White Suburban Schools' Responses to Low-Income Black Children: Sources of Successes and Problems

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This paper reports the results of a study of low-income black children who moved with their families into middle-income, white suburbs. Three hypotheses are tested: (1) Educational standards will be higher in the suburban schools than in the children's city schools. (2) Suburban schools and teachers will respond to these students with increased educational assistance mixed with some racial discrimination. (3) Students' grades and school satisfaction will not decline with the move to the suburban schools. Two kinds of research design are used: children's postmove suburban experiences are compared with retrospective reports of their premove experiences and also compared with experiences of a control group. Interviews with mothers and children permit quantitative and qualitative analyses. The findings support all three hypotheses and suggest new perspectives on the kinds of advantages and problems arising from residential integration.

When low-income black families move into white middle-class suburbs, how do the black children and suburban schools respond to each other? This event was repeated hundreds of times in more than fifty Chicago suburbs over six years through a housing integration program. How responsive were these suburban schools and teachers to these low-income black students? How did the new students respond to their new schools? These are the questions to be addressed by this paper.

This study provides a quantitative and qualitative examination of the ways that these schools and children responded to each other. The data are taken from interviews with 114 mothers and children who participated in a residential integration program, and their suburban experiences are compared with their own experiences before the move and also with the experiences of a "control group" of 48 comparable children whose families moved to black urban neighborhoods through the same program.

School desegregation has been extensively studied in recent years (Gerard and Miller, 1975; Patchen, 1982; St. John, 1975). However, this study is distinctive in two respects. First, it examines the results of a distinctive program, one

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which creates both residential and school integration, and it does so with little visibility, thus reducing backlash and stigma. Low-income black families moved into apartment buildings occupied mostly by middle-income whites and located in middle-income white suburbs. As a result, children arrived in the suburban schools as community residents, not as participants in a busing program. Moreover, residential integration provided the possibility for social integration of old and new residents.

Second, this study describes both the quantitative findings and the qualitative processes at work. Reports of actual experiences and the participants' understandings of these events can help us understand the meanings and causes of the findings from the quantitative analyses. The residential integration program studied here permits tests of concerns related to the enrollment of these low-income black children in the suburban schools. We may state these concerns as hypotheses:

1. Educational standards will be higher in the suburban schools than in the children's city schools.
2. Suburban schools and teachers will respond to these students with increased educational assistance mixed with some racial discrimination.
3. Students' grades and school satisfaction will not decline with the move to the suburban schools.

METHODS AND DATA

In 1976, as a result of the Gautreaux housing desegregation lawsuit, the federal government funded a program to assist low-income families in Chicago to move into private housing throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. The federal government made rent subsidies available for these families to make these moves. By late 1981, a year before this study began, approximately 1,300 families had moved through this program, some to primarily white suburbs and others to predominantly black urban areas.

The data are taken from a study of two groups of Gautreaux families. The first group were families who moved to white suburbs whose white composition averaged 96%, according to the 1980 U. S. Census. The second group of families moved to Chicago census tracts with a black composition averaging 99%. The mother and, whenever possible, a randomly preselected child from each family were interviewed. The interviews included both standard closed-ended scales and open-ended questions.

The two samples were quite comparable in their family structure and educational background. The families were predominantly female-headed in both the suburban (86%) and control (88%) groups. Virtually none of the mothers in either group had finished college, and similar proportions had 12 or fewer years of school (53% suburban and 57% control). The children had a similar proportion of females (52% suburban, 56% control), but were younger

in the suburban group (11.8 years suburban, 13.1 years control). We chose children in only primary and secondary schools, so their ages ranged between 6 and 18.

Comparing our samples with a larger survey of Gautreaux program participants reveals that our samples were highly similar to the characteristics of fuller samples of program participants. However, comparing our sample with nonparticipants who were eligible to participate (because they were tenants in or applicants for public housing) reveals that the participants have smaller families, and are better educated, more frequently employed, and more likely to have a higher income (albeit below the low ceiling required for public housing eligibility). We infer that the Gautreaux participants are somewhat distinctive from typical low-income black tenants in public housing. Although many of our findings may hold for a larger population, we must confine our conclusions to the Gautreaux population.

The experimental design in this study is a "posttest-only design with non-equivalent groups" (Cook and Campbell, 1972). The city-control group is utilized in these analyses as a no-change control group that can be compared with the suburban group in order to determine effects of residential integration. The city-control group was felt to be a relatively strong control group in that it controlled for the selection effects of Gautreaux participation and the effects of moving. As noted, the groups showed no significant differences on any important demographic variables. In addition, the suburban group was asked retrospective questions about their experiences before they moved to the suburbs. Consequently, two types of analyses are used in this study: *city-control/suburban* comparisons and *retrospective pre/post* comparisons. While each type of analysis has potential methodological pitfalls, they are *different* pitfalls, so that where both analyses arrive at similar results, we may be more confident of our conclusions. Quantitative and qualitative analyses are used.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: Educational Standards

The mothers repeatedly noted that the suburban schools had higher standards, as they reported on their experiences in shifting their children between schools. These experiences were like a myriad of small experiments out of inner-city schools into schools in many diverse suburbs.

Many mothers concluded that the pace and difficulty of the work in their children's suburban schools were much more demanding than those in the city. One mother noted a difference of a grade level in the difficulty of the work—that fourth-grade work in the city was being done in third grade in the suburbs:

> The move affected my child's education for the better. I even tested it out . . . (I) let her go to summer school by my mother's house (in Chicago) for about a month . . .

she was in fourth grade at that time . . . Over in the city they were doing third grade work; what they were supposed to be doing was fourth grade. (006)

Other mothers reported similarly dramatic differences in the standards of the suburban and city schools. Some expressed surprise at the magnitude of these differences, even though they had expected some differences to exist. One mother said that when she moved to the suburbs, her children had to be "taught all over again." When the teachers in the suburban school tested these children, they found that "they didn't know anything; they had to be taught from the beginning." This mother pointed out the differences in standards between the city and suburban schools by citing her daughter's experience:

Well, the standards were different in Chicago. In Chicago, they said she was doing O.K., she was about the same as most kids. It was only out here that she began to improve in school work. . . . I was concerned in Chicago; but the teachers were saying she was doing O.K. When I moved out here, we had a different reply from this school; so evidently she wasn't doing that great in school in the city. (026)

Many mothers reported similar experiences:

The level of everything is so much higher than it was in the city. Everything is just on a higher scale. Everything is just more advanced. The reading and the math. (072)

The school work is much harder here than it was in the city. He's just learning what they have had already. Now that he's picking it up, he's doing O.K. They might have had the things that he had in 7th grade in 5th grade or 6th. So when he got to 7th grade, he really didn't know the basics of what they had done already. . . . He was an honor roll student in Chicago. But when he came here, he realized that the honor roll (in Chicago) wasn't the honor roll (in the suburbs). . . . All white environments are better than black as far as schools go. The schools are always better. Plus it makes him more like that. It brings the best qualities of him out. (089)

The work is different. I think it's harder than what they are taught in the public schools (in Chicago). They have more homework. There's always an assignment. They have certain novels they have to read which is a part of their schoolwork. And she's competing now with kids that are at a different level. Whereas she was the smartest in the public schools, here there are kids who are geniuses almost. I think that's the difference there. These kids started out maybe in the better schools from the beginning, from day one. So they are used to all of these things. (098)

When we first moved here, Moses was in first grade but he was doing kindergarten level work. They had to hold him back and he had to have special tutors. But they eventually started working with him and now he's really doing great. It was really hard. I went to the school to find out—the first thing I thought was "black," because this was the first time I had had any trouble. In Chicago they never called me up. I went up there and actually saw what the first grade kids were doing (in the suburbs) and I knew in my heart he couldn't do that. (017)

The (city schools) were telling me her grades were good, but when I got out here I found out they were worse. . . . I was satisfied until (after the move). They were doing nothing to me but lying. Maybe I shouldn't say lying. They just have different standards. Their level in Chicago is about 3 or 4 grades below what it is out here. My

> daughter had to repeat the 4th grade. . . . I liked the (Chicago school) because I didn't know any better. When I moved out here, I found out how far behind my kids were. (032)
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> (The suburban school) said it was like he didn't even go to school in Chicago for three years, that's how far behind he was. And he was going every day and he was getting report cards telling me he was doing fine. . . . If a teacher (in the city school) saw that he was slow, he should have brought it to my attention. . . . Nobody ever did. . . . I've always been a concerned parent. . . . I just assumed there was no problem because nobody brought it up to me . . . (040)
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> They (the instructors) don't accept any excuses like they do in the city (for not getting work done). Even when Sally broke her finger and had to stay home, she was expected to call her classmates and when she returned (to school) to bring all the work (she missed). There was no excuse. It made Sally feel her teachers really cared, that they're not just there for money. (093)

The higher standards in the suburbs indicate that the city schools are not demanding as much from children as the suburban schools are. The difference in standardized achievement tests scores is well documented, but the schools can always interpret this as indicating limitations of the students; i.e., that the schools teach to the children's capacity, and the children just don't have the capacity to do any better.

The differences experienced by these children indicate that the city schools have different standards that they expect from children. Some mothers report that city school teachers don't expect children to make up work when they are absent, students aren't expected to do homework, fifth grade students don't yet write in cursive, "passing grades" don't mean achievement at grade level, and even "honor roll" students may be two years behind grade level. According to the reports of some mothers, the problem of lower achievement is not that children aren't absorbing material at grade level—*they aren't being exposed to an equivalent grade-level curriculum.* According to the experiences of these children, the level of curriculum is one to three years behind grade level.

When a program seeks to accomplish school integration by moving students from one school to another, it assumed that schools are in some sense comparable so children can fit academically into their new schools. These mothers' reports suggest that the suburban schools are very different than the city schools. As a result, integration is more than a matter of changing schools; children must also adjust to radically different curricula and expectations.

HYPOTHESIS 2: SCHOOLS' AND TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO STUDENTS

Special Education Placements

Placement of the children is one of the most important decisions the suburban schools had to make about these children. Assigning students to special

education classes may have important long-term effects, either positive or negative. Misclassification can result in permanently limiting students' educational and career opportunities.

The suburban schools placed these children in special education programs—learning disabled (LD) and educably mentally handicapped (EMH)—at a significantly higher rate in the suburbs than in the city (7% premove and 19% postmove; 4.9% control group). Many mothers were initially suspicious about the potential stigma of these placements. However, the classes were much smaller and offered more individualized attention, and most mothers, including mothers who had initially been critical of special education, concluded that their children were making better progress in these classes.

Mothers had a variety of reactions to their children being placed in special education classes in the suburban schools after they were in regular classes in the city. Some mothers came to accept the need for a special education placement for their children in the suburbs:

> (A psychiatrist) told me that my son had motor skill problems and he should go into in-depth testing. I couldn't afford it and I didn't believe him anyway. When I moved here, I put him in school, in kindergarten, and they told me that he had problems and I didn't believe them. So they sent him through all these training sessions for EMH children and there was real documentation that there really was a problem. So I believed them. It took me almost a year to really accept it. It's kind of hard to accept that your child is mentally retarded. It is not easy to accept that you have less than a perfect specimen. (043)

> When we left Chicago she was in first grade. When she got out here she couldn't read. She couldn't keep up with the second grade out here, so she got retained. But she still didn't know how to pick up. . . . But they did a lot of tests on her—they were real nice about it—to try to get her in the right grade, but she couldn't read. So they get her into the special education out here and she's been doing really good. . . . They recommended that she be put in the LD group. I had a parent conference with five teachers and the principal, which I found very, very nice. They were talking about Michelle's background and (asking) was she happy at home and other problems like that. . . . I'm satisfied with the program she's in now—she's progressing very well. In fact, I asked for her to stay there another year. (068)

Other mothers blamed the Chicago schools. They thought that the Chicago schools had committed an error in not diagnosing their children as needing special education. This is consistent with some mothers' reports that city schools did not notice or notify mothers about children's poor performance. They thought that the Chicago schools had overlooked a learning problem and that the suburban schools had discovered it and placed the child in the appropriate class or program to maximize the child's opportunity to fulfill his or her potential. Our description of one such response illustrates the point:

> One mother reported that her son had achieved practically nothing in a regular classroom in his Chicago school. School in Chicago was a miserable experience for him, since his classmates picked on him and victimized him continuously. The mother

> interpreted the child's lack of progress in school as a result of his obstinacy. When the family moved to the suburbs, however, the school tested the boy, diagnosed him as retarded, counseled the mother, and placed the boy in a special class, with personal tutoring. There were twelve children in his class. The mother was extremely satisfied with this placement. (043)

Other mothers whose children were newly diagnosed in the suburbs and placed in special classes implied that the placements were appropriate because of the failure of the Chicago schools their children had attended:

> Mostly the kids that came from the city were kind of behind the regular kids, so they started testing them: every (city) child here, practically, had to have some kind of special help. So my Michael was kind of unfortunate—he was too far gone. The only place that they could find for him in school was to put him in the EMH program. . . . They had other programs but they said that was the best for him, because he really needed one-to-one. They said it was like he hadn't even gone to school in Chicago for three years—that's how far behind he was. And he was going every day and he was getting report cards telling me that he was doing fine. To know that a big city like that would allow your child to be abused and misused to make him educably mentally handicapped—crippled, that's what he would have been, he would have been EMH all right, a cripple all his life. (040)

Still other mothers were more skeptical about the suburban school's placement of their children in special education programs. Several mothers expressed concern that the suburban school officials might be biased against black children and/or children from Chicago, which might lead them to underestimate the abilities of the children and to misclassify them. These mothers were concerned that racial stereotypes or their Chicago school experiences might have led to erroneous placements of their children into special education programs:

> As long as she was in the city, she was okay—considered a pretty bright child. But here, they're labeling her as having a disability to learn. . . . I talked with other black families who had come from the city and they had done the same thing to their children. . . . I don't know if it's just something that they do to the black kids or if they really had this problem when they came from the city schools. . . . (This mother was very upset about her child's special education placement. She questions the "legitimacy" of the findings in her child's school records, whether mostly black children are in these programs—although she admitted there were whites in them. She wants the school to let her child try a regular classroom in spite of the record and her apparent acknowledgement of the "more advanced" work of the child's school. (072)

> The first thing they do to ninety percent of our children when they get them is to say they are retarded or mentally handicapped or have emotional problems. . . . I think they drop all the students down when they come from Chicago . . . and stick them in a lower class. (111)

One mother reported that she was sure that her child had been placed in such a program inappropriately:

> In the beginning I had a conference with a couple of her teachers and a psychologist. We discussed some of the problems that they thought Darlene had that needed to be

> corrected. So they decided to put her in a class for slow learners. I didn't let them do it because I know my daughter was really capable of doing what she was told to do, so far as her homework is concerned. Then they brought in their psychologist from the school and she came up with the conclusion that Darlene didn't need to be placed in a special class. The psychologist said Darlene needed more time to adjust. And believe it or not, her grades have been improving. . . . After she saw the psychologist, they transferred her back to her regular classes. (035)

A few other mothers indicated that they believed that racial discrimination was present, even though they believed that the result was right and that special education classes were the appropriate placements for their children. Indeed, most of their anger was toward the city schools which had allowed their children to fall behind while indicating no problem. As one mother said, "It was like he hadn't even gone to school in Chicago for three years—that is how far behind he was. And he was going every day and he was getting report cards telling me that he was doing fine." (040)

Of course, it is difficult to assess these conflicting interpretations. Racial discrimination is perceived by some mothers, not just those whose children were in special education, so it is possible that discrimination may be affecting special education placements, even though we cannot assess how often it is doing so. We also know that the suburban schools have higher standards than these children experienced in the city, so special education is likely to be affected by these standards. However, children's actual special needs are difficult for outside researchers to assess, and we have no way of doing so. Consequently, while it seems possible that both discrimination and higher standards are contributing to the greater incidence of special education placements, we cannot say how much each of these is affecting these children.

One other factor that may be affecting the greater incidence of special education is the greater resources in the suburban schools. Mothers report that the suburban schools have more resources in all kinds of ways, and in particular, that they have smaller classes even in their regular classes. It seems quite possible that suburban schools have more resources to devote to special education, and they may have more special education classes, allowing more flexibility to respond to students' special needs.

Higher standards and special education are related. Children entering from schools with lower standards will probably have difficulty fitting into schools with much higher standards. A few schools responded by putting the children back a grade, but that puts them with younger children, which creates problems. Placing children in special education classes has the advantage of very small class sizes, so teachers can spend more time with students. According to most reports, teachers actually did treat children positively in these classes, and many mothers felt their children made good progress in these classes. Nonetheless, special education separates these children—perhaps permanently—from the mainstream in the suburban schools. This is an important consideration for the 19% of the children in these classes, and it is an important question for an integration program like this.

Teachers' Assistance

The mothers felt that their children received more help from suburban teachers than from city teachers and more than the city-control mothers felt their children received from their teachers. According to both the retrospective and city-control comparisons, suburban teachers were seen as providing more help to the children, as responding better to their educational needs, as treating them better, as going out of their way to help children more, and as helping much more often than the city teachers were. All items showed large statistically significant differences, and a composite scale was highly significant ($t=5.81$; $df=71$, $p<.001$). For instance, to cite some statistics in the retrospective analysis, when asked whether suburban teachers went out of their way to help their children more, less, or the same as city teachers, 45% of mothers said more and only 21% said less. In the city-control comparison, when asked whether teachers had gone out of their way to help their children during the past three months, 59% of suburban mothers and only 30% of city mothers reported such extra help. Also, 92.0% of suburban mothers approved of the way teachers treated their children, compared with 82.5% of the city-control mothers.

The suburban mothers reported stories that illustrated these differences and that indicated examples of teachers going out of their way for children:

> (In Chicago) after the (teachers') eight hours are over, they're over! That's the way it was. He has teachers (in the suburbs) who would work overtime to get things right if it looks like (his work) is messed up. (051)

> Suburban schools are smaller and it seems like the teachers are able to treat each child individually—maybe because they have smaller classes. (058)

> (My daughter) is really good in music. She's in concert band . . . I couldn't take her (to a concert) so she called school. . . . The band instructor . . . left his home, picked her up from the house (and) drove her to the school. . . . It's that type of cohesiveness (014)

> I like that fact that . . . when a student is having trouble . . . in almost any area that they need to study or do extra work in, . . . (extra help from teachers is) available for them. (012)

> (The school) had an extracurricular activity (which involved) taking the kids to a ranch for 3 days. I wasn't able to afford the activity (so) the teacher paid Robert's way. (066)

> The teachers out here seem to care more . . . . The reason I feel he is doing better is because the teachers are different. The atmosphere is different (from the city). . . . If you need help with (subjects) they're right there to help you . . . . They will xerox copies of the directions (of assignments) and send them home so the parents can help . . . . They did an IQ test on him and he scored high enough to be a genius. This caused some frowns (as to) why he sits in a classroom and won't do anything. So they figured that maybe Fred (would) work better under a male than a female teacher. So they gave him all male teachers and his grades came up. . . . They'll let you know before marking period that your child needs work in these areas. They're going to focus more on these areas (where child is failing) than on the others. In the city, the first sign you (would get) was a failing grade on the report card. (057)

> They (teachers) demand more out of the child and pay a lot more attention to the child (than in the city). . . . In the last marking period, . . . to help her bring her grades up so she could pass, (the teacher) had her come in early in the morning and she helped (her) with her studies. She went over a particular test with her that she didn't understand and let her take the test over after she had gone over it with her. (060)

It should be noted that individual teachers' responses to these children were not part of a systematic response to the housing integration program. The program kept a low profile in order to avoid identifying and thus stigmatizing these families. This strategy, coupled with the small numbers of program participants in each school, may have facilitated some kinds of positive responses. The kinds of political protest that sometimes accompany busing experiments and subsidized housing projects did not occur in this program.

A possible disadvantage of this approach, however, was that no special efforts were made to prepared the neighborhoods or schools for these children. The teachers had received no special training or preparation for these children. Indeed, they were not told that these children were part of a special program. So the teacher efforts that these mothers reported were done at the teachers' own initiatives. Of course, we do not know whether these teachers went out of their way more for these children than for others in their classes, or whether these actions were just their typical way of responding to all children in their classes. In any case, their actions impressed many mothers as quite remarkable, and they were an important unanticipated benefit of the program.

Although many mothers reported greater satisfaction with suburban teachers than with city teachers, their reactions were complex. Many of those expressing approval also described problems that arose with teachers. Some mothers reported serious racial discrimination by teachers, and these incidents had extensive ramifications for the children. According to mothers' reports, a few teachers permitted, or even encouraged, students to call black children names, a few teachers picked on black children in the classroom, others ignored black children, a lunchroom monitor segregated the black children into one part of the lunchroom, and a school bus driver made black children go to the back of the bus. Moreover, such behaviors can have extensive implications, as some mothers noted:

> (My daughter) had one instructor (who) was a downright bigot, a racist. . . . It was openly this way and she perpetrated the same attitude among the other students in the class, so that really presented a problem. When a teacher acts as though she dislikes a student, then the rest of the class will act the same way toward that particular student, and this is exactly what happened. It got to the point where the students were calling her names in front of the teacher and in the classroom (and) the teacher wasn't saying anything (or) stopping them . . . . My daughter's grades were dropping drastically and I knew it was the result of the environment. (014)

> They have one little space in the corner where they (black children) can sit for lunch. They can't venture out. The monitors, the guards in the hall, they put them in the corner for their lunch. All the black kids. It's like down South on the plantations. And this is for real. They're (children) trained now. They've been there a couple of years.

> . . . They know their spot. This is what they are given. When they get out of it, they get into trouble. So now . . . they wouldn't dare (move) because most parents teach their children to try to get along. (064)

Two mothers identified both aspects of teacher behavior—the extra help and the prejudice—in their experience:

> Some of the teachers are prejudiced—that is observable. Some of the teachers would barely acknowledge black students. If my child approaches the teacher about making up work from when he was sick, they would say no. Some of the things they say in class are definitely racial slurs. They give white children more opportunities to make up work. Some of the white children are very disrespectful, but if a black child says the slightest little thing . . . you can't stand up and say 'I disagree.' If a white student doesn't like something, the teacher will negotiate or they talk about it in class. But if a black kid said something like "you didn't tell us that the test was today" they would make them feel really bad in front of the class, or they would ignore them totally. So the black kids sit there watching the white kids be able to have a better relationship with the teacher. (058)

However, this mother also described having a healthy relationship with the teachers:

> The teachers are pretty good. I wanted to get much stricter on him, but they encouraged me to not be quite as hard, and to give him rewards along with punishment. They offered suggestions, things that they might know on educating children. They said whenever I had a problem to be sure to get in touch with them. They stress that they are there and encourage us to talk to them if there are any problems. They seem to respond toward your child better if they know that you are concerned. (058)

Another mother reported similar conflicting perceptions:

> The teachers are excellent. They are very prejudiced, but . . . if you need help . . . they are right there to help you. But you have to be the one to raise your hand (and say you need help). . . . In the city they don't really care. . . . They don't have the time to put toward the effort to help this one individual who needs help. My son, now his grades have really come up (since leaving the city). (057)

These incidents not only had negative ramifications for the children involved, and other black children; they are also likely to have fostered racial prejudice among the white children in these schools. Moreover, racial insults occurred day in and day out in a number of less overt ways. However, these incidents did not overwhelm the mothers' general feelings of satisfaction with the teachers, and these incidents seemed to decline over time, to judge from retrospective reports.

Hypothesis 3: Students' Grades and School Satisfaction

The higher standards in the suburban schools raise the issues posed in the second hypothesis, that these students will respond to these suburban schools:

their grades will not decline and they will be as satisfied in these schools. We were not certain about this hypothesis. In light of the higher standards in the suburbs, we might expect that the children moving to the suburbs would receive lower grades compared to what they (or the control group) showed in the city schools. For example, it should be harder to get a grade of "C," indicating "average" performance, in a school where more was demanded.

Our analyses of children's grades contradicts this expectation and supports the hypothesis: children's grades show no significant differences in both retrospective and city-control comparisons, and the finding is the same when the analysis is restricted only to children in regular classes (not special education). In this case, an absence of statistical significance is a noteworthy finding. This suggests an impressive ability of these children to respond to the higher demands in the suburbs, probably aided by the previously noted efforts of suburban teachers. We tried to supplement this analysis with standardized test scores, but we were unable to obtain such scores.

Nonetheless, the clear absence of differences in grades in both analyses indicates that suburban teachers did not evaluate these children's performance any lower than city teachers evaluated them or control-group children. Even though grades are not objective indicators of achievement, they do indicate how children's achievement is regarded in the classroom, and the results indicate that the suburban move did not lower the standing of these children in the eyes of their teachers.

Indeed, some children seem to have done better in the suburbs. One fifteen-year old boy had a mediocre record in the Chicago public schools and had been identified as having modest ability and a tendency to cause trouble (057). In his initial experience in the suburban schools, he showed the same patterns of poor motivation and mediocre performance in class. However, one of his teachers believed that he had more ability than he was demonstrating, and the teacher recommended that the boy be transferred to a higher ability group. The boy went from being a mediocre student in a city school with low standards to being a good student in a suburban school with higher standards. The motivating benefits of good teachers and high standards seem to have brought out previously undiscovered talents.

Many children's attitudes also seem to have improved in the suburban schools. To cite some statistics: children expressed significantly more positive attitudes toward school in the retrospective analysis ($t=2.27$, $df=36$, $p<.05$), and the city-control comparison is in the same direction, although not significant ($t=.58$, $df=98$, $p>.05$). While the children were too young to be articulate about their attitudes, many mothers noted indications of their children's increased interest in school:

> In Chicago she had no interest. Here she wants to do well. (113)
>
> He likes to go to school. He likes his teachers. And he likes to impress his teachers, so he works very hard. (041)
>
> I don't have any problems getting her to go to school . . . . She is always raring to go. (013)

She wants to go when she is sick. If she's sick I keep her out of school. She cries then. (065)

Even when it's zero degrees, he wants to go to school. (036)

When Agnes is sick, she wants to go to school. . . . She's the first one at the bus stop. (018)

CONCLUSIONS

This paper presented a test of the three following hypotheses, which are largely supported by the findings.

1. Suburban schools' standards were higher than those in the city. This created some problems in integrating these black children into the suburban schools.

2. Suburban schools' responses to these students were difficult to interpret. School grouping practices are a major ambiguity in these findings. Students were placed in special education programs and lower ability groups at a much higher rate in the suburbs than in the city. Several students were placed back a grade when they entered the suburban schools. Do these groupings and practices indicate that schools are diagnosing previously unidentified problems and devoting more resources and individualized attention to these students, or do they indicate prejudice and misclassification? Although many mothers expressed overall satisfaction with these placements, the high rate of such placements is cause of serious concern.

As hypothesized, the suburban teachers responded with increased educational assistance, mixed with some racial discrimination. The suburban teachers were seen as providing more help to the children, as responding better to their needs, as treating them better, as going out of their way to help children more, and as helping much more often than the city teachers were. Mothers reported a great variety of ways that teachers went out of their way for these children and ways that their children benefitted. At the same time, mothers reported significant incidents of teachers' racial discrimination, as well as mistreatment by other school officials because of their children's race.

3. These students responded well to the suburban schools: neither their grades nor their satisfaction declined. Despite the higher standards in the suburban schools, children's grades were no lower in the suburbs and their attitudes toward school were better. The qualitative reports by mothers indicated many instances where children had to overcome enormous obstacles to adjust to these schools, both socially and academically. Their struggles illustrate the kinds of problems that must be confronted in integrating low-income black children into suburban schools. The nature of these struggles is discussed in greater detail in our larger report (Rosenbaum, Kulieke, and Rubinowitz, 1985). The present findings indicate that, for the most part, these children were able to overcome these difficulties.

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