

District 3 Equity in Education Task Force

Policy Framing Document

Executive Summary

Among the 32 Community School Districts that comprise New York City's public school system, CSD3 is one of the most racially and economically diverse; it is also among the most segregated and unequal. A 2009 federal magnet grant recognized the racial and socio-economic disparities among schools in CSD3 and awarded the district an \$11 million grant to address the high rates of racial isolation.¹ Despite best efforts and good intentions, the magnet grant had limited impact.

CSD3 stretches from 59th Street to 122nd Streets, mostly along the West Side of Manhattan, and includes the neighborhoods of the Upper West Side, Manhattan Valley, and the southern portion of Central Harlem.

CSD3 includes 21 public (non-charter) elementary schools (4 of which serve grades K-8) and 11 public (non-charter) middle schools, as well as 9 charter schools.² Admissions criteria for most of District 3 public elementary (non-charter) schools are based on catchment/zone lines. In addition to catchment/zone lines, certain schools also admit students to choice programs (such as district-wide "gifted & talented" and dual language immersion programs) with policies that differ from school to school.

The combined average Economic Need Index for CSD3 public elementary schools is 61%, but few student populations are near the average. Rather, the average Economic Need Index ranges in CSD3 schools from fewer than 15% to as high as 97-100%. Likewise, while the CSD3's documented average of English Language Learners (ELLs) is 8.8%, the population of some schools is comprised of 18.9% or more ELLs while other schools serve as few as 3% of these students. Similarly, in a district where 66.5% of students are Black or Latino, the racial concentration of students is striking and parallels the patterns outlined above. Some CSD3 schools, including charter schools, are comprised of 95-99% Black and Latino students while at other schools less than 30% of the student body is comprised of Black and Latino students.

As such, CSD3 schools continue to be severely segregated. Just as it was sixty years ago when the Supreme Court announced that separate could never be equal, the separation of students by race and income continues to be inextricably connected to unequal learning environments, resources, curricula, school facilities, personnel,

¹ District 3 Federal Magnet Grant Application (2009).

² Included in these numbers are two specialized schools with citywide enrollment: PS 859, The Special Music School of America, and PS 334, The Anderson School (a citywide school for students identified by testing as "gifted & talented").

and more.³ The federal guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (March 2014) reiterate the argument that disparities in access to educational resources have negative impacts on student learning, and call on states and school districts to comply with the legal obligation to provide students with equal access to these resources.⁴ Further, the Economic Need Index strongly correlates with the fourth grade English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics assessments (2013). Schools with fewer Title I students have higher scores and schools with more Title I students have lower scores on average, regardless of the test in question. The segregation of students who rank higher on the Economic Needs Index has a profound and negative effect on their ELA and Math scores.

The District 3 Equity in Education Task Force is advocating for an equitable admissions policy. A Controlled Choice student assignment plan will ensure that all of our public schools reflect, respect, and serve the entire district's families. Controlled Choice is a widely acclaimed student assignment methodology developed in the early 1980s by Michael Alves and others in Cambridge MA, as a way to voluntarily desegregate schools and avoid the imposition of court-ordered student assignment policies. It is an educationally sound, transparent, and equity-driven method of assigning students to public schools. It promotes diversity and allows parents to choose schools they want their children to attend in a manner that is fair to all students and families. It is also a practical method that has been implemented in over 30 school districts across the United States to respond to systemic segregation.

Key features of Controlled Choice include transparency and equity with the goal of creating a student assignment plan that is accessible and implemented consistently for all families. The plan also ensures that all schools reflect the diversity of the student population in a district and that no school becomes overcrowded or under-utilized.

Controlled Choice makes all schools in the district available to students living anywhere in the district, and no students are assigned solely based on their home address. Controlled Choice uses a student assignment algorithm built in to address the needs and preferences raised by the specific community where it is implemented. The specific components of the algorithm, such as the weight to be given to factors such as economic diversity, proximity to a given school, and

³ This was, for example, documented in 1966 by what is referenced as the Coleman Report and similar studies conducted since have documented the same findings: Coleman, James S., Ernest Q. Campbell, Carol J. Hobson, James McPartland, Alexander M. Mood, Frederic D. Weinfeld, and Robert L. York. 1966. *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office; Orfield, Gary & Lee, C. 2005. *Why segregation matters: Poverty and educational inequality*. The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University.

⁴ <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-resourcecomp-201410.pdf>

selection of particular types of programs, are arrived at through a process that is equitable for all.

An integral element of every Controlled Choice program is a Family Resource Center that offers a space for equal access to the process. It has been widely documented that Controlled Choice student assignment plans are only successful if resources are allocated to build a sustainable infrastructure. This center provides relevant information and support for families as they learn about the schools and programs in the district and apply for admission.

The District 3 Equity in Education Task Force believes that CSD3 must embrace the opportunity and rise to the responsibility presented to us. To enliven the words of John Dewey from over a century ago: "What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon it destroys our democracy."⁵ The Task Force is confident that a controlled choice student assignment plan will promote District 3 schools as a model of diverse, well-resourced, and equitable educational opportunities for *all* students and families.

Signed,

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⁵ Dewey, J. *The School and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1907).

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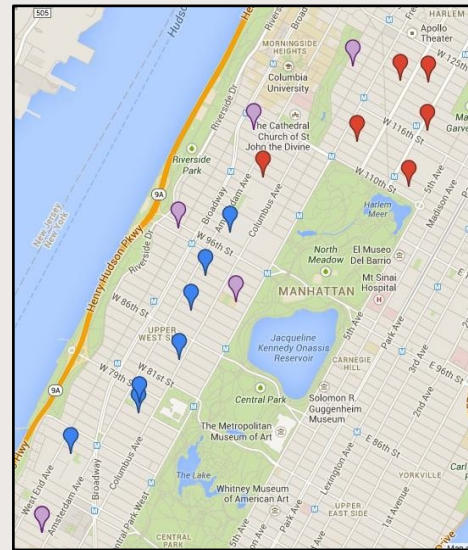
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The Challenge: Towards Equitable Schools

Sixty years after the U.S. Supreme Court determined that separate could never be equal, students across the country continue to attend segregated schools, and the separation of students by race and income continues to impact the immediate futures and life outcomes of these young people. A recent study by the University of California, Los Angeles' (UCLA) Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles entitled "New York State's Extreme School Segregation: Inequality, Inaction and a Damaged Future," finds that New York State's public schools are the most segregated in the entire nation.⁶

In New York City, the largest school system in the nation, Community school District 3 (CSD3) is one of the most racially and economically diverse districts, yet also one of the most segregated and unequal.

Two-thirds of CSD3's public elementary and middle schools are characterized by intense concentrations of students of either high or low socioeconomic status. Higher-Socio-Economic Status (SES) students are generally concentrated in schools below 96th Street, and lower- to very low-SES students are concentrated above 96th Street. This geography is matched almost exactly by disparate outcomes in 4th grade reading (a standard measure for comparing schools) as well as by racial concentration. Schools with an over-representation of higher SES students also have a disproportionate concentration of white students (and conversely, schools with an over-representation of low or very low-SES students have a disproportionate concentration of Black and Latino students).⁷ According to the terminology put forth by the recent UCLA study on New York State schools, "intensely segregated" schools are schools with less than 10 percent white student enrollment, and "apartheid schools" are schools with less than 1 percent white student



District 3 public schools' average Economic Need Index: Red: Intense concentration of high-need students. Blue: Intense concentration of low-need students. See data table on p.11.

⁶ The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, "New York State's Extreme School Segregation" (March 2014); and The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, "Brown at 60: Great Progress, a Long Retreat and an Uncertain Future" (May 2014).

⁷ Data for this map is drawn from the NYC Department of Education; see data table and source on p.8.

enrollment.⁸ Using these definitions, nine of the schools⁹ are “intensely segregated”. Of those nine, two schools¹⁰ are “apartheid schools”. Of these two, one school has no white students.¹¹

Even deeper disparities may be masked by school statistics. For example, in several schools that more closely reflect the SES and racial composition of the district, Black and Latino children are over-represented in General Education classes, while the sought-after Gifted & Talented (as well as some Dual Language) classrooms are populated by a majority of white and higher-SES students.

The Significance of Segregation

Not coincidentally, disparities in student SES levels are also matched by disparities in school budgets. Although Title I funds ensure that low-SES students receive much-needed services, high concentrations of economic wealth in some schools (and the concentration of low-SES families in other schools) have resulted in a situation where schools have significantly disparate resources. These resources, garnered largely by parent fundraising efforts, have compensated for citywide budget cuts that impact, for example, arts and enrichment activities in schools as well as classroom resources.¹²

These programs, activities, and resources provide enormous advantages to students’ educational outcomes, as demonstrated by achievement levels on 4th grade English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics assessments. (See chart on p.11.)

The UCLA study cites a substantial body of research which find that racially and economically diverse schools benefit all students: low-SES students achieve higher educational success and better life outcomes, and high-SES students also see improved outcomes, such as critical social benefits. We believe that attending diverse schools enables children to function well in diverse communities. Being exposed to diverse racial and socio-economic settings at a very young age introduces young children to multiple personal, cultural, and historical perspectives. This diversity of perspectives is an asset that children will draw upon in myriad

⁸ The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, “New York State’s Extreme School Segregation” (March 2014); and The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, “Brown at 60: Great Progress, a Long Retreat and an Uncertain Future” (May 2014).

⁹ PS 165 (9%); PS 191 (6%); PS 180 (5%); PS 242 (4%); PS 145 (3%); PS 208 (2%); PS 76 (1%); PS 149 (0.87%); PS 241 (0%)

¹⁰ PS 149 and PS 241

¹¹ PS 241. 0 white students. Data for this map is drawn from the NYC Department of Education; see data table and source on p.11

¹² See for example “Way Beyond Bake Sales: The \$1 Million PTA” (New York Times, 6/3/12) at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/nyregion/at-wealthy-schools-ptas-help-fill-budget-holes.html?pagewanted=all&module=Search&mabReward=relbias%3Ar&r=0>

dimensions of their personal, work, and community engagement.

Segregation and inequality, conversely, deprive students of the benefits of equitable schools, and impose ever-steepening social and economic costs.

The Need for a Different Policy Measure

In 2009, the Federal Magnet Program recognized the race and SES-based disparities among schools in District 3, and awarded the District an \$11 million Magnet Grant.¹³ Despite best efforts, the Magnet Grant had limited impact.¹⁴ Recognition of educational disparities was also an impetus for the recent adoption of a Universal Pre-Kindergarten program for New York City. However, the gap that UPK intends to diminish is almost certain to reappear for low-SES students who move from UPK into segregated public schools.

In 2012 a group of District 3 parents, educators, principals, and long-time community members came together to form the District 3 Task Force on Equitable Admissions. Over the course of 18 months, we examined the dimensions of inequality as they manifest themselves in District 3 public schools and explored possible paths to greater equity and stronger schools for all students and families. The following sections lay out the need, and a proposal for an alternative district-wide student admissions policy that would ensure diverse, well-resourced, and equitable educational opportunities for all District 3 students and families.

CSD3's Current Admissions System: A Formula for Inequity

Community School District 3 stretches from 59th Street to 122nd Streets mostly along the West Side of Manhattan and includes the neighborhoods of the Upper West Side, Manhattan Valley, Central Harlem, Southern Harlem, and a portion of Morningside Heights. District 3 is comprised of 11 public (non-charter) middle schools and 21 public (non-charter) elementary schools.

Admissions criteria for many District 3 public elementary schools are set by a combination of DOE assignments and school-specific admissions policies, and include combinations of the following:

- DOE catchment/zone lines.
- Test-based admissions (predominantly used for Middle School admissions)

¹³ District 3 Federal Magnet Grant Application (2009). Also see: Center for Immigrant Families, "Segregated and Unequal, The Public Elementary Schools of District 3 in New York City" Self-published (2004)

¹⁴ Among other things, the limited impact is partially due to the grant having reached only a small number of schools and students, and it having provided funding for only three years.

as well as for elementary school programs such as Gifted & Talented).

- Dual Language programs that include school-generated admissions criteria that are supposed to insure that at least 50% of students speak a non-dominant language as their first language.
- Random/blind lotteries (implemented, for example, at P.S. 333 and at charter schools).

These criteria have resulted in uneven access to the district's schools and an uneven distribution of students:¹⁵

- The combined average Economic Need Index for District 3 public elementary schools is 61%. However, some schools range under 15% while others range as high as 97-100%.
- ELLs comprise 8.8% of District 3 students, yet the percentage of ELLs at District 3 schools ranges from a low of 0.2% to a high of 18.9%.
- Approximately two-thirds (66.5%) of District 3's students are Black or Latino. Some schools, however, are comprised of 95-99% Black and Latino students while at other schools, less than 30% of the student body is comprised of Black and Latino students.

There are innumerable harms that result from segregated and unequal schools, but as noted in the UCLA study, diverse schools add benefits for all students without losses to students who are already in enriched environments.

¹⁵ Some of these issues have been exacerbated by issues with last year's Kindergarten Admissions application system, K-Connect. K-Connect (to date) provided applications in English only, with inadequate translation support. Further, K-Connect was available online, through the phone and in person at the office of student enrollment, with no adequate support or extensive outreach to parent communities that do not have computers, email, internet, or who live in temporary housing. And although the application itself was centralized, individual schools were able to continue to be able to determine who they will admit from their respective wait lists. For these reasons, K-Connect replicated and intensified some of the existing barriers for lower-SES and non-English-speaking parents that already contribute to the uneven distribution of students in District 3 schools.

District 3 public Elementary and Middle Schools 2012-2013

Source: <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm#Citywide>

<i>School Name</i>	<i>IEP (%)</i>	<i>Economic Need Index</i>	<i>Black/Hispanic (%)</i>	<i>ELL (%)</i>	<i>4th Gr ELA</i>	<i>4th Gr Math</i>	<i>PTA Gross receipts**</i>	<i>Title 1***</i>
P.S. 334 The Anderson School	2.8	0.0548	15.8	0.2	3.86	4.18	1,156,140	0
P.S. 087 William Sherman	17.5	0.0664	22.3	3.1	3.36	3.70	1,677,058	2,943
P.S. 199 Jessie Isador Straus	16.2	0.0751	16.0	2.0	3.51	3.85	504,101	2,943
P.S. 333 Manhattan School for Children	20.0	0.1432	31.5	2.1	3.09	3.40	566,303	7,849
P.S. 009 Sarah Anderson	13.1	0.2295	29.3	5.6	3.37	3.64	629,057	23,545

<i>School Name</i>	<i>IEP (%)</i>	<i>Economic Need Index</i>	<i>Black/Hispanic (%)</i>	<i>ELL (%)</i>	<i>4th Gr ELA</i>	<i>4th Gr Math</i>	<i>PTA Gross receipts**</i>	<i>Title 1***</i>
P.S. 163 Alfred E. Smith	12.9	0.4603	64.8	6.8	2.97	3.28	167,188	13,735
P.S. 084 Lillian Weber	15.7	0.5408	68.0	8.8	2.94	3.25	N/A	12,754
P.S. 180 Hugo Newman	11.9	0.6590	91.1	7.4	2.68	3.09	N/A	374,762
P.S. 075 Emily Dickinson	18.0	0.6767	79.1	14.1	2.72	3.06	475,571	27,470
P.S. 191 Amsterdam	24.5	0.7936	86.9	8.2	2.60	2.89	N/A	278,619
P.S. 165 Robert E. Simon	18.8	0.9362	86.8	19.9	2.73	3.06	N/A	550,371
P.S. 076 A. Philip Randolph	18.3	0.9717	98.7	9.8	2.58	2.86	N/A	378,686

<i>School Name</i>	<i>IEP (%)</i>	<i>Economic Need Index</i>	<i>Black/Hispanic (%)</i>	<i>ELL (%)</i>	<i>4th Gr ELA</i>	<i>4th Gr Math</i>	<i>PTA Gross receipts**</i>	<i>Title 1***</i>
P.S. 149 Sojourner Truth	27.9	0.9864	89.9	9.5	2.39	2.54	N/A	251,150
P.S. 208 Alain L. Locke	29.0	1.0219	95.6	14.2	2.49	2.58	N/A	158,931
P.S. 241 STEM Institute of Manhattan	26.7	1.0298	98.0	12.9	2.45	2.78	N/A	94,181
P.S. 242 The Young Diplomats Magnet Academy	24.8	1.0351	93.8	8.5	2.34	2.46	N/A	212,889
AVERAGE	18.5	0.6077	66.5	8.8				

*The Economic Need Index is a measure widely used in Education analysis to reflect the socioeconomic demographics of the school population. It is calculated using the following formula: Economic Need Index = (Percent Temporary Housing) + (Percent HRA-eligible * 0.5) + (Percent Free Lunch Eligible * 0.5) **For universal lunch schools, the percentage of free lunch eligible comes from the last year the school collected lunch forms. "HRA-eligible" refers to students whose families have been identified by the Human Resources Administration as receiving certain types of public assistance. HRA-eligible is based on current year data. Students are identified in temporary housing if they have been identified in temporary housing anytime in the

past four years. Students identified in temporary housing who are also HRA eligible count toward both percentages. Students who are HRA eligible also count toward Percent Free Lunch Eligible.

**Based on 2012 figures; data are from guidestar.org. N/A is for unavailable data. Following excerpt is from the NYTimes Article [link below]: “The city’s Education Department does not track how much individual PTAs raise. There is no central clearinghouse for this information, and parents are often reluctant to publicly share fund-raising numbers. To put together a list of the top-earning PTAs, The New York Times analyzed Internal Revenue Service filings posted on GuideStar, a research company that tracks nonprofit organizations and charitable giving. The information is not comprehensive, so there may be other schools that raised similar amounts that were not included.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/03/nyregion/at-wealthy-schools-ptas-help-fill-budget-holes.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

***From the NYC DOE (2012-2013):

http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/d_chanc_oper/budget/dbor/allocationmemo/fy12_13/fy13_PDF/sam08.pdf

Controlled Choice: A Policy Framework for Advancing Equity in CSD3 Schools

Based on our research and assessment of: 1) District 3's admissions policies; 2) the impacts of these policies on the uneven distribution of students; and 3) voluntary integration efforts nationally, we recommend that a Controlled Choice student assignment plan be developed and implemented for District 3.

Controlled Choice is a system that combines choice-based admissions processes with controls to promote equity of access, as well as community support structures. Controlled Choice is a proven tool that ensures that all schools more closely reflect the SES diversity of the overall district, and that all students enjoy the documented advantages of such diversity. In so doing, Controlled Choice can also create more high-quality school options within the district. With proper support and resources, Controlled Choice can be an effective policy framework for District 3 schools to serve and reflect its diverse population, and achieve advantages that the current system denies to both high-SES and low-SES students.

In New York City, the parent-led Community School Board in Community School District 1 (CSD1) implemented a choice-based admissions plan with targets for diversity in 1991. The targets for diversity worked to help produce more equitable access as well as diversity that reflected the district. However, with the advent of Mayoral Control of schools, the targets for diversity were removed and replaced with a choice based plan with no controls for fairness. As a result, CSD1's schools have become more stratified by race, class and academic achievement than they were prior to 2004.¹⁶

Controlled Choice: What it is, and how it works

Controlled Choice is a widely acclaimed and well-implemented student assignment methodology that was developed in the 1980s by Michael Alves in Cambridge, MA as a way to voluntarily desegregate schools and avoid the imposition of court-ordered student assignment policies. It is a race-neutral, constitutionally permissible framework that actively promotes the integration of students from diverse socioeconomic, racial, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds with varying educational needs and achievement levels.

¹⁶ see: http://cecdistrictone.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/2013_10-31_cec1_wxy_assignmentpolicystudy-final-with-edits.pdf

- **Transparency and equity:** The goals of Controlled Choice are simple: a student assignment plan that is accessible, transparent, and implemented consistently for all families; schools that reflect the diversity of the student population in a district; structured community-wide investment in every school, ensuring that no school becomes overcrowded or underutilized.
- **District-wide choice of schools:** Controlled Choice makes all schools in the district available to students living anywhere in the district, meaning that no students are assigned based solely on their home address.
- **Community-set criteria:** To ensure that admissions reflect the real-world preferences of families in the district, Controlled Choice uses a student assignment algorithm built to address the needs and preferences raised by the specific community where it is implemented.
- **Neutral/Independent implementation:** The student assignment algorithm is run through independent software by Alves Educational Consultants Group¹⁷, the same specialists who built and operated software in all of the earlier Controlled Choice programs in other cities.¹⁸
- **Troubleshooting:** Controlled Choice integrally includes at least one Family Resource Center so that families have equal access to the process and that common barriers like language, computer skills, and confusion about issues like home addresses don't impede access.

Controlled Choice allows all families to choose and rank a certain number of schools according to their own individual preference. Using a web-based interface, families select schools that they would like their child to attend. When making their choices, families can see real-time information about each school in the district. Information includes academic performance, special programs available, distance from their home, how many applications have already been submitted for each school, and other details that the community has requested.

Admission to a school is based on this rank order and on the criteria for diversity determined by a school district. Documented past experience with Controlled

¹⁷ Michael Alves is an accomplished education planner working throughout the United States. Mr. Alves, along with his team (represented by The Alves Educational Consultants Group) brings over thirty years of experience designing and implementing comprehensive and diversity conscious Controlled Choice student assignment plans.

¹⁸ Alves Educational Consultants have continually developed algorithm to make use of advancing technology and experience in implementation. Although not a function of all earlier Controlled Choice programs, the algorithm is able to make assignments while taking into account community preferences and seat control. (Source: Alves Educational Consultants presentation to New York City CEC members and education advocates, 9/21/13.)

Choice in over thirty school districts indicates that 85% of students are consistently assigned to their first choice school and that the accommodation of choice-based assignments is similar for all racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomic levels.

Research demonstrates that within five years of implementing a comprehensive, transparent, and equity driven Controlled Choice student assignment plan, schools within a given district: 1) Provide a greater percentage of high-quality educational opportunities that encourage every student to thrive; 2) Meet benchmarked goals for diversity; 3) Are increasingly well-utilized and well-resourced.

While Controlled Choice plans are district-specific, Alves Educational Consultants Group has identified the following best practices as critical to the success of Controlled Choice plans:

- **Grandfathering:** Students already enrolled in a community district public school should be allowed to remain in their assigned school and will not be involuntarily reassigned to another school.
- **Sibling Assignments:** Siblings should be allowed to attend the same school if they are attending the school at the same time.
- **Proximity Assignments:** Students who reside within walking distance from a school should be given a priority to attend that school.
- **Diversity:** All assignments should be subject to the race neutral diversity goals established for the Community School District.
- **Choice:** All parents should be allowed to rank-order their preferred schools of choice.
- **Scope of Choice:** All of the Community School District's elementary and middle public schools and grade levels should be included in the diversity conscious choice-based student assignment policy.
- **Pre-K Assignments:** Every effort should be made to include Pre-K students in the diversity conscious choice-based student assignment policy.
- **Assignment Lotteries:** Students are assigned at entry-level grades (K for elementary school, 6th for middle school) using a batched application lottery that balances individual family preferences with weights that guarantee that each school meets diversity and other district-wide goals for enrollment.
- **Transparency:** The algorithm used to assign the lottery applicants should be transparent and fully comprehensible to all parents and have a proven track record of promoting diversity and maximizing first-choice assignments.

- **Testing:** Mock student assignment lotteries should be conducted to beta test the efficacy of the diversity conscious choice-based assignment algorithm.
- **Walk-In Assignments:** No-lottery walk-in students should be assigned to a school of choice with available seats in accordance with the provisions of diversity conscious choice-based student assignment policy.
- **Facilities Utilization:** Enrollment capacities should be established for each school and program and no school or program should be allowed to become over-crowded.
- **Stability of Assignment:** Once assigned, no students should be involuntarily re-assigned to another school.
- **Family Resource Centers:** Each Community School District must establish a Family Resource Center that coordinates the parent outreach and targeted recruitment efforts associated with the implementation of a diversity conscious choice-based student assignment policy. (See section on Family Resource Center, below.)
- **School Improvement:** Each Community District should develop a school improvement plan for facilitating the replication or creation of attractive schools and programs that attract diverse student population groups.
- **Monitoring:** Each Community School District should establish a community-based monitoring committee that will document and assess the implementation of the diversity conscious choice-based student assignment policy.

Based on our assessment of District 3's current criteria for admissions, the uneven distribution of District 3 students, and the unequal educational outcomes of District 3 students, we recommend that the following criteria guide a Controlled Choice student assignment plan for District 3:

- 1) Socioeconomic Status (SES)
All schools should fall within a 10% margin of the district-wide average economic needs index of 61%. This will ensure that all schools currently receiving Title I funds maintain their eligibility for these federal monies. SES and race significantly overlap in D3. Thus, by controlling for SES we also address racial disparities.
- 2) Geography
An enrollment analysis is needed for each elementary and middle school in the district to understand the patterns of where families send their children to school, and what geographical distances are both practical for families and

required in order to achieve diversity goals. Based on this analysis conducted by Alves Educational Consultants Group, Ltd (AECG), a preference should be established for families who wish to enroll their child within a certain block radius.

3) Language and Special Needs

All schools should fall within a 2% margin of the district-wide average of 8.8% English Language Learners. Schools should fall within a 3% margin of the district-wide average of 18.5% students with special needs. The purpose of these specific percentage margins is to make sure that our schools are more reflective of the overall demographics of the District 3 community.¹⁹

Family Resource Center

It has been widely documented that Controlled Choice student assignment plans are only successful if the necessary resources are allocated to build a sustainable infrastructure. More specifically, a key component to ensuring success for Controlled Choice policies is the development and implementation of a district-run Family Resource Center. This center provides relevant information and support for families as they learn about the schools and programs in the district, and apply for admission.²⁰ A District 3 Family Resource Center can also help redress some of the issues posed by K-Connect.²¹

A Family Resource Center is an essential component to a Controlled Choice student assignment plan. As Edward B. Fiske documents, Family Resource Centers aid parents in selecting schools for their children, learning about

¹⁹ Percentages have been approximated with the goal of equity but exact percentages will be determined conclusively in the planning process.

²⁰ As documented by Eileen Fava, the proactive development of the parent resource center was critical to the success of the Cambridge controlled choice plan: "The school board should distribute literature about the application process in several languages, and it should provide transportation for parents unable to reach the information centers on their own. School administrators should arrange for parents to visit schools and meet with prospective teachers and staff. In many districts using controlled choice, schools hold "open houses" for parents during the selection period, and some information centers provide checklists that aid parents in evaluating schools." Fava, Eileen M. "Desegregation and Parental Choice in Public Schooling: A Legal Analysis of controlled choice Student Assignment Plans." *BC Third World LJ* 11 (1991): 83.

²¹ K-Connect the new Kindergarten admissions rolled out in 2014. It provided an online application only in English with inadequate translation support. Although K-Connect was primarily available online, parents completed the application through the phone or in person at the office of student enrollment, with no adequate support. There was not extensive outreach and/or support to parent communities that do not have computers, email, Internet, or who live in temporary housing. The window of applying to schools through K-Connect was very limited, a one month timeframe.

their options, and learning about their rights. Family Resource Centers are also a central conduit through which information is disseminated and outreach to families takes place. According to Fiske, in Cambridge, “[n]o parent can register for elementary school unless they visit the official information center.”²²

In addition to these essential components, the District 3 Task Force for Equitable Admissions believes it is crucial that a Family Resource Center in District 3 also address the growing disparities in access to basic services. As such, the Task Force envisions the Family Resource Center as a “one stop shop” that would be a hub in District 3 for services, information, and trainings. The Family Resource Center would enable parents to:

- Learn about school admissions processes
- Learn about District 3 schools
- Apply to District 3 schools
- Learn about their rights as parents in the application process
- Learn about their rights as parents as they enter public school
- Gain advocacy skills
- Gain access to information on related services

Further, parents will also have the opportunity to connect with other parents through ongoing issue-based and cultural events hosted by the Family Resource Center.²³

The goal of the Family Resource Center is to be a warm and welcoming place where all parents are treated with respect and dignity. The center will be staffed by multilingual workers who have been or are parents in District 3 schools themselves.

While the Family Resource Center will serve all District 3 parents and families, the Task Force acknowledges that some families are harder to reach and access than others. Given this reality, additional resources will be directed to ensure that low-SES, undocumented families, and families living in temporary housing are specifically targeted for outreach. The Family Resource Center will be located at a central location in the district. Ideally, it will be based in the District Office at 93rd Street.

²² Fiske, E. "controlled choice in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In *Divided we fail Coming together through public school choice* (pp. 167-208)." New York: Century Foundation, Task Force on the Common School (Sponsoring Agency: Spencer Foundation, Chicago) (2002).

²³ These events would focus on the needs of parents as evaluated by Family Resource Center Staff and as identified by parents.

Essential elements of the Family Resource Center:

- Multilingual staff
- Wrap-around services and referrals (requires partnerships with existing social services)
- Computer lab
- Childcare
- ESL classes and other adult education services (as identified by staff and parents)

Evaluation

It is in the interest of the district that all schools succeed. Evaluation is critical to ensure that necessary outreach is conducted to families and to see that the system is properly implemented, and that no schools remain undersubscribed. Evaluation of the criteria established to diversify and desegregate the district's schools is also essential.

The Task Force proposes two systems of evaluation. First, we propose an internal system where the Family Resource Center would be a hub for critical feedback from district families on the application process, timeline, methodology of assignment and outcomes. Second, we propose that an outside evaluator be contracted to assess outcomes of the new student assignment system.

Charter Schools and Controlled Choice

The goal of this Task Force is to redress educational inequality in District 3 public schools. We know, too, that charter schools serving low-SES communities of color often filter out students who traditionally score lower on standardized tests, or are higher-needs students. These students are often low-SES students of color.

While Charter Schools are a complicated matter of advocacy and policy beyond the scope of our Task Force, it is clear that they can become a back door for ongoing segregation and inequality if they are not included in district-wide equity policy. For these reasons, the most effective Controlled Choice assignment plan should include Charter Schools.

Conclusion

New York City schools should not be among the most segregated in the nation; there is no acceptable reason for failing to redress this problem.

As the sections above document clearly, systemic inequality results when admissions policies are not grounded in principles of equity.

A Controlled Choice policy is a concrete and practical opportunity to begin to repair the long-standing challenges facing our schools and improve the educational setting throughout District 3.

We have been working together with parents in District 1 and District 13, and have been contacted by parents from other districts as well, who are also seeking equitable district-wide admissions policies for their districts.

Following the examples of the often invisible, but courageous New York City parents who have spoken out for their children and communities, and the committed educators and advocates who have undertaken efforts to change long-standing but deeply inequitable policies, we can make substantive change that benefits all of our children. The District 3 Task Force, along with advocates for educational justice in other districts, is part of the much larger demographic of New Yorkers who see equitable education as an investment in our future.

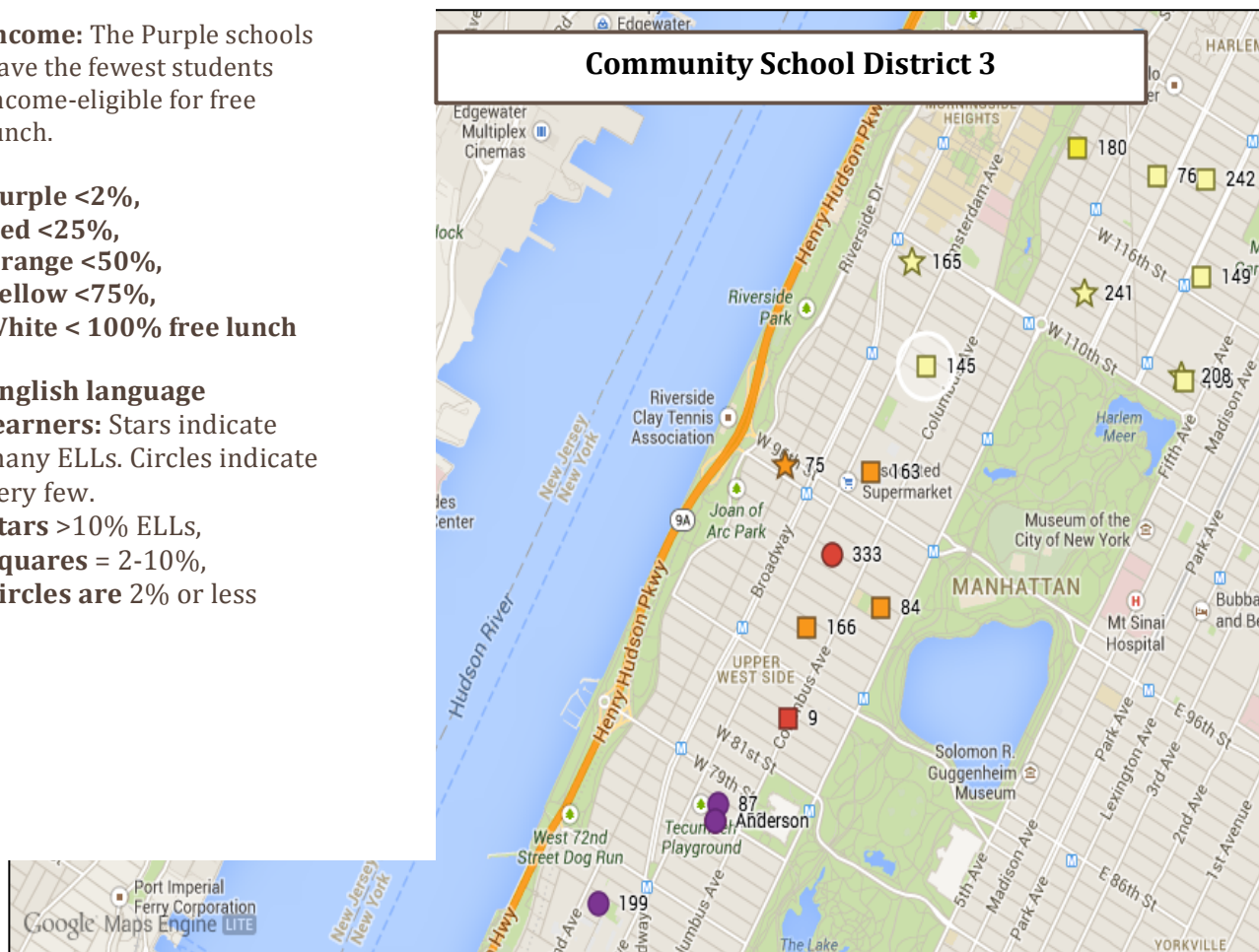
Appendix A: District 3 Child Representation Map

Income: The Purple schools have the fewest students income-eligible for free lunch.

- Purple** <2%,
- Red** <25%,
- Orange** <50%,
- Yellow** <75%,
- White** < 100% free lunch

English language learners: Stars indicate many ELLs. Circles indicate very few.

- Stars** >10% ELLs,
- Squares** = 2-10%,
- Circles** are 2% or less



All D3 public elementary schools are mapped using NYC DOE data as available on schools.nyc.gov on 11/20/13.

Appendix B: List of Districts that have worked with Michael J. Alves to Design Controlled Choice Student Assignment Plans

Focus on Racial / Ethnic Desegregation	Focus on Socioeconomic Desegregation	Focus on Student Achievement	Focus on Urban / Suburban Desegregation
Cambridge MA 1981	Manchester CT 1995	Wake County Public School System, NC Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce 2011	Proposed Metropolitan Controlled Choice Desegregation Plan for the City of Hartford And Surrounding Suburbs 1991
Montclair NJ 1985	Charleston County Public Schools 1998		
San Jose Unified School District CA 1985	Rochester City School District 2001		
Little Rock AK 1986	Cambridge MA 2001		

Focus on Racial / Ethnic Desegregation	Focus on Socioeconomic Desegregation	Focus on Student Achievement	Focus on Urban / Suburban Desegregation
Fall River MA 1987	Champaign IL 2009		
Lowell MA 1987			
Lawrence MA 1988			
Northampton MA 1988			
Seattle WA 1988			
Boston MA 1989			
White Plains NY 1990			
St. Lucie County FL 1990			
Milwaukee WI 1991			
Pawtucket RI 1994			

Focus on Racial / Ethnic Desegregation	Focus on Socioeconomic Desegregation	Focus on Student Achievement	Focus on Urban / Suburban Desegregation
Somerville MA 1994			
Brockton MA 1995			
Providence RI 1995			
Rockford IL 1995			
Malden MA 1996			
Lee County FL 1997			
Waltham MA 1997			
Fitchburg MA 1997			
Framingham MA 1998			
Champaign IL 1998			

Focus on Racial / Ethnic Desegregation	Focus on Socioeconomic Desegregation	Focus on Student Achievement	Focus on Urban / Suburban Desegregation
Medford MA 1998			
Fayette County TN 2014			

Appendix C: Additional documented experiences of unequal access and admissions to District 3 public elementary schools (compiled by the Parent Leadership Project 2011-2014):

Briefly outlined below are just a few documented occurrences of low-income parents of color and their experience gaining access to CSD3 public elementary schools. The experiences were documented between 2011-2014 by the Parent Leadership Project (PLP), a membership-based organization that works for educational justice in CSD3.

These stories are not unique. Rather, they were chosen because of their representative value.

Some of the situations outlined in these stories were resolved through advocacy efforts. Some were not. Perhaps more importantly, these stories must be recognized as indicators. They point to implicit policies and practices that result in the uneven distribution of students and families based on combinations of income, language, race, and geography. A common explanation for inequity presumes that parents are uninformed. However, the documented experiences below demonstrate otherwise, and point to the need for an alternative student assignment plan.

Carmen was excited to go on a school tour at a well-resourced District 3 school. It was a school where they had a Dual Language program. She wanted her child to attend the school, to learn Spanish and English, and have pride in who he was and where he came from. She waited a long time to get registered for a tour, it took months, and she had to take time off from work. Carmen wanted her husband to come on the tour with her, but the school had told her that only one parent could come on the tour. She understood this rule and it seemed fair. But when she arrived at the tour, she noticed that there were many couples in attendance that appeared to have more economic means than she and her family. Carmen didn't understand, but decided not to dwell on it. She wanted her child to go to this school. But, she started to get worried when she saw fliers hanging outside the children's classrooms stating that the school needed an average monetary donation from its families to keep running. Carmen left, disappointed. It didn't seem like this school was for her family.

One winter morning, two mothers whose children would be entering kindergarten later that year, went to a District 3 school. They had each come to find out more about the admissions process. One mother spoke English, the other spoke Spanish. When they compared notes after their meetings they found out that the same staff person gave them completely different information. The mother who spoke Spanish was told that they did not distribute applications for admission at the school. The mother who spoke English was given an application for admission.

Three parents from a Head Start center arranged to travel together to tour a school. The school had a Dual Language (Spanish/English) program, yet did not provide for language interpretation: the tours were English-only. In years past, the Head Start center had tried to advocate for interpretation, but the school maintained that interpretation was not available. This year (2014), when the Head Start center inquired about interpretation, the school said there would be one specific tour at which Spanish-speaking parents could be accommodated. Three parents from the Head Start center decided to attend the tour together. As they participated in the tour, they realized that the interpretation was shoddy- not everything was being interpreted to Spanish. They were also made to feel that they were a problem. The parents who were conducting the tour apologized to English-speaking parents about the interpretation, and suggested that a solution might be to split off linguistically and tour the school separately. One of the parents from the Head Start center had brought her baby with her. The parent coordinator informed her that babies were not allowed on the tour, and that if her baby made noise she would have to leave the tour. The interpreters had to leave during the Q&A session that followed the tour. Before they left, the interpreters asked the parent coordinator how the parents from the Head Start center who were Spanish-speaking would be accommodated. To this, the parent coordinator responded, "They're not getting in, they know they're not getting in anyway. They know that."

Four mothers whose children attend a District 3 Head Start center wanted their children to learn Spanish and attend one of the Spanish-English Dual Language programs. One mother is from Ghana, one mother is from the Ivory Coast, one is from the Dominican Republic, and one mother is African American. Only

the Spanish-speaking family was accepted to the Dual Language program. After visiting many of the Dual Language programs in the district, the mothers concluded that the majority of English-speaking students in District 3 Dual Language programs are white and middle-class and almost none are Black.

Hilda lives in District 3. She was told by the school that as a zoned parent, she did not need to submit an application for her child, and that a space was guaranteed. In April she went to the school to ask about registration and was told that she had not filled out an application and that she was not guaranteed anything. She also had to bring friends with her to translate because the school would only communicate with her in English. Hilda filled out an application, but was told her child would be on the waitlist. She was worried and didn't know what to do. When she asked the school, she was told that there was no information available. Hilda was anxious and felt disrespected. She was worried – why were the people at the school so mean to her, and what would this mean for her child?

Maria's child Jose went to the Bloomingdale Head Start Center. From the start, Maria along with Jose's teachers recognized that Jose would do wonderfully in a Gifted and Talented program. When the time came, Maria took Jose to be tested. When the results came in, Jose was in the top of the top – he had made the 99th percentile and qualified for citywide Gifted and Talented programs. But when Maria took Jose to visit the school, the administrators at the school said that there must have been a mistake on Jose's test score. They did not seem to believe that Jose could have tested so high.