

Austin High School:

Telling her Story

BY

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THESIS

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2017

Chicago, Illinois

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This dissertation is dedicated to all students at Austin High School. The light, the love, and the teacher in me honors the light, the love and the teacher in each and every one of you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Austin Business Council
CPE	Central Park East
CPS	Chicago Public Schools
CREB	Chicago Real Estate Board
CAM	Christian Action Ministry
CCC	Commercial Club of Chicago
CCCO	Coordinating Council of Community Organizations
HEW	Department of Health, Education and Welfare
DHCS	Division of Housing and Community Services
ESSA	Emergency School Aid Act
FHA	Federal Housing Association
LSCs	Local School Councils
MHPC	Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council
NCA	North Central Association
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
OBA	Organization for a Better Austin

SUMMARY

This is an archival study of Austin High School. The purpose of this study was to investigate the major themes that contributed to the transformation of Austin High School beginning in the 1960s. There were four major themes found in this study. The first was the continued failure of desegregation efforts across the city of Chicago Public Schools during the Civil Rights Era. The second theme I discovered was the social, political, and economic disinvestment of the Austin neighborhood once African Americans began to move into this region of the city, block by block. The third theme of this study was an examination of the language and power wielded by those in the Austin neighborhood and by those working for the Chicago Board of Education and city government during Austin's transition. The fourth and final theme I found was repeated discrimination against African Americans through housing policies and restricted covenants maintained at both the federal and city level.

The study is meant to paint a broader picture of why many public schools in inner cities are struggling to provide a quality education for young people in society today. The trends I uncovered, while specific to Austin High School on the city of Chicago's west side, are trends that pervade other major inner city school districts across the United States. I believe that there are critical next steps if we truly want to re-engage with our young people in schools similar to Austin High School. There must be an effort to solidly reinvest, not just financially, but also socially and politically in our neighborhood public schools. I also argue that it is pivotal to provide an avenue where local neighborhood and community members, including students, are able to become involved in the shaping of their public schools. Public schools must remain a

SUMMARY (continued)

space where any child, regardless of their race or economic status, is provided quality education that meets the needs of their specific neighborhood community.

I. INTRODUCTION

Demetrius Funtz, Mi Paloma

It was a hot summer day in the city of Chicago during the month of July. My friend Chris and I boarded the green line train to head west. We had just graduated college, both of us new to Chicago, coming to visit Austin High School for the first time. The year was 2006, and we could not wait to see our classrooms, meet our principal, and take a tour around the school. The train stopped at Central Avenue, and we nervously stepped off the train and onto the platform. As we looked out into the neighborhood, there was Corcoran Food Mart on the right side of the street, and to the left, which is now a Dunkin Donuts; there was a liquor store. There was a crowd of men in front of the liquor store. It was early, and we knew that the school was just a couple of blocks away from the train station. We started walking down Central Avenue. As we walked passed the crowd, we noticed the men tossing dollar bills on the ground. They were placing bets on two crack addicts who were going to fight each other in front of the liquor store. As Chris and I passed by, a few of the men catcalled out to me. I turned fifty shades of red, and Chris grabbed my arm as we hastened our pace past the liquor store. Two minutes later, the howls of police cars could be heard down Central Avenue to break up the fight.

There were a lot of firsts for me that day. I had not even made my 22nd birthday yet, and as we turned down Pine Avenue, I suddenly felt so sick to my stomach. But then a total stranger, who would later become a student in my very first homeroom, called out from his porch. “Hey, you the new teachers? You lost? I’m Demetrius Funtz. Lemme call Thomas, he will let you in.” Demetrius grabbed my hand and pulled me into the building. He grew up across the street

from Austin High School, and it seemed like he knew the entire neighborhood. He had been held back quite a few times, and as a freshman he stood at a staggering six feet, two inches tall. After that day, Demetrius walked me to the train every day, waiting until I made it to the platform. “These people crazy, Ms. D. I’ll protect you.” Demetrius never missed a day of school with me, until I lost him in a gang-related incident his sophomore year. I have a tattoo of Picasso’s Peace Dove on my right arm because to me, Demetrius was my peacekeeper and my dove. He would board me on the train every night so that I could come home safely to my neighborhood in Hyde Park. Demetrius may have lived in a an area rife with real challenges, but I never want to forget that he was my first guardian peace angel, mi paloma.

My First Experience of Transformation

The school year 2006-2007 was the last year that Austin High School opened its doors to students. The school was undergoing a transformation through Renaissance 2010, a new initiative through Chicago Public Schools to offer parents in neighborhoods like Austin more “school options.” After that school year, Austin would become three smaller schools within the main building, one charter operated, and the other two public schools. While I was hired to teach at the charter school on the 4th floor, Dr. Scott, the principal of Austin High School, became a mentor and someone I sought for advice and guidance as a first year teacher. On my free periods and lunches, I would come downstairs and help with the remedial math programs he was implementing to help students who were struggling in the mainstream curriculum.

I didn’t really understand what was happening at Austin High School when I started teaching. I knew my principal on the 4th floor became angry when I would go help Dr. Scott, and I remember hiding the fact that I was spending most of my free time with the veteran teachers downstairs. On the 4th floor, almost our entire staff was my age, with little to no

experience teaching. While they were a great group of people, I wanted to grow, and I needed to learn. I couldn't understand why they were trying to keep our schools separate. We served the same children, many of who were siblings or cousins with each other. But there was a clear division within the building, and I didn't enjoy my first year teaching. The 4th floor went through four principals in that one year, and Chris, myself, and the math teacher were the only teachers who worked there from August until June. Every other teacher quit, and that was always tough because then we had to find someone new to replace them. The 4th floor was like a revolving door of adults that year, and I know it was difficult for the kids. At the same time, the first two floors were going through their own transition, as they knew this would be the last year that their school would open its doors to students. After experiencing the 2006-2007 transformation of Austin High School, I didn't want to let go of the school or the children who touched my life. I continued to teach at Austin, and as the years passed, I realized that the Austin community had experienced many "transformations," which resulted in an extraordinary story that needed to be told. Hence the birth of my archival study.

From the Beginning

The transformation of Austin High School began in the early 1960s. In its prime, Austin was a comprehensive neighborhood school that was home to thousands of students. Today, the building of Austin High School is now three small schools within one school, struggling to sustain a full faculty of teachers and staff. After Chicago Public Schools (CPS) switched to student-based budgeting in 2012, schools like Austin with low enrollment suffered because the total number of students was not enough to sustain the same number of teachers and support staff. According to CPS Strategy and Planning Manager Patrick Payne, in 2014, less than one quarter of eighth graders chose to attend their neighborhood high schools (Bloom, 2014). With a

district-wide dilemma of low enrollment in neighborhood high schools, principals must be creative in their planning to attract neighborhood children.

The purpose of this study is to explore the demise of Austin High School within the broader context of housing policies and desegregation efforts in the city of Chicago since the early 1960s. From these realities, this work investigates the following phenomenon: How did housing policies and desegregation efforts contribute to the transformation of Austin High School on the west side of Chicago?

Racism, both implicit and overt, manifested itself into the school fabric of Austin High School during the 1960s. This archival study reveals a curriculum of disinvestment, white supremacy, and displacement of African American students at Austin High School. Racism is the primary mechanism for maintaining segregation and an inferior schooling experience for African American students living in the Austin neighborhood.

The first chapter serves as an introduction in order to understand Austin High School within the context of desegregation efforts of public schools, discrimination within the housing market of the Austin neighborhood, and the impact within Austin High School during these oppressive experiences in the 1960s and 1970s. The second chapter of this work reviews literature relevant to understanding how disinvestment on the west side of the city has negatively impacted Austin High School throughout the decades to its present day situation. It is divided into four sections: (a) the history of housing policies in the city of Chicago, (b) the small schools movement, (c) community schooling and control, and (d) venture philanthropy and public-private partnerships in school reform. Chapter three discusses the methods of my archival research and the process of collecting archival documents from various sources around the city. The fourth chapter is a series of vignettes that I wrote to portray not only what happened in

Austin during the 1960s, but also how this history connects to a bigger picture of disinvestment in neighborhoods in cities across the United States. The purpose of the vignettes is to illustrate that none of the actions taken by the Chicago Board of Education, members of the Austin community, or the Federal Housing Authority and other housing entities in Chicago were accidental or a coincidence. These were planned, intentional acts of racism and de facto segregation in order to discriminate against and contain African Americans moving into the city of Chicago. The final chapter discusses how these policies and acts of hatred ultimately contributed to what we see in the Austin neighborhood and at Austin High School today. The last chapter also reflects on neighborhoods similar to Austin across our nation that experienced similar trends of disinvestment in the 1960s and 1970s. In the end, it is my hope that readers will think about how past transgressions require an action agenda created by community members and supported by city, state, and federal governments if we want to see authentic, positive reinvestment in these neighborhoods and their neighborhood public schools.

Desegregation Efforts

Housing and the Second Great Migration

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 created a platform for the federal government to end segregation in the United States. Title VI became a monumental piece of legislation for schools because it allowed the government to withhold federal funds from a school that discriminated against a child's race, color, and national origin. In September of 1965 when Francis Keppel, U.S. commissioner of education, announced that Chicago would lose \$32 million in federal funds due to "probable noncompliance," there was a sign of hope, (Satter, 2009, p.179). The South and West Sides of Chicago experienced a swift and large influx of African American

families between 1940 and 1960, particularly following World War II (Hirsch, 1983). This brought about an increased demand for housing stock and space in public schools. The demand hit specific neighborhoods, such as Austin, which was located on the west side of Chicago. A survey conducted by the Austin Community Organization in 1965 indicated that in southeast Austin, 84% of residents found integration undesirable (McKinlay and Shanas, 1968, p. 22); however, African Americans continued to enter Austin. “The area began experiencing rapid transition from white to black. In 1960, there were only 31 blacks in Austin; but by 1970, 41,583 blacks lived in the community, making up 32.5 percent of the community population,” (Danns, 2014, p. 22).

Many theories exist regarding why African American families settled in west Chicago rather than into the southern black belt during this time. After World War II, the Great Migration brought thousands of southern Black migrants to Chicago, many of whom found their way to the West Side (Seligman, 2005). African American families who were displaced from housing being torn down on the South Side began to move to the West Side. While few records exist with the exact number of these displaced residents, in 1960, more than half of North Lawndale’s African American community reported “living somewhere else in Chicago five years previously,” (Seligman, 2005, p. 33). The Chicago Housing Authority also constructed family public housing in the Near West Side and East Garfield Park during the 1950s, including Maplewood Courts, Rockwell Gardens, Harrison Courts, Henry Horner Homes and Extension, Leclaire Courts, and Ogden Courts. African Americans settled on the West Side in recently established Black neighborhoods and on the edges of neighborhoods that were expanding one block at a time (Seligman, 2005).

Challenges in Chicago Public Schools

During the movement of African Americans into Austin and other Chicago neighborhoods, several shifts occurred in Chicago Public Schools. In 1961, the case of *Webb v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago* led to a study of Chicago Public Schools. Plaintiffs argued that the seats for high school selection, the use of permissive transfers, and the process of drawing school boundaries contributed to segregated schools in Chicago. The creation of permissive transfers was a strategy proposed by the Chicago Board of Education in order to relieve overcrowded schools in the city. Certain overcrowded schools, such as Austin High School, were granted the right to either “send” or “receive” students for permissive transfers. This meant that if a student wished to transfer to a public school outside of his or her neighborhood boundaries, they would be permitted to do so under the permissive transfer plan. However, the strategy of permissive transfers resulted in many white students using the transfers to leave their neighborhood school for another school that had fewer African American students in attendance. This was later confirmed in Board meeting minutes, resulting in schools being removed from the permissive transfer list all together. The plan did not solve the concern of overcrowded schools, and it exacerbated the growing segregation of students in neighborhood public schools.

From the *Webb* court case, researchers spent eight months studying segregation practices in Chicago Public Schools, (Hauser, 1964). This was narrated in a report by Hauser (1964) that detailed segregation not only existed in Chicago Public Schools, but that within segregated schools of African American children, teachers were less qualified, test scores and attendance rates were lower, and fewer resources were available (Hauser, 1964). Board Member Cyrus Hall Adams expressed to his fellow committee members concern that the process of relieving overcrowded schools and successfully integrating the schools would be challenging (Adams,

1964). The Board struggled to make a decision about integration policies, even after reviewing the integration plans of cities such as Detroit and Baltimore and receiving recommendations from experts in their field.

Shifts at Austin High School

From 1963–1967, student demographics at Austin High School shifted dramatically. According to school records, in 1965, 25% of students at Austin High School were African American. *The Austinite*, a local neighborhood newspaper, stated that the Austin Business Council was concerned about maintaining racial balance at Austin High School, as over 50% of its freshmen and sophomore students were African American (Austin High School, 1966). Two years later, 39% of the entire student body at Austin High School was African American, causing panic among many White residents of Austin. In a report from the law department in 1967, Austin High School was removed from the list of schools eligible under the Permissive Transfer Plan, as its white students were using the plan to flee the school. According to Coffey, who drafted the report from Chicago Public School’s Law Department (1967), using a fixed racial quota system to preserve racial balance was illegal and violated “constitutional and statutory guarantees of due process and equal protection of the law” (p. 3). White residents in Austin could not agree on how to stabilize a rapidly changing student demographic at Austin High School. However, when the Board of Chicago proposed mixing populations of high schools on the West Side, White residents crowded downtown, protesting the right for their children to attend neighborhood public schools. According to Seligman, “White northerners recognized that as long as children were assigned to neighborhood schools, residential segregation in housing kept the populations of neighborhood schools racially homogenous,” (Seligman, 2005, p. 121).

In order to support Austin residents, local businesses and community organizations called to restore the former boundaries of Austin High School, which were the Belt Line to the east, Austin Boulevard to the west, Roosevelt Road to the south, and the Milwaukee Railway to the north. In 1967, the Austin Business Council wrote to the Board of Education that if racial balance was not be achieved during that school year, residents would leave Austin and move to the suburbs of Chicago. Proponents of the boundary changes at Austin High School knew that north Austin residents would benefit from the boundary restoration, as their children would be sent to predominately White high schools. Residents in south Austin, however, pushed for different boundary changes as more African American students entered the high school (Vrame, 1970).

Change the Boundaries or Change Discriminatory Housing Policies?

Other organizations, such as the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCCO) and the Christian Action Ministry (CAM), questioned new boundary changes proposed for neighborhood public schools. The CAM (1967) argued that the lines drawn would not change the pattern of population movement. The CAM argued that unless action was taken to address housing discrimination on the West Side, boundaries would continue to be redrawn depending on where African Americans could secure housing stock, (CAM Paper, 1967). The superintendent of Chicago Public Schools, Dr. Benjamin Willis, had been historically critiqued for his blind eye to de facto segregation that occurred during the 1950s-1960s from discriminatory housing policies and racially separated boundary lines in neighborhood public schools. The “notorious” 1963 Chicago Public Schools Boycott, where more than 250,000 students stayed home from school, and over 20,000 students marched in streets, commemorated its 50th year anniversary in

2013, (Dickson, 2013). Many argue that not much has changed in terms of the segregation in Chicago neighborhood public schools and in equalizing the distribution of resources.

When Willis' term ended in 1966, James Redmond, the new superintendent of Chicago Public Schools, chose to implement desegregation efforts in a different way. Released in August 1967, the Redmond Plan proposed integration of public schools through racial quotas, transportation of African American students to majority White schools, creation of racially diverse magnet schools, and encouragement of vocational training for students not wishing to attend college, (Herrick, 1970). The plan was controversial, as state and federal courts were divided on the use of racial quotas and bussing. "Some have held that bussing and quotas are permissible if the result is 'beneficent' but others have argued that racial classification for any purpose is forbidden by the equal-protection clause of the 14th Amendment" (Cooper, 1967, p. 1). This plan caused tension among White and Black residents of Austin. Some parents wanted neighborhood schools, where the children were in close proximity to their homes. Other parents vocalized their opposition to integrated schools. The discussion of school segregation often went hand-in-hand with housing discrimination. Additionally, many Austin residents expressed concern that their neighborhood was beginning to show signs of blight, particularly in south Austin. The Coordinating Council of Community Organizations critiqued the plan as barely touching the surface of school segregation. They also highlighted the implicit racism of the plan in its inference that any school on the edge of becoming majority African American would be considered undesirable, thus devaluing the presence of Blacks in Chicago neighborhoods (Danns, 2014). Northwest Side residents who would receive African American students vehemently opposed the new plan. In the 1968 public hearings over bussing, over 1,500 Northwest Side residents, mostly white, attended and expressed their dissatisfaction with

receiving students from Austin schools; however, overcrowding in both the elementary and high schools in the Austin neighborhood necessitated a plan from the Board.

Efforts to Desegregate Austin High School

Under the new bussing plan proposed by Superintendent Redmond, the demographics at Austin High School would shift minimally, however; it was the intention for schools that had a majority White demographic to become more integrated through the bussing of African American students into various parts of the city (Danns, 2014). Redmond proposed his plan in 1968. In less than two years after the implementation of bussing, Austin High School became a majority African American school. According to the Austin Area Project Reports, the results of the bussing plan led to receiving schools gaining over 9% Black students. However, sending schools, like Austin, resulted in almost 99% Black student populations by 1970. This indicated that the plan overall left the districts' receiving schools slightly desegregated, while sending schools became even more homogenous in terms of student demographics, (Connery and Glickman, 1974). Projections indicated that the student population for the following school year would increase to well over 90% Black. White Austin parents enrolled their children in schools other than Austin High School when possible. Some parents argued that because Austin High School had resegregated to become a majority Black school, White students were being deprived of an integrated educational environment and should thus be allowed to transfer to other city schools (Seligman, 2005). When Prosser Vocational and Lane Technical schools began accepting female students in fall 1971, more students left Austin High School. *The Austinite* stated that the new school proposals of Prosser and Lane gave students whose neighborhood school was Austin High School an option other than a school that was being "resegregated" (Co-

ed Look, 1970, p. 1). Once the demographics changed to a majority Black student population, the hope for integrated public schools in Austin seemed less likely.

On November 17, 1971, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael J. Bakalis, a graduate of Austin High School, announced his plan to desegregate public schools in the state of Illinois. Under the plan, the government would withhold federal funds for school districts that did not comply; news of state-enforced desegregation shocked Superintendent Redmond. Bakalis emphasized that the desegregation efforts would not only include bussing students to achieve racial balance; they would also reorganize and reassign students; pair and group schools, similar to the Cluster Plan of the 1960s; and create specialized magnet schools, educational parks, and plazas, (Danns, 2014). Since 1963, Chicago had limited desegregation efforts. Overcrowded schools qualified for permissive transfers, two magnet schools were created, and there were a small percentage of African American students bussed to majority White schools (Danns, 2014). Bakalis wanted schools to be within 15% of the Black enrollment for their district; therefore, in Chicago, every school and classroom in the city would have a student demographic between 52.2%–82.2% African American. While Bakalis knew it was an enormous undertaking, he believed Chicago needed a carefully planned program that included a timeline for specific efforts to make school integration happen, (Danns, 2014).

Austin High School did not benefit from desegregation efforts. In fact, the use of permissive transfers and bussing of African American students to the Northwest Side inflamed the issue of maintaining an integrated student population at Austin High School. The disinvestment, in both the community of Austin and Austin High School, began to illustrate serious consequences. In April 1975, the North Central Association conducted a site visit of Austin High School and reported on various aspects of the school. The North Central

Association stated that by 1970, the Austin community was predominately Black and the pattern of movement of African Americans into the Austin neighborhood was block by block. The Austin area was cited for experiencing social problems, such as drug use, prostitution, and gangs, due to the influx in population. Many of the single-family homes were converted into multiple-family dwellings, which were often not well kept, (Monks, 1975). The state of disrepair in housing units indicated that signs of blight were pervading the neighborhood. The Black population in Austin increased from 31 in 1960 to 41,564 in 1970, a 134% increase, (Monks, 1975). The movement of families in and out of the neighborhood revealed the student demographic shift at Austin High School. The North Central Association also cited transfers out of Chicago Public Schools and the new challenge of low academic achievement for entering freshmen as direct results of the instability in school selection. According to Monks, 80% of entering freshmen from 1971–1974 had a seventh-grade reading level or lower entering Austin High School. Additionally, Austin High School's enrollment continued to increase, from 2,556 students in 1970 to 3,665 students in 1974 (Monks, 1975). In 1931, enrollment peaked at 6,815 students; however, between the 1960s and 1970s, enrollment remained between two and three thousand students, (Monks, 1970). Even with a lower enrollment, it was difficult for teachers at Austin High School to provide the extra instruction needed to bring the students up to their grade reading level. Teacher dialogue shifted to how they could support the new population of students that entered the doors of Austin High School.

One year after the North Central Association visited Austin High School; Superintendent Hannon learned that Chicago Public Schools was out of compliance with state requisites for desegregation efforts. Of the 667 Chicago schools, only 81 schools were within the 15% quota stipulated by the state (Danns, 2014). Superintendent Hannon stated that the state's guidelines

were unrealistic and blamed the failed efforts to desegregate the schools on discrimination in housing policies. Hannon also stated that a serious desegregation effort in schools may “trigger population shifts that may not be desirable in the city in the long run” (Shaw, 1976, p.3). The *Chicago Sun-Times* and *Chicago Tribune* stated that it was clear that the superintendent feared losing White families to the suburbs of Chicago. Hannon also stated that forced integration would result in Whites fleeing from the city and Chicago Public Schools; however, he was under state mandate to create a comprehensive plan to address school desegregation. In 1977, Hannon released the following statement addressing the noncompliance of Chicago Public Schools:

The development of a plan to implement the state rules need not be considered a threat nor a travesty on cherished rights and privileges...Chicago will remain the strongest urban center in America, because we will have developed a plan based for the future of our children. (p. 2)

A New, Faux Desegregation Plan

In November 1977, Hannon announced that Chicago would begin implementing a new desegregation plan by September 1978, (Danns, 2014). A major component of this plan was the implementation of permissive transfers. In May 1977, Superintendent Hannon published *Administrator's Guide to Permissive Transfers*, which outlined which elementary and high schools would be eligible for sending and receiving students. According to Appendix B-3 in the guide, Austin High School could transfer as many as 300 students to the Northwest Side of the city, (Hannon, 1977). Since bussing began in 1968, Chicago residents expressed concern for student safety, as African American students were greeted in majority-White schools with hostility and rage. Students on the Southwest Side boycotted the arrival of students from other communities, and multiple arrests followed the start of bussing. In the end, permissive transfers

for that school year totaled 2,180 students, which was a sliver of students who needed to move for there to make a significant impact on student demographics (Danns, 2014). Superintendent Hannon also implemented Access to Excellence, a program that emphasized voluntary choice for students who wanted a specialized educational path. Hannon's belief that desegregation efforts needed to be voluntary permeated his presentation to the board. Again, that plan did nothing to promote integration at Austin High School; it only gave options to students if they wanted to leave Austin. The non-voluntary nature of the plan infuriated minority groups, who called Access to Excellence "isolated integration" (Chicago Urban League, 1979, p. 1). The Chicago Urban League (1979) published its own Access to Excellence, which critiqued Hannon's assumption that parents and children would voluntarily desegregate in public schools.

By the end of 1978, governing bodies outside of Chicago were frustrated with the faux desegregation efforts from Superintendent Hannon. In a letter to Hannon dated February 28, 1979, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) stated that the segregated school conditions in Chicago were in part a result of efforts put forth by Chicago Public School officials:

These conditions have been created, maintained, and exacerbated through the placing of mobile classroom units at certain schools; selecting sites for new or expanded school facilities, creating and altering attendance boundaries for elementary schools; establishing optional zones and feeder patterns for middle schools, upper grade centers and high schools; implementing student transfer programs; using segregative bussing; establishing vocational high school attendance zones and admission criteria; and assigning faculty and other professional staff. The actions and omissions of Chicago school officials in these areas have contributed to racial segregation in the Chicago public schools and demonstrate the intent of school officials to segregate students by race. (p. 1)

A reduction in funds from the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) accompanied this letter. The OCR filed six official allegations of violations from the board under the ESAA guidelines. Superintendent Hannon responded to these allegations with a statement on October 17, 1979, stating that a key point of disagreement “was, and still is, the percentages of minority and nonminority students required to constitute a desegregated school, as determined by HEW/OCR” (p. 2). Hannon also emphasized the expansion of Access to Excellence as a primary mechanism for desegregation in Chicago Public Schools. The Chicago Urban League (1979) pointed out that Access to Excellence programs served less than 10% of students, and over 90% of the programs were targeted at academically gifted students. Concurrently, segregation continued in schools on Chicago’s South and West Sides, and the White student population in Chicago Public Schools continued to decline. Superintendent Hannon also continued to release statements that Chicago was doing everything in its power to implement desegregation efforts.

Finally, on September 24, 1980, the same day that the Justice Department officially filed a lawsuit against the Chicago Board of Education, a consent decree was released regarding desegregation efforts in the city, (Danns, 2014). Article 3 of the decree stated, “the Board neither admits nor denies the allegations of the complaint in this action. It recognizes, however, that the Chicago Public School system is characterized by substantial racial isolation of students” (United States of America v. Board of Education of the City of Chicago, 1980, p. 2-3). The decree called for Chicago to desegregate the greatest number of schools possible and to provide compensatory funding to schools that could not be desegregated. No racial quotas existed in the new plan, and the board had discretion to develop how the plan would be implemented for the 1982 school year (Danns, 2014). The consent decree disappointed many who felt the Board of

Education would never have to comply with meaningful desegregation. More money was given to plan, hire professional consultants, and execute an unprecedented desegregation effort.

Concomitantly, Austin High School received another visit from the North Central Association. In its report of Austin High School, the North Central visitors noted that since the first visit in 1968, the school had sought to work with community groups, but many of those groups had not actively responded to help the school, (Zabor, 1982). Parental involvement in the school was an equal challenge. In February 1981, before the North Central Association arrived for their official visit, they sent a survey to 100 randomly selected families, only to receive 16 of the surveys back, (Zabor, 1982). According to 1980 census data, the population of Austin swelled from 127,973 in 1970 to 138,056 in 1980, (Zabor, 1982). Since the 1960s, however, little new construction took place in the Austin neighborhood. The Austin Community Coalition stated in this report that during the 1970s, 2,417 housing units were demolished in the neighborhood, (Zabor, 1982). Furthermore, a study published in the *Chicago Tribune* in January 1981 indicated that the rate of job loss increased from 15.1% to 19.3% in Austin due to industries relocating to the suburbs. In 1981, only 110,554 jobs were available on the West Side of Chicago, with 50%–55% of residents receiving some form of public assistance, (Zabor, 1982). Gang activity was also increasing, particularly among teenagers in the community (Zabor, 1982).

The North Central Association noted that Austin's student enrollment increased as the general population of the neighborhood increased. As enrollment surged from 3,625 students in 1972 to 3,941 students in 1973, the Chicago Board of Education purchased a vacated property for excess students rather than bus them to an underutilized school. The vacated property was referred to as a "branch," or extension of the main campus. However, by 1980, the branch of Austin High School was closed due to the implementation of permissive transfers for Austin

students. In fact, by 1980, only 2,445 students were enrolled at Austin High School (Zabor, 1982). North Central Association attributed this drop to both the permissive transfers and the poor reputation that Austin High School had sustained throughout the previous decade. From the North Central Association's report, it was clear that Austin High School struggled to provide a quality education to all students given the disinvestment from different stakeholders, most notably, the surrounding community and the Chicago Board of Education.

Too little, Too Late

At the same time, there was a critical shift from left to right in the perception of civil rights policies as the federal government transitioned from the Carter administration to the Reagan administration. According to Reynolds, head of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division:

The Supreme Court has told us, I don't know how many times, that there is nothing wrong with a school that is racially imbalanced...It's only unconstitutional when that's a forced situation because the school board has basically put in place, intentionally, certain practices and procedures that preclude children from going to one school because of their race, (Detlefsen, 1991, p. 131).

Not only did Reynolds disagree with the concept of forced racially integrated schools, he also disagreed with the methods that Chicago had implemented to achieve the goal of desegregation in public schools. Reynolds claimed that forced bussing historically did not work in big cities because the public lacked support for student bussing and bussing to a school outside a child's neighborhood did not equate to a high-quality education (Detlefsen, 1991). The Reagan administration emphasized promoting quality education and reversing progress made by civil rights advocates throughout the last three decades. While this did little to improve the situation of

segregated schools, it affected Chicago in the 1990s as multiple schools, including Austin High School, faced reconstitution due to the chronic poor performance of its students.

When the *Chicago Tribune* analyzed school demographics in 2003, they found that 85% of the city's Black or White students would need to transfer in order to mirror the public schools' racial and ethnic makeup (Olszewski & Little, 2003). The Tribune article also noted that the change in racial demographics from the consent decree until 2003 illustrated the White population in Chicago Public Schools was overrepresented in both selective enrollment and magnet schools. Others argued that the selective enrollment and magnet programs kept White students in city schools; therefore, those programs must remain intact. According to the 2000 census, over half of White children in Chicago attended private schools (Olszewski & Little, 2003). Jordan (2003), a consultant hired to review the desegregation consent decree, stated that if Chicago was serious in its efforts to desegregate public schools, it should have been more aggressive in its approach. "A school system generally reflects the value system of the larger community that it serves. Historically, the city of Chicago has not demonstrated a high level of concern for equal justice for Black and other non-white people" (Jordan, 2003, p. 3). After spending at least \$2.5 billion on desegregation efforts over the previous three decades, most of Chicago's Black and Latino students still attended racially isolated schools (Olszewski & Little, 2003). With White students as a minority group in the city, Judge Kocoras ruled that the consent decree from 1980 no longer served a purpose in Chicago Public Schools. On May 2, 2006, Chicago Public Schools released an official statement that they had negotiated a settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice that would release the district from the consent decree. The press release urged that this was "great news" because funds that had been used to pay lawyers to prepare court reports could now be used in classrooms (Chicago Public Schools Office of

Communications, 2006, p. 1-2). What the press release failed to mention was the board's plan to combat decades of disinvestment that had destroyed a large number of public schools serving minority children.

It is critical to understand how policy decisions related to desegregation efforts also affected the student body at Austin High School. Chicago Public Schools that were similar to Austin High School followed a trend of racially changing student demographics. From the 1950s through the 1970s, many schools in the South and West Sides of the city experienced a racial change from "all-white, to temporarily integrated (and crowded), to all-Black over the course of a few years...Neither Superintendent Redmond nor his successor, Joseph Hannon, proposed or implemented an effective desegregation plan for Chicago" (Seligman, 2005, p. 150). The failed plans to desegregate Chicago Public Schools continued for decades. After the consent decree was removed in 2006, it was clear that because of failed desegregation efforts, integration for students in schools like Austin High School would never come to fruition.

Housing in the Austin Neighborhood

Thousands of African American families moved to Chicago after World War II, settling on the South and West Sides of the city. In the 1940s, North Lawndale became home for many African Americans. After North Lawndale, Black families moved north to the neighborhood of West Garfield Park. In the 1960s, African Americans began settling west of Garfield Park, in the neighborhood of Austin. Together, these neighborhoods formed the West Side of the city of Chicago (Seligman, 2005). This research will focus on the neighborhood of Austin.

Until the late 1800s, Austin was a part of Cicero Township. In 1899, Austin residents supported extending public transportation west to Austin Boulevard from Lake Street. This

infuriated Oak Park residents, who did not want the tracks entering their domain. The Oak Park community believed this extension would lead to an unwanted demographic of lower class families entering their neighborhood; thus, the town board decided to separate Austin from Cicero and annex the land to the city of Chicago. To this day, Austin remains one of the largest neighborhoods in the city of Chicago.



Figure 1. Map of Chicago Neighborhoods, (Parnell, 2007).

After its annexation to Chicago, Austin developers maintained the charm and beauty of the homes that existed when Austin was a suburb of the city. In the Chicago Land Use Survey of 1942, Austin held 16,581 residential structures, with 46.1% being single-family detached homes and 35.2% described as classic Chicago two-flats, (Seligman, 2005). The 1942 Land Survey also classified 44% of Austin's residential structures as being in good condition, with another 53% in need of small repairs (Seligman, 2005). While residents enjoyed stability in their neighborhood for some time, the literature indicates that being west of the city often left residents having to advocate for city support. For example, when the University of Illinois at Chicago was searching to relocate their campus, West Siders wanted the opportunity to create an environment similar to what Hyde Park residents experienced in their relationship with the University of Chicago. Community members persuaded university trustees that the West Side would be a perfect location for the university; however, after numerous newspaper articles, meetings, and visits to the West Side, Mayor Richard J. Daley chose a different site instead. "One angry resident fulminated against the 'conspiracy to make the West Side a ghetto,' reminding *Garfieldian* readers of the campus's potential to prevent white out-migration" (Seligman, 2005, p. 116).

After the war, Chicago had grand urban renewal plans occurring throughout the city, including the construction of the Congress (Eisenhower) Expressway, which linked the West Side to downtown. However, little money and effort was devoted to maintaining neighborhoods like Austin in the condition they had once been. By the mid-1950s, before African Americans began to enter the Austin community, the West Side showed signs of neighborhood blight and physical decay. Austin residents were disappointed in the disinvestment from city planners.

The conditions created from hastily constructed housing stock were dangerous and left Austin almost unrecognizable by the 1960s. In 1961, African Americans began to move into the

southeast section of Austin (Danns, 2014). Black households often had more children than fleeing White families and relied more on public schools for education. This created a strain on both the housing stock and public schools, as school populations almost doubled during the 1960s, (Seligman, 2005). As this pattern continued, housing stock began to rapidly deteriorate as residents lived in dwellings that were not meant to support oversized family units. With an increase in industrial jobs, many production line workers moved to the West Side for work. Landlords began to cut housing stock by dividing apartments into smaller units to accommodate a growing neighborhood population (Seligman, 2005). Oftentimes, landlords created smaller units without adding new plumbing or electrical lines to accommodate the increased demand on the housing units in general. The deterioration of housing stock in Austin caused White residents to blame the blight and neighborhood decay on the arrival of African Americans in the community.

Chicago's Black population continued to grow; between 1940 and 1950, 214,534 Black residents lived in Chicago, (Hirsch, 1983). By 1960, the population grew to 320,372 residents (Hirsch, 1983). The increase in demand for housing stock from Black families moving into the city left the housing market open for discrimination and mistreatment of its new residents. By 1960, rent paid by Blacks was 10%–25% higher than those paid by Whites for the same dwelling (Hirsch, 1983). Because African Americans were not permitted to rent in many parts of the city, many families had no choice other than to purchase a home at an inflated price. While some White families advocated for integration, others made it difficult for African Americans to enter their neighborhoods.

Many White families contributed to residential segregation through the formation of neighborhood improvement associations. These associations encouraged other White owners in

the neighborhood to avoid selling or renting their properties to African American families, (Satter, 2009). The Chicago Real Estate Board (CREB) helped organize these associations throughout the city and defined areas throughout the city where African Americans could live (Satter, 2009). According to the CREB, “Inasmuch as more territory must be provided, it is desired...that each block shall be filled solidly and that further expansion shall be confined to contiguous blocks” (as cited in Satter, 2009, p. 40). While the Supreme Court had outlawed racial zoning, the CREB organized voluntary block clubs in White neighborhoods to keep African Americans out of their neighborhoods. In addition to block clubs, many Whites also used restrictive covenants to keep African Americans in certain sections of the city, which were legally binding documents that restricted the way in which residents could use or dispose of their property. For example, restrictive covenants outlined that White homeowners could not sell their property to a person of a different race, (Satter, 2009). The concept of blockbusting was also a common practice on the West Side, where residents took advantage of selling to the first African American family in an all-White block in order to profit immensely from the differences that Blacks and Whites paid for housing (Seligman, 2005). The combination of restrictive covenants, blockbusting, and the pressure from neighborhood block associations made it difficult for African Americans to find housing outside of the Black Belt in the city of Chicago.

Aggravating the challenge of finding decent housing in the city, African Americans also endured discrimination on the federal level. Created in 1934, the Federal Housing Association (FHA) racially segregated housing throughout the United States, (Satter, 2009). The FHA offered insurance for mortgages that banks and savings and loan institutions gave to homeowners; however, in the 1930s, the U.S. appraisal industry did not believe in “mixing races,” claiming that it would cause “the decline of both the human race and of property values”

(Satter, 2009, 44–45). Properties were rated on a color scheme, and if a neighborhood had Black residents, it was automatically redlined, which meant that the value of a property, regardless of the social class of the neighborhood, was downgraded by the federal government, (Satter, 2009). In addition to racist mindsets, White homeowners had an economic incentive to not allow African Americans into their neighborhood if their neighborhood wanted to maintain a high property rating through the FHA.

The FHA created detailed maps of neighborhoods and gave them to banks, indicating what would happen to a homogenous neighborhood if the banks provided a mortgage to a person of color. This practice discouraged banks from providing mortgages to African Americans. As a result, most African Americans relied on contract sales in order to become homeowners. According to Satter (2009), African Americans purchased a home on contract or through installments. One missed payment could cause the contract seller to evict the homeowner and resell the unit to a different family (Satter, 2009). In Chicago, African Americans on contract sales had to front a much larger sum of money as a down payment, while White homeowners benefited from the FHA-backed mortgages where they had to place little money down to purchase a home. The housing exploitation that existed on the West Side of the city did nothing to help racial tensions that existed between Whites and Blacks. Additionally, with the steep costs of contract sales, African Americans often had little money left over to maintain and beautify their homes.

Satter (2009) stated that everyone who took part in the explosive market for Black housing was responsible for the crumbling of neighborhoods on the South and West Sides. The FHA, redlining banks, the CREB, the many White residents who participated in harassment, and the Black residents who felt unwelcomed all contributed to an ugly piece of Chicago's history.

This history, however, cannot be ignored because it may explain the racial transitions in Austin High School from 1963–1967, as the neighborhood of Austin began to change block by block.

Power in Public Schools

When Kumashiro (2008) wrote *The Seduction of Common Sense: How the Right Has Framed the Debate on America's Schools*, one sentence stood out: “Common sense does not tell us that this is what schools *could* be doing; it tells us that this and only this is what schools *should* be doing” (p. 5). It explains how common sense can penetrate major tenets of public education and how dangerous it can be in terms of justifying what matters to students.

Kumashiro (2008) drew significantly from Apple (2004), as Apple’s *Ideology and Curriculum* examined the notion of common sense and how it can be a powerful tool in creating curriculum, teaching, and evaluating what is important in public education. According to Apple (2004):

The control of schools, knowledge, and everyday life can be, and is, more subtle for it takes in even seemingly inconsequential moments. The control is vested in the constitutive principles, codes, and especially the commonsense consciousness and practices underlying our lives, as well as by overt economic division and manipulation. (p. 4)

Apple (2004) linked economics to cultural control. Hegemony that persists through economic struggles results in certain groups of individuals being able to control others. Extending this claim further, Apple (2004) discussed the notion of a racial contract:

As Charles Mills reminds us, underpinning so much of the social structure of American life is an unacknowledged *racial contract*. Current neo-liberal and neo-conservative policies in almost every sphere of society—marketization, national curricula, and national testing are representatives of these policies in education—have differential and racializing effects. (Apple, 2004, p. xi)

The effects of certain policies in the field of education target specific racial groups in the United States. The concept of a racial contract is central to the discussion of what transpired during the last decade at Austin High School until its closing in 2006—who made the decisions, how policies affected students, and ultimately what the repercussions were for the school as a whole.

Even when certain groups admit that they possess hegemony, the capitalist culture makes it difficult for different groups to transfer or share power. Apple (2004) cites Italian theorist Gramsci (1971) to further illustrate the point that “a critical element in enhancing the ideological dominance of certain classes is the control of the knowledge preserving and producing institutions of a particular society” (p. 25). Knowledge and the control of knowledge processes are powerful tools. Furthermore, the mere selection of knowledge—what parents teach their children—can have a profound impact on student achievement. Apple (2004) discussed the selection of knowledge in schools and the distribution of that knowledge throughout his first chapter. He (2004) stated that “Raymond Williams’s assertion that education is not a product like bread or cards, but must be seen as a selection and organization from all available social knowledge at a particular time” (p. 15).

Finally, the culturally dominant, those creating the frames and those who are not, is not new in education. Simon de Beauvoir’s (1949) *The Second Sex*, introduced the concepts of *subject* and *other*:

The category of the *other* is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality—that of the Self and the other. This duality was not originally attached to the division of the sexes; it was not dependent upon any empirical facts...Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought...Thus it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself. (p. 2)

Apple (2004) also discussed the other, what it meant to be the other, and how that grouping affected the quality of education in America.

The most crucial themes in Apple's (2004) work are the dialectical relationship between culture and power and the arrangement of school to serve as a mechanism that maintains inequalities. "Cultural invasion, which serves the ends of conquest and the preservation of oppression, always involves a parochial view of reality, a static perception of the world, and the imposition of one world view upon another," (Freire, 1970, p. 160). Apple's (2004) examination of this cultural invasion was compelling, as we observe the transitions for schools that underperform in Chicago.

Apple (2004) argued, "as has been pointed out elsewhere, for example, one important tacit function of schooling seems to be the teaching of different dispositions and values to different school populations" (p. 62). Starting with the reinvention of Austin High School in 2007, advanced manufacturing became a valued part of the curriculum. With the promise of higher paying work and cutting-edge technology, Austin High School became Austin Polytechnical Academy, along with two other small schools, all housed on different floors of the building. Apple (2004) argued, which was evident in the evolution of Austin High School, that it

was not about the actual school itself, but more about the businesses and individuals attached to that school. He (2004) articulated the relationship to power and culture by stating:

First, it sees schools as caught up in a nexus of other institutions—political, economic, and cultural—that are basically unequal. That is, schools exist through their relations to other more powerful institutions, institutions that are combined in such a way as to generate structural inequalities of power and access to resources.” (p. 61)

In the city of Chicago, multiple schools purchased the Project Lead the Way curriculum to frame the advanced manufacturing and engineering foci. However, the question remains, “Why choose engineering for the community of Austin? Are decisions like this happening in all Chicago Public Schools? Or are these decisions just those schools that are chronically underperforming and disproportionately African American?

Apple (2004) contended, “The controversies usually exhibited in schools concerns choices within the parameters of implicitly held rules of activity. Little attempt is made to focus on the parameters themselves” (p. 81). The parameters for Austin Polytechnical Academy were bound by a set curriculum and a power struggle between teachers, administrators, and company partners of the school. The community did not create nor contribute to the instructional foci of the school. Rather, people not from the community, and whose children did not attend Austin Polytechnical Academy set the instructional foci for the school.

Apple (2004) offered the solution that “to change this situation, students’ perceptions of to whom they are to look as holders of ‘expert knowledge’ must be radically altered. In ghetto areas, a partial answer is, perhaps, instituting a more radical perspective in the schools” (p. 95). The problem with this statement is that it is difficult for students to trust and know what is right for themselves and their community. If children are raised around instability and

disempowerment, they struggle with authenticity in thinking. “A miseducated person neither develops independent ideas nor a desire to influence the environment of ideas” (Akbar, 1998, p. 40). However, in many of the failing schools across the city, I would argue that certain communities have been so disempowered that the notion of fighting for something better becomes an impossible task.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is divided into four sections: (a) the history of housing policies in the city of Chicago, (b) the small schools movement, (c) community schooling and control, and (d) venture philanthropy and public–private partnerships in school reform. These sections are critical to the literature review because they will provide insight as to how Austin High School transformed its instructional foci throughout the decades to what it is today, with or without the community’s input and voice. Exploring housing policies and neighborhood spaces will clarify the concept of neighborhood public schools. The small schools movement is an example of an initiative from school innovators to combat the failures found in large, public, neighborhood schools. The general concept for the small schools movement was that students would receive more attention while focusing on a specialized area of interest. The section on community schooling and control discusses the implications of creating initiatives, such as the small schools movement, without proper consideration and input of the neighborhood. Finally, venture philanthropy and public–private partnerships are discussed to explain relationships, which public school systems must navigate in 21st-century school reform.

Chicago Housing

In Chicago, neighborhoods have both implicit and explicit values based on race, class, and culture. Sociologists began drawing Chicago neighborhoods, once referred to as community areas, in the 1920s. The purpose of drawing boundary lines was to study various populations and how they changed over time (Seligman, 2005). In the early 1900s, Chicago neighborhoods shifted in population and other characteristics in response to what was occurring globally and nationally. For example, at the close of World War I and again after World War II, sociologists

documented neighborhood changes in Chicago in response to migrations of individuals into and out of the city, (Seligman, 2005).

Philpott stated that “no large, solidly Negro concentration existed” in Chicago until the 1890s, and by 1900, the Black population suffered an extraordinary degree of segregation and their residential confinement was “nearly complete” (as cited in Hirsch, 1983, p. 3). Hirsch (1983) described the Great Migration of southern Blacks into the city’s South and West Sides between 1890 and 1930 as the making of Chicago’s “second ghetto” (p. 3).

By 1920 the Black Belt extended roughly to 55th Street, between Wentworth and Cottage Grove avenues. Approximately 85% of the city’s nearly 110,000 blacks lived in this area. A second colony existed on the West Side between Austin, Washington Boulevard, California Avenue, and Morgan Street. (Hirsch, 1983, p. 3)

Once the Great Depression hit during the 1930s, however, the pace of migration began to decelerate and Blacks began to settle into specific neighborhood areas on the South and West sides of Chicago.

The pattern of Black settlement in Chicago’s South and West Sides was no coincidence. As white hostility and violence toward new neighbors increased, both informally and privately, Black residents were often restricted to certain areas of residence. The Chicago Real Estate Board (CREB), a professional organization of White Chicago realtors, decided to restrict the movement of Black residents only to “immediately adjoining neighborhoods that already contained black residents. No new areas would be opened until these blocks became entirely black” (Satter, 2009, pp. 40–41). This phenomenon, maintained through the use of restrictive covenants, largely determined which sections of the city were slated for African American residents, but it also targeted the Jewish and Asian populations. According to Satter (2009), a

typical covenant stated that “at no time shall said premises...be sold, occupied, let or leased...to anyone of any race other than the Caucasian, except that this covenant shall not prevent occupancy by domestic servants of a different race domiciled with an owner or tenant” (p. 40). White residents used restrictive covenants to strategically control where Black residents could settle in the city of Chicago; open housing was not available to Black residents.

Another influence on Black settlement in Chicago was the city’s greater plan for urban renewal and redevelopment in the Black Belt areas of the South and West Sides. “Not only was there little construction during the 1930s, but the city began a demolition program in 1934 that destroyed 21,000 substandard housing units; about one-third of the demolition occurred in black areas” (Hirsch, 1983, p. 18). Urban renewal and redevelopment for African American communities meant the erection of massive public housing structures to replace dilapidated homes in decaying neighborhoods. Because housing was so desperately needed in the Black community, most individuals welcomed housing projects such as Ida B. Wells, Robert H. Brooks, and the Altgeld Gardens.

This led to Alice and Wonderland convolutions: to build public housing for those displaced by urban renewal, the CHA first had to clear land in the Black Belt, but by clearing this land it displaced yet more black people, who were left to seek housing in a city where the vast majority of neighborhoods were closed to them. (Satter, 2009, p. 49)

Due to overcrowding on the city’s South and West Sides, many landlords took their properties and divided them into smaller units to meet the housing demands of newcomers. A census conducted in 1934 revealed that the average Black household contained 6.8 persons compared to 4.7 persons found in the average White household; 66% of the White families studied had fewer than 1 person per room, while only 25.8% of the Black families met that same

measure (Hirsch, 1983). As multiple families packed into smaller units, it was not unusual for these homes to lack electricity and plumbing or to have a single bathroom for all of the families on one floor to share. Luxury apartments were converted into kitchenettes, which were smaller units that were separated from one another with glass doors. By the conclusion of World War II, however, the Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council (MHPC) stepped in to urge cities to review, renew, and reinforce building codes, (Satter 2009).

In 1947, the MHPC drafted the Illinois Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act, which was supposed to facilitate urban renewal for the city of Chicago by establishing a public agency called the Land Clearance Commission. The commission was charged to acquire land in blighted areas, demolish whatever structures existed, and sell the land to private investors who promised to build new, more profitable structures on site (Satter, 2009). After the first redevelopment project was completed, however, it was evident that the commission had an agenda to push African Americans away from the city's downtown area, including a well-established Black community that bordered the southern edge of downtown. Despite pleas to not to demolish an area where the majority of properties were "resident-owned, its taxes paid, and its maintenance above par" (Satter, 2009, p. 48), the neighborhood was razed and Lake Meadows, a middle-class housing complex, was built in its place. For those residents from areas that were targeted for demolition, the Redevelopment Act, a companion measure to the Illinois Relocation Act, allocated money for only 15% of those displaced by urban renewal. The remainder of the displaced families had to find housing without aid from the state (Satter, 2009).

As the city pushed its agenda to renew and redevelop certain areas, many African American families found it difficult to move into new neighborhood spaces due to restrictive covenants and housing financing. The Federal Housing Authority (FHA), which shaped the

nation's banking and savings and loan industries, contributed to restrictive financing for African Americans by creating appraisal-rating maps. These were detailed neighborhood maps that ranked properties in a descending scheme of A (green), B (blue), C (yellow), and D (red).

If a neighborhood had Black residents it was marked as a D, or red, no matter what their social class or how small a percentage of the population they made up. These neighborhoods' properties were appraised as worthless or likely to decline in value, (Satter, 2009, p 42).

As Black families looked for housing stock in the city, it was difficult to obtain a loan to move into a White neighborhood. Banks were hesitant to approve loans that would devalue a neighborhood, and appraisal maps were created solely based on race. White property owners in turn did not want Black families to move into their neighborhoods because it would lower the value of their homes and neighborhood.

Whites who opposed blacks moving into their neighborhoods feared the loss of neighborhood stabilization—meaning that a neighborhood would not turn over racially from white to black. In some communities, whites fought to stay in their homes in an attempt to delay black encroachment and maintain stabilization. (Danns, 2014, p. 21)

With few options for housing and more individuals moving into the city, many Black residents were left to share units that were not meant to support more than one family. As Seligman (2005) described overcrowding on the West Side, a property owner:

Decried absentee landlords' practice of renting small apartments to large families in his neighborhood. It is impossible for a family of adults and children over five in number to live decently in three and four bedroom apartments which have only one bedroom...It isn't fair to the responsible property owner who is endeavoring to keep his property up

and who consistently turns away undesirable tenants, many times at a financial loss.”

(Seligman, 2005, p. 52)

African American residents had no other options. They could not move outside of the Black Belt due to restrictive covenants, yet they also could not move to certain areas within the Black Belt due to urban renewal and redevelopment. It was difficult to attain a fair mortgage and Whites did not want Black residents moving into their neighborhoods. Chicago city housing was not designed to be fair and policies ensured that discrimination against African Americans would continue for decades.

The Small Schools Movement

As neighborhoods began to change in terms of demographics and student needs, initiatives commenced throughout inner city schools to work with students who entered public neighborhood high schools deficient in reading and math skills. One of these initiatives included the small schools movement, an educational approach that originated in New York and moved to Chicago with tremendous initial success.

Meier (1995) wrote *The Power of Their Ideas* in order to share with others the stories from Central Park East (CPE), a conglomerate of four small, public high schools in New York City. Central Park East served as a model for the small schools movement before it trickled to other urban districts across the country. The school was a teacher-run building that embraced strong family-to-school relationships and developing the whole child. According to Meier (1995):

Small size is a major factor in improving schools and an absolutely essential one for the kind of pedagogical exploration we are talking about...Where schools are large and

anonymous choices are largely made on the basis of who attends the school, not the kind of education offered. (p. 202)

For those who worked in CPE, the small schools initiative demanded the input of parents, community, and teachers. It also emphasized locality and participation of its members.

At the school level, unique values emerged from the small schools movement. An emphasis on small professional learning communities empowered teachers to be leaders in their buildings. Large, urban schools often breed an environment of isolation for teachers, while small schools are given the time and structure for teachers to meet and plan together. “In such settings, professional development is often enhanced by teaming and by small task-oriented group formations. For instance, teacher teams may work on interdisciplinary units or on personalized learning plans for all students,” (Klonsky & Klonsky, 2008, p. 164). For teams of teachers, it was common for them to share students and collaborate on interdisciplinary projects. In this sense, teacher collaboration became a necessity for effective planning. At CPE, the school’s structure was organized so teachers could visit each other’s classrooms, provide teacher-to-teacher feedback, and plan as a team (Meier, 1995).

The bottom line remained: the staff continued to be central to all decisions, big and small...This has actually meant more time for discussing those issues that concern us most: how children learn, how our classes really work, what changes we ought to be making and on what basis. (Meier, 1995, p. 202)

Working at a small school meant that teachers had the time to work collaboratively as grade-level teams and departments, self-facilitate professional development activities, provide feedback to fellow teachers, and examine student work and progress as a team (Klonsky & Klonsky,

2008). These experiences made the small schools model unique for teachers. Top-down reform was de-emphasized because teachers were seen as the greatest agents of change and progress.

In addition to a unique adoption of teacher leadership, small schools work necessitated community engagement, rather than relying on outside organizations or district mandates, to shape the quality of education in the building. A common notion that exists in public education is that public schools need to be managed by outside professionals in order to be effective.

Progressive educators such as those at CPE maintain that this belief must be challenged.

If you provide avenues for students, families, and community members to contribute in meaningful and substantive ways to the process of education, you can build a foundation that will extend and help protect the integrity of your work in classrooms over the long haul. (Ayers, Kumashiro, Meiners, Quinn, & Stovall, 2010, p. 67)

This was the idea behind the creation of small schools. Community investment meant that all stakeholders would participate in creating an educative experience that was relevant and meaningful for all students in the building. In small schools, teaching and learning was a process that meant including low-income/working-class, of color, and typically female parents and community members, rather than utilizing professionals to create the mission and vision of a school (Ayers, et al., 2010). The direct involvement of families, teachers, and staff was a central tenet in how a small school prioritized its learning goals and philosophy of education.

According to Meier (1995):

The CPE approach placed a heavier burden on public school choice as a form of parental empowerment, on the judicious use of advisory boards and parent councils for input, on openness and accessibility, and above all on the power and frequency of individual school/family relationships. (p. 202)

This is critical when examining how the small schools initiative in New York compares to the evolution and challenges of the small schools movement throughout other urban districts. In Chicago in 1991, a group of university professors and public schools teachers created the Small Schools Workshop. Central Park East High School inspired the movement, and the buzz around parent and student participation spread quickly to other neighborhood schools located throughout inner cities in the United States. According to Klonsky and Klonsky (2008), “the small schools movement was grounded in the histories and theories of the Civil Rights Movement, Deweyan progressive education, teacher professional communities, and personalized learning environments” (as cited in Lipman, 2011). The movement began with the goal to support the development of several small high schools and teacher-initiated charter schools (Lipman, 2011). While it started small, the hope was to inspire bigger changes, particularly rethinking how traditional, large urban schools served students in the city of Chicago.

By the mid-1990s, however, the influence of major venture philanthropists, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and other local funders complicated the small schools movement in Chicago. The movement began to shift away from principles of teacher autonomy, democracy, and social justice, and began to move toward incorporating “business metaphors, accountability metrics, and a corporate franchise model to replicate a prototype to be imposed on teachers and communities” (Lipman, 2011, p. 112). As Meier (1995) wrote about the need to have proper funding to make these schools work, it was often difficult to balance the need for financial support with a corporate agenda. According to an interview with a small schools leader, “It dawned on me that what Gates funding was about was they wanted to hire me/us to manage their \$20 million initiative in Chicago... This wasn’t an empowerment thing. It was a way to bring the money in and the big power guys would hire us to implement their program” (as

cited in Lipman, 2011). Some scholars criticized that the Gates Foundation did not understand that the Small Schools Workshop in Chicago was not a one-size-fits-all model that could be implemented uniformly throughout the city. The strategy of small schools in Chicago was to craft an educational model for each individual school from input given by the schools' communities, teachers, and families.

When the mass replication of a small, cookie-cutter school model did not work, the Gates Foundation moved on to other ventures, (Lipman, 2011). This marked the end of the small schools movement in Chicago because without the extra money from outside funders, many of the small schools experienced difficulty in surviving under the new student-based budget (SBB). Chicago Public Schools implemented SBB during the 2012-2013 school year, with funds being allocated to schools based on the number of students enrolled in the school building. Fewer students in a school meant fewer dollars allocated for schools. The pattern that emerged for schools with small populations of students placed a strain on teachers. In some small schools, many teachers lost their positions. The educators who survived teacher cuts taught three or four different classes in order to compensate for the shortage of personnel in the building. "After Gates entered the picture, all small schools funding in Chicago was pooled, so there were no alternative sources of funding for teachers who wanted to continue to initiate small schools on the original model" (Lipman, 2011, p. 112). What Meier (1995) had written as an alternative story to public education was no longer viable, as a new budgeting model would change the way that administrators staffed their buildings.

Community Schooling and Control

The concept of a neighborhood school defines a community and the demographics of students in urban districts. In cities such as Chicago, New York, and Detroit, where a student is

born and the neighborhood in which he or she lives usually determines the school he or she will attend. The Chicago School Reform Act of 1988 addressed the issue of community and parental input into neighborhood schools through the creation of local school councils (LSCs). Chief functions of an LSC included hiring principals and creating a budget aligned with instructional priorities outlined in the school's improvement plan, (Lipman, 2011). In 1995, however, the School Reform Act changed to allow a board of trustees and Chicago Public School's chief executive officer, appointed by the city's mayor, the power to intervene in low-performing schools (Lipman, 2011). "The 1995 reform spawned a revolving door of top-down accountability driven interventions, including centrally mandated and directed programs, staff development, curriculum, pedagogy, budgetary and administrative decisions, and teacher monitoring" (Lipman, 2011, p. 41). This type of reform would remove power from LSCs and give more control to the mayor and his appointed school board.

Ownership and investment in neighborhood public schools has historically been a contentious issue. "The polarization within the schools and between schools and the community speaks volumes about power and conflict in the service of narrow, and ultimately self-defeating, conceptions of self-interest," (Sarason, 1979, p. 294). When the community and school are not equally sharing in important decisions, this polarization becomes exacerbated. According to Sarason (1979), "those who are or may be affected by the change should have some part in the change process because only through such involvement can they become committed to the change" (p. 294). However, when multiple stakeholders are involved in a school, and all with different self-interests and motives, it can be a difficult process to engage all stakeholders fairly.

Apple (2004) discussed this phenomenon as "dominant groups defining educational agendas," (as cited in Watkins, 2012, p. x in the Foreword). As schools trend toward fostering

public–private partnerships, corporate sponsorships, and external partners, tension can be placed on the community–school relationship due to the input from new stakeholders. According to Apple (2004), “dominant groups have actively engaged in a vast social/pedagogical process, one in which what counts as a good school, good knowledge, good teaching, and good learning is being radically transformed” (as cited in Watkins, 2012). Another obstacle is the time it takes for all constituencies to work together and compromise to make decisions that are best for a school (Sarason, 1979). “It not only takes time, but it almost always is a frustrating experience precisely because there are many constituencies differing in outlook and self-interest” (Sarason, 1979, p. 296). In urban districts across the nation, the search for school leaders who can balance the self-interests of all stakeholders while still empowering his or her community and parents is no easy task. This is particularly true in schools where complex relationships exist and where fiscal power may come from varying self-interested stakeholders.

According to Lipman (2011), “Areas that were home to low-income communities of color are foci of public-private partnerships, gentrification complexes, privatization, and de-democratization through mayoral takeovers of public institutions and corporate-led governance bodies” (as cited in Watkins, 2012, p. 37). In Chicago, the creation of Renaissance 2010 (Ren2010) schools, backed by the Commercial Club of Chicago (CCC), is a prime example of this shift of power from LSCs to other entities such as private corporations that have influence over school funding and resources. According to Lipman (2011), “Ren2010 eliminates elected Local School Councils comprised primarily of parents and community members (mainly working-class people of color), with the power to hire the school principal and approve the budget and school improvement plan” (as cited in Watkins, 2012, p. 39). The Ren2010 concept of removing LSCs as the school’s main body of governance diminished community power and

control for many struggling schools across the district, (Lipman, as cited in Watkins, 2012). According to Katz (1992), the LSCs “asserted the capacity of ordinary citizens to reach intelligent decisions about educational policy” (ibid.). Eliminating the standing LSCs created space for corporate and other public–private entities to have input in how a school should operate. “Thus, the contest over Ren2010 is partly a contest over democracy and who should have a voice in public affairs,” (ibid.). In schools under the Ren2010 umbrella, the dominant group is valued and its voice overpowers that of the school’s community and families. With few options in quality education, individuals who do not work directly in the school and do not have children attending the school make the educational decisions. This contradicts Sarason’s (1979) assertion that school ownership and responsibility should rest with those most directly impacted by the decisions.

When dominant groups exert control in a school setting, the implicit message is that the experts have an opinion that carries more weight than that of the immediate neighborhood. Saltman (2012) argued that “it also ‘de-publicizes’ public schooling by suggesting that private businesspeople should have the power to designate and influence the determination of what is valuable knowledge for students to learn,” (as cited in Watkins, 2012, p. 71). Finally, as schools shift toward these outside partnerships, there is a battle for control over what constitutes academic success. “The 1995 reform spawned a revolving door of top-down accountability-driven interventions, including centrally mandated and directed programs, staff development, curriculum pedagogy, and teacher monitoring” (Lipman, 2011, p. 41). Schools that must balance relationships with outside partners oftentimes compromise their own mission, vision, and voice without having the resources to successfully compromise with all stakeholders.

The significance of a local school council is its potential to foster the democratic participation of a school's parents and community members. According to Lipman (2012), "Ren2010 epitomizes the democratic deficits of neoliberal policy generally, as decisions about public transportation, housing, development, and infrastructure are made by mayor-appointed boards, public-private entities, and experts..." (Lipman as cited in Watkins, 2011, p. 39). An aspect of an authentic democratic livelihood is the ability to participate in school governance. The fact that this right is removed for a disproportionate number of low-income, minority communities is problematic because there is no avenue for public investment and participation. According to Massey (1993), "the 'change/regeneration' discourse is deeply racialized. It dismisses all aspects of existing communities of color as uniformly bad, denying the actual complexity of neighborhoods which are 'realigned to being merely a matter of their being 'behind' in the historical queue'" (as cited in Lupton & Tunstall, 2008, p. 112; as cited in Lipman, 2011, p. 65). It should not be a surprise that along with declines in enrollment for neighborhood public schools, families find themselves feeling undervalued and without a voice in being able to improve their neighborhood public school. As Imbroscio (2008) argued, "genuine 'choice' should also mean ensuring 'the right to stay put' and the upgrading of one's own community" (as cited in Lipman, 2011, p. 54). However, as long as local relationships face strain in light of other stakeholders' self-interests, it is difficult to convince parents and community members to invest in their neighborhood schools.

Venture Philanthropy and Public-Private Partnerships in School Reform

Business interests in public schools have paved a new path in educational reform. Scholars critical of the business aspect in education claim that educational management companies, venture philanthropists, and public-private partnerships may cause more harm than

progress for public schools. The business aspect of the charter company that came into Austin High School and the conflicting agenda of the public-private partnership at Austin Polytechnical Academy are two examples of how educational reform had a negative impact at Austin High School. According to Saltman (2009), “venture philanthropy treats schooling as a private consumable service and promotes business remedies, reforms, and assumptions with regard to public schooling,” (as cited in Lipman, 2011, p.105). The concern with assumptions about public schooling and the decision over what should be taught in schools and what is valued will impact a school’s mission and vision. When public schools create these partnerships, the community must acknowledge an additional stakeholder when deciding the educational direction for its students. In some schools, this may look like a particular instructional focus, such as manufacturing, technology, or engineering. In other instances, the stakeholder may be external, such as an internship program or apprenticeship. The stakeholder may also be influential in school purchases such as instructional materials. These stakeholders possess the power to make school-based decisions, and the possibility exists that not all decisions will be in the best interest of the children.

In the past 15 years, philanthropy has leveraged market-driven, managerial education reform agendas in the United States and beyond...City government reliance on public-private partnerships, the centrality of cities to capital accumulation, and the race and class inequalities that threaten urban social stability put cities at the center of foundation strategies, (Lipman and Jenkins, 2011, p. 100).

In urban districts, low-income communities of color are arguably the most susceptible to these partnerships. Rather than face a school closure or school-turnaround, the option for

restructuring a failing school may appear to be the least disruptive to a community. Behind the school's renaissance, however, exists a political and economic agenda that undermines the democracy of our public school system. According to Saltman (2012):

This is no small matter in terms of how the public and civic roles of public schooling have become nearly overtaken by the economistic neoliberal perspective that views public schooling as principally a matter of producing workers and consumers for the economy and for global economic competition, (as cited in Watkins, 2012, p. 56).

For example, if a school's external partners desire an advanced manufacturing curriculum in order to produce students who will be qualified to work in their factories, the instructional piece cannot be compromised. Once this partnership is created, it is difficult for the school to shift in any direction that strays from the mission and vision of its venture partners because money and resources are woven into the relationship. According to Saltman (2012), "the seed money desperately sought by underfunded schools allows the venture philanthropists to 'leverage' influence over educational policy and planning, curriculum and instructional practices, and the very idea of what it means to be an educated person" (as cited in Watkins, 2012, p. 57). The economic dependability between underfunded public schools and external partners creates a dynamic that undermines community input and democratic ideals. Despite any altruistic factors for beginning a partnership, money is being exchanged for some sort of good or production. In the case of public schools, money and other resources are being leveraged for the production of students with a certain subset of skills and/or knowledge.

What distinguished the Gates Foundation from other foundations such as Soros and Ford, which also share an interest in public education reform, is the amount of money at its

disposal and the strategic dedication of its powerful social network and economic resources to advance a narrow band of public policies. (Fabricant & Fine, 2012, p. 64)

It is through the funneling of money and resources into both public and charter schools that foundations such as Gates and Broad are able to maintain a strong political, social, and economic agenda that affects the lives of thousands of young students.

Concerns exist as to why the treatment of education as a consumable commodity is problematic. Saltman (2010) stated, “as privatization and managerialism become more acceptable as school reform, information becomes more and more a saleable commodity the value of which is decreasingly social and increasingly economic” (p. 133). Mauss (1922) elaborated upon this idea in his work, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Mauss (1922) argued that there was no such thing as a free gift, because in all societies he had encountered, the giving of a gift created an obligation for some type of exchange. In some instances, the exchange was social, and in others, the reciprocity was economic in nature. According to Mauss (1922), different systems of exchange govern societies (cited in Saltman, 2010). “All societies for Mauss are reproduced through exchange practices. Collectively, gift-giving forges social obligations and recreates the society through transactions and associated rituals,” (Saltman, 2010, p. 133). While Mauss (1922) originally wrote of archaic societies, Saltman (2010) used his work to detail what occurs in modern society when these types of exchanges are made.

Saltman (2010) described educational economism as the relationship that forms when a social obligation is created in exchange for public education.

For neoliberalism, there is a twofold obligation that the individual owes to the society for the gift of public education: the individual’s education is expected to contribute to the

national effort in global economic competition, and the individual is responsible for optimizing the educational system towards the end of upward individual economic mobility. (Saltman, 2010, p. 134)

Gramsci (1971) distinguished two types of intellectuals: (a) traditional intellectuals, and (b) organic intellectuals. Traditional intellectuals learn to produce knowledge in order to maintain a certain class system, while organic intellectuals learn to produce knowledge for the working class (Gramsci, 1971). Saltman (2010) used Gramsci's (1971) distinction to argue that professionalization of certain careers over others creates an elite group that is controlled through social capital. For example, society holds a different regard for professions such as medicine and law versus a profession in a factory. By creating public schools that specifically prepare students for a certain type of career, the current class system is preserved. Saltman argues the professionalization agenda leads certain people to have knowledge (professionals), which in turn also gives them control over other forms of capital (economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital), (Saltman, 2010). Furthermore, the reduction of a high school education as the means to economic ends diminishes the concept of education being holistic and enlightening. This takes us back to the very question: Education for whom?

The danger of corporate philanthropy and private-public partnerships is that it threatens the democracy that is inherent in the public school system. The voice of community becomes compromised when a stakeholder with economic influence exerts greater control over a school. This compromise not only diminishes neighborhood and community input, it also has the potential to dictate an instructional program that may not be the best fit for all children in the building. According to Saltman (2010):

Venture philanthropists are self-appointed political actors, who, by dint of their superwealth, operate in the space between the state and society to engineer public policy, without public discussion or control. In reshaping urban education they also help reshape the city, affecting the lives of millions of primarily low-income working class people of color. (Saltman, 2010, p. 52)

While the intention of most relationships formed between public schools and external partners is not to harm the children, the literature shows that these relationships are difficult to maintain. Studying Austin High School will explore the evolution of its curriculum and instructional foci while remembering the platform for its changes and eventual closure.

III. METHODOLOGY

This work is an archival study of Austin High School, as the school presents a fascinating study of the intersection between school, neighborhood, and city politics. Archival research is an examination of primary source documents, maps, charts, and any other relevant historical data that can be gathered to learn more about a particular phenomenon. As a former teacher at Austin High School, I understand the school represents a larger story of neglect, disinvestment, and renaissance that we see in many neighborhood Chicago Public Schools. The fate of this school rests upon those who are willing to stand up for its historical value to the neighborhood of Austin. I also believe that the only way this building will survive is through intentional, strategic planning, authentic community input, and investment in the surrounding neighborhood.

In order to address the phenomenon of how housing policies and desegregation efforts contributed to the transformation of Austin High School, data were collected from several archives throughout the city of Chicago. The first archive is the *Austin Community Collection, 1860–1981*, housed in the Chicago Public Library. The collection is a historical source of demographic, economic, cultural, social, political, and religious developments in the Austin neighborhood. According to the archive description from the Chicago Public Library from the Austin Collection, “school has been in session in Austin since 1872 when the North School was first erected on what today is the site of Francis Scott Key School” (p. 1). The collection includes brochures, fliers, historical sketches, and clippings from newspapers and publications. A series in the collection is separated for Austin High School, which includes clippings from the 1960s–1980s.

The second data collection source examined is from the archives of the Chicago History Museum. This collection has a series of papers from Cyrus Hall Adams III, dated 1958–1968.

In December 1963, Mayor Richard J. Daley appointed Adams to the Chicago Board of Education. It was during this period of time that the Board grappled over the concept of racial integration in public schools. Topics in this series include the Hauser (1964) and Havighurst (1964) reports and methods used by Chicago Public Schools to achieve racial integration, including mobile classrooms, voluntary transfer plans, and bussing systems. According to a summary of the archives, “the issue of integration of the schools is reflected in many documents throughout the collection, including the correspondence among board members and the General Superintendents and numerous letters from Chicago citizens and civic organizations including the Citizen School Committee” (Uhl, 1983, p. 1). The Cyrus Hall papers consist of correspondence, meeting minutes, financial and other reports, transcripts of board hearings and meetings, news clippings, and other printed materials from the time when Hall was a board member (Uhl, 1983). This collection also includes documents and articles printed in response to Hauser’s (1964) report and the debate over compensatory services for culturally deprived areas of the city.

The final archive is the archives of the Chicago Public Schools. Prior to the closing of Austin High School in June 2007, there was a site visit to the school for a collection of historical and archival materials. This collection included yearbooks, newspaper clippings, student newspapers, and reports conducted by the North Central Association. The Chicago Public Schools archival description of Austin High School states:

By the early 1960s, however, there was rapid racial change with the influx of young black families with children who replaced the largely middle-aged White population. At the same time the public schools became overcrowded, new school buildings were

constructed, and most of the churches took on a new lease on life as black congregations, (p. 1).

The historical sources in this archive were invaluable to the study of the transformation of Austin High School in relation to its changing neighborhood space from the late 1950s into the early 1970s.

The data were coded into three sections: (a) desegregation efforts implemented in the Austin neighborhood by the Chicago Board of Education; (b) housing policies and practices in the Austin neighborhood; and (c) the transformation of Austin High School in relation to racial demographics, academic performance of its students, and implementation of various curricular and instructional programs. The data were classified in this way in order to determine whether there was a relationship between changes in the neighborhood and changes in Chicago Public Schools policy, and whether there were effects on the student population of Austin High School.

Philosophical Assumptions and Approach to the Study

Findings and implications from this study were constructed based on the philosophical assumptions of an advocacy and participatory approach. According to Creswell (2009), “this position arose during the 1980s and 1990s from individuals who felt that the postpositivist assumptions imposed structural laws and theories that did not fit marginalized individuals in our society or issues of social justice that needed to be addressed” (p. 9). The literature review indicated patterns of discrimination, oppression, and inequality; therefore, I chose the advocacy and participatory worldview as an appropriate lens for my research.

In addition to an advocacy and participatory approach to the research, theoretical perspectives were used to construct findings and implications. The theoretical lens is significant

to consider because it will indicate the connections between policy and impact on Austin High School. In particular, I have drawn from critical race theory and used authors such as Apple (2004), Lipman (2011), and Gramsci (1971) to explain why racial inequality has been at the forefront of many educational, political, and social battles around the city of Chicago.

Beyond theory, my personal experience in Chicago Public Schools taught me that race matters. I began teaching at the age of 22 in the summer of 2006. Every morning, I boarded at 51st Street and rode to Central Avenue on the Green Line. When the train arrived at the Ashland stop, all White residents exited that train except for me. My students used to joke about it as they walked off the line at Pulaski, Conservatory Central Park, and Cicero stops into a historically disinvested neighborhood now teeming with liquor establishments, J & J Fish joints, and currency exchanges. My hope is to explain what happened to this neighborhood public school and what must happen in the future if we want to see change.

As I continued to make trips to the archives, there were specific archival pieces where I chose to focus my attention:

Chicago Public Schools Desegregation Efforts

There was evidence in the 1966 permissive transfer plan Board report under Superintendent Willis revealing how white students used permissive transfers at Austin High School to leave due to the growing population of African American students. The permissive transfer report not only documented the number of students who left, but it also indicated that Austin would be removed from the permissive transfer list the following year due to the fact that white families leaving Austin were using the transfers inappropriately.

After this plan failed, there was a busing plan piloted for Austin High School under Superintendent Redmond and announced on January 8, 1968. Specifically designed for students

residing in the Austin neighborhood, the busing plan had four goals: to relieve severe overcrowding in the sending schools, to promote community racial stabilization, to increase desegregation, and to improve the educational experiences of the students involved. Christopher Chandler wrote an article on this pilot entitled, “Redmond Discloses the Details of Plans for Busing 1,035 Pupils,” in the *Chicago Sun-Times* on January 9, 1968. I wanted to investigate more on this pilot program, and I wanted to see if this pilot affected student demographics and academic achievement at Austin High School.

Finally, in the appendix of a report sent to Superintendent Joseph Hannon from the Office of Civil Rights in 1969, there is more evidence of the negative impact from desegregation efforts under Superintendent Willis. In the appendix of this report, I was able to find information about the Willis wagons, which were extensions added onto existing school buildings that housed African American students. The reason why Willis wagons were so controversial was because they were chosen over the option of creating a more robust busing program for the Austin neighborhood when schools became overcrowded in the mid-1960s. Located in the *Appendix to Letter of Ineligibility to the Chicago Public School District under the Emergency School Aid Act*, (Record Group 60, Box 98, National Archives), the document was able to detail the specifics concerning the weaknesses of Permissive Transfers and Bussing Plans provided by the city in their failed efforts to desegregate Austin High School. The effects of permissive transfers and the pilot-busing program were devastating to Austin, and the consequences of these plans will be discussed more in depth in chapters four and five of this work.

North Central Association Visitations and Evaluations

The North Central Association was an organization used in educational accreditation for at least 19 states around the country. North Central was one of six regional accreditation bodies

that was recognized by the United States Department of Education. The body dissolved in 2014, and the primary and secondary education accreditation functions are now performed through a new body known as AdvancEd. At my last visit to the archives, I was able to find two reports written about Austin High School from the North Central Association that detail everything from teacher morale, to background of the neighborhood and academic achievement of students at Austin High School. These reports were used extensively to define the transformation in instructional foci and the disinvestment evidenced at Austin High School after the African American population of students increased during the 1960s. I will discuss the details of these reports in chapters four and five.

Letters Demanding Boundary Changes and Board of Education Intentions

Letters were collected from local residents and parents of children attending Austin High School were sent to Mayor Richard J. Daley and Superintendent Redmond regarding boundary changes for Austin High School, beginning in 1967. I coded as many letters as I could find and compared those requests to when the Board approved boundary changes across the city and in Austin. From this set of data I could ascertain if the proposed boundary changes correlated to a change in the racial demographics at the high school. I also used these letters to examine the coded language of “racial stabilization” and “racial balance” in the Austin community. What did that mean for African American residents of the community? These letters were critical to my analysis of community intentions, which will be discussed in chapters four and five.

In addition to letters from individual residents, there were also sets of letters in the archives from local businesses in the Austin community. For example, “The Austin Business Council (ABC) was formed early in 1965 by businessmen and professional men who live and work in the Austin community. The main objectives of the Council are to maintain and improve

wherever possible, the high standards of the Austin community by coordinating and consolidating the affairs, governmental services, business ethics, law enforcement, public safety and educational opportunities,” (*The Austinite*, December 14th, 1966, 1). This was one of the major groups that emerged in the archives when I started my initial research. I was also able to find multiple letters sent to the Austin Business Council from other local businesses regarding the change of boundary lines for Austin High School.

From this archival research I became interested in the contrasts between Board intentions and requests from the community beginning in March of 1967. The request from the ABC was to restore the old boundaries of Austin High School. These lines were the Belt line Railroad on the east, Austin Boulevard on the west, Roosevelt Road on the south and the Milwaukee Railway on the north. In a position paper written by the Christian Action Ministry in April of 1967, it is stated that if the east boundary is moved west from Keeler to the Belt Line Railroad, that “racial balance” had an opportunity to be preserved. The hidden language, or the implicit messages that I analyzed in these letters is another theme that will be discussed in chapters four and five of this paper.

Redlining the neighborhood within Austin High School’s boundaries and the impact of restrictive covenants:

I collected documentation related to restrictive covenants, housing discrimination, housing contracts and racial demographics of the neighborhood within the boundary lines of Austin High School from 1960-1970. From this inquiry I wanted to create a timeline that overlaid neighborhood changes with pilot programs for busing, permissive transfers, or any other Board action over Austin High School. Discriminatory housing policies were found to exacerbate the racial tensions felt at Austin High School between Black and White residents.

Furthermore, when residents of Austin attempted to combat the practices of panic peddling and redlining, documents show little support given from city government. The purposeful act of ignoring the requests from Austin residents to discipline panic peddlers in the neighborhood is another theme of disinvestment that will be discussed in the final two chapters of this paper.

IV: FINDINGS

Chicago's Austin High School: Truth Speaks

Since 2006, I have lived, breathed, and tried to understand Austin High School. I taught my students, I loved them, cried with them, and watched them graduate. I have shared in their successes and their challenges. I have lost some of my students to the streets, and I have also seen my students through college. So many educators and children have walked through the double doors of Austin High School at 231 North Pine Avenue. I feel an urgency to write this story because after all the changes in public education, particularly in Chicago, I do not want to lose the institutional memory, the historical oxygen, of Austin High School. Why should I write a story of Austin High School? Austin is a unique iteration of the larger shared narrative of public schools across the country. The names of the kids change, sometimes there are different triumphs and challenges, however, the message of all stories like Austin remain the same: *the disinvestment in our public schools system is a nation-wide crisis, and it cannot be silenced any longer.*

Whether you choose to singularly blame housing policy, the inability to address population spikes during the Great Migration, lack of support for teachers, or machine politics, it doesn't change the fact that in the late 1950s and early 1960s, children were knowingly placed into schools that exacerbated de facto segregation in the city of Chicago. De facto segregation created disinvestment in certain schools and neighborhoods around the city, and Austin High School is one that has suffered great casualties. In education, we use terms like "reconstitution" and "change of instructional foci" to label our casualties in a figurative sense. We buy a new series of books or maybe even change the leadership team to rename something that broke along

the way in our school buildings. This is one way to look at how the actions of a school system (and its supporting actors) have failed us, and how they have failed our children.

There are six young boys from the last ten years who sat in my classroom. They will not go to college. They will not work; they will not start their own families. These are young boys who I lost because they could not find home in their school. They could not connect to the one place where they should feel safe, where they should feel like they can do anything and be anybody. But for the majority of Black and Brown babies walking into inner-city buildings every day, school doesn't work like that anymore. School is not your home, and education is not the key that frees you, not always.

The point of telling Austin High School's story is that this is NOT an exception to the rule. The transformations we see in large public school districts around the United States are not happenstance. They are deliberate effects of what happens when you ignore the casualties of disinvestment; when your plan to improve a school is simply to come up with a new plan; that does not provide discourse about the wound that breathes underneath your next brilliant plan. That is what I hope to discuss in the final two chapters of this work.

In 1967, the Chicago Board of Education employed John E. Coons, Arthur Johnson, and Michael D. Usdan as consultants for developing a plan towards integrating Chicago Public Schools, (Coons, Johnson, and Usdan, 1967). These men were charged with two important tasks. The first task was a deep review of the attendance boundaries and assignment of children in Chicago Public Schools. The second task was to brainstorm a plan that would reduce segregation in elementary and high schools across the district.

“There will be no panacea for the problem of racial segregation but our purpose will have been achieved if we have been helpful in providing just a few

approaches that will lead down the road toward a more integrated and democratic society,” (Coons, Johnson and Usdan, 1967, B-15).

If only the consultants and Board members understood the drastic consequences of their actions and policies adopted during the 1960s. Providing “just a few approaches” in order to achieve integration in what became one of the most segregated school systems in America was an injustice to inner-city children everywhere. To read those casual words within the introduction of a working paper, a paper supposedly drafted by experts, breaks my heart into a million pieces. It also serves as the impetus to write vignettes of Austin High School.

Vignette 1: Permissive Transfers and Austin High School

“I simply know that every school, what you’ve done before was to even up population by changing boundary lines, haven’t you? Isn’t that what you’ve done. That what we did the meeting before this...”

“Yes, but Warren, now we supposedly have a lot of people dedicated to integration,” (Board member Bacon and board member Wild, Verbatim Transcript of the minutes of the meeting of the special committee on the Hauser Report, p. 42, June 3rd, 1964).

Transcript after transcript, meeting minutes, memos, and letters—the Chicago Board of Education had a tremendous undertaking in 1960s to transform its segregated school populations across the city. Chicago was not alone. The 1964 Civil Rights Act called an end to segregation, and inner city school districts across the country scrambled to devise plans that could delicately and deliberately assign children to integrated schools. Board members clamored with parents and community members over boundary changes as the wholesome concept of a “neighborhood school,” was now being called into question.

It was evident that neighborhoods in Chicago were indeed segregated, and per the neighborhood school policy students would attend school based on where they resided in the city, despite dissent amongst Board members. As Warren Bacon wrote honestly in a report to the Board, “...the Committee was repeatedly asked to investigate what open enrollment plans were in operation in other cities and how they have worked out. This was refused...we have failed in our assignment and thrown out the taxpayers’ good money that we invested in the expert Panel,” (Bacon, 1964, 2). Even with expert surveys and reports from the University of Chicago about

how to facilitate integration in Chicago, Superintendent Benjamin Willis remained adamant about Chicago students attending neighborhood public schools.

It was March of 1964 when Dr. Hauser and his team released a report to the Board concerning segregation in Chicago's Public Schools. In this work, Hauser stated, "It is unfortunate that during the prolonged period of controversy the Board of Education did not move earlier and more rapidly in a determined and creative manner to resolve the problem of school integration," (Hauser, 1964, p. 42). With each school year that passed without decisive action, school populations continued to increase, and segregation within school populations worsened.

But that same year, a cluster plan was proposed in the fall of 1964, with Austin and Marshall High Schools being two of the proposed redistributions of student populations. Parents and community members knew that the student demographics at Austin High School would begin to change with this plan in effect. During the 1964-1965 school year, Austin High School's population remained approximately 96% white. However, panic started to brew among concerned parents and community members who preferred to keep Austin a predominately white school. Amanda Seligman cites three factors that would contribute to a change in student demographics at Austin High School:

"First, the school was underutilized in the 1950s and 1960s, prompting the board of education to extend the boundary between Austin and Marshall high schools from the Belt Line Railroad eastward to Keeler Avenue, well into the western section of West Garfield Park. Within a few years, many African Americans lived inside the new boundaries. Secondly, the citywide transfer program for honors students allowed a couple dozen black students to enroll in Austin rather than

their neighborhood schools. Finally, African Americans were starting to move into Austin proper,” (Seligman, 2005, p. 137-138).

As members debated how to implement policies that would integrate school populations and alleviate the overcrowding of certain buildings on the city’s south and west sides, parents and community members pressured the Board to rescind its cluster plan. By January of 1964, the Board decided to back down. In his report to the Board, Dr. Philip Hauser argued,

In summary, the school system cannot, by itself, bring about meaningful integration in the schoolroom. The goal of integration of the public schools cannot be achieved without the active participation of religious institutions, business and labor organizations, civic and community groups, and social and fraternal societies as well as of all agencies of government. (Hauser, 1964, p. 12)

Clustering, or grouping schools within reasonable distance in order to foster integration was arguably the boldest plan proposed. In a transcript of the meeting minutes from the Special Committee on the Hauser Report, Board Member Warren Bacon stated,

...on the south side you will get little or no significant change in the composition of your schools by this plan; particularly when you do not provide transportation. All the schools that are underutilized in terms of capacity are all on the north side. The only one that you’ll get any degree of change, possibly, is Marshall and Austin,” (Special Committee on the Hauser Report, 1964, p. 42).

However, after a barrage of letters and protests began to inundate Board members, it seemed that permissive transfers would be the only major desegregation effort for the city of Chicago.

By 1965, after the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO) lodged an official complaint against the Board of Education for intentional segregation of its students, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) promptly withheld funds, only for Mayor Daley to meet privately with President Johnson in order to have those funds released back to Chicago, (Coordinating Council of Community Organizations Demands, 1963, p. 1-3). The murky lines of implementing a federal desegregation policy did not blend well into schools in Chicago because it could not be enforced. Less than one year before the CCCO filed their official complaint, Board member Cyrus Hall Adams issued a memo to the Special Committee over integration. In this memo, Hall stated,

Try to keep the proportion of Negroes in a school at a reasonable level.

Discussion of 20 to 30%. He [Dr. Hauser] doesn't care what he says in public, as witnessed by his statement: "If I found the whites fleeing from a school I'd see to it they stayed put." (Adams, 1964, p. 1)

No matter what federal mandate was in place to combat segregated schools, what was discussed behind closed doors, and even what was a matter of public record evidenced that Chicago desired the use of racial quotas in public schools.

There are two reports by Dr. Philip Hauser (Hauser Report, 1964, March) and Dr. Robert J. Havighurst (Havighurst Report, 1964, November) that detailed how damaging mobile classrooms, permissive transfers, and other faux desegregation efforts were to students in Chicago Public Schools. In fact, the Law Department of Chicago Public Schools stated in a memo to the Board of Education that, "...the Permissive Transfer Plan, while relieving overcrowding has also had a marked effect on integration; that white children taking advantage

of the Permissive Transfer Plan have endangered integration as the percentage of white versus Negro students decreased sharply,” (Coffey, 1967, p. 1).

In the same report, Coffey argued that the use of racial quotas in order to achieve “racial balance” was also an illegal practice in violation of the Constitution. Where Austin High School is listed as a school under the permissive transfer list recommended for removal, Coffey stated,

It is my opinion that the proposed report, which seeks to maintain a racial balance at each of the eight schools by excluding the pupils at those schools from the general application of the Permissive Transfer Plan violates constitutional and statutory guarantees of due process and equal protection of the law. (Coffey, 1967, 4)

We know from records on the permissive transfer plan that in October of 1966, the student population at Austin High School was 71% white and 28% Black, (Seligman, 2004, p. 150). However, between 1968-1970, Emmet Elementary, one of the main feeder schools for Austin High School, was declared “one of the most crowded schools in the city,” (Seligman, 2004, p. 150). It was so crowded, in fact, that in 1970 the school received half a dozen demountable classrooms. When many of the Emmet students matriculated to Austin High School in the 1970s, the African American student population at Austin continued the trend of rising.

Members on the Chicago Board of Education battled over the direction to take public schools. In meeting minutes from the Special Committee on the Hauser Report, Dr. Hauser shared with the Board that even the proposed plan of permissive transfers in order to achieve integration was not successful.

In Baltimore, where the plan has been in effect for some time, not more than 2 or 3% of children are actually integrated...In Detroit, this has not worked. In Chicago, under what I think we'd all agree are unfortunate conditions as far as preparation is concerned and timing is concerned, permissive transfer plans did not work. (Hauser, 1964, p. 7)

And yet, permissive transfers remained at the forefront of Superintendent Willis and Superintendent Redmond's plan to integrate Chicago Public Schools.

The deliberate attempt to use permissive transfers against the counsel of professors from the University of Chicago and even the Board's own Law Department signifies a lack of genuine effort to end segregated schooling in the city of Chicago. Board member Warren Bacon documented the failure to address integration in a meaningful way in his report to the Board of Education on the Special Committee for Integration of the Public Schools. Bacon wrote,

The Committee Chairman and Superintendent Willis seem determined to avoid any genuine effort to arrive at a mutually acceptable plan, and insisted on pushing a plan which rejects the Advisory Panel's report, which will not be generally accepted by the community, and which will do virtually nothing to bring about a greater integration of our schools. (Bacon, 1964, p. 2)

Rather than address segregated schools in a manner that would truly elicit change, the reigning Superintendent and Board members continued to work with policies that not only demonstrated failure, but also could be classified as illegal.

In the expert report of Coons, Johnson and Usdan (1967), the way to manage successful integration of schools was to do the following:

[T]he Committee recommends that a purely voluntary transfer system be available to Negro children attending schools deeper in the ghetto...such a policy, however, has symbolic importance. It would suggest that the interests of the Negro child in the ghetto have not been subordinated to an all-encompassing policy of neighborhood stabilization. (Coons, Johnson and Usdan, 1967, p. B-21).

In other words, as long as the Board appeared to be sympathetic to the situation of African American children living in segregated neighborhoods, attending segregated schools, then Chicago Public Schools was doing its job. Undoubtedly, the Board hired consultants who in their working paper, stated,

We in essence, are endorsing the imposition of a racial quota system...The Committee, however, strongly believes that in present circumstances a racial quota system is the only feasible short range approach that will anchor sufficient members of whites to make meaningful integration even a long range possibility. (Coons, Johnson and Usdan, 1967, p. B-21)

Was this the best Chicago Public Schools could do?

You won't find the working paper of Coons, Johnson and Usdan (1967) in the CPS archives. When I arrived at CPS headquarters, their archives from desegregation files of the 1960s consist of article clippings of the great master plans from Superintendents outlined in the Chicago Tribune and the Chicago Sun Times. There was a bigger folder on desegregation in the back of the archives, but when I requested this folder, I was told that I did not have permission to access that information.

When I asked for Board minutes from a certain date, I was told that they could not be found in the CPS archives. What I was given access to, however, was a series of articles that

blamed housing for segregated schools, and hailed CPS as the great leader committed to providing high quality education to all students. There are no transcripts on the arguments, the contradictions, and the real debates about desegregation efforts in Chicago Public Schools. It was not until I went into the archives and papers of Cyrus Hall Adams at the Chicago History Museum that I saw a different story about what really happened in Chicago Public Schools during the 1960s.

What I soon realized is that the people who were supposed to be in charge, making policy for CPS and introducing desegregation initiatives—these people weren't trying to save anything, really. Everyone kept using the same language, and Chicago matched what other big city districts in the United States were doing to combat de facto segregation. If the newspaper clippings filed neatly away in the CPS archives told me that same story, it “had to be true”.

In his book, *Heat Wave*, Eric Klinenberg (2002) discussed a theory from sociologist Stanley Cohen. Cohen documents how governments use specific techniques to deny involvement and responsibility in cases where they are suspected of human rights violations or committing acts of violence. He has cataloged the various types of denial which include the following:

Interpretive denial: “The raw facts are not being denied. Rather, they are given a different meaning from what seems apparent to others...what is happening is really something else,” (Klinenberg, 2002, p. 180).

In the case of Austin High School, interpretive denial is evident in the repeated argument that white people were fleeing the city during desegregation efforts of the 1960s. The public would hear more about white flight, rather than what was being done to effectively integrate school populations around the city. Therefore, integrating schools seemed more like a

conversation of keeping whites in the city rather than providing equal education opportunities for all students, no matter what their race.

Implicatory denial, or denial of responsibility: “To attribute responsibility to forces—named or unnamed—that supposedly have nothing to do with the government and are beyond its control,” (Klinenberg, 2002, p. 180).

This practice was evident in the naming of housing segregation as the main reason why Chicago Public Schools segregated its school population. The open enrollment option for schools was never approved, which meant that students would attend their neighborhood schools regardless of segregation that existed in neighborhoods.

Denial of public record: “Using [the] symbolic power of state to define official version[s] of the event,” (Klinenberg, 2002, p. 180).

For example, an article from the Austin News, dated August 23rd, 1967, explicitly states that Austin High School, “is not a permissive transfer school, receiving or sending, so it is expected to remain stable,” (Austin News, 1967, p. 1). On the same page of this newspaper, there is mention that West Side business and community groups have repeatedly met with board officials to discuss boundaries in order to “stabilize” Austin’s population.

The failed attempt of permissive transfers and other faux desegregation efforts is the first of many stories within the greater story of racial segregation, disinvestment, and denial in Chicago Public Schools. What cannot be denied is the explicit racism in the proposal and execution of permissive transfers at Austin High School.

On a wider landscape, we cannot be surprised by the failed desegregation efforts at Austin High School. Similar to other public school systems in American cities, the struggle to create parity among different groups of folks is part of what makes our country beautiful and

unique. The United States' "claim to fame" is our diversity, our melting pot of citizens. But can we honestly argue that throughout history, our diversity has been a valued piece of what it means to be an American? Vignette 2 will discuss the challenges specific to Chicago's west side during the movement of African Americans into the city of Chicago, and where a neighborhood public school like Austin High School fits into the framework of a community in transition.

Vignette 2: Austin Transitions

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Dr. Martin Luther King (1963)

The year of 1968 was a time that arguably changed America forever. In April of 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King’s assassination rattled the Civil Rights Movement. On Chicago’s west side, students at Austin High School rioted as racial tensions between white and black students were enflamed. It was also during this school year that the North Central Association, one of six bodies recognized by the United States Department of Education as a regional accreditor, was dispatched on its first of three visits to Austin High School (Monks, 1975). The panel of visitors created a report that detailed a school in transition (Monks, 1975).

It was also at the beginning of the year of 1968 that the neighborhood community of Austin turned to grassroots organizing in order to be heard more clearly by the city’s political machine. The Organization for a Better Austin (OBA) held annual conferences to address concerns that continued to plague the neighborhood (Austin News, 1968).

It is perhaps an understatement to say that the OBA in its first year has been a provocative organization...it has prodded the board of education to try new departures in alleviating school overcrowding instead of continuing old procedures that did not work. (Austin News, May 1st, 1968)

While support for OBA initiated around the controversy created over Austin’s neighborhood and public school concerns, residents commented that at the very least, Austin was being heard. “In obedience to Saul Alinsky’s famous edict to ‘rub raw the resentments,’ the Organization for a Better Austin (OBA) employed aggressive tactics without concern for their alienating effects” (Seligman, 2005, p. 195). By 1968, it was clear that the concern for speaking

too loud or pushing too hard was no longer a problem for Austin residents. The people of Austin wanted action.

In the spirit of revolution, OBA worked to recruit members from every race, class, and religion residing in the Austin neighborhood. Organizers understood the importance of presenting a diverse front when taking on big city politics. While all members in the neighborhood did not accept this strategy, it was a strategy upheld throughout times when divisiveness permeated city culture. “OBA’s combative style and willingness to share Austin with blacks vexed some residents who had retreated to the neighborhood from other parts of Chicago,” (Seligman, 2005, p. 195).

In time, numbers grew for OBA, and membership for the annual Austin congress gained support. According to the Austin News, “It is the first community organization in Austin that has drawn an appreciable grass-roots membership—a membership that actively works to attain objectives instead of merely furnishing names for a roster,” (Austin News, 5/1/68). At its annual gathering, congress members created resolutions that demanded equality in housing, education, and general security of the Austin neighborhood. For example,

Whereas many children graduate from elementary school with having a very low reading level...be it resolved that the OBA enlist the aid of the University of Illinois Circle Campus and teacher colleges and junior colleges for more of their involvement...at Austin High School. (OBA, 1971, p. 8)

Austin residents felt that if they could not enlist the support needed as individuals to combat the early signs of disinvestment evident in their neighborhood, the only solution was for individuals to come together.

As if the overcrowding of public schools was not a big enough dilemma, the OBA also fought for fair housing practices on the West side of the city. For example, OBA joined with Our Lady of the Angels Committee, the Hermosa Organization, the 31st Ward Polish and American Citizens, the Maternity BVM Real Estate Committee, the Northwest Community Organization, and the Northwest Austin Council to form the Westside Coalition Against Panic Peddlers. (OBA, 1971, p. 2). At the 5th Annual Congress, OBA resolved to,

...demand that Mayor Daley, Building Commissioner Joseph Fitzgerald, and Urban Renewal Commissioner Lewis Hill keep open at all costs the Austin Neighborhood Service Program to complete its task of inspecting and bringing up to code standard every dwelling in Austin. (OBA, 1971, p. 2)

But no matter how hard residents clamored, disinvestment continued to plague Austin residents in the late 1960's. The disinvestment in the neighborhood and public schools of Austin was an injustice to all community residents.

The 5th Congress, where resolutions were drawn to address educational inequities took place on May 1st, 1971. Four short years later, the NCA documented a change in the academic levels of students at Austin High School. "An average of 80% of the entering freshmen during the past 4 years had seventh grade or lower reading levels," (Monks, 1975, p.7). The NCA also reported an increase of transience among the school community. "Student folders reveal that many students have attended many schools before entering Austin High. Urban conditions of ethnic and racial change are involved in movements to and from the community," (Monks, 1975, p. 7). Furthermore, we see the impact of re-drawing boundary lines from the 1975 report.

The Austin High School district traditionally was the same as the Census

Bureau's delineation, but changes have been made...Another change occurred

when an area of West Garfield Park was added to the district in order to achieve integration in 1964. (NCA, 1975, p. 1)

Challenges within Austin seemed to bleed outside of the school world and into a politicized and racialized unknown consequences. For example, we know from Board minutes that the boundary lines of Austin High School were a contentious issue in the neighborhood, particularly for folks living in south Austin. I argue that the concern was not over racial stabilization, but over the movement of African Americans in general into the Austin neighborhood. When letters from business owners arrived at the Board, it added pressure on the Board's decision to change the boundary lines back because many of these companies carried political weight in the city. Therefore, we see a school-based decision of the Board being influenced directly by political and racialized tensions of the Austin community. When Austin's lines reverted back to their original boundaries, there was no follow-up from city government as to how it would address the overcrowding in the public schools in addition to maintaining a healthy neighborhood culture and climate. As a result, we see disinvestment documented from the NCA's second visit to Austin High School.

The area is experiencing a number of social problems. Some quickly constructed multiple-family dwellings were built in the area. Many of the one-family homes are being converted into multiple-family units...the crime rate has risen concomitantly with other related social problems," (Monks, 1975, p. 2).

With the sharp increase in population, the local economy of Austin was not able to keep up with its residents. The North Central Association noted,

DeVise's study, encompassing the years 1972-1978, indicated that the west side of Chicago from Halsted Street to Austin Boulevard has suffered a job loss rate of

15.1% to 19.3% because of the movement of industry to suburban sites. His study indicated that there are now only 110,554 jobs available on the west side of Chicago. (Zabor, 1982, p. 36)

And while population continued to increase, real estate practices remained at the center of suspicion among neighborhood residents. According to the Real Estate Practices Committee, established under the Organization for a Better Austin

This vermin has flooded our blocks with scare literature and other tactics designed to panic residents into selling their homes cheap, and this same scum has panicked whites out of Lawndale and West Garfield and re-sold property to blacks at inflated prices on long-term and exorbitant contracts,” (OBA, 1971, p. 4).

Residents did not know how they would combat the varying degrees of disinvestment evident in schools and on the streets.

Six years later, in the spring of 1982, North Central Association visited Austin High School for its final evaluation. Sadly, the NCA documented,

It appears that Austin High School has met with continuous failure in its attempts to involve community people and parents in the educative process. After its first evaluation in 1968, the North Central Association visitors noted that, “The school has sought to work with community groups but the community groups have not responded actively nor helped the school with problems to any great extent” (Monks, 1982, p. 26).

As reported from North Central, the damage done to neighborhood, school, and community relations was now most likely irreversible. Even the simple task of collecting demographic data

from Austin High School students proved to be challenging. According to the final NCA report of Austin High School,

In the absence of any meaningful communication with either the community representatives or the parents, data about the community such as age groups, educational levels, income levels, marriage and divorce statistics, which ought to be part of this report are missing,” (Zabor, 1982, p. 27).

The history of enrollment is even more distressing. In the 1971-1972 school year Austin High School enrolled 3,625 students. And with an increase projected for enrollment throughout the 1970s, the Chicago Board of Education purchased the vacated Siena High School to be a satellite branch of Austin (Zabor, 1982, p. 43). However, by the 1979-1980 school year, overall enrollment dipped to 2,445 students, and the satellite branch of Austin High School closed.

The closure of Siena was a clear indicator that despite community efforts, injustices from the past were a threat to justice in the present. Austin residents could not fight the disinvestment in their neighborhood. Despite community efforts, families were fleeing to the suburbs and other developed neighborhoods where work could be found. “A variety of reasons accounts for the exodus—among which were the permissive transfer policy of the Board of Education and the school’s poor image in the community,” (Zabor, 1982, p. 43).

It is interesting to note the NCA’s explanation for the exodus of students at Austin High School. While the permissive transfer policy was implemented years earlier, it had serious repercussions for students in the 1970’s at Austin High School. The permissive transfer policy was dangerous because it placed value on race. Rather than educating students on de facto segregation and fighting for equality as the great Dr. King modeled, the Board of Education chose to adopt a policy knowing that white students could inappropriately transfer out of Austin

to “whiter” schools. The policy created racial inequality, and high school aged students became the pawn of injustice.

It wasn’t just permissive transfers that created a poor image of Austin High School in the community. The community itself was fighting patterns of illegal home ownership and disinvestment in neighborhood housing. As Vignette 3 shows us, you cannot develop a healthy neighborhood school when the “neighborhood” part is under siege. A neighborhood is characterized by the day-to-day social interactions of its community members within a specific geographical location. However, as you will see in Vignette 3, if one group in a community controls power and space over others, it is almost impossible to reach decisions that consider all neighborhood folks, particularly those people who are the most disenfranchised community members.

Vignette 3: Boundary Changes or Racial Containment?

“We are in favor of restoring the old boundary for Austin High School students, which would help stabilize the ratio of white and negro students and prevent racial imbalance,”

(Letter from the Austin Business Council, March 20th, 1967).

In 1968, the Community and Family Study Center of the University of Chicago published a report that studied the progression of integration in the Austin neighborhood. The introduction of the paper states, “This report is concerned with the question of how the residents of Austin confront the many issues generally subsumed under the titles of race relations and civil rights,” (McKinlay and Shanas, 1968, p. 1). For a neighborhood concerned with “racial balance,” as indicated in the multitude of letters archived from local businesses during the 1960’s, what the University of Chicago uncovered in its study depicted quite a different story. According to the report,

In any case, it appears that on the question of school integration, the “threshold” beyond which a majority of the populace would categorically object to Negroes in the schools is reached at some point between a ratio of one Negro student to every three whites and a ratio of one to one. (McKinlay and Shanas, 1968, p. 16)

In other words, members of the Austin community who fought for “racial stabilization” may not have actually wanted true integration. What is the value in language like “threshold,” “racial balance,” “stabilization,” and “integration?” What is the source of using a specific vernacular to explain what happened not only in Austin during the 1960’s, but also in other communities around our nation? This situation was not unique to the west side of Chicago. The

Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s is just one example demonstrating that as a country, we have struggled with the development of healthy race relations among our melting pot of citizens.

McKinlary and Shanas (1968) discussed fear.

Fear—and a fear which is in all likelihood not unrelated to the white perception of the Negro presence—now characterizes a substantial minority of white Austin... Nearly half report that they are generally afraid that they will be robbed, beaten, raped, or assaulted if they go out alone at night. (p. 23)

But is that the story that was told? White people feared African Americans moving into their neighborhoods? And because of this fear, the quest for “racial balance” was conceived? What made the neighborhood “theirs” to begin with?

“I am in agreement that to keep this school from going predominately colored the School Board must make some change. I believe that returning the east boundary to its original place will help stabilize the community,” (Kubal, 1967, p.1). Almost six days later, the Austin Business Council wrote to the Board of Education, “We are vitally interested in maintaining the Standard of Austin Community and would like to present a very critical problem that has arisen at the Austin High School with regard to Racial Balance that must be corrected now,” (Grant, 1967, p.1). On March 7th, a few weeks prior to these letters, Pastor Cunningham of St. Angela’s Rectory wrote in a letter to James Grant,

If the increase of colored students continues at the present rate, we shall soon have an almost completely colored high school in a predominately white neighborhood. If this occurs, a mass exodus of white people to the suburbs is a certainty,” (Cunningham, 1967, p.1).

It is not simply the mass collection of letters from community members, business people, church folks, and others who chose to the words of “racial balance” and “stabilization” to make a case. The more formidable action is that this group of people possessed the power to exercise such vernacular at the expense of a disempowered group of human beings. Trouillot cited Foucault in his discussion of power.

I don't believe that the question of 'who exercises power?' can be resolved unless the other question 'how does it happen?' is resolved first. Power does not enter the story once and for all, but at different times and from angles. It precedes the narrative proper, contributes to its creation and its interpretation,” (Trouillot, 1995, p. 29).

The people in power who wrote the history of Austin signed petitions to restore boundary lines in the name of racial preservation. The North Austin Civic Improvement Club wrote, “All members were in favor of the stabilization of negro students in Austin High School...We feel that this will solve the problem existing at Austin High School,” (Miedema, 1967, p.1). It was members of this club who decided the existing problem at Austin was the increase of African American students at Austin. In all of the archives I searched, I could not find one single letter written by an African American student about the concern of “racial stabilization” in Austin. There was not one letter from an African American parent asking to redraw the boundary lines of Austin High School so that racial balance could be maintained. Instead, I found letters from churches, private banks, realty firms, manufacturing businesses, and other commercial entities of the neighborhood, imploring the Chicago Board of Education to change boundary lines for their neighborhood high school.

In April of 1967, the Christian Action Ministry (CAM) published a position paper objecting to the boundary change proposed by Austin businessmen. According to CAM, “There is no visible effort being put forth by the Austin community, and in particular the businessmen, to deal with the basic housing problem and the system of injustice facing Negro citizens; until this happens Austin is doing nothing to deal with the problems of integration,” (CAM, 1967, p.1). CAM pointed out that the Board of Education could not possibly solve Austin’s residential problems. CAM argued, “The Negro community grows only at its edges because of discrimination in the housing market. The movement of Negroes into the Austin community follows the same classical pattern, move-ins: house-by-house, block-by-block,” (CAM, 1967, p. 1). At the time, there were very few organizations speaking out against the injustice of residential segregation in the Austin neighborhood. The approach was to move boundary lines of schools, discuss “racial balance,” or to place blame on panic peddlers around the neighborhood blocks. But as we will see in Vignette 4, the voice that spoke to housing discrimination should have been blasted through every loudspeaker in the city of Chicago. Was this the voice of power that could change the trajectory of the Austin neighborhood? It very well could have been. Vignette 4 demonstrates that power and control painted a different fate for the west side of Chicago.

Vignette 4: Housing Discrimination in Austin

“If you sought to advantage one group of Americans and disadvantage another, you could scarcely choose a more graceful method than housing discrimination,” (Ta-Nehisi Coates, 2014, p. 6).

Ta-Nehisi Coates (2014, June) wrote a beautiful article in the Atlantic called “A Case for Reparations.” And the story is quite moving; it tells of Clyde Ross, an African American man moving from the south and his experience of housing discrimination once he arrived on Chicago’s west side. However, as you read deeper into the article, the consequences of housing discrimination become this bigger story within the context of African American people and the Great Migration in the United States. As Coates tells the story, we see that housing discrimination is not unique to the west side of Chicago. It was evident in Detroit, in Boston, Newark, New York, and Washington D.C.—the story is a painful piece of our negligence, discrimination, and racism as a people. “From the 1930s through the 1960s, black people across the country were largely cut out of the legitimate home-mortgage market,” (Coates, June 2014, p. 8). As Lynne Beyer Sagalyn (1983) described the neighborhood phenomenon in Chicago, “Racial change afforded an additional opportunity to profit from differences in housing prices which resulted from prejudice among departing white resident-owners and discrimination against prospective black buyers with limited housing choices,” (Sagalyn, 1983, p. 100).

Even more alarming was the pace at which certain neighborhoods such as Austin changed, often leading to characteristics of neighborhood instability aligned with transience: Some of the properties have been allowed to reach a state of disrepair. The crime rate has risen concomitantly with other related social problems. The

increased police force tackles increasing crimes of all kinds that stem from drugs, prostitution, gangs, family problems, and poverty. (Monks, 1975, p. 2-3)

But what are the implications for young people growing up in these very same neighborhoods today? And how has history been recorded to bring our attention to the urgency of the consequences in housing discrimination?

Clyde Ross moved from Mississippi to Chicago in the 1960s, with hope that life would be different once he placed distance between himself and the Jim Crow South. What happened when he moved to Chicago, however, is a story that still haunts the west side of the city today. Similar to many other African Americans moving west, Ross bought his home in North Lawndale “on contract.” He paid more than double what the original seller paid for a mortgage. And the worst part was that Ross didn’t even possess a deed. The seller of the home would keep the deed until Ross made all of his payments. And if he missed a single monthly payment, Ross would lose his down payment, all of his monthly payments, and the property. “The men who peddled contracts in North Lawndale would sell homes at inflated prices and then evict families who could not pay—taking their down payment and their monthly installments as profits. Then they’d bring in another black family, rinse, and repeat,” (Coates, June 2014, p. 8).

It is hard to believe that housing discrimination contributed to the ruin of the west side of Chicago---but it did. As Sagalyn (1983) documented, “When homebuyers in transitional neighborhoods in Chicago were unable to secure conventional or FHA-insured mortgages, the private market responded with an alternative supply of credit, but as we have seen, the cost was remarkably high,” (p. 107). In other words, the contract seller was able to “capture” this market because African Americans had limited access to the commodity of mortgage credit. Again, we tell the story of Austin because it is not just a story about the west side of Chicago. “The

experience of FHA-insured mortgages during the late 1960s and early 1970s in urban neighborhoods, which resulted in widespread defaults and foreclosures, reemphasizes the consequences of completely shifting the lending risk,” (Sagalyn, 1983, p. 107).

Housing discrimination in the United States is just one example of who has the power and control to write history, and how institutional memory is created from history. From historical documents in archives, it is evident that the Federal Housing Authority played a pivotal role in creating and maintaining the monster of housing discrimination and de facto segregation. Coates (June 2014) cites this research in “The Case for Reparations:”

The FHA had adopted a system of maps that rated neighborhoods according to their perceived stability. On the maps, green areas, rated “A,” indicated “in demand” neighborhoods that, as one appraiser put it, lacked “a single foreigner or Negro. These neighborhoods were considered excellent prospects for insurance. Neighborhoods where black people lived were rated “D” and were usually considered ineligible for FHA backing. They were colored in red. Neither the percentage of black people living there nor their social class mattered. Black people were viewed as the contagion. (p. 9)

Yet, other accounts suggest that housing discrimination was a concern that Chicago tackled without any hesitation. According to Edward Marciniak (1967), the Director of Chicago Commission on Human Relations,

Judged by any standard, however, the Negro in Chicago has moved ahead rapidly...the city in 1963 moved to shoulder its share of the responsibility by passing a fair-housing ordinance to ban racial and religious discrimination—and

panic peddling by brokers...Equality of housing opportunity is wedded to the availability of quality housing. (Marciniak, 1967, p. 2)

But that is not the equality and opportunity we read about with Clyde Ross. In fact, when Coates (June 2014) tells the story of Clyde Ross, it is clear that Chicago was no where near a state of equality or opportunity for racial minorities moving into white neighborhoods, regardless of socio-economic class.

In his book, “Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History,” Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) discusses this phenomenon. He argues, “The vernacular use of the word history thus offers us a semantic ambiguity: an irreducible distinction and yet an equally irreducible overlap between what happened and that which is said to have happened,” (Trouillot, 1995, p. 3). In the case of housing discrimination, not only were contract sales an impossible predicament, they were also a probable outcome for so many homeowners of color. In 1965, the Division of Housing and Community Services in the city of Chicago prepared a report entitled “Remedies for Panic Peddling” to address this epidemic in Chicago. The term “panic peddling” was derived from the fear elicited in the homeowners. Panic peddlers would push the selling of homes in certain neighborhoods, claiming it was essential in order to maintain the property values of the neighborhood. As the story of Clyde Ross portrays the difficulty African Americans had in settling into neighborhoods that were predominately white; panic peddling explains exactly why this happened. “By spreading racial fear, such a dealer induces homeowners to sell at less than market value, then resells the homes at inflated prices to persons of another race,” (Division of Housing and Community Services [DHCS], 1965, p. 1). According to the report, which also included investigative findings from complaints filed through the Fair Housing Ordinance in Chicago, it would not be unusual in neighborhoods like Austin, experiencing rapid racial

turnover, for residents to receive phone calls from panic peddlers encouraging them to sell their homes. “Negroes will be on your block by this summer, and when property values are affected you will regret not selling,” (DHCS, 1965, p. 3).

The Organization for a Better Austin started work during its 5th and 6th Congress gatherings. An OBA Real Estate Practices Committee formed, and during the 5th Convention, it stated,

The people of Austin do not want hundreds of “For Sale” signs on our blocks, and will no longer tolerate them. The OBA demand the Chicago City Council to pass a new zoning ordinance that would outlaw “for sale” signs, making it illegal for any realtor to post these symbols of panic that are not used to advertise but only to breed racial fears and hatreds in changing neighborhood,” (OBA, 1971, p. 4).

The desire and demand for change started at the neighborhood level. As residents took notice to the signs of disinvestment in their neighborhood, pressure was placed at the state and federal level. In a report from U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, local governments were named in prolonging discriminatory housing practices. According to the report, “Not until 1948 was the judicial enforcement of such covenants held unconstitutional, and not until 1953 was their enforcement by way of money damages held unlawful,” (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, p. 21, 1967). Yet even after these laws were in place, cities like Chicago did not enforce them. Redlining plagued Chicago neighborhoods, particularly Austin.

Locked out of the greatest mass-based opportunity for wealth accumulation in American history, African Americans who desired and were able to afford home ownership found themselves consigned to central-city communities where their investments were affected by the “self-fulfilling prophecies” of the FHA

appraisers: cut off from sources of new investment, their homes and communities deteriorated and lost value in comparison to those homes and communities that FHA appraisers deemed desirable. (Coates, June 2014, p. 10)

By the time neighborhoods were able to organize, it was too late to reverse damage done to these communities.

Even more alarming is the fact that panic peddlers were not the only problem in housing discrimination. The role of public housing in the city of Chicago also contributed to the segregation of our neighborhoods, which in turn affected the public schools.

It is not difficult to see that the public housing projects alone have contributed substantially to the segregation of Chicago's schools. Knowing that at least ninety percent of public housing families are minority, and that there are about 45,000 families with an average of two plus children per family, it is easy to see the nondiscriminatory site policies in the past would have meant considerably less housing, and therefore considerably less school segregation today. (Darden, 1981, p. 12)

From the guise of containment in public housing to restrictive covenants and redlining—in just a few decades, cities all over the nation created an irreparable disaster in urban housing. “Redlining went beyond FHA-backed loans and spread to the entire mortgage industry, which was already rife with racism, excluding black people from most legitimate means of obtaining a mortgage,” (Coates, June 2014, p. 9). Housing discrimination wasn't just a problem in the neighborhood of Austin or North Lawndale, the city of Chicago or Detroit—it wasn't an isolated incident in Boston or an instance we should think back on with astonishment and disbelief. Housing discrimination was planned, executed, and maintained by mortgage companies, banks,

and the government. And with each day that passes where disinvestment pervades and dysfunction becomes a norm, what are we doing as a nation to serve our children who live in these neighborhoods? The case for reparations is undisputable, so where do we go from here?

In the case of Austin High School, disinvestment in the neighborhood began to affect the school as early as the 1960s and 1970s. However, this disinvestment also created a cycle of transformations for Austin High School that began as early as the 1990s. These school actions resulted in a series of reconstitutions, phasing in and out of students, and changes to the instructional priorities of the school. A math teacher who began working at Austin High School in 1983 who still works in the building once told me, “When the only thing that remains constant in a school is change and inconsistency, it is difficult for a building to serve its children.”

In 2004, two years prior to my arrival, Austin began a phase-out process. They would no longer accept incoming freshmen, and current students at Austin were bussed to Roberto Clemente High School and Wells High Schools in West Town. This transition was notably one of the worst for children in the Austin neighborhood due to the violence and racial tensions that mounted between the predominately Latino student population at Clemente and the African American students from Austin. “Since Chicago school officials began phasing out Austin High School two years ago and dispersing hundreds of teenagers to crosstown Clemente, violence has invaded the hallways and spilled across campus...And racial tensions—already simmering under the surface—have bubbled over,” (Banchero, 2006, p. 1). A former Austin student who later came back to Austin as a basketball coach told me that the transition was so rough, many of his friends wanted to give up on their education all together. He had lost so many classmates that year to the streets, or they simply just stayed home. Taking the bus to Clemente every morning, crossing gang territories, and then sitting in class with other kids who you knew did not welcome

you was a terrible experience for the Austin kids. "By early October, gang warfare erupted. School officials, security guards, and students say the Gangster Disciples from Austin warred with the Latin Vice Lords and Lovers for control of the school...Only a small portion of the school's 2,400 students were involved in the violence, but it put a dark cloud over the school," (Banchero, 2006, p. 2).

The transition to Clemente was not sustainable. Austin residents organized, and students were allowed to graduate from their own building in 2006.

What we know now that we didn't know two years ago when they first began phasing out Austin High School is that our kids going outside of our neighborhood are not safe, and they're not getting any better of an education at those schools," Johnson said. "CPS did not do an adequate job of studying the potential for violence and things like that. I really don't think they did a good job of planning this transition, and thinking about the safety implications. (Dean, 2006, p. 1)

While the number of students who returned to Austin for their final years before the doors closed in 2007 was small, at the very least it was an authentic cry from the community to keep their neighborhood school intact. After years of disinvestment in the neighborhood of Austin, it was a challenge for the public school to serve its students in the ways that were needed. What cannot be forgotten is that relationship amalgamated between a neighborhood and its public school. The two go hand in hand, and if one piece of that puzzle is deficient in services and how it provides to its community, the other piece will equally struggle to serve. This is exactly what happened in the neighborhood and public school of Austin.

V. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

A Conclusion, but not an Ending

I began my archival study by asking the question, “How did housing policies and desegregation efforts contribute to the transformation of Austin High School on the west side of Chicago?” As a teacher who entered Austin High School in 2006, one year before the closing of this comprehensive neighborhood high school that would gradually transition into three smaller schools, I was intrigued by Austin’s past. I was lucky enough to learn some of the oral history from veteran teachers, some of who worked in that building for over twenty years, prior to the school closing in 2007. I just turned 22 years old that July, and I was not from Chicago. I remember in the spring of 2007, walking down the halls of the first and second floor, cardboard boxes filled with old school supplies that had not been touched in years. Veteran teachers invited me into their rooms, shared their histories, and piled my arms with more highlighters, staplers, and paper clips than I could carry. Their message was always the same. “Now it’s your turn. Love these children and you will be fine.” Some teachers cried when we talked to each other; others were just angry. Many were exhausted. It was the end of the school year, but it was also so much more than that. The departure of these educators was the loss of institutional memory at Austin High School.

When I started digging through archives at different libraries and museums in the city, there were themes that began to emerge from the data that I collected. At first, I just wanted to learn more about Austin High School. It is one of the oldest high schools in the city, and I wasn’t sure where I wanted to start with the collection of data. But what caught my attention were the archives I started searching through from the years of 1960-1980. During this time, there was marked transition, not just in the high school, but in the neighborhood of Austin as

well. The first theme I discovered, desegregation efforts in the city of Chicago, was quite extensive. I wanted to focus specifically on Austin High School because of the permissive transfer plans that were unique to the high schools on the south and west sides of the city with neighborhoods that were experiencing rapid racial turnover.

The second theme I uncovered was the progression of social, political, and economic disinvestment in Austin High School through a series of reports from the North Central Association, an organization responsible for educational accreditation across the United States. These reports, spanning over one hundred pages each were invaluable to this research. They provided perspective and accounts from various stakeholders at Austin High School: students, teachers, staff, parents and community members from 1968 until 1982—years that were a prime focus for this work that I wanted to explore.

After 1982, disinvestment takes a different shape. Austin High School is no longer facing a crisis of severe overcrowding, rather, its students are spiraling through a series of educational initiatives designed to improve academic achievement on standardized tests. From this point forward, the school itself is regulated by change, with complete shifts in instructional programming for the purpose of meeting state accountability standards. For example, upon my arrival in 2006, there were classrooms full of culinary arts materials collecting dust because of careers and technical education (CTE) initiatives that lasted no more than a few years. There was no study done to see if students going through this program had higher academic achievement, or if their graduation rate was higher than those students who did not.

Austin Polytechnical Academy is another example of a complete shift in instructional programming. When Austin High School broke into three smaller schools at the start of 2007, one of the small schools had an advanced manufacturing focus. Millions of dollars were spent to

purchase equipment for the program, only for the advanced manufacturing program to be phased out a few years later. During this time, students entered Austin Polytechnical Academy with state achievement scores on the Explore test way below average. Yet, students were required to take engineering classes with Project Lead the Way curriculum, where it is recommended that students are entering high school possess math skills at the very least on grade level. However, this initiative was temporary. In 2016, all three small schools were consolidated once again to become Austin College and Career Academy.

The Board for Chicago Public Schools voted to consolidate all three schools on February 24th, 2016. The three small schools were originally part of the small schools movement under the Renaissance 2010 plan in Chicago. However, as enrollment at all schools began to dwindle, it became almost impossible to financially support the students. Chicago Public School's student based budgeting (SBB) allocates dollars to schools based solely on the number of students enrolled, regardless of teacher tenure or student needs in the building. The current enrollment according to Chicago Public Schools is 275 students. Even if the small schools movement was successful at Austin, the enrollment could not financially support small schools. While some of the manufacturing and business aspects have been maintained, the school is advertised as a comprehensive academic program.

The third theme of this study was an examination of the language and power wielded by those in the Austin neighborhood and by those working for the Chicago Board of Education and city government during Austin's transition. As I uncovered countless letters, memos, and minutes from closed session meetings, I realized that there was more to tell about Austin High School outside of actions from the Board of Education and discriminatory housing policies. There was also a piece of history from Austin that is ugly and uncomfortable because most of

these archival records contain racially charged language. This part of my archival study focused on the confrontation of racial tensions in the neighborhood, and how language was used to discuss racial change on the west side of the city. Language such as “racial stabilization” and “racial balance” also became signature phrases within a curriculum of resistance that Austin residents clung to as the Austin neighborhood experienced an increase in its African American population.

The fourth theme I explored in my study was the practice of discriminatory housing policies that permeated not only the Austin neighborhood in Chicago, but also other major cities within the United States. These four themes were separated into vignettes, where I wove data from my archival documents to support the development of these pieces as they related to Austin High School. But as I continued investigating and studying my archival records, I realized that this study is much bigger than Austin High School. The story of Austin High School is one that mirrors many other public school systems across the United States. This study uncovers a curriculum of disinvestment, white supremacy, and displacement as primary mechanisms for maintaining segregation and an inferior schooling experience for African American students living in the Austin neighborhood. The findings of this study show how racism manifested itself as a material reality in Austin High School. Findings in this study will further show how African American students became disenfranchised through an inferior quality of education, and also by a lack of stability in educational initiatives implemented by Chicago Public Schools.

Interpretation of the Findings

When I started reading for the literature review of this study, there were some key concepts discussed by Sarason (1979) that enhanced the “so what?” aspect of my findings. Sarason discussed this idea of how polarization between the neighborhood school and

surrounding community can be damaging, particularly if the division creates unhealthy power dynamics and conflict. In the case of Austin High School, the archival findings indicate that polarization stemmed from the neighborhood community base and the school. This ultimately led to not only an unhealthy image of Austin High School in the neighborhood, but also a disinvestment in the high school from various stakeholders in the neighborhood and greater city of Chicago. For the purpose of this study, disinvestment is defined as the lack of resources and support, inclusive of economic, social, and political resources, in order to meet the needs of a given community. Permissive transfer plans that were implemented in the guise of supporting integration actually became a mechanism that fueled racial segregation. Permissive transfers, for the purpose of this study, will be defined as the transfer of a student from one school to another, with the “transfer to” school not necessarily being within the boundaries of the student’s address. While the purpose of permissive transfers from the Board of Education were initially created to relieve overcrowding and foster integration of public schools, it is clear from the records at Austin High School that white students used permissive transfers to move to schools that had a higher demographic of white students in the overall school population.

The initial polarization was rooted in racial fears and tensions, worsened by discrimination created in the housing market. However, in terms of public schooling, the 1960s provided an opportunity for the Board of Education to support its public schools and create programs that could foster integration in a healthy way that did not involve racial quotas, minimum percentages of races in schools, or adding modular building extensions to existing buildings when students had the option to taking a bus to schools that were not overcrowded.

But the fear of mixing Black and White together, the fear of what might happen with integration of public schools, killed any hope of creating parity for Black and White students.

This fear in residents and Board members alike was exacerbated by the community's input on permissive transfers and bussing policies. I would argue that blame could be shared by the Board of Education, the neighborhood, and Chicago's political machine. One thing is clear, however. The neighborhood of Austin did not receive support from the city to educate existing residents and support all folks during the 1960s when African Americans began to migrate north for different opportunities after years of oppression in the Jim Crow south.

Vernacular such as "racial stabilization" and "racial balance," the desire to change boundaries of Austin High School, and housing discrimination within the Austin neighborhood were all factors that contributed to the ultimate disinvestment of Austin High School as a viable neighborhood school. While there was no specific operational number given, when the words "racial stabilization" and "racial balance" were read in transcripts, letters, and other archives, this generally meant that the population of African American students was either increasing past 25% of the overall student population, or increasing more than 10% as a demographic between one school year and the next. The phenomenon of disinvestment in public schools that experienced rapid racial and socioeconomic transition is not unique to Chicago. It happened across major cities in our nation, with no comprehensive plan to "level the playing field." Archival findings indicate that the Board of Education was swayed by community input; the outpouring of letters demanding boundary changes, the demand for "racial stabilization," all language that was coded to ask for limitations on African American students entering predominately white schools. And as the North Central Association documented in 1975 and again in 1982, as the population of Austin High School became increasingly African American, there was less interest in the community and other stakeholders outside of the neighborhood to improve the academics, culture and climate at Austin High School.

The year 2004 marked the 50th anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education, and the former United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan wrote that in Chicago, integration and equality were still “elusive,” (Duncan, May 2004, p.1). In 1980, the Chicago Board of Education negotiated a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice. In this agreement, Chicago Public Schools promised to desegregate its student population through the use of voluntary student transfers, integration of staff and faculty, creation of magnet and bilingual programs, and by providing compensatory services for children who remained in segregated schools, (Lutton, 2003, p. 1). However, on June 30th, 2007, a settlement was negotiated with Chicago Public Schools and the U.S. Department of Justice, acknowledging that CPS “has undertaken significant efforts to comply with the desegregation plan, including creating and submitting numerous and costly reports required under a modified consent decree,” (CPS News Release, May 2nd, 2006).

Seligman (2005) documented that African American students attended schools on the south and west sides that were predominately overcrowded in the 1960s. Rather than bus African American children to white schools that were not overcrowded, modular extensions were added to pre-existing buildings. Other schools were so overcrowded, that elementary buildings started implementing double shifts. In other words, half of the students would attend school for part of the day, and then the next group of students would come in for the second part of the day. After years of those practices, along with sharing textbooks, or having no textbooks at all for schools with African American children, we wondered why students were entering high school with reading scores that were lower than in previous years. The North Central Association documented this phenomenon at Austin High School in 1972. They could not understand why students were entering with reading and math scores so low to cause an increase in offerings of remedial reading and math courses. Yet, these students were entering Austin High School from

feeder schools that were overcrowded, on double-shifts, and where students could not take books home because they were shared. Was it be possible that African American students entered high school behind their white peers because their schools lacked the resources and instructional minutes necessary to be prepared for the rigor of a high school curriculum? But rather than focus on the educational priorities of all students, the community of Austin was more concerned about writing letters to the Board of Education to change the boundary lines of the high school. “Racial stabilization,” or in other words, limiting the number of African American students who entered Austin High School, was viewed as a greater priority in order to preserve the “integrity” of academics in the building.

The city of Chicago, banks, mortgage companies, and the Federal Housing Authority knew that there was an opportunity for economic gain off the backs of African Americans in the housing market. For years, restrictive covenants, redlining neighborhoods, and panic peddling practices exacerbated the already tenuous racial relations between African Americans and Whites.

The archival findings show that the Organization for a Better Austin had to form out of necessity for neighborhood preservation. Austin was not receiving the support that it asked for from city government to control the panic peddlers and slumlords, which seemed to multiply more quickly than could be controlled in the early 1960s. The practices were intentional, calculated, and enforced de facto segregation in neighborhoods and community schools. The forced segregation and containment of African American people led to an increased disinvestment in the neighborhood of Austin. This was also intentional.

At one point, there was discussion of moving the University of Illinois, Chicago campus to the west side. Austin residents rallied Mayor Richard J. Daley to use their neighborhood,

citing the opportunity for revitalization similar to what the University of Chicago had done in Hyde Park. In a last minute decision, however, the university was relocated to its present day location near the Little Italy/Tri-Taylor neighborhood. People outside of Austin made these decisions, and the domination of racist policies continued to control African Americans within their own neighborhood. They may have escaped the Jim Crow south, but African Americans were not free, not really.

What happened to students at Austin High School in the 1960s creates a narrative that illustrates the unpardonable consequences of implicit and explicit racism and white supremacy in the city of Chicago. This was an archival study of one neighborhood public school in Chicago that can tell the story for thousands of other schools across the nation. Due to decades of neglect and disinvestment, I am not certain if there is any sort of compensatory services or reparations that could mend the damage caused in the Austin community. I believe that this is where the conversation needs to be directed.

For years, the Austin neighborhood, and neighborhoods like Austin, have been spaces controlled by forced segregation. Under the conditions of this neighborhood, its community members have not had the opportunity to flourish as productive citizens unless they are venturing into other neighborhoods for work opportunities. We have heard the deplorable conditions of food deserts, about how the only establishments you see on the main streets are liquor stores, currency exchanges, and fast food joints. Too many men and young boys work on the corners, and trash litters the streets. Safety is such a concern that my students never allowed me to walk to the Green line from school at night without a football player holding my arm as I ascended onto the train platform. This is a physical reality for students in the Austin neighborhood, and

many other neighborhoods on the south and west sides of the city. In Mitchell Duneier's (2016) most recent work, he argues,

For the U.S. black ghetto has, over time, seen less flourishing and more pathology; it has lost much of its autonomy and become subject to more intrusive forms for control. Recently, scholars, characterizing the ghetto have used metaphors such as "ethnoracial prison" and "the new Jim Crow" to highlight the transformation. (Duneier, 2016, p. 219)

My students did not choose to live in Austin. Most of them were born here. Many have families who have lived here for generations, moving from the South during the Second Great Migration. The misconception of people who are not from these neighborhoods and who do not know the historiography of these neighborhoods is that my students and their families choose these conditions. They choose violence, poverty, and low-resourced schools. In fact, these conditions were chosen for them through the ongoing war over space, the deep-seeded practice of disinvestment, and the overt racism that is still a practice in Chicago and in other cities across the nation today.

The other relationship that perpetuates the stereotypes of African Americans in the city of Chicago is the association of the negative aspects in Austin with every person who lives in this neighborhood. This is perhaps the most harmful association that can be assumed for folks living in the Austin neighborhood, because most people are simply trying to make ends meet and support their families. However, the Austin label over their heads says gang leader, drug dealer, or whatever other negative stereotype exists today. This label is not only false; it is exhausting for folks to battle these stereotypes and prejudices every day. But this is the reality; this is real life for my students, the community members of Austin, and others living in similar communities

throughout the nation. It is an injustice. And as Dr. King was quoted in the vignettes, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” We, as a country, must do better.

Limitations of the study

My archival study of Austin High School was challenging because I have a deep and personal connection to this school and its students. I chose to write about Austin because I felt like I could tell its story with honesty and integrity. It was also a logical choice because I had prior knowledge and experience working in the building as a teacher from the years of 2006-2010. However, I do realize that in choosing just one high school for my archival study, that it is difficult to generalize exactly what happened in other high schools with similar racial and socioeconomic demographics, not only in the city of Chicago, but across the country as well.

It is possible that there are high schools in different neighborhoods of Chicago that also experienced rapid racial turnover in the 1960s concomitantly battling housing discrimination that now have very stable and integrated high school populations. There have been extensive studies done in Chicago, New York, and Newark that examine the transitions of inner-city schools. But there is much more work to be done in other school systems around the nation. There are trends and connections that can be made between cities, and the more work that is done to analyze these schools, the stronger the research base will become.

A second limitation in my study is the process of analyzing archival documents. As a researcher, I read letters from businesses, community members, Board members. I also analyzed meeting minutes, reports from meetings, agendas, newspaper articles, journals, responses to letters, memos, and other documents. Sometimes it took three or four readings before I felt comfortable with my coding and analysis of those documents. When you are analyzing documents from archives, it is possible to interpret what people have written in a way that was

not the author's original intention. For this reason, the process of reading, understanding, and analyzing documents in my archival study could also be a limitation to the research that I was trying to conduct.

The third and final limitation to my study is my personal relationship to Austin students, community members, and Austin High School. It is important to remember that this bond could have caused personal bias as I read through documents in my archival study. I could also have interpreted documents differently than a researcher who perhaps had no relationship or prior knowledge of the Austin community. I tried to remain unbiased because I wanted to tell the story of Austin as with as much honesty and rawness as possible. For this reason, I reminded myself constantly of the danger of personal bias in research. However, personal bias is still a limitation that may have impacted my work.

What to do next?

My grandfather Giovanni (John) Hugo Dallacqua died of complications from Alzheimer's disease on July 22nd, 2011. He was sick for about seven years before the disease eventually took him away from my family. Even when he became really sick, and even though I knew he had no idea who I was, he would listen to my stories about teaching at Austin High School. He always encouraged me along my path as a teacher, even when I would come back to Michigan when the big bad city of Chicago was just too overwhelming for me.

My obsession with institutional memory and oral history comes from my grandfather. When I was a child, every weekend my parents would take us to our grandparents and we would sit for hours, as my grandpa would tell us stories about his years fighting in Korea and World War II. I come from a family of four daughters, with almost ten years difference between my baby sister and myself. After grandpa got sick, it was difficult for me to process. Not only was

I losing this man who I loved dearly, but I also I knew that the oral history, his institutional memory, would never be the same. My grandma still lives in the same home they bought after he came back from the war. They live on McNichols and Telegraph, which at one point was considered part of the city of Detroit. On her kitchen wall she has this quote, “When someone you love becomes a memory, that memory becomes a treasure.” I’m terrified of that stencil in her kitchen because I always think if I get Alzheimer’s, I will forget all of these stories my grandpa told me, and I never want that to happen. I don’t want to lose the oral history or the institutional memory of my family.

Growing up in Michigan, you heard about the race riots in Detroit, and how the suburbs and the inner city became so separate. When I was a kid, I thought the phenomenon of racial discrimination, segregation, and intolerance was something unique to Detroit and its suburbs. And then as I grew older, I realized this hatred was everywhere in the United States. When I moved to Chicago after college, I was bewildered by the city’s segregation and how different resources were allocated to public schools based on geographic location within the city. I had to learn more, to know more, and that is why I wanted to go back to school. I wanted to write about it.

How do you repair damage for decades of disinvestment, racism, and injustice? There are scholars who argue that reparations are a starting place for repairing injuries caused to any human being. Reparations must be specific to the harm that was caused. Can a price be placed on all of the students who never received books, or students who had to share books, along with those students who lost instructional minutes due to double-shifts in the instructional school day? How much would it cost to repay African American families the money lost from discrimination in the housing market? Would that include all of the money African Americans spent repairing

homes that were often in disrepair when they were purchased? Would reparations take into account families who lost all of their money if they missed a house payment through restrictive covenants? You cannot put a price on it, because it is that deplorable.

In my mind, it is not enough that Chicago Public Schools had to submit a lengthy and costly report to the United States Justice Department in order to be released from a consent decree. I don't know how many millions of dollars were spent to pay lawyers who wrote reports about the progress of desegregation efforts in Chicago Public Schools. They are all neatly organized in the Chicago Public School Archives. Could that money have been put into the schools most affected by de facto segregation? Possibly. Could there be something other than money that could begin to repair years of hurt and pain in certain neighborhood Chicago Public Schools? This is also probable. But I believe that prescribing recommendations for how to repair decades of injustice and disinvestment shouldn't come from me. I never lived in Austin. I didn't experience educational inequality; my family didn't have a restrictive covenant when they purchased their first home in Detroit. My grandparents didn't attend schools that were on double shifts of instructional minutes.

The next steps for the Austin neighborhood shouldn't be decided by anyone except for the residents of that community. In the beginning of my literature review, I quoted Sarason (1979). Sarason wrote, "The polarization within the schools and between schools and the community speak volumes about power and conflict in the service of narrow, and ultimately self-defeating, conceptions of self-interest," (p. 294). If a neighborhood community and its school are going to rebuild, it has to be done by people who live in the neighborhood, who have children attending the public schools, and who are invested in the growth and development of the space. Teachers and administrators who work in these buildings, members of the community who are

running the neighborhood block clubs, parents and students attending the public schools should be those deciding what next steps should be taken in order to make their neighborhood and public school great again.

Money should not be a factor. I understand that is an unrealistic expectation. But in truth, if you did calculate the decades of disinvestment that occurred in this neighborhood, you could argue a solid number in the federal courts. The fact of the matter is that Chicago Public Schools violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The segregated conditions that were created in Chicago Public Schools were directly related to the various policies and practices of Chicago Public School officials. It is lamentable that, because the racial and socioeconomic demographics of Chicago Public Schools have changed so drastically in the last decade, true integration is not a viable option in our city. However, that has absolutely nothing to do with addressing the educational inequality that existed between black and white schools during the 1960s. That also has nothing to do with the years of housing discrimination that created neighborhoods like Austin on the south and west sides of the city.

The change must be led by the community, and supported by the city, state, and federal government. Until that happens, Austin can never truly be free. It is time to break the chains and support this community just like we would any other neighborhood in our city. In addition to what is owed to the current residents of Austin, or what the neighborhood deserves, it is about justice and doing the right thing for all people in Austin because Austin residents are also residents of Chicago. Perhaps if the city of Chicago took this next step, other cities across the nation could also summon the courage to make amends and begin to heal.

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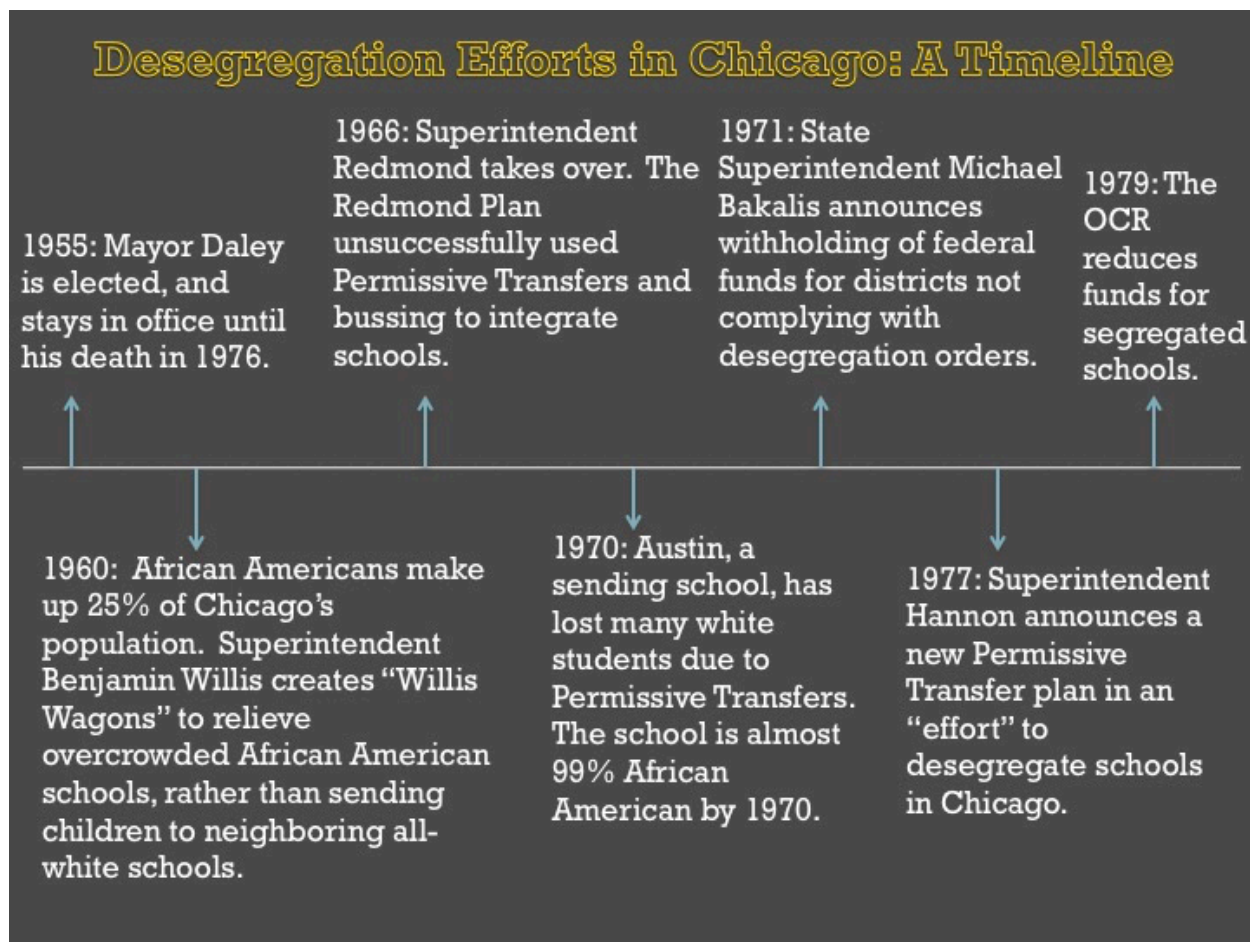
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APPENDICES

Appendix A Desegregation Efforts Timeline



Appendix B
Archival Letter, Boundary Change Request

March 9, 1957

Mr. James D. Grant
Austin Federal Savings & Loan
5454 West North Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60639

Dear Mr. Grant:

This letter is being written in support of the Austin Business Council's proposal to move the boundary line of Austin High School back to the Belt Line.

It is only by keeping Austin High School in proper racial balance that the school and the Austin community itself, can be kept from going the way of other neighborhoods - first, white -- then integrated, and finally -- all black. Integration is an impossibility if the white people move.

The Board of Education's Superintendent in charge of integration has recommended that Austin High School be taken from the permissive transfer list of schools. However, their lawyer seems to think this is unconstitutional to try and maintain racial balance in a school. Doesn't he realize that this preserves the rights of all of the people? Give the white people an incentive to stay in their communities. Let them know that their wishes are not being ignored in preference to the demands of others. Please try to impress this fact upon the Board of Education.

We have enough children here in Austin to fill Austin High School -- the freshman class should not be forced to attend Hay branch.

As the schools go -- so goes the community!

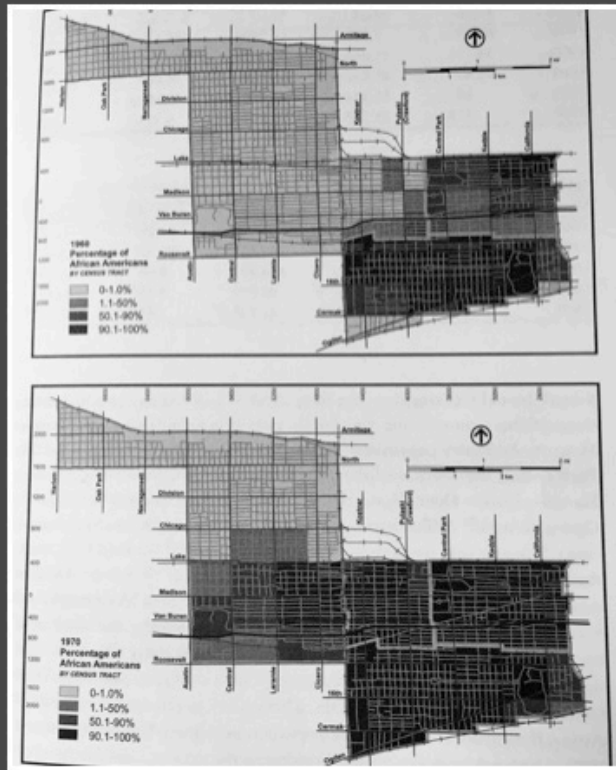
I wish you much success in your efforts to attain your goals for Austin.

Very truly yours,

Mrs. A. J. Hipsky
Mrs. A. J. Hipsky
1040 N. Mayfield Ave.
Chicago, Ill. 60651

Appendix C

Housing on the West Side of the City



Housing on the West Side of the City

Here, we see a series of maps that compares the percentage of African Americans on the west side of Chicago from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Cartography and GIS Center from 1960-1970. As the maps show, there was an increase of African Americans residing on the west side, which in turn, affected the student demographics for both elementary and high schools in CPS.

Appendix D

Population Shifts in the Austin Neighborhood

Population shifts in the Austin Neighborhood

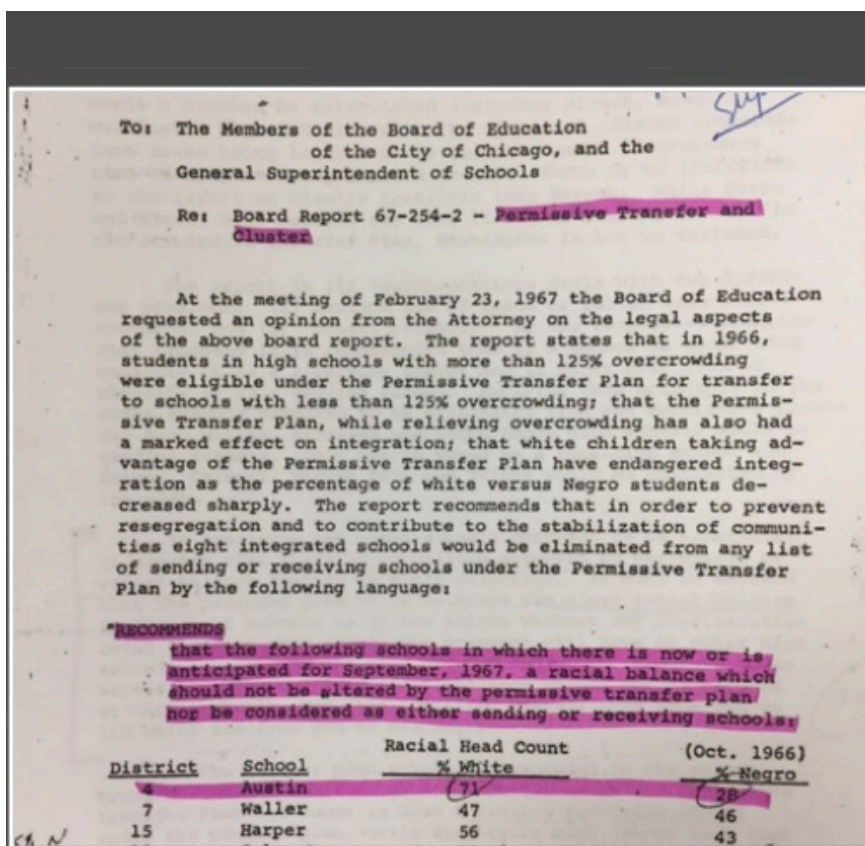
Population in Austin	1950	1960	1970	1980
White	131,970 (99.84%)	124,916 (99.83%)	84,909 (66.35%)	28,649 (32.49%)
Black	122 (.09%)	31 (.02%)	41,583 (32.49%)	101,831 (73.78%)

Taken from the 1960 Fact Book and 1980 Fact Book; Department of Development and Planning, City of Chicago, Chicago Statistical Abstract, Part I: 1970 Census, Community Area Summary Tables (July 1973)

1942: Chicago Land Use Survey	46.1% Single-family detached homes
16,581 Residential Structures in Austin	35.2% Classic Chicago two-flats

Appendix E

Permissive Transfer Evidence, Austin High School



Theme #1:

The Permissive Transfer Plans, Changing Boundary Lines and Busing were Failed Desegregation Efforts that kept repeating throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Appendix F
Letter from Attorney Coffey, Chicago Public Schools

- 5 -

~~these schools by confining the pupils to those schools and not permitting them to transfer would be a contradiction in terms and would ignore the facts.~~ The proposed plan really involves the fixing of a racial quota at each of the eight schools, which must eventually affect the individual pupils at those schools by including or excluding him from the operation of the Permissive Transfer Plan because of his race or color.

In fixing the ratio of the racial balance in each of the eight schools by removing them from the Permissive Transfer Plan there is created a situation similar to that discussed in Palaban v. Rubin (248 N.Y.S. 574, Aff'd. 250 N.Y.S. 2d 881, Cert. denied by U.S. Supreme Court, 379 U.S. 881), where the court declared that a racial quota system was repugnant and illegal and defined a quota system to be the establishment of a "fixed immutable ratio in order to achieve and thereafter to maintain and preserve the same racial composition."

It is my opinion that the proposed report, which seeks to maintain a racial balance at each of the eight schools by excluding the pupils at those schools from the general application of the Permissive Transfer Plan ~~violates constitutional and statutory guarantees of due process and equal protection of the law.~~

As pointed out in previous opinions, the well-established principle that all school children shall have equal rights must be constantly kept in mind when proposed cluster or transfer plans are being considered and developed by the Board of Education.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. Coffey
James W. Coffey
Attorney

JWC:gg

Appendix G

Increase in Remedial English Classes, Austin High School

1973-74			3941				418	
			3665				467	
READING LEVELS OF ENTERING FRESHMEN:								
	Sept. 1971		Sept. 1972		Sept. 1973		Sept. 1974	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
BASIC ENGLISH	793	55%	887	59%	705	52%	689	50%
ESSENTIAL ENGLISH	384	26%	301	20%	396	28%	415	30%
REGULAR ENGLISH	127	9%	148	10%	253	18%	211	16%
HONORS ENGLISH	49	3%	161	10%	26	2%	50	4%
NO RECORDS	97	7%	15	1%	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	1450	100%	1512	100%	1380	100%	1365	100%

(An average of 80% of the entering freshmen during the past 4 years had seventh-grade or lower - reading levels.)

Movement of families in and out of the community has been increasing in momentum during recent years. (Student folders reveal that many students have attended many schools before entering Austin High. Urban conditions of ethnic and racial change are involved in movements to and from the community.) These conditions influence the school's holding power. Withdrawals indicate two factors: (1) transfers out of the district; (2) low academic achievement and interest levels of entering freshmen during the past four years.

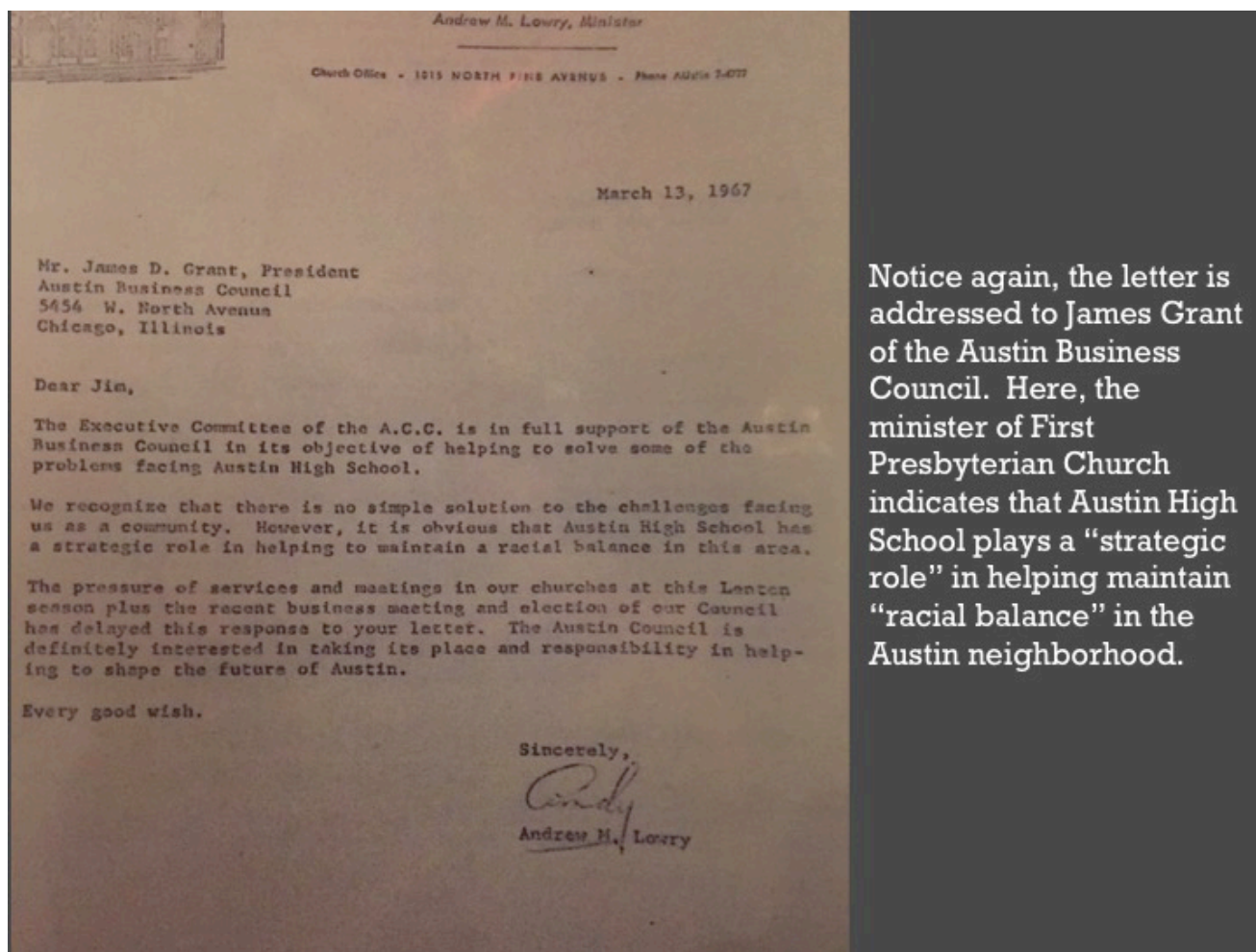
Parent and student conferences with teachers, counselors, and administrators are arranged to inform parents and to encourage students to want to achieve their best possibilities. Withdrawals are encouraged to attend summer school and evening school. Students of limited ability may transfer to one of the additional educational opportunities to meet their needs.

Data is used to plan the individual's course of study in high school and for group guidance. The guidance conference series and individual conferences are held with students and parents to discuss the student's progress and to plan for the future.

The North Central Association (NCA) documented an increase in remedial and basic English class enrollment at Austin High School during the late 1960s-early 1970s. The NCA also cited "urban conditions of ethnic and racial change: involved in movements to and from the Austin community."

Appendix H

Archival Letter, Boundary Change



Notice again, the letter is addressed to James Grant of the Austin Business Council. Here, the minister of First Presbyterian Church indicates that Austin High School plays a "strategic role" in helping maintain "racial balance" in the Austin neighborhood.

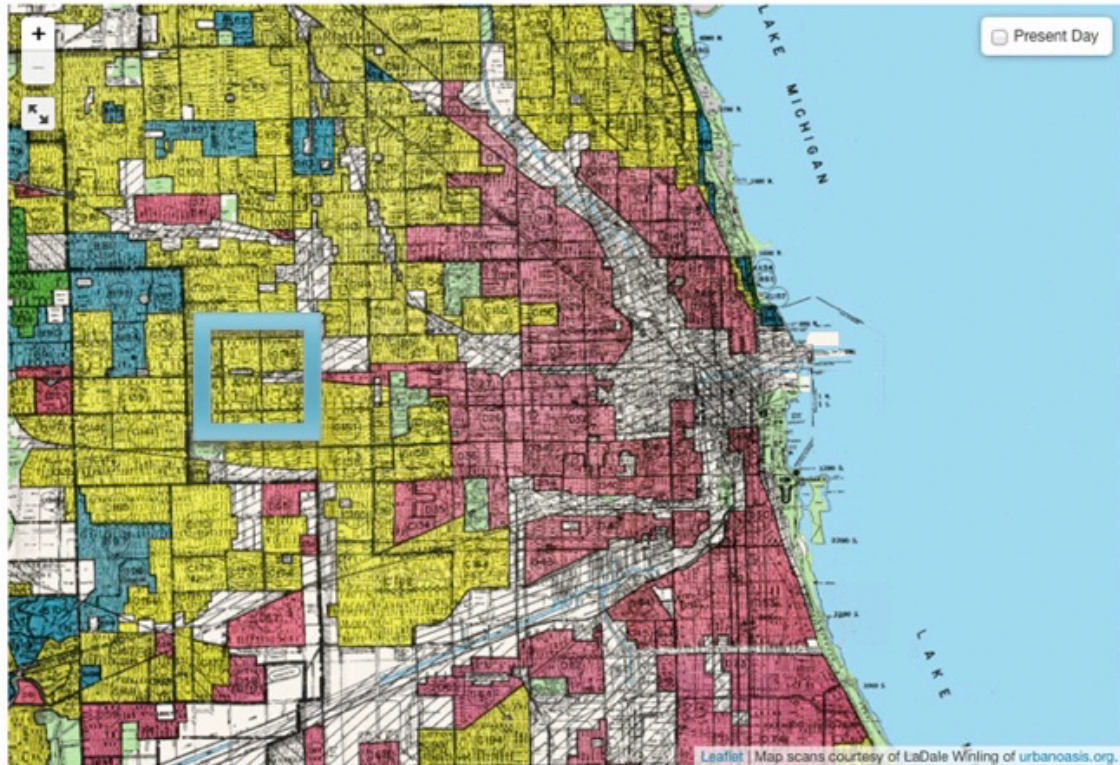
Appendix I
FHA Redlining Map, Austin High School



The housing stock surrounding Austin High School is found in area C144. The next slide is going to show Chicago on a bigger scale so that you can see the limitations of where African Americans could move based on the ability to secure an FHA-backed mortgage.

Appendix J FHA Redlining Map, Chicago

Explore Redlining in Chicago



A 1939 Home Owners' Loan Corporation "Residential Security Map" of Chicago shows discrimination against low-income and minority neighborhoods. The residents of the areas marked in red (representing "hazardous" real-estate markets) were denied FHA-backed mortgages. (Map development by Frankie Dintino)

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