprecedented natural resource crisis such as the Flint Water Crisis can disrupt education and magnify problems in the physical environment. The Flint crisis occurred due to shortsightedness by politicians’ and longstanding financial problems. According to the many lawsuits the city of Flint was affected by lead and bacteria contaminated water when the city decided to use water from the Flint River while they were building a pipeline to switch to Karegnondi Water Authority instead of the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department where they previously obtained their water. This was supposed to be a cost cutting measure which would save two hundred million over twenty-five years (Kennedy, 2016). Rather than a small cost cutting measure this decision turned into a massive crisis that affected the entire population of Flint.

It not only made people sick and inconvenienced people, it also killed twelve people from an outbreak of legionnaires’ (Kennedy, 2016). The water crisis in Flint not only affects living conditions, it affects learning and according to Greg Little from the Educational Law Center (2018) “The children and families of Flint have lived with exposure to lead in their water and with schools unequipped to help students whose

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9 Legionnaires’ disease is an infection caused by the legionella bacteria which causes a severe form of pneumonia that may be fatal.
learning may be affected by this dangerous neurotoxin” (Education Law Center, 2018). In the current case\textsuperscript{10}, \textit{D.R., et al. v. Michigan Department of Education, et al.}, the “plaintiff alleges in the Case that Defendants are in violation of the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (“IDEA”)” meaning that the defendants violated the law by not providing protection under IDEA for students (\textit{D.R. et al. v. Michigan Department of Education, et al.}, 2018). This is especially important because all kids in Flint were affected by the high lead levels\textsuperscript{11} found in Flint water, therefore, making them all susceptible to unforeseen diseases\textsuperscript{12} that may cause debilitating sickness and/or disabilities which would compromise their learning.

Additionally, many urban neighborhoods have problems with access to food. Limited access to markets with nutritious foods is a challenge that many urban neighborhoods face. Due to lack of access and resources urban children are more likely to go hungry. In these urban environments liquor stores, mini-marts and gas station marts are prevalent. This lack of healthy grocery stores contributes to the notion of “food desert” where access to healthy food is inadequate (Manna & Pelletier, 2016, p. 194). Shockingly, the organization Feeding America reported forty-one million people in the United States are hungry and that in 2016, 13.3 million American children are hungry (Feeding America, 2017). Moreover, Anyon (2005) found that on average Americans only spent one fifth of their income on food which is down from the 1950s when families spent one third of their household income on food. This decrease of spending on food is a

\textsuperscript{10} See Appendix III

\textsuperscript{11} A water sample test conducted by Virginia Tech found that Flint resident Lee-Anne Walters’ home had lead levels as high as 13,200 ppb. The EPA classifies water with lead levels of 5,000 ppb as hazardous waste.

\textsuperscript{12} According to the World Health Organization high levels of lead can “affect children’s brain development resulting in reduced intelligence quotient (IQ), behavioral changes such as reduced attention span and increased antisocial behavior, and reduced educational attainment” (World Health Organization, 2017)
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direct result of higher costs of living as a result of low wages (p. 25). Limited access to healthy foods compounded with smaller food budgets is a large factor in child hungry.

The physical environment includes the actual structures and buildings of urban schools. Vesely and Crampton (2005) states that urban schools and districts have older and less maintained structures when compared to rural and suburban districts (p. 165). According to Foote (2005) not only are structures older in urban districts, urban schools are severely underfunded for their infrastructure needs and resources like desks, boards, literature and textbooks are in appalling conditions (p. 372). Technological resources too, are severely lacking in urban schools. Foote (2005) points out that accessibility to these resources would “serve to reduce the achievement gap” between ethnic minorities and the Caucasian students (Foote, 2005, p. 372).

Race and Ethnicity

It might appear that after the progressive actions of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s and 1960s the challenges of race and ethnicity should be laid to rest. However, ethnic school-aged children make up approximately thirty-five percent of America’s student population (Vesely, Crampton, Obiakor, & Sapp, 2008, p. 59). Also, according to the U.S. Census Bureau the 2014-2015 school year had the first record of white students being the “numerical minority in public schools across the United States” (Manna & Pelletier, 2016). Today race and ethnicity is still a powerful discourse in twenty-first century America. It is a universal right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26 that all people have the right to an education that is free to everyone, at least in the primary stages (United Nations, 2017). Additionally, I would like
to add that all healthy children have the cognitive ability to learn. Based on this, I ask why is it that race, and ethnicity still divest children of equitable and/or adequate education?

Many people cite racism as the reason for the flagrant dismissive attitude\textsuperscript{13} of lawmakers\textsuperscript{14} towards the citizens of Flint during the water crisis. Residents believe that the high population of fifty-four percent African-Americans in Flint is a reason that government officials ignored the pleas of Flint residents. Residents complained about their children having abnormal rashes, skin conditions and overall unwell conditions. Virginia Tech confirmed that there were high-levels of lead in the water yet, government officials claimed that it was within federal regulations. Julia Craven and Tyler Tynes of the Huffington Post writes that “polluters prey on communities of color, in part because of weak environmental regulations” and government oversight (Craven & Tynes, 2016).

New Racism

New racism is an ideology that denies racism and its presence today. It also endorses a fake meritocracy that is based on standardized tests that do not calculate “quality performance” (Obiakor, Harris-Obiakor, Garza-Nelson, & Randall, 2005, p. 21). New racism is covert because it disguises itself as non-racist. According to Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock and Kendrick (1991) racism or “racial prejudice is now regarded as socially undesirable, so people favor disguised, indirect ways to express it” (424). This means that new racism is carried out by its utilization of “contexts in which there is a

\textsuperscript{13} See Appendix IV
\textsuperscript{14} From April 2014 to December 2015 lawmakers and government officials denied that there were problems with Flint’s water supply (Kennedy, 2016)
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plausible, nonprejudiced explanation available” for behaviors that are really intended to be prejudice (Sniderman, Piazza, Tetlock, & Kendrick, 1991, p. 424).

Consequently, urban schools are affected by this ideology. The significance placed on standardized tests and policies like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top exploit low performing schools particularly those in urban areas that are comprised of ethnic minorities, especially African Americans and English Language Learners. Statistics revealed that African Americans and Latino fourth graders in the 2003\textsuperscript{15} school year scored below basic levels in reading. African American in fourth grade scored sixty percent below the basic level and Latinos in fourth grade followed with fifty-six percent below the basic level in reading (Vesely, Crampton, Obiakor, & Sapp, 2008, p. 59).

School Reform

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was presented by the Bush Administration as a landmark bill that would increase accountability by school, give more choices to parents and students and give states, districts and schools greater flexibility (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). At the time the government mandated annual testing that would reflect how well a school was doing. These tests were standardized and would give parents a clear and reliable report that would give transparency to not only the government, but parents also. Almost everyone had to take these tests. Even those in special education classes were obligated to take the annual standardized tests. These annual tests were compounded with a new measure called the Adequate Yearly Progress

\textsuperscript{15} In this same study by the National Center for Education Statistics, The Nation’s Report Card, eighth graders African American students scored forty-six percent below the basic level in reading and Latino eighth graders scored forty-four percent below the basic level in reading.
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(AYP) which would determine whether a school was maintaining proficiency as mandated by the government (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Proficiency being placed solely on the measurement of one type of test. If politicians were tested in only the standardized test method on subject matter that they may be unfamiliar with, would they be able to pass these tests? Many scholars argue that standardized tests discriminate amongst different groups of people and it cannot be the only measure of intelligence (Columbia University Office of Work/Life, 2013). If a school did not reach levels of proficiency they would be subject to corrective action and parents could choose to leave these failing schools and take their children elsewhere. On the other hand, if schools were able to meet standards they could “transfer up to 50 percent of the funding they receive” to any of the other four programs, giving schools the flexibility to distribute funds as they saw fit within the parameters set (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). In 2015, the No Child Left Behind Act was replaced with Every Student Succeeds Act.

Every Child Succeeds Act of 2015

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced the No Child Left Behind Act in 2015 and is the current educational mandate. The No Child Left Behind Act laid the groundwork for ESSA because ESSA kept many of the same directives, however, it also improved and modified many of the problems with No Child Left Behind. However, even with these improvements ESSA still has lots of room for progress. ESSA took away the strict penalties of No Child Left Behind and replaced it with developed plans for improvements in scores. Schools would not be subject to loss of funds, instead they will have a chance to review problems and develop with the assistance of the government a
new plan for improving scores. Also, ESSA instructs schools and districts to involve parents in creating any new plans whereas No Child Left Behind did not include parents in making new plans (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

**Race to the Top**

In July of 2009, President Obama announced his intention to “incentivize excellence and spur reform and launch a race to the top in America’s public schools” through a program called Race to the Top which used $4.35 billion in funds from the newly signed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 which earmarked one hundred billion for education (Howell, 2015). This program would have three phases of competition that would be assessed by a point system. The policy categories included (1) State Success Factors (2) Standards and Assessments (3) Data Systems to Support Instruction (4) Great Teachers and Leaders (5) Turning around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (6) General (7) Competitive Preference and points were allocated for each category. In order from the previous list (1) 125 points (2) 70 points (3) 47 points (4) 138 points (5) 50 points (6) 55 points (7) 15 points. Interestingly, category (5) Turning around the Lowest-Achieving Schools was allocated only fifty points which low considering the highest point allocation was 138 points (Howell, 2015, p. 60). Meaning that even with this new program low performing schools which are usually in urban areas with high rates of poverty are not a top priority in the Race to the Top program. Years after the Race to the Top program ended “49 percent reported that it has a ‘minor’ impact, whereas just 19 percent claimed that it had no impact at all” (Howell, 2015, p. 65). Although many states reported that there was no impact at all Joanne Weiss disagrees. She claims
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that Race to the Top advocated a lead by example type of empowerment that “urged idea-rich capable states to define and navigate paths to educational excellence, and in so doing, to blaze trails that could show the way for other states” (Weiss & Hess, 2015, p. 52).

Reforms such as Race to the Top\textsuperscript{16} was supported by the federal government and private organizations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation promising to award top performing schools through grant money. This $4.35 billion-dollar grant was to be distributed to districts that improved tests score, teacher quality, and turned around low-achieving schools (Lipman, 2015, p. 58). This competitive business model seemed lucrative to states and districts that desperately needed the money, but like anything else there is no such thing as easy money. As of 2015, it was reported that only eighteen states and the District of Columbia received grants from Race to the Top\textsuperscript{17}.

This type of competition does not have a level playing field because it is based on an impossible premise for urban schools. Examining the statistics of the earlier results in standardized reading tests we can see that many urban schools fall below the basic level. With statistics like these how could we ask urban schools to compete in corporate like competitions like Race to the Top. Another reason urban schools had a more difficult time participating in the Race to the Top program was because of what Frederick Hess calls “grant-writing prowess” (Weiss & Hess, 2015, p. 53). Meaning that schools and states employed a third party to write proposals for the program. Hiring a third party to write a proposal is a costly endeavor that many urban schools and poor states could not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16}Alaska, Vermont, North Dakota and Texas did not apply to the program
\item \textsuperscript{17}The first and second phase winners were Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island and Tennessee. Phase 3 winners were Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
\end{itemize}
afford. Is the spirit of competition more desperate than urban challenges like hunger, unsafe living conditions and poverty?

Bilingual Education and English Language Learners

Bilingual Education (BE) is not a new phenomenon in American education. In 1839 the state of Ohio had bilingual education in German and English. It was not until World War I that feelings of hostility were targeted at bilingual education. By 1923 many states required classroom instruction to in English only. Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Bilingual Education Act in 1968, which required the government to help limited English proficiency students (Leal & Hess, 2000, p. 1065). Additionally, in 1970 the government issued a memo saying:

Where the inability to speak and understand the English language excludes national origin minority group children from effective participation in the educational program offered by a school district, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students – The Federal Office for Civil Rights (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2017).

Following this the 1974 lawsuit Lau v. Nichols claimed that groups of students were denied equal education due to their limited English proficiency. The sink or swim policy would no longer suffice for English language learners. This ruling required school to give all students a meaningful and equitable education regardless of their linguistic background (Crawford, 1996, p. 1). Over forty years after the Lau v. Nichols case, today there are five million students in America who have limited English proficiency (National
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Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2017). Urban classrooms are more likely than suburban classrooms to have English language learners. In some urban classrooms teachers have more than fifty percent of limited English proficiency students (Imazeki, 2002, p. 121) According to Kaplan and Owings (2013) research reveals that “English proficiency is the biggest predictor of immigrant students’ academic achievement” (Kaplan & Owings, 2013).

Of the English language learner population, over seventy-six percent are Spanish speaking (Vesely, Crampton, Obiakor, & Sapp, 2008). The challenges of English language learners in urban areas are compounded by their limited English language. According to Kaplan and Owings (2013) two third of English language learners score below the “below basic” level in reading and mathematics (p. 29). Not only do English language learners struggle in reading and mathematics they also struggle in science subjects like life science, earth science and physical science (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 29).

Fiscal Policy
Equity and Equality

What is equity? In simplest terms, “equity addresses the issue of things not being equal and seeks to level playing fields while solving the problem” (Obiakor & Beachum, 2005, p. 5). What is equity in education? Equity in education is not to be confused with equality. Equality means that all children will receive the exact same funding, condition of schools and quality of teachers hence, the word ‘equal’. This notion of equal is unreasonable because no district is exactly the same and “remedies based on equality assume that citizens have the same opportunities and experiences” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 29). Moreover, equality in education means the same fair treatment of all
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students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion and socioeconomic status. Public education welcomes all students from all walks of life at any given time. Due to this, there is no one-size fits all.

On the contrary, equity is the idea that those who need more receive more to ensure the same success. In public education this translates to money. Leaders and educators understand that for students to succeed disadvantage groups need more resources. A few years ago, my former business teacher\(^{18}\) gave the class an example that I will never forget:

There are three men who want to watch a baseball game, but there is a wooden fence blocking their view. The three men realize that there are three wooden crates that they can use to make them taller. All three men got on their wooden crate. The first man could clearly see the game without the crate because the fence only came up to his chin. The second man could see the baseball game, but the fence came up to the middle of his nose with the assistance of the crate. The third man still could not see the game even while standing on the wooden crate. The first man saw this and gave the third man his wooden crate. After standing on two crates the last man finally saw past the fence and so, everyone was able to watch the game. Although each man came up to various parts of the fence, in the end they were all able to watch the game.

The Equity Model

The equity model developed by Berne and Stiefel and summarized by Brown is important in the discussion of equity in urban schools. The questions asked are “(a) equity for whom? (b) what should be distributed equitably? (c) Which principles should be used to determine whether a distribution is equitable? (d) What quantitative measures should be used to assess the degree of equity?” (Brown, 2007, p. 134). When examining equity in schools all these questions must be addressed; however, the answers to these questions are open-ended because each school or district has a variety of issues that are

\(^{18}\) Angela Head M.B.A
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original to their individual situation although the challenges of urban schools share many commonalities.

The Problems with Equity

Although educators and leaders agree that equity in education is extremely important equity falls short in urban schools. Allgood and Rice (2002) affirm that the “resources available to students in urban schools are inequitable relative to those available to students in suburban and rural schools” (p. 157). One of the reasons that inequity still exists in urban schools is the lack of a “true fiscal neutrality” (Aligood & Rice, 2002, p. 157). Moreover, urban schools have less money and a limited capacity in raising money for infrastructure, materials and educational resources needed in order to meet the state standards (Aligood & Rice, 2002, p. 158). In a recent study researchers found that a “10 percent increase in per-pupil spending each year for all 12 years of public school is associated with 0.5 additional years of completed education, 9.6 percent higher wages, and a 6.1 percent-point reduction in annual incidence of adult poverty” which leads to reduced rates of future child poverty (Jackson, Johnson, & Persico, 2015, p. 70).

Adequacy

What is adequacy in education? Adequacy in public education is the idea that schools need to bestow adequate resources to all students to ensure that every child will have an acceptable and satisfactory education (Picus, McCroskey, Robillard, Yoo, & Marsenich, 2002, p. 185) According to Allgood and Rice (2002) adequacy represents the convergence of two previous reform streams—the equity based school finance reform of
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the 1970s and the excellence movement of the 1980s” (p. 155). Although money is significant in providing adequacy, another resource is especially important—teachers.

Educational Funding

Who pays for public education? Public education is funded by taxpayers and as John Adams stated in 1785, “the whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people and be willing to bear the expense of it.” The idea that education must be provided for the people by the people is not a new notation, rather the ways in which the resources are distributed is the focus of many studies. Today, public education receives funding from the state, federal and local government taxes. Education falls under the authority of the state and local districts with the most funding coming from the state. Due to the increasing contribution of state funds local authorities have less control and governance of schools (Vesely & Crampton, Financing Urban Schools, 2005, p. 167). Nevertheless, the median voter still has a lot of input in tax and increasing funds for education (Burbridge, 2002, p. 240).

Urban schools have a larger overhang due to larger student populations of “exceptional needs” and “non-educational services” (Aligood & Rice, 2002, p. 157). If urban schools have higher populations of students with exceptional needs, why then do these schools receive less money? In the state of Illinois and New York, schools with high-poverty rates received two thousand dollars less per pupil per capita than districts with fewer poor students (Epps, 2005, p. 225). Furthermore, in the 2000 U.S Census, two-thirds of the U.S population living in poverty resided in urban areas and attended urban schools (Anyon, 2005, p. 24).
Brown (2007) affirmed that to provide adequate funding for the neediest students, schools must spend more money per pupil. Not only does spending more money per pupil help students in the short term it helps them in the long term also. Recent research indicates that by “increasing per pupil spending by ten percent in all twelve school years” the rate of high school graduations increases significantly (Jackson, Johnson, & Persico, 2015, p. 74). Brown (2007) states that studies conducted by Duncombe and the Maryland Commission on Education reveal that for adequate education poor students need two and a half times more funding to meet the average level of educational outcome (Brown, 2007, p. 132). Title 1 funding for high-poverty districts and schools increased to eight percent of most district’s budget (Brown, 2007, p. 132). Looking at three large urban districts—Los Angeles Unified School District, New York City and Chicago—who together make up seven percent of the nation’s school children living in poverty, received high-levels of FRPL. New York City students received 75%, LAUSD 74% and Chicago students received 85% (Brown, 2007, p. 132). Within these three districts there are more than seventy percent of children living in poverty and according to Brown (2007) Title 1 does not entirely meet the needs of students living in poverty (p.144).

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19 According to the U.S. Department of Education’s website “Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Federal funds are currently allocated through four statutory formulas that are based primarily on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state.”

20 Free or reduced-price lunch is a program by the Federal government which subsidizes lunch for low-income children in public schools. Due to this, many scholars use FRPL as a measure of poverty for conducting surveys and data.
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Privatization and Gentrification

With several types of funding like Title 1 being distributed to urban schools we cannot exclude federal and state funding that are being funneled to the private sector. In recent years there has been an increase of federal and state funds being disseminated into the private sector due to the Parent Choice Movement.

Parent choice is a shift from state and district mandated assignment of students to schools. Schools began assigning students to schools due to the practice of desegregation of schools. Brown v. Board of Education was a landmark case that overturned the Plessy v. Ferguson decision that deemed the practice of separate but equal unconstitutional. The Brown cases established a legal precedent that diminished segregation in the educational sector that infiltrated into the public sector. After the Brown verdict, schools were forced to desegregate and integrate.

Following the call for desegregation school districts began making efforts to integrate by busing students across large areas. Some parents believed that the state and school districts did not have the right to mandate where their children went to school. Subsequently, as a result of busing students many parents felt reluctant to send their children to public schools because they felt that they had so say in their own child’s education. Others saw busing students as an opportunity to send their children to schools that were more affluent and far from unsafe neighborhoods. Billingham (2015) states that the idea of school choice is perceived as “a civil rights issue, and as a remedy for the

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21 Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) held that if the separate conditions were equal public segregation was constitutional. To many people this decision validated the Jim Crow Laws

22 The Brown cases were five lawsuits Brown, Briggs, Davis, Bolling and Gebhart v Belton consolidated into one
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social closure practices that the privileged engage in when they send their children to elite private schools” (p. 696).

This practice of bussing students lasted for many years and many people resented it. Moreover, parents began looking for different educational options. One such option was the newfound charter school system. Numerous political and educational leaders advocated for charter schools and some supporters “portrayed them as the salvation for poor minority children trapped in subpar urban and suburban schools” (Ravitch, 2013, p. 158). Additionally, charter schools are apt at recruiting academically incline students from public schools (Lipman, 2015, p. 59). Furthermore, with the new No Child Left Behind standards pressuring students to get better results each year parents saw charter schools as a viable alternative to public education.

Charter schools according to Ravitch (2013) are “funded with taxpayer dollars; some receiving additional private-sector support and spend more than local schools” (p. 159). They could take resources away from local school districts and do not have to abide by the laws that govern traditional public schools (Lipman, 2015, p. 59; Ravitch, 2013, p.159). Due to this, charter schools have the freedom to turn away students at will. Unlike public schools who are mandated by law to take all students anytime in the year regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, limited English proficiency, disabilities and socioeconomic status. Charter schools have the right to turn these students away. Many charter schools do not want the burden of educating high-needs students such as students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities (Ravitch, 2013, p. 159) If charter schools can reject enrollment on their own terms, then why does taxpayer dollars fund charter schools?
Parent choice is not limited to charter schools or giving into district assignments. Recently there has been a move to bring students back into neighborhood schools. These efforts are made by mostly professional parents who moved to urban areas in their twenties and gradually gentrified the area. Unlike past ideas of moving to suburbia America to raise families, these professions choose to stay and raise families in urban neighborhoods. These parents want the choice to enroll their children into local schools.

There are many successful schools like Emerson Elementary where parents took an active role and education and it worked. Emerson is located an urban area with students of diverse populations who perform at an average or above average level. Schools like Emerson rely heavily on parent and community involvement. They foster learning through a community perspective and due to this they can meet state standards. According to the website, socio-economically disadvantaged students exceed in both English and math\(^{23}\) (Long Beach Unified School District, 2018). By involving parents and community the Emerson was able to make their school a successful place where learning becomes a community activity.

In Billingham’s study of thirty-six parents in the Boston area he found that gentrified parents preferred neighborhood schools and disliked the idea of putting their children on the bus (Billingham, 2015, p. 691). Other than the negative feelings surrounding bussing students or commuting to school parents saw neighborhood schools as a means of community. They believed that it would provide a community space that would serve as a local network (Billingham, 2015, p. 692). Residents of gentrified neighborhoods often will form a cohesive group to reform and beautify local schools. They get involved in the schools and shape the urban schools in their neighborhood.

\(^{23}\) See Appendix VI
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(Bilingham, 2015, p. 687). However, this begs the question of what happens to all the working-class poor who used to reside in these neighborhoods?

Teacher Attrition

The rate of teacher attrition in schools are most challenging in urban schools. Urban schools are confronted with problems on every front, but in my opinion the largest problem is the rate of teacher attrition. Everyone knows that a school cannot exist if there is no teacher. Theobald and Michael (2002) assert that “teacher quality is the single most important school factor affecting student achievement” (p. 139). If teacher quality highly affects student achievement how can we keep teachers from leaving the profession?

Teaching has a high turnover rate especially, with novice teachers who tend to leave early in their careers. The turnover rate of teachers leaving the profession altogether is twenty-eight percent (Theobald & Michael, 2002, p. 142). Teachers tend to transfer among districts and schools for various reasons. However, minority teachers have a higher rate of transfer after their first position yet have a lower rate of leaving the field altogether (Theobald & Michael, 2002). Even with this numbers the urban turnover rate is still higher.

According to Theobald and Michael (2002) urban teachers are more likely to leave their district than new-hired teachers teaching in non-urban areas (p. 144). Furthermore, studies indicate that urban schools find it difficult to retain both quality and qualified teachers (Aligood & Rice, 2002, p. 167). Interestingly, mathematics teachers and all science teachers apart from biology are the most likely to leave the teaching profession (Theobald & Michael, 2002, p. 145).

What can urban schools do to lower the rate of teacher attrition?
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According to a national survey conducted by NPR, the state of Arizona was faced with this exact issue. They had higher than normal rates of teacher attrition; furthermore, Arizona’s issue was compounded with insufficient monetary funds. Instead of giving up Arizona school districts came up with the four-day school week to resolve their teacher attrition concerns. Teachers and students are given a three-day weekend and districts can save money on utilities and operational costs which they then direct into salaries for teachers and staff. It is so effective that according to NPR one in five districts in the state of Arizona have four-day school weeks.

In every profession monetary incentive is important; however, this is not the only factor in retaining teachers. Like any profession, workers want job satisfaction and feelings of appreciation and efficacy. Student achievement according to Allgood and Rice (2002) is the biggest factor in job transference or exiting the profession (p. 168). Other factors for leaving include “inadequate support from the administration, student discipline problems, limited faculty input in decision making and to a lesser extent, salary (Aligood & Rice, 2002, p. 169). To combat teacher turnover Ingersoll (2001) suggest four areas to improve on:

**Four Areas for Improvement**

1. **Changing the compensation structure**
2. **Providing greater administrative support, especially for novice teachers**
3. **Reducing conflict within the school**
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Quality Teachers

1. What does a quality teacher look like?

2. How can urban schools obtain quality teachers?

Allgood and Rice (2002) examine teacher quality through a series of characteristics: (a) teacher program and credentials (b) coursework taken by the teacher (c) test scores and (d) years of experience (p. 160). To be clear, both authors state that these four characteristics are not the only things that make a quality teacher these are just broad classifications.

For urban districts to obtain quality teachers they must provide monetary incentives like increases in salaries after a certain number of years. Or like the state of Florida have teacher bonus program that rewards high-quality teachers in low-performing schools (Aligood & Rice, 2002, p. 172). Besides monetary incentives I believe the four suggestions by Ingersoll (2001) can help entice teachers to work in urban school; because when people feel appreciated, have job satisfaction and a voice in the way the school is run they are more likely to see urban schools as a chance to shake up old stereotypes.

Chapter V – Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The goal of this study is to bring the issues and challenges of urban schools into the discourse during this difficult and perplexing political atmosphere. In addition, this study was a comprehensive compilation of data concerning the social, political and economic factors that affect urban schools and English language learners. In this paper I present the data in such a way that other students, teachers and educators may benefit. I also show that teaching in urban schools is an opportunity to the neediest students. As a
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student of the TESOL program our mission is to help students of other languages learn English to fulfill their individual goals. With such high-levels of English language learners in urban schools we cannot just ignore the needs of this large community.
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Appendix I

Population of People Ages 15 to 39

- 35 to 39 years
- 30 to 34 years
- 25 to 29 years
- 20 to 24 years
- 15 to 19 years

[Bar chart showing population distribution by age group for Ann Arbor and Flint.]
THE TEXAS CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 7. EDUCATION

Sec. 1. SUPPORT AND MAINTENANCE OF SYSTEM OF PUBLIC FREE SCHOOLS. A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.

Sec. 2. PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND. All funds, lands and other property heretofore set apart and appropriated for the support of public schools; all the alternate sections of land reserved by the State out of grants heretofore made or that may hereafter be made to railroads or other corporations of any nature whatsoever; one half of the public domain of the State; and all sums of money that may come to the State from the sale of any portion of the same, shall constitute a permanent school fund.

(Amended Nov. 8, 2011)

Sec. 2A. RELEASE OF CLAIM TO CERTAIN LANDS AND MINERALS WITHIN SHELBY, FRAZIER, AND MCCORMICK LEAGUE AND IN BASTROP
COUNTY.  (a) The State of Texas hereby relinquishes and releases any claim of sovereign ownership or title to an undivided one-third interest in and to the lands and minerals within the Shelby, Frazier, and McCormick League (now located in Fort Bend and Austin counties) arising out of the interest in that league originally granted under the Mexican Colonization Law of 1823 to John McCormick on or about July 24, 1824, and subsequently voided by the governing body of Austin's Original Colony on or about December 15, 1830.

(b) The State of Texas relinquishes and releases any claim of sovereign ownership or title to an interest in and to the lands, excluding the minerals, in Tracts 2-5, 13, 15-17, 19-20, 23-26, 29-32, and 34-37, in the A. P. Nance Survey, Bastrop County, as said tracts are:

(1) shown on Bastrop County Rolled Sketch No. 4, recorded in the General Land Office on December 15, 1999; and

(2) further described by the field notes prepared by a licensed state land surveyor of Travis County in September through November 1999 and May 2000.

(c) Title to such interest in the lands and minerals described by Subsection (a) is confirmed to the owners of the remaining interests in such lands and minerals. Title to the lands, excluding the minerals, described by Subsection (b) is confirmed to the holder of record title to each tract. Any outstanding land award or land payment obligation owed to the state for lands described by Subsection (b) is canceled, and any funds previously paid related to an outstanding land award or land payment obligation may not be refunded.
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(d) The General Land Office shall issue a patent to the holder of record title to each tract described by Subsection (b). The patent shall be issued in the same manner as other patents except that no filing fee or patent fee may be required.

(e) A patent issued under Subsection (d) shall include a provision reserving all mineral interest in the land to the state.

(f) This section is self-executing.

(Added Nov. 2, 1993; amended Nov. 6, 2001.)

Sec. 2B. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE FOR RELEASE OF STATE'S INTEREST IN CERTAIN LAND HELD BY PERSON UNDER COLOR OF TITLE. (a) The legislature by law may provide for the release of all or part of the state's interest in land, excluding mineral rights, if:

(1) the land is surveyed, unsold, permanent school fund land according to the records of the General Land Office;

(2) the land is not patentable under the law in effect before January 1, 2002; and

(3) the person claiming title to the land:

(A) holds the land under color of title;

(B) holds the land under a chain of title that originated on or before January 1, 1952;
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(C) acquired the land without actual knowledge that title to the land was vested in the State of Texas;

(D) has a deed to the land recorded in the appropriate county; and

(E) has paid all taxes assessed on the land and any interest and penalties associated with any period of tax delinquency.

(b) This section does not apply to:

(1) beach land, submerged or filled land, or islands; or

(2) land that has been determined to be state-owned by judicial decree.

(c) This section may not be used to:

(1) resolve boundary disputes; or

(2) change the mineral reservation in an existing patent.

(Added Nov. 6, 2001; Subsec. (d) expired Jan. 2, 2002.)

Sec. 2C. RELEASE OF CLAIM TO CERTAIN LANDS IN UPSHUR AND SMITH COUNTIES. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b) of this section, the State of Texas relinquishes and releases any claim of sovereign ownership or title to an interest in and to the tracts of land, including mineral rights, described as follows:

Tract 1:
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Tract 2:


(b) This section does not apply to:

(1) any public right-of-way, including a public road right-of-way, or related interest owned by a governmental entity;

(2) any navigable waterway or related interest owned by a governmental entity; or
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(3) any land owned by a governmental entity and reserved for public use, including a park, recreation area, wildlife area, scientific area, or historic site.

(c) This section is self-executing.

(Added Nov. 8, 2005.)

Sec. 3. TAXES FOR BENEFIT OF SCHOOLS; PROVISION OF FREE TEXT BOOKS; SCHOOL DISTRICTS. (a) One-fourth of the revenue derived from the State occupation taxes shall be set apart annually for the benefit of the public free schools.

(b) It shall be the duty of the State Board of Education to set aside a sufficient amount of available funds to provide free text books for the use of children attending the public free schools of this State.

(c) Should the taxation herein named be insufficient the deficit may be met by appropriation from the general funds of the State.

(d) The Legislature may provide for the formation of school districts by general laws, and all such school districts may embrace parts of two or more counties.

(e) The Legislature shall be authorized to pass laws for the assessment and collection of taxes in all school districts and for the management and control of the public school or schools of such districts, whether such districts are composed of territory wholly within a county or in parts of two or more counties, and the Legislature may authorize an additional ad valorem tax to be levied and collected within all school districts for the further maintenance of public free schools, and for the erection and
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equipment of school buildings therein; provided that a majority of the qualified voters of the district voting at an election to be held for that purpose, shall approve the tax.

Appendix III


SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

This Settlement Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into by and between the Plaintiffs (defined below) and the Defendants (defined below), hereinafter referred to individually as “Party” and collectively as “Parties,” in the civil action known as D.R., et al. v. Michigan Department of Education, et al., currently pending in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan (the “Court”) as case number 2:16-cv-13694-AJT-APP (the “Case”). This Agreement provides for the resolution of Count 1, Systemic Violation 1 of Plaintiffs’ complaint filed in the Case (Dkt. # 1), Plaintiffs’ motion for a preliminary injunction filed October 16, 2017 (Dkt. # 62), and any other claims or allegations by Plaintiffs that Defendants have violated their “child find” obligations (together, the “Child Find claim”). This Agreement resolves the motion for preliminary injunction and underlying Child Find claim only; it does not settle the entire Case.

II. PARTIES

The Plaintiffs are the named Plaintiffs, D.R., A.K., C.D.M., C.M., J.T., N.S., J.W., C.D., D.K., M.K., O.N., D.T., D.D., C.W., J.B., who filed the Case as minors through their parents identified in its Complaint (Dkt. # 1). The Defendants are the Michigan Department of Education ("MDE"), Genesee Intermediate School District ("GISD"), and Flint Community Schools ("FCS").
IV. RECITALS

WHEREAS, Plaintiffs commenced the Case currently pending before the Court, seeking declaratory and injunctive relief;


WHEREAS, the Parties agree that resolution of the motion for preliminary injunction and the Child Find claim without the delay, expense, risk, and uncertainties of a lengthy evidentiary hearing, further motion practice, trial, and possible appeal is in the best interest of the Parties, the public, and judicial economy;

WHEREAS, after the voluntary exchange of information and arm’s length settlement discussions, the Parties consider this Agreement to be a fair, reasonable, and equitable resolution of the motion for preliminary injunction and the Child Find claim;

BASED ON THE FOREGOING RECITALS AND THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS STATED HEREIN, the Parties agree as follows:
V. PROGRAM FOR SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

1. The Program, as defined above and the elements of which are set forth in Exhibit 1 to this Agreement, will be used to screen and assess children who may have been exposed to elevated levels of lead in the Flint water supply. The Program will be administered through the infrastructure of the Flint Registry platform and the NCE.

2. Counsel for MDE have consulted with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services ("MDHHS") on whether the screening, assessment and treatment services generally described in Exhibit 1 may be covered by Medicaid, and MDHHS has confirmed that those services are reimbursable, subject to Medicaid’s terms, conditions, and eligibility requirements.

3. No later than July 15, 2018, MDE shall provide $4,139,571.51 in grants or funds to the Registry and NCE for planning and initial implementation of the Program. All Parties recognize the availability of such funds may be subject to legislative approval. MDE shall use best efforts to obtain legislative approval of funds if necessary. If the Michigan Legislature fails to approve such funds, this Agreement may be declared null and void.
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Appendix IV

Direct Responses from officials and lawmakers concerning the water crisis

This is from a press release by Flint Mayor:

"Even with a proven track record of providing perfectly good water for Flint, there still remains lingering uncertainty about the quality of the water. In an effort to dispel myths and promote the truth about the Flint River and its viability as a residential water resource, there have been numerous studies and tests conducted on its water by several independent organizations. ... Michael Prysby of the Michigan DEQ Office of Drinking Water verified that 'the quality of the water being put out meets all of our drinking water standards and Flint water is safe to drink.'

...

" 'It's regular, good, pure drinking water, and it's right in our backyard,' said Mayor [Dayne] Walling, 'this is the first step in the right direction for Flint, and we take this monumental step forward in controlling the future of our community's most precious resource.' "

This is an email from Brad Wufer to MLive Journalist
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"It's scientifically probable a research team that specializes in looking for lead in water could have found it in Flint when the city was on its old water supply. We won't know that, because they've only just arrived in town and quickly proven the theory they set out to prove, and while the state appreciates academic participation in this discussion, offering broad, dire public health advice based on some quick testing could be seen as fanning political flames irresponsibly. Residents of Flint concerned about the health of their community don't need more of that.

(Kennedy, 2016)
## Policies Explicitly Encouraged by Race to the Top

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>participation in standards consortium</td>
<td>adoption of “high-quality” standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development and implementation of “common, high-quality assessments”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>implementation of statewide longitudinal data system*</td>
<td>unique identifiers for individual students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers matched to students</td>
<td>availability of data to researchers*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alternative routes to teacher certification</td>
<td>plan for identifying and correcting for teacher and principal shortages*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>systems in place to measure individual student growth</td>
<td>systems in place to differentially measure teacher and principal performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>systems in place to measure individual student growth</td>
<td>evaluation system for both teachers and principals takes into account student test-score growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>annual evaluations of principals and teachers occur</td>
<td>evaluations used as part of professional development*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluations used in part to make compensation decisions*</td>
<td>evaluations used to identify additional responsibility for highly effective teachers*</td>
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<td>evaluations used in making tenure decisions*</td>
<td>evaluations used to make decisions on removal of ineffective teachers and principals*</td>
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<td>evaluations used to make removal</td>
<td>plan to ensure equitable distribution of</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Description</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decisions after ample opportunity to improve*</td>
<td>Highly effective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers and principals*</td>
<td>Plan to increase number of highly effective teachers in STEM areas*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student achievement data used as part of teacher credentialing*</td>
<td>Plans for using data to inform various aspects of professional development*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State has authority to intervene in lowest-achieving schools*</td>
<td>Plan to turn around lowest-achieving schools*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuing state education funding did not decrease from FY 2008 to FY 2009</td>
<td>State funding account for high-need schools and LEAs</td>
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<tr>
<td>No caps on high-performing charter schools</td>
<td>Student achievement used as part of renewal of charter schools</td>
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<td>Equitable funding for charter schools</td>
<td>Support for non-charter autonomous schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding for charter school facilities</td>
<td>STEM courses and programs in operation.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Similar Policies Not Rewarded in Race to the Top**

- High school graduation exam
- 3rd-grade test-based promotion policies
- Tax credits for private-school scholarship programs

*Tracked only in the Race to the Top applications*

Figure 2 is adapted from Table 2 (Howell, 2015, p. 63)
### Appendix VI

**Emerson Elementary School CORE Index Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Result 2016</th>
<th>Result 2017</th>
<th>Change in Metric Performance from 2016 to 2017</th>
<th>Index Level 2017</th>
<th>Change in Index Level from 2016 to 2017</th>
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<td><strong>Academic Performance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>67% Meets or Exceeds Standards</td>
<td>70% Meets or Exceeds Standards</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<td><strong>Academic Growth</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>English Language Arts</td>
<td>29% Growth Percentile</td>
<td>83% Growth Percentile</td>
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<td>9/10</td>
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<td>Math</td>
<td>57% Meets or Exceeds Standards</td>
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<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>61% Growth Percentile</td>
<td>69% Growth Percentile</td>
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Table adapted from LBUSD website