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**Good Intentions, Limited Impact:
The Technical Assistance for Student Assignment Plans Program**

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<Executive Summary>

In 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 (PICS)*, invalidated the student assignment policies of Seattle, Washington and Jefferson County, Kentucky. The Court ruled that the government has a compelling interest to promote diversity, while simultaneously arguing that racial balance and diversity should be considered different and separate goals. Thus, the *PICS* decision sent mixed messages to school districts across the country. To help school districts navigate the legally uncertain environment, the federal government created a small, one-time competitive grant called the Technical Assistance for Student Assignment Plan (TASAP) grant. The grant was designed in a way that gave school districts significant discretion over the types of technical assistance and the consultants that would support their projects.

Eleven school districts received funding from the TASAP grant. The districts faced common challenges, in particular, financial austerity, declining enrollments, and pressure to reduce achievement gaps between racial and socioeconomic groups. The most common topics of technical assistance were public engagement, including marketing and community forums, and geospatial analysis. Most of the districts that used TASAP funds to continue existing policies maintained an emphasis on diversity. On the other hand, most of the districts that used TASAP to help change their student assignment policies moved away from diversity as a priority. Districts that had expressed a commitment to diversity in their TASAP applications could not necessarily sustain those commitments in the face of competition with other local interests and needs. Federal management of the grant did not provide leverage on districts to ensure that the local work remained true to its initial goals. federal government did not insist that diversity remain a priority.

We present six recommendations for future federal diversity policy, based on the TASAP experience:

1. Construct a more deliberate theory of change so that all elements of the grant, including the proposal evaluation criteria and funded activities, are aligned.
2. Solicit grant proposals for a longer period of time.
3. Include inter-district approaches to diversity
4. Provide sufficient federal involvement and guidance to support project implementation at the local level, and increase accountability for federal program goals.
5. Build on local capacity.
6. Situate diversity as central to educational improvement to increase the relevance of diversity programs.

Introduction

School districts have student assignment policies (SAPs) that establish rules for determining which schools children will attend. Often, students are assigned to schools based on their neighborhood of residence, but in larger school districts, student assignment policies are usually more complicated. This is due to families' interest in choice, residential segregation patterns and several historic court cases. In *Brown v. Board of Education*,¹ the U.S. Supreme Court declared "separate but equal" school systems unconstitutional because they harmed Black children educationally. Federal courts placed many school districts under desegregation orders. *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* established six criteria (commonly referred to as the *Green* Factors) for finding that a school district has eliminated all vestiges of segregation and thus can be declared "unitary." One of the *Green* factors is student assignment.² Today, only a few school districts remain under court-ordered desegregation plans. Many post-unitary districts continued to value diversity and voluntarily used race in their student assignment policies to ensure integration.

In 2007, school districts' use of race in assigning students by school districts was challenged in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*³ (*PICS*) and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*. The U.S. Supreme Court decided the two cases, striking down Seattle's and Jefferson County's student assignment policies by a 5-4 vote. The *PICS* decision represents a shift towards race-neutral policy, and reflects societal ambivalence over race-based affirmative action policies. Justice Kennedy's concurring opinion suggested that the use of race under certain circumstances and with other factors was still legally permissible and would likely be upheld under judicial scrutiny. After the *PICS* decision, a number of large urban school districts that were part of the Council of Great City Schools (CGCS) expressed a desire to continue pursuing integration in their student assignment policies. The NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF), frequently a participant in desegregation cases, also wanted to support districts in these efforts. Working together, the CGCS and the LDF secured funding for these efforts from the Ford Foundation. In 2009 CGCS also lobbied for the creation of the Technical Assistance for Student Assignment Plans (TASAP) grant as a \$2.5 million addition to the budget of the U.S. Department of Education's Equity Assistance Centers. As a one-time competitive grant, TASAP was intended to help districts develop, adopt and implement new student assignment policies, with the goal of promoting diversity and avoiding racial isolation in schools.

Compared with earlier federal desegregation programs, TASAP gave districts more autonomy in deciding what kinds of help they most needed. In contrast with uses of federal funding as leverage for desegregation in resistant communities (Orfield, 1969; Cascio, Gordon, Lewis, & Reber, 2008),⁴ TASAP funds were not intended to induce changes in local leaders' preferences, but to help them pursue a preference they had already expressed, within a changed legal environment.

The TASAP grant provides an opportunity for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to learn about federal diversity policies within a changing legal, political and social environment. This report analyzes the TASAP program and makes recommendations for future federal efforts. Unless otherwise noted,

¹ 347 U.S. 483

² 391 U.S. 430; The others are faculty assignment, staff assignment, transportation, extracurricular activities, and facilities. The court supervising a previously segregated district periodically reviews progress towards unitary status, and can declare a district partially unitary upon the fulfillment of some of the *Green* factors.

³ 551 U.S. 701

⁴ Gary Orfield, *The Reconstruction of Southern Education: The Schools and the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (New York: Wiley Interscience, 1969); Gerald Rosenberg, *The Hollow Hope: Can Courts Bring About Social Change?* (University of Chicago Press, 1991).

information presented here comes from interviews, media accounts, and official documents from the TASAP grantees. The Appendix contains specific summaries of each grantee district's activities, and links to each district's TASAP proposal.⁵

Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1

The use of race in student assignment has been recently contested in the Supreme Court. In 2003, affirmative action at the University of Michigan was challenged in *Grutter v. Bollinger*⁶ and *Gratz v. Bollinger*.⁷ Together, the *Grutter* and *Gratz* decisions established diversity in post-secondary education as a compelling governmental interest, which justified the individualized consideration of race as one of several factors in the college admissions process.

Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 and its companion case *Meredith v. Jefferson County Public Schools* challenged the use of race in student assignment policies. In both cases, White parents sued their respective school districts. They claimed that their children were denied enrollment at their school of choice because of their race, in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. Two issues were centrally debated in *PICS*:

- Does government have a compelling interest in avoiding racial isolation and maintaining diversity in schools?
- Was the use of race in the student assignment policies "narrowly tailored" to achieve that compelling government interest?

To assess whether the consideration of race was narrowly tailored in Seattle and Jefferson County's student assignment policies, the Supreme Court applied a four-criterion test that was used in *Grutter v. Bollinger*. In order for the use of race to be considered narrowly tailored, school districts must:

- consider and exhaust race-neutral alternatives first
- use race in an individualized, case-by-case way
- use race in a way that does not, intentionally or inadvertently, burden other students
- review the use of race to assess whether it is still necessary

The Supreme Court found that Seattle and Jefferson County had failed to meet these four criteria and thus, struck down both districts' student assignment plans.⁸ Five Justices held that race-conscious student assignment policies violated plaintiffs' rights, because the use of race was not narrowly tailored to achieve diversity. The four dissenting Justices, who held that student assignment policies were constitutional, still viewed diversity as a compelling interest of government and the use of race as narrowly tailored.

⁵ The proposals are archived on Kathryn McDermott's ScholarWorks site:

http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott

⁶ 539 U.S. 306; In *Grutter v. Bollinger*, the University of Michigan Law School's consideration of race in its admissions policy was challenged. The admissions policy was upheld with a 5-4 decision, finding the case-by-case consideration of race, along with other factors, constitutional.

⁷ 539 U.S. 244; In *Gratz v. Bollinger*, the University of Michigan's affirmative action policy, i.e. consideration of race, in undergraduate admissions was challenged. The admissions policy was struck down, with a 6-3 decision, because the use of race was not holistic, as a set number of points were automatically granted to minority students.

⁸ A discussion of the *PICS* decision can be found in the legal framework section of the "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools," p. 2-5.

Justice Kennedy voted with the majority but wrote a separate, concurring opinion. His opinion is particularly important, because he emphasizes that race can still be used in student assignment. Specifically, he discusses what he sees as legally permissible ways for districts to continue including race in student assignment policies. Justice Kennedy writes in his concurring opinion:

A compelling interest exists in avoiding racial isolation, an interest that a school district, in its discretion and expertise, may choose to pursue. Likewise, a district may consider it a compelling interest to achieve a diverse student population. Race may be one component of that diversity, but other demographic factors, plus special talents and needs, should also be considered.⁹

Justice Kennedy describes circumstances in which the use of race to pursue diversity would be considered narrowly tailored and suggests other policies that would not even need to be subjected to strict judicial scrutiny.

Federal Guidance on the Use of Race in Student Assignment Policies

To help school districts create student assignment policies that comply with *PICS*, the federal government has issued two rounds of guidance. First, a "Dear Colleague" Letter was issued in August of 2008. Three years later, in December of 2011, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Education (USED) jointly issued more in-depth guidance in a document entitled "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools."¹⁰ The TASAP program was created, and mostly implemented, during the three years between the "Dear Colleague" letter and the more detailed guidance.

"Dear Colleague" Letter

The "Dear Colleague" Letter issued by the United States Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights in 2008 summarized the *PICS* decision, and encouraged the use of race-neutral criteria, specifically socioeconomic metrics, in student assignment policies. The letter states:

The Department of Education strongly encourages the use of race-neutral methods for assigning students to elementary and secondary schools. Unlike the assignment plans in *Parents Involved*, genuinely race-neutral measures- for instance, those truly based on socio-economic status- do not trigger strict scrutiny and are instead subject to the rational-basis standard applicable to general social and economic legislation.¹¹

This letter, only two pages in length, encouraged school districts to err on the side of caution. It did not discuss the option of continuing to use of race in student assignment policies, and this narrow reading of *PICS* suggested that the use of race was no longer legally permissible.

Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools

⁹ 551 U.S. 701, 797-98

¹⁰ Available on the USED website: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.pdf>

¹¹ U.S. Department of Education "Dear Colleague" Letter, August 2008, p. 2. The letter has been withdrawn and is not available on the USED website, as it was replaced by new guidance in 2011. A copy is archived on Kathryn McDermott's ScholarWorks page: http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/15/

Compared to the 2008 "Dear Colleague" Letter, the 2011 "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools" issued jointly by the DOJ and USED provided more specific advice to local policy makers about what kinds of race-conscious policies remained legal. Specifically, this new guidance included a set of recommended considerations and steps to help school districts develop student assignment plans that promote diversity while complying with the *PICS* decision.

First, the 2011 Guidance cites the benefits of diversity in schools and the negative effects of racially isolated schools. It reiterates that diverse schools promote "cross-racial understanding, breaking down racial and other stereotypes, and eliminating bias and prejudice" and also discuss the adverse effects of racial isolation in schools:

The academic achievement of students at racially isolated schools often lags behind that of their peers at more diverse schools. Racially isolated schools often have fewer effective teachers, higher teacher turnover rates, less rigorous curricular resources (*e.g.*, college preparatory courses), and inferior facilities and other educational resources. Reducing racial isolation in schools is also important because students who are not exposed to racial diversity in school often lack other opportunities to interact with students from different racial backgrounds.¹²

In contrast to the 2008 "Dear Colleague" Letter, which did not address this critical link, the 2011 Guidance unequivocally establishes diversity as central to educational improvement.

Applying the *PICS* decision, the Guidance discusses race-neutral and generalized race-based approaches to promoting diversity and avoiding racial isolation in schools. In race-neutral approaches, race is not used explicitly in student assignment, though alternatives to race, such as factors related to socioeconomic status,¹³ are used to achieve diversity. In generalized race-based approaches, race is considered not of an individual student but of a larger group, such as all students who live in a Census block. The Guidance provides the following example: the racial makeup of neighborhoods can be considered when drawing zone boundaries, but the resulting boundary will affect all students living within the zone, regardless of their race.¹⁴ The Guidance is also explicit that race-neutral approaches should be considered prior to implementing individual race-based approaches.

The Guidance states that the use of individualized racial classification is permissible, if combined with other non-race based factors to achieve diversity, so that an individual student's race is not his or her "defining feature."¹⁵ School districts that use race in this way must also review their student assignment plans regularly to determine whether the individualized consideration is still necessary to achieve diversity. Thus, the use of individualized racial classifications is seen as a last resort, when race-neutral approaches are unworkable and the use of race closely fits their goals. Given the need to exhaust all options and the periodic evaluation required, the *PICS* decision creates numerous hurdles that limit the use of individualized racial classifications. This ensures the use of race to the least extent needed to achieve diversity.

¹² "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools," p. 1.

¹³ Some examples include: parent's highest level of education, income, family structure (dual or single parent household) and neighborhood of residence

¹⁴ "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools," p. 6.

¹⁵ "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools," p. 7.

Regarding the implementation at the school district level, the Guidance includes a suggested checklist of steps and considerations. In particular, the Departments recommend keeping documents that describe the goals, considerations, and processes relating to the development and implementation of student assignment plans. The Guidance also discusses ways in which school districts can strategically promote diversity, including choosing school sites for special programming and school closures, altering student recruitment, realigning feeder patterns, grouping several neighborhoods into an attendance zone, and the use of lottery systems.¹⁶ Several TASAP grantees had proposed this sort of work when they applied for the federal funding, but actually made policy changes that were less race-conscious.

Technical Assistance for Student Assignment Plans (TASAP)

During and after the *PICS* case, large urban school districts were particularly concerned about the legality of their student assignment policies. As described above, the USED did not immediately provide detailed guidance to school districts concerning the use of race in student assignment. Around this time, the Great Recession hit. In the midst of budget cuts, school districts needed both financial and technical assistance to revise their student assignment policies to be consistent with the *PICS* decision. TASAP provided funds for districts to use in purchasing technical assistance, and it also had the symbolic value of reiterating federal support for school diversity.

Establishing a separate grant program, rather than adding to the mission of the existing Equity Assistance Centers, was a deliberate decision. Reflecting on this decision, CGCS's Jeff Simering stated:

You could've potentially directed the technical assistance centers to take on this thing, but we didn't want to constrain our districts [to] doing things that a technical assistance center decided were appropriate....we wanted to at least let our districts deal creatively with the issue and the particular politics they had to deal with.

The authorization for TASAP appeared in Congress's Joint Explanatory Statement that accompanied the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009:

...\$2,500,000 is available for competitive grants to school districts to arrange and pay for technical assistance in preparing, adopting, or modifying, and implementing student assignment plans in accordance with the parameters of recent Supreme Court decisions pertaining to school desegregation, which require a compelling governmental interest in avoiding racial isolation and the resulting re-segregation in the Nation's schools, and in facilitating student diversity. School districts shall utilize the grant funds to seek assistance and expertise from student assignment specialists, demographers, community relations specialists, facility and other planners, curriculum specialists and others in comparable school districts with relevant and successful experience, as well as specialists and consultants from academia, non-profit institutions, civil rights organizations, and the private sector.¹⁷

The TASAP grant was established as a one-time grant, implemented over a two-year period, with funds dispersed as one single award at the beginning of the grant period.

¹⁶ A discussion of the approaches to achieving diversity or avoiding racial isolation is on p. 9- 13 in "Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Race to Achieve Diversity and Avoid Racial Isolation in Elementary and Secondary Schools."

¹⁷ Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009. H.R. 1105; P.L. 111-8. Joint Explanatory Statement, Division F, Title III, pp. 1446-1447. Accessed at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CPRT-111JPRT47494/pdf/CPRT-111JPRT47494-DivisionF.pdf>

Grant Purpose and Design

The design of TASAP was somewhat atypical, compared to other USED grants in the USED. First, the grant was created in response to external pressure, when the CGCS recognized a need to mitigate the financial and technical barriers to assessing, revising or augmenting existing student assignment policies so that school districts would be able to respond to the *PICS* decision.¹⁸ Second, TASAP had minimal requirements, to allow room for innovative and thoughtful solutions. The TASAP grant was designed both to support districts already thinking about student assignment and to induce school districts to continue pursuing diversity-promoting initiatives. School districts were given significant discretion over the use of TASAP funds to acquire support and expertise. According to Jeff Simering of CGCS, the goal was not to constrain districts' options, but rather to help them "go in at least some direction."¹⁹

In the RFP, the USED suggests a wide range of potential services and consultants, including "student assignment specialists, demographers, community relations specialists, facility and other planners, or curriculum specialists and others in comparable LEAs with relevant and successful experience, as well as specialists and consultants from academia, non-profit organizations, civil rights organizations, and the private sector."²⁰ Grantee districts were awarded up to a maximum of \$250,000, all of which came to the districts at the beginning of the grant period.

The *Federal Register* notice of the TASAP grant articulated an "Absolute Priority" that repeated the language from the Joint Explanatory Statement, quoted above.²¹ TASAP also had a "Competitive Priority" for districts with a voluntary integration policy. Applicants that met the Competitive Priority received an extra five points.

The language that created TASAP specifically mentioned the goals of avoiding racial isolation and re-segregation, but it also did not identify what kind of diversity (racial, socioeconomic, or something else) districts ought to pursue. It also did not explicitly highlight the connection between student diversity and academic outcomes/educational improvement that was central in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Grant Timeline

The Request for Proposals (RFP) was announced on July 22, 2009. Some outreach to disseminate information about the RFP occurred, mainly through the USED Equity Assistance Centers as well as through related groups. Interested school districts submitted a notice of intent to apply by August 6, 2009, and the deadline for the final application was approximately two weeks later, on August 21, 2009. Between the initial RFP and application deadline, the turnaround time was one month. Some inter-district communication and collaboration between the grantees took place, though it was not formally organized by the USED. All but one grantee district received no-cost extensions, and were allowed extra time to spend the funds they had received.

Evaluation of Grant Proposals

¹⁸ See Elizabeth DeBray, Kathryn McDermott, Erica Frankenberg and Ann Blankenship, Lessons from a Federal Grant for School Diversity: Tracing a Theory of Change and Implementation of Local Policies (Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Vancouver, BC, 2012), pp. 13-15. Online: http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/3/

¹⁹ DeBray, McDermott, Frankenberg, and Blankenship, Lessons from a Federal Grant for School Diversity, p. 14.

²⁰ *Federal Register*, v. 74, no. 139, p. 36175. Online: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2009-07-22/pdf/E9-17492.pdf>

²¹ *Federal Register*, v. 74, no. 139, p. 36175

Each grant application was reviewed by two or three peer reviewers. Applications for the TASAP grant were evaluated on the following criteria:

- Need for Project (25 points)
- Significance (10 points)
- Quality of Project Design (15 points)
- Quality of Project Services (15 points)
- Quality of Project Personnel (10 points)
- Adequacy of Resources (5 points)
- Quality of Management Plan (10 points)
- Quality of Evaluation and Evaluation Plan (10 points)

Twenty-two school districts submitted applications for the TASAP grant. Averaging the scores given by the three peer reviewers, TASAP applicants received scores ranging from 31 to 94.5. Eleven school districts received TASAP funding, with average scores that ranged from 84.7 to 94.5.²² These districts were: Boston, Massachusetts, Champaign, Illinois, Evangeline Parish, Louisiana, Hillsborough County (Tampa), Florida, Jefferson County (Louisville), Kentucky, Orange County (Orlando), Florida, Portland, Oregon, Rockford, Illinois, San Diego, California, San Francisco, California, and St. Paul, Minnesota.

The applicant with the tenth highest score, Walpole (MA), was not funded while two districts with lower average scores, Champaign and San Diego, did receive funding. Walpole was proposing a project to increase participation in the METCO city-suburban desegregation program as a way to diversify their suburban school district. We have been unable to learn why Walpole's proposal was not funded.

Projects with ambitious but achievable and measurable timelines and goals tended to score higher on quality of project design. Concrete implementation details also served as an indicator of well thought-out project design. Reviews considered the extent to which the assistance sought would build local capacity or otherwise be sustainable after the grant period. In general, the non-funded districts scored high on project need, but earned lower marks for whether the project was well thought out and/or whether the district would be able to carry out the project (districts that only budgeted a small amount of staff time were routinely marked down). This result supported the hypothesis that the quick turnaround may have favored more-advantaged districts with better grant-writing operations and other internal capacity.

Implementation of TASAP

Although each of the TASAP grantees' local circumstances were slightly different, they faced a common set of challenges that included financial austerity and pressure to reduce achievement gaps. Some grantees also shared the problem of declining enrollments. The most common areas in which grantees received technical assistance were public engagement, including marketing and community forums, and geospatial analysis. The eleven funded projects were nearly evenly divided between efforts to enact new student assignment policies (5) and work to refine or implement existing policies (6).

Most of the districts that used TASAP funds to continue existing policies maintained an emphasis on diversity. On the other hand, most of the districts that used TASAP to help change their student assignment policies moved away from diversity as a priority. Even though these districts had been committed enough to diversity to have applied for TASAP funding, other local interests and needs

²² We obtained the reviewers' notes and scores from the U.S. Department of Education through the Freedom of Information Act.

crowded out diversity. Federal management of the grant deferred to local decisions and did not exert leverage to ensure that diversity remain a priority.

Common Challenges

Financial Austerity. Following the *PICS* decision and around the time of the TASAP grant application, the Great Recession hit.

Financial constraints created an environment where school districts were focused on logistics and making day-to-day operations more cost efficient. To reduce operating costs, several TASAP districts, including Orange County and Portland, either considered closing or actually closed and consolidated schools.

Many school districts, including several TASAP grantees, considered reducing their operational costs by limiting school choice in order to reduce transportation costs, closing and merging schools, or both. Boston Public Schools, Portland Public Schools, Rockford Public Schools and St. Paul Public Schools reduced choice in their student assignment policies so that students would attend schools closer to home. St. Paul Public Schools, for example, reduced the size of their student assignment attendance zones. In other cases, districts with zone-based student assignment plans considered redrawing their zone boundaries to address uneven enrollment between schools. When there was excess capacity, some districts closed and merged schools to increase cost-efficiency. Portland Public Schools' High School Redesign process resulted in the closure of a high school campus that housed three magnet programs and the conversion of another high school into a "middle college" magnet.²³ In addition, some districts saw a mismatch between the location of students and schools, and sought better alignment to optimize resources.

Declining Enrollment. Most of the TASAP grantees were urban districts struggling with declining student enrollment. Only three out of the eleven district grantees (Orange County, Hillsborough County, and Rockford) had recently experienced enrollment growth.²⁴ Middle class families were leaving many cities for the suburbs. There was an increased pressure for public schools to compete with private schools and charter schools, particularly in districts where funding followed students. Declining enrollment, in these cases, exacerbated financial constraints.

Some districts' work on student assignment policies attempted to attract more students, or to retain current students who might relocate to the suburbs or choose a private school. Examples of this priority include San Francisco, St. Paul, Champaign and Rockford. Many of these students were White and/or middle-class, and their parents sought ways of guaranteeing their access to desirable schools in their own neighborhoods. This preference was consistent with reducing transportation costs, but also in tension with TASAP's diversity goals because neighborhood-based school assignments would reflect residential segregation.

Achievement Gaps. With limited resources, some districts struggled to close substantial achievement gaps in order to meet performance expectations set forth by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This was the case in Boston, Champaign, Portland, and Rockford.

²³ Students are allowed to begin earning college credits as upperclassmen by taking classes at the local community college.

²⁴ See Erica Frankenberg, Kathryn McDermott, Elizabeth DeBray, and Ann Blankenship's 2013 article "The Changing Politics of Diversity: Lessons from a Federal Technical Assistance Grant," Table 4.

At the same time as districts were implementing TASAP, other federal programs like NCLB and Race to the Top emphasized raising test scores and closing racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps. Despite social-science evidence that links diversity with improved academic performance, these programs did not include any incentives for maintaining or improving diversity. No Child Left Behind actually required districts to give its school-choice requirements priority over the requirements of their desegregation orders.²⁵

Diversity Definitions

Table 1 shows the definitions of diversity included in the funded districts' TASAP applications. Orange County and Evangeline Parish, still under desegregation orders, sought to promote racial balance, though Orange County also included socioeconomic status. Several districts proposed multifactor diversity definitions that included race as one of the factors considered. Districts also included equity among the goals of their TASAP projects.

Table 1 about here.

Table 1 also shows that how the funded districts' actual policies defined diversity, and indeed whether they included it as a goal at all, often diverged from what they had proposed. Some of these changes included downplaying diversity or even dropping it as a goal, which will be discussed further below.

Types of Technical Assistance Used

The TASAP grantees used the grant for a variety of technical assistance. Assistance with public engagement and geospatial analyses were the most common. Seven TASAP grantees used some portion of the funds for public engagement-related activities such as marketing and community forums.²⁶ Evangeline Parish hired a Student Recruitment and Support Coordinator, who then implemented a marketing campaign to promote the district's magnet programs. Rockford gathered community feedback on student assignment alternatives through open houses, implementing a survey and conducting in-person focus groups. Four of the TASAP grantees conducted geospatial analyses, and a fifth used the funds to build internal capacity to do so in the future.²⁷ Hillsborough County hired SEER Analytics to help develop the capacity to perform multi-objective geospatial analyses to optimize their student assignment policies. Their goals were to balance enrollment, reduce racial isolation, and reduce transportation costs. This newly acquired geospatial capability has informed several boundary changes, including one middle school and one high school change. Orange County (FL) received legal consultation from one local and one national expert, and with this support, was able to draft a settlement agreement to achieve unitary status. Boston and San Francisco also secured private grants to support their work. Table 2 provides a summary of the types of technical assistance used by TASAP grantee districts.

Table 2 about here.

Several TASAP grantees sought services to assist with data collection, data analysis or to increase their data analysis capabilities. Hillsborough County, with the help of SEER Analytics, acquired the technology to systematically simulate boundary scenarios and project enrollment trends. Portland State

²⁵ Elizabeth DeBray, NCLB Accountability Collides With Court-Ordered Desegregation: The Case of Pinellas County, Florida. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 80 (2005), 170-188.

²⁶ The seven districts were Boston, Champaign, Hillsborough County, Portland, Rockford, San Francisco and St. Paul.

²⁷ The four districts were Boston, Hillsborough County, Portland, and St. Paul.

University's Population Research Center generated enrollment projections for Portland. SEER Analytics also generated a set of scenarios to help evaluate the potential effects of student assignment changes in Portland. In St. Paul, TeamWorks International determined that a small increase in student enrollment would allow the district to avoid downsizing, and worked with the district to design a new school choice policy. Champaign, Jefferson County and San Francisco developed online applications, which will make data analysis easier in the future. Some of the grantee districts that used TASAP funds for public engagement collected and analyzed the feedback they received, which then informed changes to student assignment. However some districts were less systematic about their approach to public engagement, or were unsuccessful at addressing public criticism.

Given flexibility in contracting, it is interesting that several districts used TASAP funds for the hiring of consultants they already had existing relationships with. For example, St. Paul contracted with TeamWorks International, who were already working with the school board on strategic planning. Hillsborough County was already working with SEER Analytics, and Champaign was also working with their choice consultant Michael Alves prior to TASAP.

Diversity, Change, and Continuity in the TASAP Districts

This section of the report identifies overall patterns among the eleven districts. For more details about each district's TASAP projects, please refer to the Appendix.

Did TASAP-Funded Work Support Diversity?

All of the grantee districts' proposals had articulated some sort of diversity goals. However, in practice, not all of them actually used their TASAP funds in ways that made diversity a priority. We defined "success" as a TASAP project that emphasized the goals of "facilitating diversity" and "avoiding racial isolation and the resulting re-segregation" as articulated in the appropriations language and the *Federal Register*. "Subverted" implementation of TASAP is characterized by using funds in a way that did not prioritize diversity or prevention of resegregation. Subverted projects met some other local need, such as cutting costs or responding to demand for neighborhood schools, while downplaying the Federal Register goals.

Our other pair of analytic categories was the emphasis on "change" or "continuity" of student assignment policy in TASAP projects. We classified as "change" the five proposals from districts that intended to use TASAP funds as part of a process of completely changing their student-assignment policies by redistricting, changing the extent of school choice, or redefining "diversity" and then reorganizing student assignment around the new definition. We classified as "continuity" the six proposals from districts that intended to refine implementation of an existing student-assignment policy, build a new data set that could inform change at an unspecified future point, or focus on closing a few schools (see Table 3).

Table 3 about here

Table 3 shows that most districts that won TASAP funds to help them design new student-assignment policies ended up with new policies that did not actually include diversity as a priority. The "continuity" projects, which built districts' capacity to implement existing policies, were likelier than not to emphasize diversity.

Continuation Projects. The five "continuity" TASAP projects proved to be less susceptible than change efforts to subversion of the grant's diversity goals. Of the five, four were TASAP successes, in the sense that their projects retained diversity as a goal (refer to Table 3). Evangeline Parish, one of two grantee districts that was still under a desegregation order, used its TASAP funds for an effort to reduce

segregation at its two high schools with magnet programs, with the ultimate goal of being released from its order. Prior to TASAP, both magnet programs were designed to admit only students of the racial group that was in the minority at the receiving school. The Parish changed admissions procedures so that they now admit students of both races to both programs. Jefferson County (Louisville) used the funds to convert their processing of transfer requests from a paper-based system to an electronic one. San Francisco's Board of Education used its TASAP grant for intensive community engagement to develop the specifics of a policy whose broad outline had been adopted in 2009. These included improving access to choices for disadvantaged families, building internal demographic analysis capacity to be able to adjust the plan, marketing the plan, instituting online applications, and monitoring its effectiveness. In Hillsborough County, there was already an active magnet program in operation, as well as a strong school board commitment to maintaining diverse schools. Hillsborough used its TASAP funds to hire local consulting firm SEER Analytics to develop zoning "scenarios" that would maximize diversity while also efficiently using existing space (a "distance-balance" trade-off).

Only one district with a continuity project, Orange County, Florida, subverted the diversity goal of the grant by changing policy in a way that seems likely to reduce diversity (refer to Table 3). Its proposal was to pay community engagement specialists to consult about the closing of eight small schools with mainly Black populations whose operation was costing the district \$6 million per year, and whose demographics contributed to resegregation of the district. While the grant was still under review, the Orange County board was persuaded by very vocal opponents, many of them teachers, to keep the schools open. At this point, the district's TASAP coordinator contacted ED to withdraw the application, but the federal officials told them to proceed. Orange County then used the grant to hire two attorneys for input on a unitary status settlement agreement, and returned some funds to the US Department of Education. Because the unitary status agreement focused on employment, school renovation, and extracurricular activities, rather than student assignment, and because the racially-isolated schools remained open, we categorized Orange County as having subverted the diversity purpose of TASAP.

Change Projects. Six TASAP districts planned to use the grants to support development of new student assignment policies. Reversing the pattern of the districts with continuity projects, five of these subverted the diversity goal of the grants, by enacting new policies that downplay diversity as a goal (refer to Table 3). Each had proposed redesigning their student assignment policies in ways that would pursue diversity or balance, and often make them simpler and/or more cost effective. In practice, local policymakers emphasized goals other than diversity. Notably, in three of the districts where the diversity goal was subverted, prior attempts to change the SAP had failed, indicating that the issue was politically unsettled. Because changing an SAP means re-opening previously settled questions, the pressures of local politics and other challenges—such as budget austerity, declining enrollments, preferences for neighborhood schools, and pressure for increased test scores—weakened policy makers' commitment to diversity in student assignment. These decisions represent "subverted" implementation in terms of the federal theory of change, because other local needs and issues crowded out the initial diversity purpose of the grants.

Champaign was the one TASAP district that changed its student assignment plan while retaining diversity as a goal. Its TASAP coordinator clearly saw the grant as an opportunity to enhance community engagement and public outreach about the plan, with a goal of modestly increasing school diversity. Prior to applying for TASAP, Champaign had hastily switched from a race-conscious controlled choice plan to one that was race-neutral. TASAP funds enabled them to hire choice consultant Michael Alves to add other race-neutral factors to their controlled choice algorithm. This is exactly the sort of technical assistance that CGCS had in mind when it pushed for TASAP.

We have classified San Diego as an example of subverted TASAP implementation, because our analysis of district budget documents suggests that the district did not actually spend all of its grant, and because it adopted a new goal of transitioning to neighborhood schools without making diversity a priority. San

Diego had proposed to analyze the potential for reducing racial isolation by adjusting school attendance zones, develop “new transportation schema” that would maintain current diversity, and analyze racial and ethnic patterns in performance.²⁸ However, a new school board majority elected in 2010 asked district staff to focus instead on neighborhood schools.²⁹

St. Paul’s TASAP proposal stated the goals of comprehensive redesign of the controlled choice plan in a way that would maintain both racial and socioeconomic diversity, as well as actively engaging the public about what it wanted in a new plan. The policy it actually adopted shifted from citywide choice to choice within six zones, in an effort to reduce transportation costs and attract more families to the district by strengthening neighborhood ties to schools. The policy itself did not include a diversity goal, though the district later decided to set aside spaces in higher-performing schools for students whose neighborhood schools were low-performing.

For several years prior to TASAP, Portland had been considering closing one or more high schools, and reducing disparities among the remaining schools in terms of their enrollment, demographics, and academic offerings. Portland’s TASAP application had identified a goal of developing a multifactor diversity index and using its high-school redesign process to “enhance diversity.” It contracted with SEER Analytics to develop such an index, but the actual policy that the Board of Education adopted in 2010 made relatively modest changes and did not use the diversity index. After the changes went into effect in 2011-12, Portland high schools’ percentages of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch still ranged from 14.8% to 75.9% (www.pps.k12.or.us/schools-c/profiles/enrollment).

Boston’s TASAP focused on changing an SAP that had evolved from the district’s controlled-choice desegregation policy. Even though many constituencies saw problems with this policy, it offered all students at least a chance to enroll in sought-after schools in more affluent neighborhoods, and thus was defended by civil rights groups.³⁰ Students often traveled long distances to school, and the district’s leaders wanted to reduce transportation costs. The original TASAP proposal was for a public-engagement process in collaboration with three civil-rights organizations, with the goal of enacting a new policy that would address problems with the current policy while preventing resegregation. This collaboration ended unsuccessfully in 2010. A new project supported by TASAP and private funds began in 2012, and led to adoption in 2013 of a “Home Based” elementary- and middle-school student assignment plan that went into use in early 2014 for Fall 2014 placements. Rather than diversity, the new policy’s stated goal is “equal access to quality,” but it remains to be seen how the new policy will affect students’ access to higher-performing schools.

As in Boston, Rockford’s TASAP dismantled the remnants of a desegregation-era SAP. Rockford had proposed using TASAP funds to redesign its elementary school assignment process after one prior redesign had been unsuccessful in 2007. The district considered different scenarios that ranged from neighborhood schools to controlled choice as well as hybrids incorporating choice and neighborhood

²⁸ San Diego Unified School District, TASAP Application, 2009, p. 2. Online: http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/12/ [Materials received from the U.S. Department of Education but not available on the Department website are archived on Kathryn McDermott’s ScholarWorks site.]

²⁹ San Diego Unified School District, TASAP Report Progress Report and Next Steps, April 4, 2011. Received from the San Diego Unified School District through a FOIA request, and archived on Kathryn McDermott’s ScholarWorks site: http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/16/

³⁰ Kathryn A. McDermott, Erica Frankenberg, and Sarah Diem, The “Post-Racial” Politics of Race: Changing Student Assignment Policy in Three School Districts. *Educational Policy*, in press. DOI: 10.1177/0895904813510775. Online: <http://epx.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/01/28/0895904813510775>

preference. The business community successfully influenced the board to view diversity as unrelated to improving achievement and to adopt a colorblind, zone-based assignment policy that—in a residentially segregated community—is likely to sustain the advantage of whites and subvert the intent of the initial TASAP goal.

Overall Patterns

One of the implicit purposes of TASAP was to shift the way in which the federal government interacts with school districts on diversity issues. In contrast to its history of forcing reluctant local officials to integrate their schools, and later of directly providing desegregation assistance, with TASAP the federal government endorsed the goal of diversity and financially supported technical assistance for district diversity efforts, without imposing a particular outcome or providing technical assistance itself. With eleven grantee districts, TASAP provided a potential opportunity for districts to learn from each other's efforts.

The USED's deference to local preferences and unwillingness to insist on a particular definition of diversity enabled some of the subversion that we saw. Without federal insistence that the work maintain a connection to diversity, other local interests and needs dominated TASAP implementation. Most of the districts had declining enrollment and decreased budgets, both of which produced pressure for simpler student assignment policies and lower busing expenses. They also wanted to retain their middle-class students and possibly attract more of them. Middle-class families tended to want neighborhood schools or something very much like them, a preference that conflicts with diversity when neighborhoods are not diverse.³¹ In the subverting districts, TASAP became a source of aid for post-*PICS* revisions of SAPs in general, rather than diversity-promoting ones in particular.

The crucial flaw in TASAP's theory of action was that districts with current or past commitments to diversity could not necessarily sustain those commitments in the face of public indifference to diversity as a goal and of other pressing priorities, such as boosting test scores, implementing budget austerity, and attempting to recruit or retain middle-class and white students. Several TASAP coordinators mentioned being interested in how Seattle had changed its SAP after *PICS*. The reference to Seattle is evidence that decision makers in the districts with subverted TASAP implementation came to see the grants' purpose as supporting any kind of post-*PICS* change in student assignment policies, rather than focusing on changes that promoted diversity. Seattle, whose race-conscious SAP was struck down in *PICS*, had already suspended the policy before the ruling. Within months after the decision it had returned to having neighborhood high schools and was no longer pursuing any kind of diversity through student assignment.³² Like Seattle, the grantees with subverted TASAP implementation enacted new assignment plans that emphasized geography over diversity, and that responded to local needs other than maintaining diverse schools.

One reason for the TASAP grants' modest effect on diversity policy at the local level was that the federal government's position on the use of race-conscious tools to pursue diversity or reduce racial isolation was ambiguous throughout the initial grant period. In other words, the normative and political messages coming from the "top" about equity were absent. Another reason for the modest effect was that there was also not much pro-diversity mobilization from the "bottom up."³³ Technical assistance can help districts

³¹ Erica Frankenberg, Kathryn A. McDermott, Elizabeth DeBray, and Anne Blankenship, *The Changing Politics of Diversity: Lessons from a Federal Technical Assistance Grant*. Presented at American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Vancouver, BC, 2012. Online: http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/2/

³² Kathryn A. McDermott, Elizabeth DeBray, and Erica Frankenberg, *How Does Parents Involved in Community Schools Matter? Identifying Initial Patterns of Political and Legal Response*. *Teachers College Record*, 114(2012): 12.

³³ McDermott, DeBray, and Frankenberg 2012; Frankenberg, McDermott, DeBray, and Blankenship 2012.

carry out their existing commitments to diversity, but is less able to build political will. Many grantee districts were facing political, not technical, challenges. Where grantee districts' goals focused on continuing existing policies, their grant-funded work was likelier to promote diversity than when districts were enacting changes to SAPs.

Internal capacity within districts also mattered. TASAP was likeliest to contribute to local school diversity efforts when the funds were used to build internal capacity to continue an existing policy, as in Jefferson County, Hillsborough County, Evangeline Parish, and San Francisco. These districts' TASAP projects were also likelier to have been housed in offices whose overall mission was diversity, equity, or desegregation. Where the projects were run by generalists like Chief Operating Officers or "special projects" staff, or specialists in instructional facilities, there was less diversity emphasis in practice even if the grant proposal had emphasized it. Although USED's grant reviewers sometimes were reluctant to fund work that seemed like it would happen even without federal funding, perhaps this is not actually a problem, at least when compared to the likelihood of funding work at cross-purposes with a program's goals.

Unsuccessful TASAP Applicants

One final way of assessing the impact of the TASAP grant is to consider whether or not unsuccessful TASAP applicants implemented their proposed projects and pursued diversity-driven initiatives on their own, without receiving federal support. Eleven applicants did not receive funding from the TASAP grant: Charleston County School District (SC), Cincinnati City School District (OH), Clark County School District (NV), Leake County School District (MS), Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO)/Walpole Public Schools (MA), Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (TN), Pulaski County Special School District (AR), Scholars Academy Charter School (GA), St. Landry Parish School District (LA), Tucson Unified School district (AZ), and Wichita Public Schools (KS).

Details on three of the non-grantee TASAP applicants, Cincinnati City School District, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, and METCO/Walpole Public Schools, are provided in the Appendix. Two of these three non-grantees implemented portions of their TASAP proposal, even though they did not receive funding. The remaining non-grantee, Walpole, MA on behalf of METCO, did not carry out their proposed project (See Appendix for more information about Cincinnati, Nashville, and METCO/Walpole). As a TASAP Applicant, METCO/Walpole Public Schools is an outlier. METCO is not a school district. Rather, it is a program that promotes regional integration by busing students from the cities of Springfield and Boston into nearby suburbs. Further, the program is designed to promote inter-district diversity, while student assignment policies typically focus on intra-district diversity. We suspect, but cannot confirm, that this is why its proposal was not funded despite outscoring two funded proposals.

Several factors may have influenced the ability of non-grantee districts to follow through with their TASAP proposals. The two non-grantee districts that implemented their proposals were both CGCS member districts, and received some level of support and technical assistance from CGCS about student assignment policies. As relatively large urban districts, Cincinnati and Metropolitan Nashville have access to more financial and political resources, compared to METCO/Walpole Public Schools.

Lessons From TASAP

Based on our analysis of TASAP, we have six recommendations for future federal diversity policies.

1. Construct a more deliberate theory of change so that all elements of the grant, including the grant proposal evaluation criteria and funded activities, are aligned.

Our team attempted, through interviews with federal officials and selected members of the civil rights community and interest groups, to derive what the working “theory of change” of the program designers may have been, as this is considered a crucial first step to conducting effective evaluations.³⁴ We concluded that the theory of change behind the TASAP grant came mainly from the CGCS and that USED’s implementation work was not strongly aligned with it. A well-constructed and widely shared theory of change behind the grant would have increased the grant’s impact and success. At the local level, an aligned set of goals and activities would have allowed for a more targeted and systematic use of TASAP funds.

In addition to the 2008 “Dear Colleague” letter on race-conscious policies, which sent a message contrary to TASAP’s priorities, the grant came at a time when the most visible federal education initiatives, such as Race to the Top, focused on improving student performance. There appears to have been a disconnect between the way in which grant applications were evaluated and the expected outputs and outcomes of promoting diversity and avoiding racial isolation. For example, with Need (25 points) and Significance (10 points) worth over one-third of all possible points, districts with the most challenging local context were rated more highly. USED should be commended for not cherry-picking the easiest successes, but in practice, these more challenging contexts often led to enactment of new SAPs that made diversity a lower priority than the policies they replaced. Technical assistance can be crucial to policy implementation, but enacting new policies raises political questions, not just technical ones.

2. Solicit grant proposals for a longer period of time.

Although a thirty-day turnaround time to respond to an RFP may be typical for federal grants, TASAP’s tight timeline posed challenges for school districts interested in receiving technical assistance around their student assignment plans. The challenge was magnified because the RFP came out in July, when many district staff members are out of the office. In effect, the turnaround time acted as a selection mechanism: it reduced the number of applicants by limiting the opportunity for districts to find out about the grant.

Some TASAP applicants were already in the process of revising their student assignment or securing technical assistance,³⁵ but a longer turnaround time would have allowed applicants to better develop their projects and anticipate implementation challenges. This, in turn, likely would have led to greater implementation success. For example, if TASAP applicants had been given more time to solicit the feedback and support of stakeholders, community pushback might have been reduced.

3. Include inter-district approaches to diversity.

The four districts that came out of TASAP with new student assignment policies that do not make diversity a priority are all northern, single-municipality districts. Three of these four districts (Boston, Rockford, and St. Paul) have small and declining populations of white students, and large proportions of low-income students. Interviewees in those districts suggested that efforts to integrate white students with students of other races and to achieve socioeconomic diversity are futile because of these demographics.

³⁴ Carol Weiss, Nothing as Practical as Good Theory: Exploring Theory-Based Evaluation for Comprehensive Community Initiatives for Children and Families. In J. Connell, A. Kubisch, L. Schorr, and C. Weiss (Eds.), *New Approaches to Evaluating Community-Wide Initiatives Volume 1: Concepts, Methods, and Contexts* (Queenstown, MD: The Aspen Institute, 1995).

³⁵ Hillsborough was already working with SEER Analytics. Large Scale Systems Change already underway in St. Paul and TASAP funds went toward the second half of the project. San Francisco had begun its student assignment redesign. Jefferson County was already changing their student assignment policy as its student assignment policy was being challenged in *Meredith*, the companion case of *PICS*. Portland had started their High School Redesign process in 2009, before the TASAP grant.

In these districts, like other large cities, student assignment now involves not just the district, but also networks of charter schools. Where most segregation is between rather than within districts, future federal diversity grants should concentrate on building capacity to avoid further resegregation through inter-district choice programs like METCO, on whose behalf Walpole had unsuccessfully applied for TASAP funds.

4. Provide sufficient federal involvement and guidance to support project implementation at the local level, and increase accountability for federal program goals.

One reason for the TASAP grants' modest effect on diversity policy at the local level was that the federal government's position on the use of race-conscious tools to pursue diversity or reduce racial isolation was ambiguous throughout the initial grant period.

After the *PICS* decision was handed down, the United States Department of Education was slow to provide clarification on how the ruling would affect local implementation of student assignment policies, with only a "Dear Colleague" letter issued in 2008, and Guidance from the Department of Education and Department of Justice issued in 2011,³⁶ around the time the TASAP grant period ended. TASAP's Absolute Priority, which referred to preventing resegregation and racial isolation, was in tension with the race-neutral emphasis of the "Dear Colleague" letter. It is plausible that if adequate federal guidance had been provided prior to the creation and implementation of the TASAP grant, there would be less variation in diversity definitions and more districts would have been more willing to retain the use of race in their student assignment policy in some form. TASAP districts would have been better positioned to change or augment their student assignment policies with federal guidance in hand. Alignment of federal and local understanding and support may increase the adoption and implementation of diversity policies.

The distribution of TASAP funds at the beginning of the grant period deprived the USED of leverage over behavior at the local level. Disbursing the TASAP funds at multiple points during the grant period might have resulted in more efficient uses of grant funds and ensured more districts used the funds as planned. Further, the choice and flexibility built into the grant design may have contributed to a situation where the federal government was less able to hold districts accountable. We found no evidence that TASAP proposals had been deliberately misleading about local intentions, but without federal pressure for change (or political cover for change), TASAP grantee districts that encountered opposition often chose politically and legally risk-averse courses of action. This resulted in grantees hiring consultants with whom they already had working relationships, implementing smaller changes than originally planned and adopting "safe" diversity definitions that excluded race entirely.

5. Build on local capacity.

Experience with TASAP suggests that if an incentive takes the form of a technical assistance grant, it is likelier to have its intended effect if it builds on existing local programs and administrative capacity, rather than attempting to alter local policy makers' agendas. A future TASAP-like technical assistance program could contribute to local capacity for diversity work by facilitating connections and mutual learning among grantees, as several of our local interviewees recommended.

6. Situate diversity as central to educational improvement to increase the relevance of diversity programs.

A clearer understanding and articulation of the relationship between diversity and educational improvement, from both district staff and community members, should enhance the salience and effectiveness of diversity policies. Historically, diverse and integrated schools have been viewed as

³⁶ <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/guidance-ese-201111.html>

critical to promoting the learning of all students.³⁷ However, with the *PICS* decision and federal education initiatives like Race to the Top (RTTT), there has been a shift towards decoupling diversity from educational improvement. Issues of quality have remained front and center, but diversity is often viewed as a peripheral goal. Viewing diversity as an add-on made it more difficult to justify complicated, expensive student assignment policies. For example, a frequent argument for reducing transportation costs involved framing the expenses as money not invested directly into classrooms to improve student achievement.

Now that federal guidance explicitly connects diversity with quality, the U.S. Department of Education should help districts make this case locally. The former director of Louisville's student assignment office described what her district *really* needed in November 2009 by saying, "what I really need, and what my community really needs right now, is for someone besides the local educators to be talking about the importance of vision and practicality of diversity in public education...we need to have people like the Secretary of Education, the President, and others talking about true transformation, and that is providing access and rigorous outcomes for all children in all of our schools through diversity."³⁸

Framing educational improvement and diversity as complementary and related may increase the likelihood that diversity policies will be maintained or adopted. Districts with recent experiences with desegregation and integration may have more success with this, because they have seen diversity policies reinforce and support policies related to educational improvements. The cases of Hillsborough County, San Francisco and Champaign provide examples. In districts where there is less understanding and support for diversity, it may be politically possible to incorporate diversity considerations into other district initiatives or changes.

Conclusion

The TASAP grant differs from previous federal initiatives aimed at promoting diversity and reducing racial isolation and segregation in schools. TASAP gave districts broad discretion over how to use the funds. The TASAP grantee districts discussed in this report had all expressed a commitment to promoting diversity, or more broadly, equity, through student assignment plans. Coupled with a lack of federal guidance and challenging financial, political and legal environments, in practice the commitment to diversity manifested in many ways, and at times, completely gave way to efficiency or other goals.

The TASAP grant provided a much-needed infusion of funds and technical expertise to its grantees. As the first grant program of its kind, the grant's design and implementation was undoubtedly imperfect. As school districts, including TASAP grantees, continue to work on diversity and student assignment-related issues, the need for technical assistance remains. With some adjustments to design and implementation, and with explicit reference to the 2011 guidance, future TASAP-like grants could make stronger contributions to diversity. Technical assistance could complement other initiatives, such as the Race to the Top "Equity and Opportunity" priority outlined in President Obama's 2015 proposed budget, which would competitively award \$300 million to states "to identify and carry out strategies that help break up and mitigate the effects of concentrated poverty."³⁹ Multiple strategies and policy instruments targeted at school diversity would be most effective.

³⁷ Roslyn Arlin Mickelson, Twenty-first Century Social Science Research on School Diversity and Educational Outcomes. *Ohio State Law Journal* 69 (2008): 1173-1228.

³⁸ Pat Todd, Remarks at Howard Law School Conference (C-SPAN television broadcast Nov. 13, 2009). Accessed at <http://www.c-span.org/video/?290005-1/governmental-role-integration>. Time marker 1:02:37.

³⁹ <http://www.ed.gov/racetothetop-equity-opportunity>

Over the past fifty years, policy analysts have become used to the idea that the federal government's role is to impose an equity agenda on recalcitrant local officials. Now the courts have pushed the federal racial equity role in the opposite direction—prohibiting districts to enact the kinds of race-conscious policies that used to be federal requirements. In this new political context, the federal role should encourage local officials who have already expressed support for continuing racial equity work. Despite the flaws we have identified, TASAP did embody critical principles that may, in time, prove to have laid important precedent for the future of the federal role in equity-based and student assignment policies. Racism and racial inequality are by no means dead in the United States, but the local politics of diversity are different in 2012 from what they were in the 1960s and 1970s. White attitudes are more supportive of diversity, at least in principle. People of color have more political power, and they constitute the majority in many school districts. The way forward is not obvious, but there is potential for the federal government to be a vital partner with local school districts in preventing school resegregation.

Appendix: TASAP Grantee Districts⁴⁰

Boston, Massachusetts

When it received TASAP funding, Boston had 55,371 students enrolled in its public schools. Of the students, 36.5% were Black, 39.6% were Latino, 13.1% were white, and 8.7% were Asian. The large majority of students (76%) came from low-income families. About 12% were English Language Learners.

Desegregation History. In 1974, a federal District Court decision ruled that the Boston Public Schools had intentionally maintained a segregated system. The beginning of mandatory busing in the city led to riots, and many Bostonians across racial groups have bad memories of that era. The district implemented racially controlled choice in 1989 and was declared unitary in 1990. In 1999, the Boston Public Schools took the racial-balance requirements out of its school choice policy.

Local Context. When it applied for TASAP funds, Boston's student assignment policy used school choice within three large zones, with children from within each school's walk zone given priority for 50% of seats. In 2004 and 2009, the Boston School Committee (the Massachusetts term for a school board) considered making the choice zones smaller in order to shorten the distances and times students traveled, save money, and respond to pressure for neighborhood schools.

Use of TASAP Funds. Boston's TASAP application was entitled, "Equity and Diversity: Designing a Student Assignment Plan for Boston."⁴¹ The district received \$241,600 to fund collaboration between the Boston Public Schools and three civil-rights groups with the goal of developing a new policy. This partnership broke down in 2010, and in 2012, Boston started a new project. Its TASAP funds went toward:

- Research into what comparable districts were doing in response to the *PICS* decision
- Public engagement logistics, such as interpreters, ads, translated materials, and facilities rental.
- Consultative services from a faculty member at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, who analyzed community feedback
- The hiring of Mendelsohn, Gittleman and Associates to conduct a process evaluation
- consultative services from Creative Services for the creation of handouts
- Extra staff support, including two technical support analysts.

Boston also received additional funding and support from private groups, totaling approximately \$400,000.

Boston's new student assignment plan uses an algorithm to produce a "basket" of school choices for each student. Each basket includes all of the schools within walking distance, plus at least two schools in the city's performance quartile and two in the second-highest. Boston also overhauled how students are assigned to special education and English language learner programs. Diversity is not one of the policy's stated goals. Instead, the goal is to achieve "equitable access" to quality schools. The algorithm was used for the first time for Fall 2014 school assignments. Students who were already in the Boston Public Schools in 2013-14 could stay in their current schools or choose to move.

⁴⁰ Demographic data, unless otherwise noted, is from the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data, 2009-10.

⁴¹ The proposal is archived online: http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/4/

Champaign, Illinois

Champaign is located in central-eastern Illinois, south of Chicago. In 2009-10, it enrolled 9,458 students. About 53% were low-income. By race, 42.7% of students were White, 38% were Black, 9.7% were Asian, and 7.6% are Latino.

Desegregation History. In 1998, after it was found that Black elementary school students were negatively and disproportionately affected by Champaign's student assignment policy, the district began implementing an Equity Plan, which included a race-conscious student assignment policy. Champaign achieved unitary status in 2009, and as required in the settlement agreement, established an Education Equity Excellence Committee. The district also switched to a race-neutral student assignment policy, called School of Choice.

Local Context. At the time of TASAP application, Champaign had implemented a new controlled choice system to promote socioeconomic diversity. The district faced several student assignment challenges:

- Declining enrollment, particularly of White, middle class students, with increased competition from private schools and families questioning the quality of schools in the district.
- Uneven enrollment in schools, with some schools over chosen while others are under-chosen
- A general lack of understanding by parents of the new "School of Choice" student assignment policy
- A lack of technological capacity- the district was using paper and pencil applications.

Use of TASAP Funds. Shortly after *PICS*, Champaign enacted a race-neutral SAP. Its goal for TASAP was to develop a multi-factor diversity index that would include race. Champaign's TASAP proposal "Achieving Educational Equity through a Multi-Faceted Socio-Economic Student Assignment Plan"⁴² was awarded \$250,000, which was used to strengthen the new plan's implementation. It allowed for:

- The continuation of the work with choice consultant Michael Alves
- The hiring of an external project evaluator from I-STEM Education Institute (University of Illinois)
- A pilot implementation of a new "multi-faceted, socioeconomic, controlled choice student assignment plan" (SES-SAP)
- A marketing campaign and community engagement, including community informational forums, ads and fliers
- A new website that allows parents to submit their school choices using an online application

In addition to TASAP, Champaign was also awarded a federal Magnet Schools Assistance Program (MSAP) grant, to help address the uneven enrollment issue by converting schools in minority neighborhoods into magnet schools.

Evangeline Parish, Louisiana

Evangeline Parish⁴³ is a rural school district in south-central Louisiana. It is a geographically large district, spanning 680 square miles. However, the Parish is sparsely populated. It had a 2009-10 enrollment of 5,994. Nearly all students are either White (58%) or Black (41%). 77% are low-income.

Desegregation History. Evangeline Parish was under court supervision from 1968 to 2012. In 2004, the Evangeline Parish School Board reconfigured its elementary and middle schools, after the U.S.

⁴² Archived online at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/5/

⁴³ "Parish" is the Louisiana term for what is called a "county" in other states.

Department of Justice found that the condition of Evangeline Parish's majority White and majority Black schools were not comparable.

To balance enrollment at the high school level, an Advanced Placement (AP) magnet program was created at Ville Platte High School, a majority Black school, and a performing-arts magnet program was created at Pine Prairie High School, a majority White school. To ensure that the magnets would affect the racial balance of the two schools, only white students could enroll in the Ville Platte magnet, and only black students could enroll in the Pine Prairie magnet. In 2009, Evangeline Parish was granted partial unitary status and a new settlement agreement was created. After meeting the criteria in this agreement, Evangeline Parish achieved full unitary status in 2012.

Local Context. Evangeline Parish was implementing a magnet program, but faced several student assignment challenges:

- Residential segregation and geographical isolation of racial groups contributed to racial segregation at its two high schools.
- Though designed to promote racial integration and diversity, the magnet school programs lacked "magnetism" and were struggling to attract students.
- Additional challenges include a lack of involvement and trust from the community and local businesses in magnet school programs and a lack of magnet school expertise in the district.

Use of TASAP Funds. Evangeline Parish received \$205,211 for its TASAP application entitled "Technical Assistance for Student Assignment- Evangeline Parish School Board Magnet Schools Program."⁴⁴ The funds were used for:

- The hiring of a Student Recruitment and Support Coordinator for the TASAP grant period who implemented a marketing campaign for Evangeline Parish's magnet school programs.
- Aspects of the marketing campaign, including the creation of new logos and promotional materials such as ads, pamphlets and billboards.
- Community events like the Magnet School Showcase, community meetings, and parent engagement sessions.
- The development of a five-year strategic plan for the magnet programs.

Evangeline also changed its district policy regarding magnet school admissions so that students of both races could apply to either magnet school programs at the high school level. The work paid for by the TASAP grant helped Evangeline Parish achieve unitary status in 2012.

Hillsborough County (Tampa), Florida

Hillsborough County, which includes the city of Tampa, is the eighth largest school district in the country, with 193,265 students. The student body is 41.4% White, 28.5% Latino, 21.9% Black, and 3.1% Asian. 53.7% of students are low-income, and 11.5% are English Language Learners.

Desegregation History. Hillsborough was under a court-ordered desegregation plan from 1971 to 2001, when it was declared unitary. In 2003, Hillsborough adopted a controlled choice plan that moved from thirteen zones to seven zones.

Local Context. Hillsborough County uses magnet schools and school choice to promote diversity in schools. The district faced several student assignment challenges:

- Enrollment growth

⁴⁴ Archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/6/

- Uneven enrollment in schools, with some schools over-enrolled while others are under-enrolled.
- Florida has a Class Size requirement (max of 18 students for elementary and middle school classes; max of 25 for high school classes) and to accommodate students in the over-enrolled areas, Hillsborough has been building and expanding schools, which has been expensive.
- There is residential segregation in the district, by race and socioeconomic status.
- Schools are becoming more racially imbalanced, with many schools majority White, Black or Latino.
- Community leaders lacked tools for leading discussions of how future zoning decisions might achieve a balance among school diversity, distance, and transportation costs.

Use of TASAP Funds. Hillsborough's TASAP application was entitled, "Training and Advisory Services Program-Technical Assistance for Student Assignment Plans Program."⁴⁵ At the time of its TASAP Application, Hillsborough lacked the capabilities and expertise to perform the multi-objective geospatial analyses (balance enrollment, reduce racial isolation, and reduce transportation costs) needed to optimize their student assignment policies. Awarded \$250,000, Hillsborough used the funds to pay for SEER Analytics to conduct Project MAPS (Model of Assignment Planning for Students). This included:

- Building the capacity to generate student assignment scenarios and evaluate them based on a series of criteria
- Training Hillsborough personnel to conduct spatial analyses using the new model
- The creation of a multi-year boundary plan.

Geospatial analyses conducted thus far have informed the move of one middle school boundary and two high school boundaries. A diversity index based on socioeconomic factors (educational attainment, income, English as a second language, single parent families and home ownership) was used as one of the evaluation criteria for the scenarios. Community stakeholders were also engaged. This modeling technology has been approved by the school board, for district wide use and will inform future boundary changes in Hillsborough.

Jefferson County (Louisville), Kentucky

Jefferson County contains the city of Louisville, Kentucky and its surrounding towns. It is the largest urban school district in Kentucky. The student body in 2009-10 was 50.6% White, 35.5% Black, 5.4% Latino, and 2.7% Asian. Over half (55.9%) of students come from low-income families.

Desegregation History. In 1974, Louisville and Jefferson County were merged into one district, which was under a court order to desegregate. In 1992, Jefferson County started implementing a school choice program called Project Renaissance, which stipulated that schools must have 15-50% Black students. Jefferson County achieved unitary status in 2000, and the district continued to use a modified race-conscious controlled choice plan. In 2007, the plan was struck down in *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, the sister case of *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1*. In 2008, Jefferson adopted a new plan that created six geographical areas. These areas were classified as either "A" or "B" based on income level, race, and parental educational attainment. The goal was to have 15-50% of students in each school from "A" classified geographical areas. Most recently, in 2012, the district moved from six geographical clusters to thirteen geographical clusters. Using an index that considers three socioeconomic factors (income level, race, parental educational attainment) the geographic areas, which are now smaller Census block groups, are now designated "1," "2," or "3" instead of "A" and "B."

⁴⁵ Archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/7/

Local Context. At the time of its TASAP Application, Jefferson County faced several student assignment challenges:

- Legal challenges to its revised policy and political pressure for neighborhood schools, despite district leaders' commitment to retaining diversity as a goal
- Inefficiencies, for example- large number of parents incorrectly fill out school applications, and the district had used paper applications, which required considerable data entry.
- Some schools are over-chosen, while others are significantly under-chosen, leading to uneven enrollment.
- The district does not have an electronic data tracking and reporting system, making it difficult to effectively market programs and recruit students.

Use of TASAP Funds. Jefferson County's TASAP application was entitled, "No Retreat: Jefferson County Public Schools Commitment to Desegregation."⁴⁶ At the time of its TASAP application, Jefferson County had already developed and adopted a new student assignment policy. Awarded \$249,997, Jefferson County used the funds to facilitate implementation. Specifically, TASAP funds were used to:

- Hire a Parent Assistance specialist for the TASAP grant period, to improve publicity about magnet school options.
- Create an electronic tracking and reporting system for elementary students and student transfer requests, to improve response time and increase transparency. It would also allow the district to better respond to any legal challenges to their student assignment policy.
- Hire temporary staff to help process applications during the summer.

Orange County (Orlando), Florida

The Orange County, Florida school district, which includes the city of Orlando, is the 11th largest district in the United States. In 2009-10, it had 173,259 students, of whom 37.8% were White, 32.2% were Latino, 27.3% were Black, and 4.5% Asian. Over half (51%) of the students were low-income, and 17.3% of students were English Language Learners.

Desegregation History. After *Ellis v. Board of Education* in 1962, Orange County was ordered to desegregate its schools. When Orange County was awarded the TASAP grant, the district was still under court order but by the end of the grant period, Orange County achieved unitary status.

Local Context. Orange County faced a series of challenges that required the revising of student assignment policies:

- A need for a more cost-efficient school system, in a time of budget cuts
- Resistance from key stakeholders around the closure of small schools
- Declining enrollment, as a result of fewer school-aged children in Orange County and competition with suburbs.

Use of TASAP Funds. Orange County's TASAP application was entitled, "Student Assignment Plans for Orange County Public Schools."⁴⁷ Orange County was awarded \$205,259 in funds for public engagement around closing eight small schools with mainly Black students. However, between the time of TASAP

⁴⁶ Archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/8/

⁴⁷ Archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/10/

application and the disbursement of TASAP funds, the political environment changed. Instead of using the TASAP funds to support community engagement around potential school closures, as proposed in the grant application, Orange County hired one local and one legal consultant. These consultants, along with a Unitary Status Advisory and Oversight Committee, helped develop the settlement agreement, which focused on employment, school renovation, and extracurricular activities. As a result, Orange County has achieved unitary status. Unused TASAP funds were returned to the United States Department of Education.

Portland, Oregon

Portland, Oregon had a student enrollment of 45,748 in 2009-10. Of those students, 52.3% were White, 14.3% were Latino, 12.9% were Black, 9.6% were Asian, and 1.3% were American Indian. Socioeconomically, 42.7% of students are considered low-income. About 10% of students are English Language Learners.

Desegregation History. Unlike many of the TASAP grantees, Portland has never been under a court order to desegregate.

Local Context. In Portland, students were guaranteed a seat in their neighborhood high school, but they were also able to attend other high schools in the city if there were open seats. As a result of students' choices, Portland Public Schools were dealing with several issues at the high school level:

- Declining enrollment and financial constraints in some schools, which affected the quality of programming and quantity of course offerings at schools because fewer students meant less school funding
- Uneven distribution of students across the city; some schools were overcrowded and other schools under-chosen
- Desire to close one or more high schools, in response to overall budget declines and declining enrollment
- Large achievement gap between white and non-white students
- Concentrated poverty in some schools and concentrated wealth in others.

Use of TASAP Funds. Portland began their "High School Redesign" process prior to receiving the TASAP grant. They used the \$249,977 they secured in TASAP funds to augment their project.⁴⁸ The grant helped pay for:

- Strategic planning services from SEER Analytics, including the development of scenarios involving various school closures and their impact
- Parts of the community engagement process, which included a survey, presentations at meetings, and a parent advisory group for High School System Design.

Portland's High School Redesign encountered political pushback, which limited the scope of change adopted. One high school was closed, with its students reassigned to three nearby high schools. Another high school in Northeast Portland was converted into a "middle college" that allowed students to take classes at an adjacent community college for college credit. Students in Northeast Portland were given preference at the "middle college" high school and a nearby neighborhood high school. In the first year after the changes went into effect, free and reduced-price lunch percentages in Portland high schools

⁴⁸ The proposal is archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/9/

ranged from 14.8% to 75.9% (www.pps.k12.or.us/schools-c/profiles/enrollment). Portland received a no-cost extension and used the funds for redistricting of some K-8 schools in 2011-12.

Rockford, Illinois

Rockford is located about 90 miles northwest of Chicago. It had a 2009-10 enrollment of 29,071 students who were 36.6% White, 30% Black, 22.8% Latino, 3.3% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. 73.9% of students were low-income, and 10.9% were English Language Learners.

Desegregation History. In 1970, a lawsuit, *Quality Education for All Children v. School Board of District #205 Winnebago County, Illinois*, was filed against Rockford Public Schools. However, it was not until 1994 that the district was found to have engaged in practices that promoted segregation. In 1996, Rockford began implementing a new student assignment policy that used controlled choice and created three zones for its elementary schools. They were also required to keep schools' racial composition within 15 percent of the district's minority population. After achieving unitary status in 2001, Rockford has been implementing a choice-based student assignment plan that did not use race as a criterion.

Local Context. Several factors led Rockford to apply for federal technical assistance and to change their student assignment policies:

- Residential segregation: the Rock River runs through the city from north to south, where the majority of low-income, Black and Hispanic students live west of the river the majority of higher-income, White students live east of the river. This has led to concentrated poverty and racial isolation.
- Persistent achievement gap and underperforming schools that were not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Schools that were meeting AYP became over-chosen
- Lack of public trust, due to Rockford's poor historical track record on desegregation.

Use of TASAP funds. Rockford's TASAP application was entitled, "Rockford Public Schools #205 Student Assignment Plan."⁴⁹ Awarded \$214,872, Rockford used the funds to develop a new student assignment policy. Specifically, TASAP funds were used for:

- Community engagement, which included the formation of a community work group. Focus groups and surveys were implemented to gather feedback on five student assignment alternatives. Open houses were used to help eliminate some of the alternatives
- A media campaign and printed materials to advertise community engagement events
- Services from an external demographer who provided GIS analysis and facilitated community meetings
- Services from external evaluator to provide analysis and reporting of the process.

Under pressure from the city's business community and residents of middle-class neighborhoods on the East Side, the school board ended school choice that had permitted West Side students to attend East Side schools, and adopted a neighborhood school policy.

San Diego, California

As California's second largest district, San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) spans 208 square miles and enrolls close to 132,000 students. The student body is 45.9% Latino, 23.4% White, 15.2% Asian, 11.6% Black, and 0.4% American Indian. About two-thirds of the students are low-income, and over one-fourth are English Language Learners. About 10% of students come from military families.

⁴⁹ Archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/11/

Desegregation History. In San Diego, *Crawford v. Board of Education* (1978) and *Carlin v. Board of Education* (1979) found that the schools were segregated, as a result of neighborhood segregation. SDUSD achieved unitary status in 1998. In 1996, California's Proposition 209 was passed, and race could not be used in student assignment. The district has been implementing three voluntary student assignment programs: the Voluntary Enrollment Exchange Program (VEEP) which buses students from majority non-White neighborhoods to majority White neighborhoods and vice versa, the magnet schools program, and the open enrollment program which allows students to apply to any school inside and outside the district but does not provide transportation.

Local Context. SDUSD, which had been struggling financially, was looking to reduce busing as a way of reducing overall district costs.

- Financial constraints due to a state-wide economic crisis at the time of TASAP application
- As a large district with highways, providing students with transportation is expensive and challenging
- Racial and ethnic isolation in some of the district's neighborhood schools
- Declining student enrollment and facilities imbalance (schools are not located in the neighborhoods where children are)
- Limited capacity to conduct demographic analyses within the Instructional Facilities Planning Department (IFPD)

Its TASAP proposal outlined a project that would analyze the potential to reduce re-segregation and racial isolation through adjusting neighborhood school attendance boundaries, redesign transportation, and build the district's internal capacity for managing student assignment issues. The work funded by the TASAP was designed to feed into other SDUSD projects, including the implementation of a three-phase community engagement process "Plan for Comprehensive Study of Demographics, Location of Neighborhood Schools and Transportation" which will lead to a long-term, strategic plan for SDUSD.⁵⁰

Use of TASAP Funds. San Diego Unified was awarded \$122,573 of the \$232,532 they requested to develop of new boundaries or student assignment plans. According to documents we received from the district through the Freedom of Information Act, the Board of Education approved contracts with a demographic analysis consultant and an evaluator. However, it did not actually expend all of the funds or complete the project.

San Francisco, California

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), had an enrollment of 55,140 students in 2009-10. Over half (55.6%) were low-income, and the racial makeup of students was 47.1% Asian, 23.7% Hispanic, 11% Black, 10.7% White, and 7.0 % multi-racial. About 38% of students were English Language Learners.

Desegregation History. Since 1983, the district has been desegregating schools using zones and allowing school choice. Racial guidelines required schools to have a minimum number of racial groups enrolled and dictated that a racial group could not comprise more than 45% of a school's enrollment. In 2001, San Francisco began implementing a race-neutral student assignment policy using a Diversity Index Lottery (which included socioeconomic status, extreme poverty, student's home language, academic performance of student's prior school, and student's prior academic achievement). In 2005, SFUSD achieved unitary status.

⁵⁰ Archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/12/

Local Context. Though San Francisco had switched to a race-neutral, choice-based student assignment policy prior to *PICS*, there was increased racial isolation and an increase in the number of racially identifiable schools despite the Diversity Index Lottery. In addition, the district needed to address several other challenges:

- Financial constraints due to a state-wide economic crisis at the time of TASAP application
- Segregated housing patterns, where a significant portion of disadvantaged students live in the densely populated, southeastern part of the city that is separated by a highway from the rest of San Francisco
- Decreased overall enrollment, coupled with uneven enrollment and access to high quality schools that has contributed to a persistent achievement gap
- Racially identifiable choice patterns, where families of the same race are often choosing the same schools for their children. This has contributed to the increase in racially identifiable schools
- Because the student assignment policy uses a complicated algorithm, many feel that it is not "user-friendly." This has also contributed to public distrust.

Use of TASAP Funds. San Francisco's TASAP application was entitled, "SFUSD Student Assignment Redesign."⁵¹ Having already begun redesigning their student assignment policies, SFUSD used the \$250,000 awarded to supplement existing activities and funds for implementation. Specifically, the TASAP funds went toward:

- Community engagement (marketing and website)
- Assistance and capacity building around demographic analyses and enrollment projections, which allow the district to perform these analyses internally in the future
- Evaluation of the first year of implementation.

St. Paul, Minnesota

With a 2009-10 student enrollment of about 38,531, St. Paul is a racially and culturally diverse school district. In 2009-10, 29.8% of students were Black, 29.3% Asian, 24.4% White, 13.7% Latino, and 1.8% American Indian. Approximately 75% of students were low-income, and over 36% are English Language Learners. St. Paul is also home to several large immigrant communities from Southeast Asia and Africa.

Desegregation History. Unlike most of the TASAP grantees, St. Paul has never been under a desegregation order. However, Minnesota has a state law that funds desegregation programs in public schools.

Local Context. At the time of TASAP application, St. Paul was implementing a city-wide, magnet choice system. However, St. Paul saw a need to change student assignment, as several issues were emerging:

- City-wide choice and transportation was becoming too costly
- The choice system was too complicated for some families to navigate successfully
- Some indications that schools were re-segregating
- A persistent achievement gap
- Declining enrollment, coupled with changing demographics where there is a growing number of students of color and low-income students.

⁵¹ Archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/13/

Use of TASAP Funds. St. Paul's TASAP application was entitled "Large Scale Systems Change II (LSSC II)."⁵² At the time of its TASAP application, St. Paul had already completed the first phase of Large Scale Systems Change. St. Paul was awarded \$249,730 from TASAP. These funds were used to pay for:

- Services from TeamWorks International, a consulting firm specializing in strategic planning. TeamWorks provided data analysis on student demographics and student achievement, and constructed several student assignment alternatives.
- Some of the logistics of the community engagement process that allowed for a more inclusive process (transportation, childcare and interpreters)
- Staff training on how to discuss race constructively

As a result of this work funded by the TASAP grant, St. Paul changed its student assignment policy of city-wide choice to choice within six geographical areas. Some magnet schools will remain city-wide, others will become region-wide, and the rest will be accessible only to students who live in the school's geographical area. As enacted, the new policy did not include any diversity goals. As implemented, the policy sets aside seats in certain schools for students from "high-needs" neighborhoods.

Selected TASAP Applicants (Non-Grantees)

Cincinnati City School District. Cincinnati Public Schools' student body is 70% African American, 24% White, 5% multi-racial, 2.6% Hispanic, 0.8% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian. In 2012, approximately 73% of students come from low-income households and qualify for free or reduced lunch (<http://www.cps-k12.org/about-cps/about-the-district/basic-facts>).

Proposed TASAP Project

Cincinnati City School District proposed a community engagement process to develop a new SAP through a three phase process with help from an Advisory Committee and three outside consultants (University of Cincinnati's College of Education Evaluation Service Center to do the project evaluation, Community Building Institute to provide facilitation and technical support and an Urban Developer from Xavier University). The project would involve an advisory committee, administering family surveys, and establishing community learning centers.

What Happened Without TASAP Funding

Though Cincinnati did not receive TASAP funds, the district continued its work with student assignment and implemented many elements of their proposed TASAP project, with the help of technical assistance from the Council of Great City Schools. They also received an infusion of funding from the Ford Foundation and a five-year grant from the General Electric Foundation. Even without the TASAP funding, CPS hired Community Building Institute to help engage stakeholders on the magnet school enrollment process. The district also created an ad hoc committee to examine charter schools. CPS also continued to focus on expanding their community learning centers and making them the center of their community engagement efforts.

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) includes both Davidson County and the city of Nashville. The district achieved unitary status in 1998. According to the district website, MNPS students are 45.8% Black, 33.3% White, 16.6% Hispanic, 4.1% Asian, 0.2%

⁵² Archived at http://works.bepress.com/kathryn_mcdermott/14/

Indian, and 0.1% Pacific Island. 24% of students are also English Language Learners, and 72.2% are economically disadvantaged.⁵³

Proposed TASAP Project

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools' TASAP proposal was focused on facilitating better communication with parents on choice options. Their plan proposed the creation of Family Information and Resource Centers, the implementation of a parent survey, and the creation of an online application, and the technological infrastructure to support it.

What Happened Without TASAP Funding

Despite not receiving the TASAP grant, Family Information and Resource Centers, housed in several community organizations and schools, now exist within the district. In 2012, online tools were developed and used to help parents understand options and allow parents to track their child's waitlist and enrollment statuses. Parents can apply to schools using paper or online.

Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO)/Walpole Public Schools. METCO began in the 1960s as "Operation Exodus," a program that gave Boston students the opportunity to transfer to suburban public schools and provided transportation. METCO receives state funds. It serves about 3,000 Boston students.

Proposed TASAP Project

METCO, Inc. proposed using TASAP funds to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its Boston area program. They proposed hiring AECG, Ltd. to install and maintain a web-based "Enroll Edu" data-management software system, which would have helped create a transparent student registration, waitlist and referral process. In addition, METCO proposed hiring several consultants with desegregation expertise- Michael Alves, John Brittain and Charles Willie- to provide technical and legal assistance in light of the *PICS* decision. METCO wanted to look into ways to draw students from underrepresented Boston neighborhoods into their program, and to conduct more targeted outreach. An administrative assistant would also be hired. TASAP funds would have also paid for project evaluation services from the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute at the Harvard Law School. A TASAP project advisory committee would have also been created to provide oversight.

What Happened Without TASAP Funding

METCO, unlike Cincinnati City Public Schools and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, did not implement their proposal without TASAP funding. As of 2014, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website still instructs Boston METCO applicants to submit applications in person at the METCO office.⁵⁴

⁵³ MNPS 2012-2013 Facts, <http://www.mnps.org/AssetFactory.aspx?did=81681>

⁵⁴ <http://www.doe.mass.edu/metco/faq.html?section=c>

Table 1: Districts' Definitions of Diversity

TASAP District	Definition of Diversity	
	What they Proposed	What they did
Boston	Racial, Equity	Equity (improving access to quality schools for the most disadvantaged students)
Champaign	Socioeconomic, Equity	Socioeconomic diversity index (parents' education, income, free and reduced lunch status, number of parents in household and preschool enrollment)
Evangeline Parish	Racial, Geographic	Racial
Hillsborough County	Geographic, Racial	Socioeconomic diversity index (educational attainment, income, English as a second language, number of parents in household and home ownership)
Jefferson County	Racial, geographic	Multi-factor diversity index (geographical areas based on race, household income, and parents' educational attainment)
Orange County	Racial, socioeconomic	Racial
Portland, OR	Socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, equity	Developed socioeconomic diversity index but did not use it
Rockford	Racial, Socioeconomic	No diversity goals
San Diego	Racial	Final progress report refers to unspecified "diversity goals," but project not completed
San Francisco	Racial, Equity, Academic	Equity, Academic, Geographic (Preference for students living in areas with historically low student achievement)
St. Paul	Racial	New policy as enacted had no explicit diversity goals; as implemented, seats set aside in some schools for students from "high-needs" neighborhoods

Table 2: Types of Technical Assistance Used by Grantee Districts

¹ Grant writing

	Boston	Champaign	Evangeline Parish	Hillsborough County	Jefferson County	Orange County	Portland	Rockford	San Francisco	St. Paul
Public Engagement	X	X		X			X	X	X	X
Translational Services	X								X	
GIS Consultation	X			X			X			X
Legal Consultation						X				
Transportation/Busing									X	
Other kinds of consulting	X ¹			X ²	X ³			X ⁴		
Refining/adjusting administration of SAP			X		X				X	

² Academic consultant

³ Consultant to develop tracking system

⁴ Technical consultant

Table 3: Scope and Diversity Orientation of TASAP Projects

	Continuing Policy	Changing Policy
Succeed	<p>Evangeline: goal-focus on magnet schools</p> <p>Hillsborough: goal-Build GIS tool</p> <p>Jefferson County: goal-refine implementation of SAP; result-built internal capacity for SAP</p> <p>SFUSD: Refine new SAP; result-built internal capacity for SAP</p>	<p>Champaign: goal-redefine SAP; result: SAP with multifactor SES index</p>
Subvert	<p>Orange: goal-Close schools; result: achieve unitary status</p>	<p>Boston: goal-redo whole SAP; result-SAP with no diversity criterion</p> <p>Portland: goal-Reconfigure high schools & balance by SES; result-closed one high school; created new magnet program; adjusted attendance zones and ended out-of-zone choice--but SES range of high schools stayed about where it was</p> <p>Rockford: goal-New SAP; result-neighborhood schools</p> <p>St. Paul: goal-New SAP; result- No explicit diversity criteria when SAP enacted; set-asides for students from some neighborhoods when SAP implemented</p> <p>San Diego: goal—analysis of diversity/ resegregation/ student achievement, including “new transportation schema.” Result: not all funds spent; 5-year plan for getting more students into schools close to home.</p>