VANISHING POINT:
"DIVERSITY" AND RACE AT PREDOMINANTLY WHITE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

by

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Abstract

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This dissertation investigates the management of racial integration at predominantly White, unaffiliated Independent schools in the northeastern United States. Once gatekeepers for the WASP elite, prep schools have made pointed efforts, especially in the last fifty years, to recruit students who would not otherwise have access to Independent schooling. When it comes to race, schools have shifted focus from a civil-rights-era language of "Opportunity" to a current language of "Diversity". By conducting in-depth interviews with "Diversity" policy developers and implementers within the Independent school community, I explore current efforts toward racial integration and the relationship between integration and "Diversity". Data collected from interviews is supplemented with numerical analysis of enrollment data of students of color at Independent schools as well as content analysis of on-line and printed materials from schools and supporting institutions such as the National Association of Independent Schools.

The findings show that the proportional representation of Black students in Independent schools has been virtually stagnant for the past decade, despite growth in the proportional representation of Asian and Multiracial students. Schools have chosen to focus on broader themes of "Inclusivity" forgoing directed attention on race. As evidenced by financial, recruitment, and programming choices, the "Diversity" movement in Independent schools has not furthered movement toward integrating Black students into predominantly White schools. In

fact, the “Diversity” movement, by not seeking to challenge the current state of inequality in a meaningful way, only serves to strengthen the segregated status quo.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> Autumn, 2001. It was school picture day. One colleague, a fellow math teacher (and fellow white woman), smiled and with a conspirational chuckle pointed to the only African American girl in the fifth grade—to her hair, more specifically—and said, "she looks like a poodle."
>
> Autumn, 2003. It was the first day of school. I looked around at the slightly terrified faces of my math students in the "regular" level class—a class self-dubbed the "retarded" class because it was the lowest of the three levels of math offered in eighth grade. About ten percent of enrolled students at this school were students of color. Close to 75 percent of students in my "regular" class were students of color.
>
> Spring, 2006. It was near the end of the school year. I was teaching a music class and mentioned Nelson Mandela in reference to a song that my mostly white 13 and 14-year-old students were learning. They looked back with confusion. They had never heard of Mandela. They had never heard of Apartheid.
>
> Summer, 2010. I was no longer teaching. A former colleague (and Black woman) emailed me, furious, to report that no students of color—literally zero—were accepted into the incoming first grade class.

Reality about the state of racial "Diversity" had a way of slapping me across the face with increasing frequency and force as I embarked on my teaching career. My naivety, built on a solid foundation of privilege and whiteness, started to crumble as I began to see—with the patient help of others—the ever-present evidence of individualized and systemic racism that plagued these elite institutions. Thus was planted the seed of a research project—not one that I wanted to pursue, rather one that I needed to pursue.

A History of Independent Day Schools

The history and legacy of predominantly white, Independent schools is one of status and power. Private, or "Independent", schools have been a part of American history since before the actual formation of the United States of America. The first private school on what would be American soil was a day school for boys founded in 1628: Collegiate School in Manhattan. The founding of Collegiate School predates the founding of the first public school: Boston Latin. Boston Latin was also a day school for boys founded seven years later in 1635. Both Collegiate School and Boston Latin remain fixtures in the educational scene in the U.S. today. The parallel history of private and public schooling underlines the importance of private, or "Independent" day schools within the broader system of education. Glenn (1998) notes that well into the 19th century, private school students outnumbered public school students. In Boston in 1817, for instance, "public school enrollment amounted to 2,365 students, with over 4,000 students attending free or tuition-charging private schools" (428). Independent schools have been and continue to be an important fixture in U.S. society.

The founding dates of the earliest and most elite Independent schools tell quite a bit about the history of these institutions. I compiled a list of the 20 "best" private day schools in the Northeast according to Forbes.com "America's Best Prep Schools" and a PrepReview.com report that ranked day schools by factors such as Ivy League Admissions and endowment. The lists from both sites concurred, and each school on the resulting list is well-known throughout the Independent school community[1]. Whether or not a particular school should be included in this

[1] In alphabetical order, those schools are: Agnes Irwin School (PA), Baldwin School (PA), Brearly School (NYC), Brunswick School (CT), Buckingham Browne & Nichols(MA), Chapin School (NYC), Collegiate School (NYC), Dalton School (NYC), Ethical Culture Fieldston (NYC), Germantown Friends (PA), Haverford School (PA), Hopkins School (CT), Horace Mann

list is debatable, however, the resulting list does represent a sample of elite, Independent day schools, and the information gathered from this list is illuminating.

Three of the "best" schools were founded in the 17th century. These schools' goals were to educate the sons of the upper strata of society in the earliest days of this country. One school, Trinity School, was founded in the very early 18th century. However, the real finding from this list of schools is the fact that sixteen schools were founded around the turn of the 19th century: between 1845 and 1920. Even more specifically, eleven of these twenty schools were founded between 1883 and 1907. In the earlier part of the 19th century, children of well-to-do families were often educated at home, but the years marking the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century saw a dramatic increase in the demand for private schooling from elite families who were migrating from the city centers to the less concentrated suburbs (Balzell). This is also the era when girls' schools were established, clearly pointing to the societal shift in opportunities for girls' education outside of the home.

Another key development during this era was the establishment of many elite boarding schools in New England. Karabel (2005) refers to the "St. Grottlesex" schools, St. Paul's, St. George's, St. Mark's, Groton, and Middlesex, which were entirely elite institutions that served as pipelines into Harvard, Yale, and Princeton in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These "St. Grottlesex" schools were each founded between 1856 and 1901: exactly the same era which saw a marked increase in the foundation of private day schools, as well.

The first wave of diversification of students in elite day schools came as a result of sons leaving day schools in favor of these new boarding schools to complete their secondary education. Again, Balzell offers a key insight:

(NYC), Nightingale-Bamford (NY), Princeton Country Day (NJ), Riverdale (NYC), Roxbury Latin (MA), Spence (NYC), Trinity School (NYC), Winsor School (MA).

> "As many of the sons of Proper Philadelphians, for example, began to go away to New England boarding schools for their last four or five years of secondary education vacancies were created in the higher forms at Episcopal and other fashionable day schools. To fill this gap many boys came in from the public school system and spent their last few years at the Episcopal Academy" (300).

I do not mean to suggest that those who students who came from the "public school system" were any less wealthy than the families sending their sons to boarding schools. Rather, the diversification of the student body to which I refer is the tenure of families' elite status. Entrance to, and matriculation from, elite, Independent schools was a marker of status more than anything else. By granting public school boys entrance into private academies, they were conferring upon them a higher status than they inherited from their parents. Mills echoes, "The school—rather than the upper-class family—is the most important agency for transmitting the traditions of the upper social classes, and regulating the admission of new wealth and talent" (64-65).

The trend of admitting sons of wealthy, but not "established" families continued into 20th century. Schools and families created a relationship of reciprocal benefit: "The private day schools, especially during the depression, needed pupils who could pay full tuition. Newly rich fathers and mothers were, in turn, eager for their sons to meet 'nice people'" (Balzell: 300). The earliest shifts in schools' demographics, then, came from a need to keep wealth flowing into these institutions.

The newly wealthy were not as desirable as the established wealthy, but schools made the adjustment to admitting the newly wealthy, especially in the older grades of the schools, in order to maintain fiscally healthy institutions. Subsequent waves of "outsiders" looking for admission to these elite schools were previously undesirable to these schools based on factors of religion and race.

The next wave of pressure and ultimately (limited) inclusion came from wealthy Jewish families. Balzell catalogs the existence of a Jewish elite in Philadelphia in the 19th and 20th centuries. Some of these families assimilated to their Christian neighbors quickly: living in Christian communities, marrying Christians, and generally accepted as Christians. However, as the Jewish community began to physically move into the elite neighborhoods in Philadelphia in the 1890s, the established Christian elite moved out to the suburbs (Balzell 284). Balzell describes the elite Jewish community as a "parallel upper class": elite but separate from the Christian elite. More often there were Jewish private schools as opposed to the inclusion of Jewish students (and faculty) into previously established private schools.

Also noteworthy is the fact that there is little, if any, mention of Jewish inclusion in scholarship about elite secondary education. When Balzell speaks of religious inclusion, he is talking about Catholicism at traditionally Episcopal schools. Newer research that touches on the history of private schools omits Judaism as a topic altogether. Kahn (2008), for instance, analyzes the extent of inclusion at St. Paul's, but never analyzes religion as a factor. This is a glaring omission. The only scholar that addresses Jewish inclusion at historically non-Jewish (and often anti-Jewish) schools is Karabel (2005). He notes that pressure from Jewish students wanting admission led to schools such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton redesigning their admissions practices with the result of minimal Jewish inclusion (115). But his investigation is of Universities, not prep schools. The evidence that exists of Jewish inclusion in Independent day schools is primarily based on oral history. Informants explain that the push for Jewish inclusion in elite day schools generally pre-dates the push for Black inclusion during the Civil Rights movement. However, there is significant data that suggests that Jewish students and faculty still struggle to be recognized within the institution of the private school. The most

compelling evidence that I found as to the more recent inclusion of Jewish students is the change to many schools' academic calendars. Now, Independent day schools often close for some of the high Jewish holidays.

In contrast to the dearth of evidence regarding the inclusion of Jewish students and faculty into Independent schools, the movement for inclusion of Black students in elite, Independent schools during the Civil Rights movement is well noted. One informant pointed out that "Quaker schools have been [including Black students] for decades and decades" (NAIS Representative) prior to the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the most elite Independent schools, whether religiously unaffiliated or otherwise, began their concerted efforts toward racial integration during the Civil Rights movement.

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in Brown v. Board of Education which, among other things, called for the desegregation of public schools. By was of backlash, the decision provoked the establishment of a rash of exclusively white private schools to cater to those white students and parents who did not want to participate in racially integrated education (Patterson, 2002). This segregationist reaction, however, was not uniform. In fact, many long-established predominantly white schools specifically recruited Black students beginning in the 1960s. Speede-Franklin (1988) explains that there were three "imperatives" that lead to the recruitment of Black students and other "minority" students at this time. The first imperative was to "address the broader problem of social inequality" (23): noblesse oblige. Programs such as ABC were formed with the goal of placing highly skilled "minority" students in these elite, Independent schools. The second was a financial imperative as, following Brown v. Board of Ed., private schools were required to make efforts to integrate or risk losing their tax-exempt status, and therefore, the financial standing of their institutions. The third was based on the

"demographic reality" that as "traditional" Independent school student enrollment wanes, the schools need to fill-in those spaces. Notably, the second and third "imperatives" of money and student enrollment are exactly the same imperatives that led to the inclusion of students from public school backgrounds in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

It seems like not much changed. Schools need money and students. It is worth noting that despite popular stereotype, many Black families whose children were among the first to attend historically white Independent schools paid as much as the White families. "Even as early as 1970, over 45 percent of the minority families whose children attended NAIS member schools received no financial aid; and at that time, Black students comprised a full 92 percent of the minority population" (Speede-Franklin: 24).

Despite the inclusion of these historic "outsiders", schools held on to their "elite" status. The meaning of "elite", however, changed from the Balzell meaning of the social elites to a more comprehensive "image of academic, financial, and social inaccessibility" (Speede-Franklin: 21). Those "non-traditional" students recruited were, then and now, skimmed from the very top level of academically talented students.

Almost immediately after the initial recruitment of Black students, Independent schools began to recruit other racial and ethnic groups to their schools. By 1987, the numbers of Asian Americans in Independent schools passed that of Black students (Speede-Franklin: 25). Simultaneously, the proportion of "minority" students on financial aid decreased to 33.1% in 1983 (Speede-Franklin: 25).

Independent Schools Today

The "elite" status at schools continues to be marked by the academic credentials of their alums. Information gathered from Independent schools' publications echoes the importance that such institutions place on where its graduates attend college and university; that their graduates pursue a Bachelors Degree is a given. Each school nearly always publishes a list of colleges and universities attended by its recent graduates. The higher the status of institution attended by its graduates, the more attractive the Independent school becomes in the eyes of potential applicants. While not confined to Ivy League institutions, this listing is comprised of elite colleges and universities. It is clear that elite, Independent schools continue to be an important fixture in US society and virtually guarantee their students admittance into a high-status post-secondary institution.

My study picks up the story of racial integration in Independent day schools in the late 1990s when branches of the "Diversity" movement were to be found at virtually every historically and predominantly white Independent school in the country.

Public schools in the US have resegregated (Orfield and Lee, 2007). Residential segregation prevents "natural" integration in the public schools system (Massey and Denton, 1998). Attempts to integrate, such as the infamous Boston busing program inspire infinite criticism and little praise.

However, Independent schools operate under a different set of circumstances and a different set of rules. Their ability to handpick students has always meant that private schools held the power to create the exact student body that they desired. Independent schools' historical efforts toward racial integration, therefore, have been very different than public school efforts toward racial integration, and should continue to be studied as a separate phenomenon.

Over the course of their long history in the US, Independent prep schools, which were primarily founded as centers for the academic and social education of the WASP elite, have faced several tides of persistent "outsiders" looking for admission. That they were and continue to be gateways to the most highly regarded colleges and universities is clear to those outsiders trying to gain access. Pressure from outsiders, as well as social pressure and some sort of internal motivation have led to cracks in what was, at inception, a completely closed status group (Weber 1978; Collins 1979; Tilly 1998) of Independent school attendees. The initial inclusion of Jewish students and faculty in the earlier part of the 20th century, for instance, prompted this comment from Baltzell (1958), "To justify their importance in an ethnically mixed democracy, these schools must resist the danger of becoming purely Anglo-Saxon, colonial-stock, upper-class preserves" (318).

Yet, decades later, it would seem that institutional motion toward inclusivity has not been an unqualified success. In a study of "elite boarding schools," Cookson and Persell (1985) found that, "...while it is their stated policy not to discriminate on the basis of race or religion, the social traditions of the schools have meant that their student bodies have tended to be homogeneous in terms of family background, religion, and race" (49). In their 1991 study, Blacks in the White Establishment, Zweigenhaft and Domhoff concurred, "…the power structure has changed little to meet [Black students], and it continues to exclude them. It remains a structure that institutionalizes the values and practices of upper-class white males" (15).[2]

[2] The topics of sex and gender were not integral to Zweigenhaft and Domhoff's study. The extent to which these White structures reinforce the "values and practices" of males and not females is not elucidated. At single-sex, all-girls' schools, for instance, the question of whose "values and practices" are institutionalized requires further study.

Current Literature on Racial Integration in Schooling

Current investigation on racial integration faces an interesting backdrop. The current era is one in which Independent schools claim to desire a more multicultural student enrollment. There are contemporary pressures on these Independent schools to now show that they are not practicing the exclusionary admission practices of their past. Against this backdrop, how are "outsiders" treated?

There is a budding literature about changes to the racial and ethnic make-up of historically White, WASP schools. Much of this literature, however, focuses on the college and university level of private schooling. Nevertheless, this literature offers much to the questions I pursued in my research for two reasons. First, there are parallels between private educational institutions—whether they be colleges and universities or elementary and secondary institutions. Second, private colleges and universities draw a disproportional percentage of their student bodies from Independent high schools. According to the 2011 American Community Survey, only 9.2 percent of high school students attended private institutions (American Community Survey 2011). Yet private school graduates made up 26% of Swarthmore College Students in 2012 (Swarthmore College 2013) and 34% of Amherst College's Class of 2016 (Amherst College 2013); Swarthmore College and Amherst College are two colleges consistently labeled as one of the top three liberal arts colleges in the country by U.S. News and World Report. Only 57% of Yale University freshmen in 2012 graduated from public high schools (Yale University 2013).

Karabel's well-known book, The Chosen (2005), investigates the historical admissions practices of Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, and in doing so confirms the relative power that prep schools' diplomas continue to hold. While prep school graduates are no longer exclusively

attending Ivy League schools, they are attending top-tier colleges and universities. Karabel also traces the process of change within Yale, Harvard, and Princeton as each institution navigated waves of newcomers to their campuses. Karabel demonstrates a sharp eye for detangling rhetoric from reality. For example, in the first half of the 20th century, an influx of qualified Jewish applicants led these universities to move away from admittance based solely on entrance exams. Thus began a shift from admittance based on social status and wealth to qualification based on "merit" and lastly into more subjective and ambiguous qualifications such as "character" and "leadership" abilities (115). As admissions qualifications became less quantifiable, schools were able to appear fair and rational even as they continued to select a student body based on non-meritocratic, status-based criteria. Certainly, these schools have become more "inclusive" but within boundaries created and maintained by each institution: preference in admission is given to various constituencies including the wealthy, high-level athletes, and legacies.

Another informative body of literature catalogs the experience of students of color who attend predominantly white, private schools. Without exception, this literature supports the finding that these institutions still cater to the White, upper-middle class student. Hill (1996) found that Black students attending elite, predominantly white, private day schools navigate an exhausting path of "dual worlds" as they shift, multiple times a day, between the culture of home and the culture of school. Neville, et al. (2004) concur that African American students in predominantly white institutions suffer from increased levels of psychological stress on account of racial stressors. This stress often leads to lower academic performance.

Scholars have also searched for ways to improve the social and academic experience of students of color at these predominantly white institutions. Datnow and Cooper (1996) discuss

the importance of peer networks among African American students at predominantly White Independent schools. These networks enhance social and academic "success". Schneider and Shouse (1992) highlight the importance of schools' efforts in making African American students feel as though they are integral to the community of the school. A sense of social and institutional inclusivity is linked to academic success.

Studies of elite, Independent schools are beginning to appear in greater numbers. Bauman (2002), Bery (2004), Stoudt (2009), and Khan (2011) all conducted in-depth research studies at one or, at most, two elite, Independent schools. However, more recent scholarship appears to be focusing on one of two things: either (1) the experience of students of color, particularly African American students, in predominantly White, Independent schools, or (2) such schools as institutions that affirm a culture of whiteness and white privilege at such institutions. To my knowledge, there is no current research that examines the process and management of racial integration in Independent schools. My research fits directly into this gap in the literature of Independent schooling.

The Project

Those working in education, as well as other fields, are aware of the current language of "Diversity" which is widely used within the Independent school system. The multi-faceted and elusive meaning of "Diversity" was the starting point of this research. Why have schools moved away from direct language about race and racial integration and toward a much more nebulous language of "Diversity"? Pulling at the thread of this simple question revealed a more intricate fabric of institutional power, policy, and intention surrounding the language of "Diversity". My

goal with this research was to examine the interdependency of language, power, policy and intention within Independent schools regarding efforts toward racial integration.

Specifically, I focused on the management of racial integration at predominantly White, Independent day schools in the northeastern United States highlighting those adult constituencies that create school policy and/or administer the implementation of these policies. These adult constituencies include school administrators, teachers, alumnae, and Independent school consultants. Examining rhetorical devices and management techniques, I sought out the perspectives of adults within the system: faculty, staff and administrators, policy makers, and policy implementers, in an effort to shed light on how racial integration is perceived and implemented in these institutions.

The Scope of Research

Within the blanket designation of an "Independent" school, there are many different types of institutions: religious, unaffiliated, boarding, day. A study of racial integration at a Quaker school would yield different results than a similar study conducted at a Catholic or unaffiliated school. Also, the difference between boarding and day schools is significant considering the social immersion of students within a boarding school setting and the potential for duality (or even multiplicity) of social worlds of a student attending a day school. Therefore, the scope of this research is contained within the group of religiously unaffiliated, day schools in the northeastern region of the US. Day schools represent 82.8% of all schools within the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), and they serve 85.3% of all students

within the Independent school system (NAIS, 2011b).[3] By focusing on day schools, I am researching the largest sector of Independent schools and at the same time, moving away from previous research that focused predominantly on boarding schools.

The history and legacy of these predominantly White institutions sets the stage for a meaningful sample from which to draw. Many of these schools were established well over 100 years ago. When we consider their historical success at placing their graduates into the top tier of colleges and universities, their relative power within the American schooling system is undeniable. Discovering and analyzing efforts toward racial integration that go on within and between such schools is reason enough to pursue this project. Graduates from these schools will be well represented within the next generation of the country's top executives, politicians, doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. The environment within which these students learn about race and racial difference will undoubtedly have a marked effect on the way that the most powerful stratum of our society understands and engages with issues of race, integration, difference, and inequality.

Methods

In many ways, I feel as though I have been researching Independent schools my entire life. Attending an Independent school as a "faculty brat": the daughter of an Independent school teacher and later administrator, I was privy to a broader picture of the functioning of an Independent school. My own subsequent experiences as a teacher in two different Independent

[3] The NAIS is an organization whose mission is to be the "national voice of independent education, advocating on behalf of its members" (2013). Of the 1,262 Independent schools in the US, 93% are members of and accredited by the NAIS (2012b).

schools allowed me to gain yet another perspective of the functioning of these institutions. I cannot pretend to be an objective outsider.

However, my insider status is what opened the door for collecting data. Notoriously stand-off-ish, Independent schools thrive on their exclusivity and in many ways present themselves as closed-off to outsiders. One participant recounted her adventures in simply trying to find the literal entrance to the first Independent school at which she taught: there was no big sign, the school was situated far removed from the neighboring town down a maze of winding roads. You have to know the school to find the school.

Another warning to would-be researchers or insider-critics of Independent schools occurred in 2006 when a teacher at Horace Mann, an elite prep school in New York City, published a satirical novel about a school that he called "Academy X". This prompted uproar from the school and its administration. The teacher's contract was not renewed at the end of the year; teachers who showed their support for the author found themselves facing financial repercussions for their actions (Salkin, 2007). Certainly no institution asks to be the subject of public satire, but the reaction was so extreme in my eyes, that I knew simply by researching these institutions that I would risk alienating myself from them in the future if the result of that research was not a glowing report.

Given all of this, I chose to approach my research with the philosophy that the words of my participants would be my primary form of data. Members of the institutions can speak for themselves, and I wanted to be a filter for these words: to make connections, to highlight contradictions, and to primarily ask questions. This led me to a grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 2009; Charmaz 2006) which unbrella-ed several forms of data collection.

As a White researcher asking direct questions about race and racial policy at schools, I was aware of my opportunity to ask questions of White respondents knowing that I was more likely to get truthful opinions about the state of Diversity because I happen to share a similar skin tone. Tatum (1997) speaks directly to the "paralysis of fear" (194) that Whites feel when trying to talk about race with people of color. Tatum goes on to note that Whites speak more freely with other Whites in forms of "racial bonding" (195). However, I also knew that many of the Diversity practitioners in Independent schools are people of color, and I needed to make every effort to encourage open conversations about race despite my whiteness. In many cases, I asked former colleagues for an email of introduction to a Diversity Coordinator with whom they were familiar; I was confident that this was the best and perhaps only approach to researching at such insular institutions and about a topic that inspires silence between races more often than not (Pollock 2004).

In the end, I had participants from eight different schools in the northeastern part of the country. The sample quickly snowballed as participants offered names of other schools and individuals with whom they thought I should speak. In some cases, participants went so far as to set up interviews on my behalf with school personnel that they knew to be invested in the topic of Diversity. It seemed to be a network of Diversity practitioners and an underground network of Diversity critics that I gained access to through the introductory wink: "she's one of us" method. I made an effort to ensure that several states were represented and that the schools in the study were both urban and suburban. The states represented by the schools in this sample are New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Nine participants self-identified as "Black" or "African American", two participants self-identified as a "person of color" with multiracial lineage, and four participants self-identified as "White" or "European American".

All of the schools in the sample share a similar power structure that is, in turn, similar across all Independent schools. The Head of School presides over all of the branches of the school including academics, community, and finances. The governing body of the school, however, is a Board of Trustees. This Board can be made up of any number of people, but most often is a group of high-donor parents with perhaps alums and faculty representation. The Board often sets the mission of the school and ultimately has the power to hire and fire the Head of School. Beneath the Head of School, each division, Upper School, Middle School, and Lower School, is headed by a top administrator (often "Division Head" or "Principal"). A faculty member tends to work within a single division. Admissions functions as a separate office as do Development (read: fund raising) and Alumnae relations.

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with between one and three participants from each school for a total of twelve participants and over seventeen hours of interview data from school personnel. It is difficult to enumerate the participants according to their job title because many participants acted in multiple roles within their institution. Nevertheless, participants roles included (a) Heads of School, (b) Diversity Coordinators, (c) Admissions Officers, (d) Upper Level Administration, (e) Faculty, (f) Alumnae, and (g) Parents.

To support the data collected from within schools, I interviewed three additional participants whose work links to Diversity in Independent schools. These three participants were (1) a senior representative of the National Association of Independent Schools, (2) a Diversity Consultant, and (3) a senior administrator at a company whose mission is to prepare low income students of color to enroll in Independent schools. These interviews resulted in four hours of data.

All of the interviews, both with school and supporting personnel, were guided by three focal questions:

1) What specific efforts are you making to recruit and retain Black American students and other students of color?

2) What efforts have been made within schools to institute the programmatic and social integration of Black American students and other students of color?

3) How do schools conceptualize their efforts toward integration? Specifically, how is "Diversity" related to racial integration?

Of the fifteen respondents, thirteen agreed to have their interviews audio-recorded. In addition, I took notes both during and after each interview. I transcribed each of these recordings and coded the resulting transcription by word usage and theme patterning. Two participants chose to not be recorded, and I took notes both during and after these interviews, including direct quotes for the most relevant data. Again, these notes were coded by theme patterning.

In support of the interview data, I analyzed the patterns of enrollment of students of color in the Independent school system from the 2001-2002 school year through the 2011-2012 school year. Yearly data collected by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) is available to the public, and I will utilize this data to report on trends.

Finally, I conducted content analyses of published and web-based materials from both individual schools and the NAIS in order to trace the public discussion of race and integration over time. Each of the participating schools and the NAIS has a portion of its website dedicated to issues of Diversity. In addition, the NAIS publishes a quarterly journal, Independent School Magazine, which includes articles on Diversity practices. All of these materials were analyzed for their references to Diversity and related themes, and for enrollment and hiring data when

available. During the course of several interviews, participants mentioned, and in one case insisted that I take, a book that they deemed to be particularly relevant to Diversity work today. I made a point to include these books as part of my data and supported themes that emerged from interviews with themes presented in the books.

Organization of the Dissertation

The following chapters are organized to expose the most tangible findings first—those involving quantifiable evidence and concrete policies. Chapter two explores data on the numerical presence of students, faculty, and administrators of color in Independent schools. This chapter also takes a close look at the role of the Diversity Coordinator within these schools. Chapter three investigates the financial policies involved in recruiting and retaining students of color, specifically addressing the division between tuition-paying families and those families who receive financial aid.

Chapter four looks closely at the Diversity programming that schools offer to their various constituency groups. Racial affinity grouping and White reaction to such grouping is central to this chapter. The meaning of "Diversity" and related language is untangled in Chapter five. Specifically, I weigh the language used by participants and spoken intention of schools against the actions that schools are taking toward racial integration.

Chapter six exposes the layers of racism that are still evident and prevalent in these predominantly white institutions. Fundamentally, this chapter raises the question of impact regarding Independent schools' policies of "Diversity". The continued presence of racism points to the fact that the current policies may not be improving the racialized state of Independent schooling.

One school was an outlier in this study. This school approached racial integration in completely different ways than the others. Therefore, their story is told in a separate chapter: Chapter seven. This school serves both as a symbol of what Independent schools can achieve as well as a standard against which to measure the relative progress of the other participating schools in this study. All of these comparisons as well as a summary of the findings are presented in the Conclusion.

Notes on Citations

The language employed by schools and their personnel are part of the focus of my research. Given this, and in an effort to simplify the jargon-laden language of Independent schools, I chose to assign certain signifying labels to all participants who held the same job. For instance, I chose to use the term "Head of School" to refer to the top Administrative role at any school, although some schools had different titles for this position, such as "Headmaster". The role that had by far the most variation in title was that of what I am calling the "Diversity Coordinator". I will continue to use this term for the person at any given school whose role is to lead and facilitate work within the realm of Diversity, Multiculturalism, Inclusion and/or Equity and Justice.

Another important note: as mentioned above, many faculty and administrators at Independent schools divide their responsibilities among several different offices or roles. For instance, a classroom teacher may also be the Diversity Coordinator and an alumna. In order to maintain clarity and anonymity of the participants, I labeled all participant quotes with the most appropriate title for that quote. If a respondent speaks about interviewing candidates for

Admission, I will label that quote (Admissions Officer) despite the fact that the participant may also be the school's Diversity Coordinator.

Chapter 2: A Vision of Diversity: Who's On Campus

What are the percentages of students, faculty, and administrators on campus? To what extent are these schools still "White" institutions?

The Numbers and Black American Students

Undeniable progress has been made in the enrollment of non-White students in Independent schools. Students of color, in the 2011-2012 school year, made up 26.7% of all students in NAIS schools across the nation. That percentage is a snapshot revealing steady increase in the percentage of students of color in the last decade. The numbers speak for themselves.

However, there has been a clear shift in mission from the original ABC efforts to the broader efforts exhibited now. When A Better Chance (ABC) was founded during the Civil Rights Era, the focus of ABC and of many Independent schools was on bringing Black American students into these historically white institutions. Speede-Franklin reported that in 1967, all of the 3,720 students of color in Independent schools were Black (1988: 25). Participants in my study echoed ABC's original emphasis. An NAIS employee explained, "…The movement, if you will, which coincided with Deseg- and Civil Rights and stuff, um, I would say would be one in which there was another aspect of Diversity happening, but it wasn't labeled such…So yes, I would say it was race-based. I would say, I would say race because it was African American first" (NAIS Representative). Somewhere along the line, though, that focus on Black Americans changed. While some racial groups are now more represented in Independent schools than they once were, Black Americans remain severely underrepresented.

Issues with the NAIS Data

Data reported from the NAIS on the racial composition of students at member schools is available from the 2001-2002 school year through the 2011-2012 school year on the NAIS website. This national data, though, as well as data from New England, New Jersey, and New York were not as easy to interpret as I might have hoped. In one section, the NAIS offered the "Enrollment of Students of Color as a % Total Enrollment" for "Students of Color" and then for each racial group. The first issue encountered was that the NAIS includes in its definition of "Students of Color" Middle Eastern students. The US defines those of Middle Eastern descent as "white". The second issue is that "race" and "ethnicity" are conflated in the term "students of color". Again, according to the US Census, the "Hispanic/Latino" designation represents an ethnic, not a racial group. In these data, a white Hispanic student and a Black Hispanic student are both deemed to be "students of color". The third issue, even more problematic than the first two issues, is that the percentages of students of color reported by the NAIS do not accurately reflect the raw numbers of students of color that the NAIS reported. For example, in the 2011-2012 school year, the NAIS reported that 26.5% of the student bodies at day, member schools were students of color. That same year, the NAIS also reported that of 473,493 students enrolled in day, member schools, 118,786 were students of color[4]. Because 118,786 is only 25.1% of 473,493, the 26.5% figure appears inflated. In all of the data reported nationally, as well as from the specific region of New England and the states of New Jersey and New York, not one year of data had the reported percentage of Students of Color that matched the calculated percentage of students of color taken from the raw data. In fact, in all but one year of the New Jersey data, the reported percentage of students of color was higher than the calculated

[4] These enrollment figures were self reported to the NAIS by the participating schools.

percentage. On average, the reported percentage of students of color was 2.1% higher than the calculated percentage of students of color. The biggest margin between reported and calculated percentage of students of color was 5.0%. After placing an inquiry to the NAIS data center, I heard back from a representative asking me to clarify my question to them, but I never received an answer explaining the discrepancy. In the following section, I report the percentages given and not those calculated from the raw data. This decision is a result of not having raw data by specific racial or ethnic category. The fact that this data is confusing, at best, is both problematic and telling. The NAIS is not forthcoming with information, particularly, it would seem, about accurate numbers of "students of color" in NAIS schools.

What the Data Show

Despite these issues, the data from the last decade is illuminating. Nationally, the percent of students of color in member day schools has increased from 19.1% in the 2001-2002 school year to 26.5% in the 2011-2012 school year (NAIS 2012b). Asian students had the most representation within the student of color population every single year with a high of 8.3% in the 2011-2012 school year. Multiracial students made the most notable advances in their numbers increasing from 2.7% in the 2001-2002 school year to 6.4% in the 2011-2012 school year: an increase of 137.0% over the past decade (NAIS 2012b).

While the national data is both fascinating and telling, this project has focused on the northeast: the home of the oldest, most established, and arguably the most highly regarded Independent schools. The reported statistics from New England, New Jersey, and New York, therefore, are most relevant to this project. In all three regions, the percentage of students of color showed marked increases. In the 2001-2002 school year, students of color made up 13.4%,

20.5%, and 19.5% of the student populations in New England, New Jersey, and New York (State), respectively. In the 2011-2012 school year, students of color made up 20.4%, 28.9%, and 28.2% of the respective regions. Delving deeper into the numbers reveals more specific trends as to the student of color population[5] (NAIS 2012a; NAIS 2012c; NAIS 2012d).

Figure 1: Percent Change of Racial/Ethnic Groups from '01-02-'11-'12

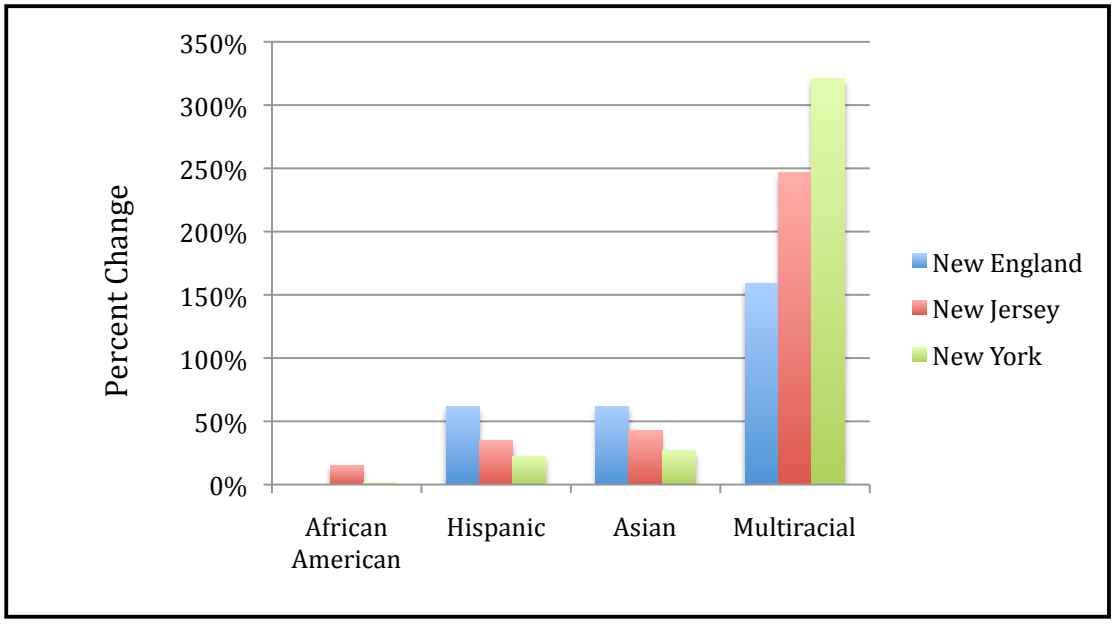


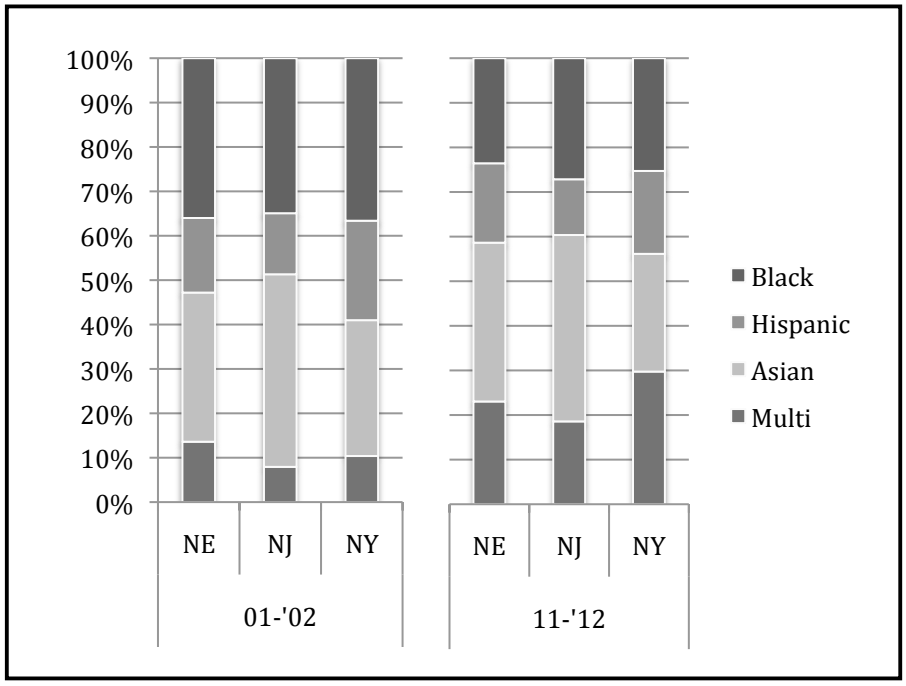
Figure 1 shows the percentage change of racial or ethnic groups in each of the northeastern regions from the 2001-2002 school year to the 2011-2012 school year. The data is clear: in all regions of the northeast, there is a marked increase of Hispanic and Asian representation, while the representation of multiracial students increased phenomenally in the past decade. The group that showed little or no movement in their representation was African American students. In fact, in New England their numbers were stagnant: in both the 2001-2002

[5] Data on Native American, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Islander students will not be reported due to the very low representation of these racial groups in the data.

and 2011-2012 school years, African American students were 4.5% of the total student body (NAIS 2012a).

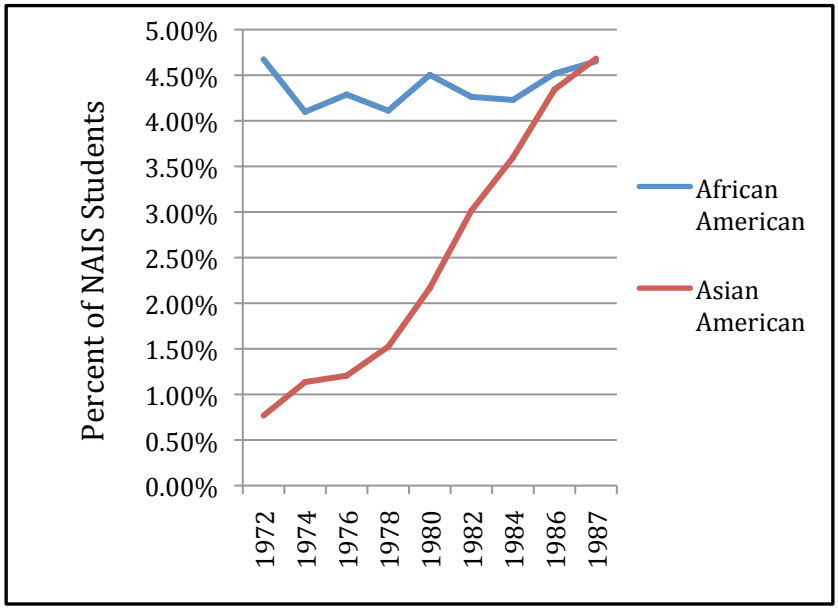
Another way to look at the representation of African American students is as a percentage of the total student of color population. In the 2001-2002 school year, African Americans represented 33.6%, 32.3%, and 34.4% of the student of color populations in New England, New Jersey, and New York, respectively. However, in the 2011-2012 school year, those percentages had dropped to 22.1%, 26.3%, and 24.1% of the student of color populations. Figure 2 offers a picture of this decrease. As an emphasis on "students of color" has increased, the representation of "Black" or "African American" students within that group has decreased.

Figure 2: Racial/Ethnic Make up of "Students of Color": '01-'02 and '11-'12



An article by Wanda Speede-Franklin in 1988 already indicated the beginning of the trend of the stagnant representation of Black students and the decline of Black students as representatives of the student of color (then, "minority") group within Independent schools. In 1967, a few short years after the establishment of the ABC program, Blacks were the only "minority" students represented in NAIS schools. In 1972, Black students were 4.67% of the national enrollment of NAIS schools and 74.19% of "minority" students. By 1987, Black students were 4.65% of NAIS students and 41.54% of "minority" students. Figure 3, below, shows the relative flat-line representation of Black students during this time period and the simultaneous rise of Asian American representation.

Figure 3: African American and Asian American Students in Independent Schools: 1972-1987



The trends noted above are a consistent with the numerical evidence of students of color, and specifically Black enrollment in Independent schools following racial desegregation. In short,

with the onset of racial desegregation policies, the growth of non-Black groups of color in Independent schools far out-paced that of Black growth. During the 1970s and 1980s, it was the Asian American population that had the most dramatic increase proportional representation. This past decade proved the time for the Multiracial population to skyrocket. Black Americans, having taken on the lion's share of the push for the decline of racist policies and racial animus in America paved the way for other racial and ethnic groups to follow and reap the benefits. Their efforts, however, have been ill-rewarded as they have been and continue to be left behind while other groups of color continue to increase their numbers.

What the numerical data show, the data collected from respondents confirms. Black students are not well represented within the student of color populations at schools. Given the numerical trends across the country and in the northeast, we can project that the number of African American students in Independent schools will continue to drop compared to other racial or ethnic groups of students of color.

The following excerpts directly address the issue of a low and decreasing percentage of Black American students in Independent schools. An NAIS employee gave evidence to the national trends of racial representation in Independent schools: "As the school-age population of African Americans increases, the number in our schools decreases or flat lines. At the same time, the number of Asian Americans increases" (NAIS Representative). An administrator from one school took out a graph to show me during our interview. She said that the percentage of Black students was "static" (Admissions Director). Taking a closer look at the graph, which tracked the percentage of students by racial category from the 2000-2001 to the 2011-2012 school year, it was clear that she was absolutely right. Black students represented three percent of the students in that school each of the eleven years shown on the graph. In contrast, the

percentage of Biracial or Multiracial students was 6.0% in the 2011-2012 school year. In the state of Connecticut, where this school resides, the 2010 Census reported that 10.1% of residents identified as "Black or African American" and only 2.6% of residents identified as "Two or More Races" (U.S. Census 2010). This school certainly did not have a representative sample of racial groups.

Other schools, while not directly speaking to the percentage or number of Black students, still gave an impression that students from other racial groups surpassed the number of Black students. Both of the schools represented below are located in New York City. The 2010 Census reported the following percentages of residents by racial group in New York City: 25.5% "Black Persons", 12.7% "Asian Persons", and 4.0% "Persons reporting Two or More Races" (U.S. Census 2010). As noted below, in both schools, the percentage of Black students was less than the percentage of Multiracial students, although Black residents outnumber Multiracial residents of New York City more than six to one.

> [The school has] about 35% students of color, but we also define that as biracial, we have a huge...Biracial is the biggest, followed I think by Black or African American, Asian and then Latino (Head of School).

> I can tell you the order [from highest to lowest percentage]: Asian, Multiracial, African American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, ah…Native American (Admissions Director).

Ethnic Diversity of the Black Population

An important, yet often over-looked factor in Black attendance of Independent schools is ethnicity. There is great Diversity among the Black American population, and yet not one interviewee spoke to this important aspect of Blackness in America. On the college level, researchers have found that the "Black" population of the student body, while increasing over time, does not include many students who have African American roots. Rather, the "Black"

population is often comprised of students with Caribbean heritage or African nationalities. For example, Black immigrants enroll at selective colleges and universities at significantly higher rates than African Americans (Bennet and Lutz 2009).

The same question should be asked at the elementary and secondary school levels. Is the Black population at elite, Independent, predominantly white schools African American? Data from the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS) was helpful in beginning to answer this question. The ACS does not distinguish among the different types of "private" schools in its survey, but offers interesting findings in comparing "private" to "public" school attendees. Table 1 shows that in the $250,000-$499,999 income category, more than half of Caribbean American students attend private schools, but only about one-fifth of African American students in the same income category attend private schools.

Table 1: African and Caribbean American Students Attending Private Schools 2011

Ethnicity	$250,000-$499,999 Household Income
Percent attending private schools (African American)	20.1%
Percent attending private schools (Caribbean American)	55.2%

Further investigation into the ethnicity of Black students in Independent schools is outside of the scope of this study because very little data is available on this topic at this level of schooling and because informants were not at the level of awareness necessary to even raise this topic as one worthy of discussion. The basic findings from the ACS, though, are astounding. There is no

doubt that Caribbean Americans are over-represented within the Black population of Independent schools.

Black Americans and Students of Color

Respondents also spoke concurrently about the relatively few numbers of Black Americans and the higher numbers of Asian Americans enrolled at Independent schools. One Diversity Consultant reported about one school with whom she is working,

> …most of their students are Asian and East Indian. Um, there's a few Latino kids and there's even less African American kids. I think for the Asian population--highly empowered and feeling a part of the culture of the school. I think particularly the African American kids—that number—that's something I'm working with the school on. Yes, you have critical mass of students of color, but your Black students are still pretty isolated (Diversity Consultant).

This respondent made clear that there is a real difference between having "students of color" and having Black students at a school. This Diversity Coordinator went on to talk about the overall trends that she sees in schools across the northeast region:

> Ah, it's one of those things that, you know, Independent schools have not been totally pure and virtuous in this effort, at least some of them…Um, but people have discovered that 'easy Diversity', I used to call it, of students is to, particularly boarding schools—is to recruit in Asia. And so you will go to schools that have big South Korean populations, that's usually the biggest is the South Korean. And, um, some schools have connections with Hong Kong. Um…and those kids identify as international (Diversity Consultant).

Again, she made the point that not all students that identify, or that the schools identify, as "students of color" have an experience similar to or even comparable to Black American students. "Easy Diversity" is easy for schools because international students tend to be "full-

pay" Asian students who are not burdened with the same national history, stereotyping, and racism directed at native Black Americans.

The Diversity Consultant quoted above pointed out that recruiting an international population is easiest for boarding schools, but day schools in this study exhibited the same phenomenon. One Diversity Coordinator of a day school in this project, who beamed when reporting a 42% student of color make-up within the student body, explained the following: "our Asian population, our Korean population is huge. It's the largest piece of who we are, uh, in terms of …no, that's not true. Caucasian is the largest, but then of the students of color, our Korean population, both…American born and Korean born is just huge" (Diversity Coordinator). But again, Asian students, particularly those born outside of the US, "identify as international" and are identified by other students as "international". At the end of the interview with the Diversity Coordinator above who spoke of the 42% student of color population, the President of the Student Diversity club: a Latina, joined the conversation. She wasn't aware of the "42%", and she displayed some emotion akin to shock when she heard that number. She and the Diversity Coordinator had the following interchange:

> Student: But you can't really feel it…
> Diversity Coordinator: Upper school feels less. You have to remember the Korean population which is quite large.
> Student: Oh, you mean like international kids?

The vast majority of schools in this project reported large and increasing numbers of Asian and Multiracial students while at the same time reported relatively low and decreasing numbers of Black students.

There is an increasingly prominent trend among the student of color populations in predominantly White schools: many of the students of color do not come from families of

color—that is: there are a significant number of children of color who are adopted into White families and subsequently enrolled in predominantly White schools. The complexity of identity issues surrounding transracial adoption is outside the scope of this study, but it is noteworthy that by enrolling students of color with White parents, schools can change the image of the school without changing the social make-up of the school. There is a "growing 'demand'" from White, wealthy couples for babies to adopt (Raleigh 2012, Goodwin 2010, Jennings 2006). And adopting a child is expensive, upwards of $10,000 (Vandivere et al 2009). To an extent then, being a parent of an adopted child is a signal of a certain level of socioeconomic status, and the growing number of wealthy couples who are seeking to adopt suggests that there is a growing number of wealthy parents who are seeking to place their adopted children in Independent schools. But to what extent will enrolling this child from this family challenge the existing institution and its exclusive foundations?

Faculty of Color

On any campus, the number of faculty members of color tells me more about the level of commitment and progress of a school toward racial equity than the number of students of color. To bring in students of color, which is related to the original goal to bring in Black students, is the central pillar of Diversity work to this day. However, commitment to bringing in faculty of color has been slower to develop. Faculty are incredibly influential over the education of the enrolled students and with more faculty of color, the institution itself becomes less White-identified.

In examining the difficulty that schools encounter recruiting and retaining faculty of color, interviewees had several reasons for the relatively low numbers of faculty of color—

particularly Black faculty—in Independent schools today. Those schools in this study that appear to be in earlier stages of development in Diversity work were not focused on bringing in faculty of color—or, at the very least, no one interviewed from these schools brought up faculty of color recruitment as being important.

The narrative of relatively few faculty of color on Independent school campuses was told frequently. Some people interviewed offered straightforward facts; the first excerpt below speaks to the national data, and the second excerpt highlights one school's demographic data as an example.

> Um, you know, the people of, the students of color in Independent schools is almost 24% now, and that's gone up steadily since I've been here, now in my 11th year. We cannot say the same for adults of color, it's only gone up, like, maybe three percent in 11 years, and the largest percentage of those individuals are those that are in the "other" category which would be like the custodians and the cafeteria workers (NAIS Representative).

> One school I'm working with right now has 32 percent students of color, ah…and only eight percent faculty of color (Diversity Consultant).

The data collected by the NAIS supports these above-quoted respondents. Nationally, in the 2011-2012 school year, there were 26.5% students of color in day schools and only 14.2% faculty of color in day schools (NAIS 2012b). In New England, the margin between students and faculty of color was also pronounced: 20.4% students of color and 9.3% faculty of color in the 2011-2012 school year (NAIS 2012a). New Jersey and New York schools had comparable numbers with 28.9% and 28.2% students of color, respectively and 9.2% and 16.6% faculty of color, respectively (NAIS 2012c; NAIS 2012d).

Schools that are awakened to the need for more faculty of color justified their actions by citing numbers, and the numbers speak for themselves. "We had one faculty member of color eight years ago. One. We have ten now. Out of 100 plus, still a low percentage, but it's made a

real difference" (Head of School). Several people interviewed spoke specifically to the lack of Black faculty members. Although the NAIS does not report percentages of faculty of color by race, data collected from respondents suggest that schools' experiences with faculty of color mirror their experiences with students of color: the numbers of Black teachers are lagging behind other teachers of color.

> For example, one school I'm working with, although it has Asian and Latino faculty, there's no Black faculty. And I'm saying if you're going to be…you need to have African American role models for all your kids (Diversity Consultant).
>
> Prior to me coming here, [this school] had not hired an African American male in the upper school –an African American period in the Upper School in its 80-some odd year history. I was the first, right (Director of Diversity).
>
> Because the race thing to me, I was still like the only Black teacher here, um Black female teacher and the other Black teacher, male, was in the Middle School (Director of Diversity).

The school where the above-quoted Black staff member worked had just hired a Black faculty member in the Upper School: the second Black faculty member. However, the first Black faculty member was leaving at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. With such low overall numbers of faculty of color, and of Black faculty, in particular, recruitment and retention are real concerns for schools.

Recruitment

Schools in this study that instigated a dialogue with me about recruiting faculty of color generally took one of two approaches to their recruitment. Some school personnel talked about making sure that there were candidates of color in as many job searches as possible; this approach speaks to the 'opportunity' mentality: creating the appearance of a more level playing field. Other school personnel spoke about making direct networking connections with people of

color who were already a part of the Independent school system, and then when jobs opened up, schools would reach out to specific individuals. To generalize, the two approaches seemed to be defined by (1) hiring for the job opening and (2) hiring for the right person. In both approaches, schools prioritized having excellent, 'qualified' candidates. In the first circumstance, the job opening came first while candidate recruitment followed. In the second circumstance, a relationship was fostered with the potential candidate first, and the job opening was secondary.

The examples below were selected from many instances of faculty hiring because each is representative of a different approach outlined above, and yet there are similarities between the examples, as well. For the reader's information, Carney Sandoe is a long-standing, highly regarded recruiting and placement agency for faculty candidates in Independent schools.

> We want to make sure our candidate pool is diverse enough so that we're increasing the chances of hiring people of color…Just have to keep working at it. Being more creative and more intentional in generating candidates of color. It is very easy to say, 'well they're not out there'. Well they're not out there if you just rely on Carney Sandoe. But they're, and it is hard I'm not going to say it's easy, at all. We struggle with it, Bonnie, mightily. But we've gotten better at, at increasing the Diversity of our applicant pool…in terms of faculty (Head of School).

> But I certainly have been very conscious about trying to hire a diverse faculty, and I want the best possible candidates out there. But since you can't always get the numbers just right in the very beginning, I thought it was going to be important to appoint some individuals in key positions. So [person's name] you know, I kind of recruited her back you know she's been gone two times and then came back. So she right now works in Admissions. That's not necessarily the position where she will be in, but it was almost like a holding position. You know [person's name] from New York City. You know he has some administrative experience. You know, for now, I had a math position, and that kind of worked there…Like most Independent schools, you know, I've worked with Carney Sandoe and other placement agencies, and my sense all the time is they try to capture everything, and I am not sure that they have a secure vision or theme as far as Diversity is concerned (Head of School).

While there are too many factors at play to determine if one approach to hiring faculty of color is

more effective than another, the fact that there were two, distinct approaches reported was interesting. As schools continue to work with issues of recruitment of faculty of color, perhaps time will reveal the differences between the approaches.

Several respondents spoke to the issues of hiring faculty of color—bringing faculty of color onto campus. It seems that many schools look for racial representation but avoid candidates who might question the status quo—at least those who question the status quo out loud. One administrator of color commented on the qualities that schools look for when they are hiring a person of color: "…and I look at Independent schools in general, in the Connecticut [area] particularly, who they hire, it has to be somebody who is not gonna push the envelope too much" (Diversity Coordinator).

Retention

Closely related to issues of recruitment are issues of retention of faculty of color. Academic scholarship on minority/majority relations in institutions—whether racial, gendered, socio-economic, religious, or other—speak to the discomfort of being a minority representative within a majority other population (Madsen and Mabokela 2000, Aguierre et al 1993, Cose 1993, Kanter 1977). With so few faculty of color at predominantly and historically White institutions, it makes sense that involved personnel analyze, whether officially or unofficially, the qualities of the individual and of the environment that contribute to faculty of color retention.

Aside from a few school administrators alluding to a "critical mass" of faculty of color, there was no real discussion from participants about what went into retaining faculty members of color on an institutional basis. Again paralleling the progress of attracting, enrolling, and retaining students of color, it is interesting that institutional representatives appeared to be in an

earlier phase of recruitment of faculty of color. Schools were concerned with attracting and contracting faculty of color. Institutional retention of such was simply not discussed. If the pattern mirrors that of students of color, schools will soon begin to address faculty of color retention through institutional practice and support. After collecting data directly from Independent schools and the NAIS, I both expected and yet was disappointed that schools have not seemed to learn from the long process of bringing in students of color. Why not immediately set up institutional support—in the form of mentorship, affinity groups, etc—for new faculty of color? Schools are repeating the mistakes they made years ago.

Off-campus events that bring faculty of color together, such as the annual People of Color Conference sponsored by the NAIS, offer opportunities for faculty of color to convene and offer each other much needed professional and emotional support. However, not all schools choose to send Faculty of color to such events, and for those schools that do, it involves financial support for conference fees, travel, and accommodation, as well as professional support in allowing faculty members to miss days at school in order to participate. As the number of faculty members of color continues to grow, it will be increasingly difficult, financially and logistically, for schools to send every faculty member who wishes to attend, unless those schools demonstrate superior commitment.

Several people of color who participated in this project spoke about the individual qualities that a potential faculty member of color would need in order to be successful, long-standing members of the Independent school system. In the first excerpt below, a Head of School balances his discussion between two seemingly opposing thoughts: the institution is responsible for the retention of its teachers; the individual is responsible for their own success or failure within an institution.

> And ah…what I've seen sometimes is you know, I look at individuals of color who either succeed or don't succeed, and certainly often times, it's the institution's fault. I'm not trying to take that away. But I'm always very fascinated about: who are the folks who can navigate all this stuff? And somehow, you know, somehow it works. And you know, it's not really fair that that's sometimes what it takes to become successful in these types of school…I think it's a, it's a highly developed sense of ah…of emotional intelligence, of just a sensitivity and sensibility as to how do you navigate all of this (Head of School).

It may be the institution's "fault" if faculty of color leave, but it is to the detriment of the faculty member who lost his or her job, not necessarily to the institution. In fact, the more faculty of color who cannot "succeed" in Independent schools only serves to confirm the prejudices held by those who fear that actively seeking to hire faculty of color will "reduce quality" (Head of School). Outcome, not blame, is the issue for job seekers, and if it takes a certain "emotional intelligence" to remain a faculty member as a person of color at a predominantly White, Independent school then those who want or need the job will do their best to adapt to the expectations of the institution. One former Diversity coordinator put it succinctly: "For me to stay there, I had to drink the kool-aid" (Former Diversity Coordinator).

In order to maintain the sense of self that was established before entering the predominantly White world of Independent schools, faculty of color create parallel worlds: one to support their professional needs and one to support their personal needs. One Black male respondent explained, "I live in [a predominantly White suburb] but I drive to the city every weekend for church. I have to have a duality, you kidding me? I work here and I live here, but I have to play someplace else" (Diversity Coordinator). DuBois' double-consciousness for Black folks is alive and well. Black faculty at Independent schools have to be aware of their own perceptions of themselves as well as of the Whites'—the majority's—perception of them in

order to "succeed" as a teacher. To a certain extent, the idea of a double-consciousness could extend to the greater population of faculty of color, however, given the unique scrutiny under which Black faculty members are placed, I believe that the DuBoisian experience of double-consciousness, which was originally conceived around the Black American experience, is still particular to the Black American experience.

Not only must Black faculty members have that "emotional intelligence" to understand how Whites with power perceive them (and consciously or unconsciously expect them to adapt to their predominantly White surroundings), Black faculty members must also be aware of their personal presentation and adapt to the existing culture of the institution. The respondent quoted below, a Black woman, spoke directly to her and others' need to "code switch" in order to maintain her position at a predominantly White, Independent school.

> …The people who persist here, people of color that persist here, are the ones that are really good at code switching and want to. And have that experience doing it, because I've seen the people of color who come through, and they're like…you're like, you ain't gonna last very long. I mean you're a beautiful person and everything, but this isn't the place to be (Admissions Officer).

For those reflective people who understand what it takes for a person of color to survive at an Independent school, it is easy to spot those who will not. My head still rings with the many, many, many examples of individuals who did not survive at their Independent school because they were "not the right fit", "too argumentative", or "too negative". When schools individualize the explanations of why certain people of color do not get offered a contract for the next school year (Independent school speak for getting fired), it is all too easy to avoid the glaring trend that

faculty of color have very high attrition rates.[6]

This evidence suggests that although schools are beginning to invite in faculty of color, there is a widespread expectation, tacit or explicit, that people of color must adapt to fit the school; they must know the language and the values—the culture—of a predominantly White, Independent school and be able to project that culture in order to be a successful teacher. The importance of being able to adopt, or at least appear to adopt, and project the culture of predominantly White, Independent schools cannot be understated as teachers of color are reported to be more closely monitored and more often questioned by parents (Madsen and Mabokela 2000, Cose 1993). The power of parents is not to be underestimated, "…with a teacher. You get a few parents like 'hmmm' then it's like—that's all it takes" (Faculty Member).

The Diversity Coordinator

Within predominantly white, Independent schools, there is one position that a person of color is expected to hold: the Diversity Coordinator. Putting a person of color in charge of "Diversity" is understood as a visual representation of a school's commitment to Diversity work. In my sample, I spoke with eight participants who were or had been a Diversity Coordinator. All eight individuals identified as "Black": four men and four women. One respondent reflected on her appointment to the Diversity Coordinator role:

> It was very comfortable to have the Black woman in charge of student Diversity, 'cause then you could have the face on the website or you could, when you do your open houses, when you're talking to the families about how great you are, you can say—well of course, look, she's over there. See all the great things she's doing (Diversity Coordinator).

[6]Along with evidence from respondents, it is apparent from the many instructional articles produced by the NAIS and its regional affiliates specifically addressing retention strategies for faculty of color that retention of faculty of color is difficult.

Data show that there was a wave of Diversity Coordinator roles established in schools beginning in the early 1990s. As more schools jumped on the Diversity bandwagon, there were more Diversity Coordinators hired. By 2010, it was commonplace for an Independent school to have a person whose job, at least in part, was dedicated to Diversity work. Different schools have assigned different titles to this role—"Director of Multicultural Affairs", "Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competency Advisor", or "Director of Diversity". The scope of the role differs slightly from school to school, but the overarching substance of the role is virtually identical. A particular school's choice of label or "title" is noteworthy, but for the sake of clarity, I will refer to all of these similar roles as the "Diversity Coordinator".

First, it must be noted that having a Diversity Coordinator is by no means universal. There is a debate within schools and among the Independent school community about the upside and downside of naming one person to lead Diversity efforts. One Head of School explained,

> Head of School: And there are lots of discussions about should you have a director of Diversity versus a director of…. and…
> Bonnie: Versus what?
> Head of School: Versus not having that title, right? Versus having lots of people administratively responsible for the work or making it kind of diffuse, saying, 'we're not going to appoint someone, 'cause that suggests he or she is responsible for it and the rest of us are absolved of responsibility'—really worried about that.

Heads of School, Administrators, and the Boards of Trustees have come to varying decisions for their particular school about the particular staffing for Diversity efforts. A number of schools decided to intentionally not name a Diversity Director. One Head of School was blunt in his point of view: "I don't believe in the kind of one-person Diversity practitioner, and we actually have folks who collaborate, you know, across race, gender, ethnicity". Another respondent, a Director of Admissions, explained her school's reasoning for choosing to not name a Diversity

Coordinator, "if you choose one person to head the Diversity program, there are groups that get better attention than others".

Some respondents, interestingly those who have exhibited a lifetime commitment to exposing inequality in schools, were very critical of those schools that chose not to have a Diversity Coordinator. In the excerpt below, a seasoned Diversity Consultant uses a tangible comparison to the development of Technology efforts at Independent schools to get her point across:

> I've always used a metaphor of Technology and Diversity. Ah, Technology and Diversity, serious…mainstream efforts in Independent schools at the same time in the 1980s…We didn't have language for either in our schools, and ah, it's interesting to watch kind of the parallel of how it all developed because the schools were so much more easily—it was so much more cerebral to learn the language of Technology, to create positions for it, to fund it, to ah, you know. There's no question that there's gonna be a full-time Technology Director at our schools, and usually two, three, four people, you know. There'll be the Director, there'll be the Systems Manager, there'll be the web person and you know. And you'll have a whole staff. And staffing this whole effort is never questioned. And there is sometimes, I hear it, I still hear it at schools, a mantra of, 'well, we didn't hire a Diversity director because we want everybody to do the work.' You hear that…but we want everybody to do, to be technologically functional and literate, we want everybody to use technology, to use it in their teaching, to use it in their institutional communications, and we provide you with all, we provide schools-faculty with all these resources. And….and it's much more expensive, when you think of the hardware, the software and everything than Diversity and inclusion professionals. Yet we expect that to happen on the margins. We expect it to just happen (Diversity Consultant).

This excerpt not only questions the decision not to have a Diversity Coordinator, but it also challenges the prevalent reasoning behind this decision. When schools really want to develop fluency and skill in a new area, they put financial and staffing resources in place to support the development of the entire faculty and staff. So why, when it comes to Diversity, do some schools opt out of this institutional support?

The next excerpt below voices the concerns from another critic of schools' lack of skilled Diversity staffing:

> But if we say, 'we'll all do it', you will never do it. You will never ever do it…You've got to have someone whose job it is continually push it, push it, push it. And unless it's the Head, it has to be a position in the school, and you can, you and I will cry every time we walk into the school and they talk about, 'well we have a Diversity Coordinator in the lower school and a half-time art teacher who does Diversity…' (Head of School).

This above-quoted Head of School brings up an important point. Yes, there are schools that have no named Diversity Coordinator. There are also a great number of schools that have someone who carries the Diversity Coordinator title as only part of their job. That was the case in many of the schools sampled in this project.

> Well, it's sort of like ah 75% admissions which really means 100% admissions, um and 25% [Diversity]... (Admissions Officer and Diversity Coordinator).

> [Faculty member's] new role, he's not exclusively in charge of, um, Multicultural Affairs, though that's in his title. He's also Dean of Upper School student life, so he's, he's sort of the disciplinarian for the Upper School (Head of School).

> …and it was part Diversity Coordinator, part Community Service, which is the way that these schools do it… (Diversity Coordinator)

> [A few years ago], I was the Assistant Director of Admissions and Director of Diversity…What happened was we had started to do so many new things and the [Diversity] program, I think, was growing ahead of us and the staffing. And at that point, I was working 24-7. (Admissions Director).

A teacher of color who had been actively involved in Diversity work at his previous school, though who does not currently hold such a role, commented on the multiple-role trend for Diversity Coordinators, "It's so much work. So you don't have anyone whose job it is to help challenge us on a regular basis in that way" (Faculty Member). Without exception, seasoned Diversity professionals who worked or had worked in the schools most clearly committed to

Diversity work agreed that a school needed at least one full-time Diversity Coordinator whose sole job responsibility was to lead the Diversity efforts.

Pushing further into the Diversity Coordinator role, the responsibilities associated with such a title are both immense and incredibly nebulous in their purview. The scope of work assigned to Diversity Coordinators, many of whom have other, significant roles to fulfill on campus, is so vast that I am led to question whether Diversity Coordinators are set up to fail from the beginning. At the very least, there is no way that a single person—even one who dedicates their entire job to Diversity—could address all elements of Diversity work in any meaningful way just as, to borrow from one interviewee, no one person could manage all of the technological efforts of a school. Below are several job descriptions of Diversity Coordinators. The length of the descriptions, alone, is evidence of the enormity of the job:

> So we created this position called the Director of Multicultural Affairs. Um, it's…it's kind of far-reaching in that I'm, I'm involved in as many areas of the school as I can get my hands into. Um, that's kind of becoming the trend in Independent schools now, um, that there is a, I guess you would call it an officer or a person who is responsible for looking across the board in the school, the…um…the way issues of Diversity or equity and justice are, are handled and um, programs that are created and policies that are created and how they're carried out. Um, whether it be your admissions and how you're looking at the composition of your school to the accommodations you make or provide for people as they come in to the hiring of faculty and the retention of faculty to the curriculum of what's in, what's being taught in the classrooms and is there representative work from the body that makes up your community. Um, what's the presence of your school in your community? What kind of programming are you doing? (Diversity Coordinator).

> It's everything from helping to interviewing candidates and ensuring that, you know, we're, you know, we don't say for every job opening we're gonna have three candidates, three finalists and one must be a person of color, but she's sort of the watch dog for those things…The Diversity coordinator works with the affinity groups, the parent ones and the, the kid ones. She helps to manage that curricular, the curriculum, she is a curricular resource for teachers, for parents. We've been trying to work on leading up to our faculty retreat in February, trying to work on racial identity formation, so she's been putting together a time line and articles for faculty to, to…work on with that… (Head of School).

> It's really, um, working on several levels on equity, inclusion, multicultural, um, all social identifiers making sure the curricularly that, um, there is mirror time for everyone who's involved in our community, but then, um, I also, um, working with all constituencies on issues of multicultural affairs. So that would be whether it's the presenting it on a board level like I did last week, um, I'm speaking with the Administrative Council on issues around equity, um, multiculturalism, the Academic Council making sure that curricularly we're, um, that we are looking at, um, our curriculum through different lenses, that others can see mirror time in themselves on the faculty level. Making sure the faculty, that I'm a resource to faculty when it comes to underrepresented children in the school, um, dealing with micro-triggers and micro-inequities for teachers with parents, right, which parlays into, um, being a resource for parents on how to, um, navigate the halls of privilege when they otherwise wouldn't know how to. Um, dealing with parents on issues of equity and on comfortability, um, dealing with the [Parent's Association] and making sure that, you know, they're representing those were not part of the homogeneous population. Um, and then of course there's dealing with the students who, um, for those who are part of the majority culture and the minority culture are marginalized and centered making sure that they look in at, um, their education experience through different lenses, um, making sure that they understand people different than themselves, but then also helping people to help others who might, um, um, um, feel as comfortable" (Diversity Coordinator and Administrator).

Phew. The last respondent quoted above also teaches an African American History class; it's understandable that he forgot that part. A typical Independent school job description may be open-ended, but there are precedents within these schools for the traditional teaching, staffing, and administrative roles. Clarity of responsibility and purpose are necessary for success. But clarity is precisely what is lacking from the role of the Diversity Coordinator. All of the expectations heaped onto one individual who may only have part of his or her time at school to dedicate to Diversity issues translates into two predictable outcomes: a feeling of unpreparedness and a feeling of burnout.

> But in terms of the work and where it is, and so that's where I get like, OK. I'm a little overwhelmed with, like, where do you start? (Diversity Coordinator).

> …I wasn't experienced, and I wasn't as credentialed as I should have been (Diversity Coordinator).

> On the one hand, you can never, you can be prepared but not be prepared, 'cause like I said before, the personal toll it takes, 'cause at times you feel like the Diversity police (Former Diversity Coordinator).
>
> Right, so, um, I juggle all of that in my role as Director of Multicultural Affairs and, um, sometimes it can be challenging, um, in terms of, you know, I feel like I need to be in seven places at one time (Diversity Coordinator).
>
> Don't think that I think this is all peaches and cream. I mean, I get frustrated, I get tired, yeah. I was thinking, how long can I do this? You know the average tenure for a Diversity practitioner in Independent schools is five years, five years. You know, I'm going on year nine. I'm eight and a half years in. And, um, so, I don't know how much longer I have. We'll see (Diversity Coordinator).

Schools ask a lot of their Diversity Coordinators. Considering that these institutions with their many, varied constituencies are evidencing resistance to much of the Diversity work, the job of the Diversity Coordinator is understandably daunting. The challenges encountered by Diversity Coordinators are vast. One Head of School said, "When somebody has a principal role in leading Diversity and multicultural efforts at a school there are great challenges and there always are a lot of people who don't really know what you are doing-- and therefore question it, right?" (Head of School). The institutional challenges that Diversity Coordinators face when trying to advance Diversity work is largely intertwined with addressing the "questioning" of other school constituents. Seasoned practitioners know that they must be accepted as a member of the institution before they can initiate effective change—especially if they are the only ones actively working toward this kind of change. Successful new initiatives of any kind are best received from "within" as opposed to from a new figure on campus that feels to the rest of the community like an outsider threatening the existing culture of an institution. When asked about moving from a job that included mostly admission with some Diversity responsibilities to one that dealt solely with Diversity, one respondent expressed her opinion on a potential move: "I'm praying

that it's not yet. Because this was my in to get in. It was like, I need to get in, you know. How do you get in? You can't, there was no position, you can't be like, 'boom, I just hired'-- you could, but knowing the culture of this school it wouldn't fly" (Admissions Officer). She later concluded, "And so, I think, I think I need to, I think I need to get more time under my belt, and I think I need to expand my Diversity role to be able to push back more on the institution" (Admissions Officer). In this case, affecting change within the institution required that this would-be change agent ingratiate herself to the community through other avenues before fully diving in to Diversity work.

Another relatively new Diversity Coordinator explained that as he approached Diversity work, he chose to go through the path of least resistance and gain entrance and acceptance through working with the oldest students.

> [The Head of School] wants me to be over all three divisions, but I wind up spending a lot of my time in the Upper School...But the kids can also handle it. We can have much different conversations, we don't have to walk on the egg shells that...trying to find the right language and do it with parent permission, and all the things you have to do in the lower school" (Diversity Coordinator).

While the former excerpt spoke to the difficulty introducing Diversity work to institutional figures, such as faculty, staff, and administration, the latter excerpt spoke about introducing this work with the parent community in mind. A Diversity practitioner has to consider each and every constituency associated with the school community in attempting to introduce Diversity work as each are a potential ally or hindrance.

Another consideration for Diversity Coordinators is the breadth of topics and issues that now fall under the umbrella of "Diversity". When this work first began in Independent schools, "Diversity" was a euphemism for race. Quickly after race came socio-economic status. Over the years, religion and sexual orientation followed, to name but a few of the most pervasive forms of

"Diversity" that schools seek to address. With the ever-expanding meaning of "Diversity" comes an ever-expanding job description for the person charged with heading the cause—or causes. Can one person accomplish all of this? Can one person be expected to have the knowledge base to address issues ranging from Islam to poverty to Transgendered individuals to learning differences?

> Diversity Coordinator: I feel like a disingenuous Diversity practitioner by saying 'race and ethnicity'. I mean race and class are the top dogs. Because that's straight privilege right there…I know, and it pains me, because I feel like a disingenuous ally in that I don't…I'm not fighting that fight ongoingly [sic] as an ally.
>
> Bonnie: How can you be expected as one person to fight every fight?
>
> Diversity Coordinator: I don't know. But my fear is that the people who feel like their voice isn't being heard because we're constantly saying 'race' and 'class', they're feeling the same pain that the group they're saying we need to champion is feeling and are feeling like the system is just—being a human is just fraught with who gets there first. Who has the most people? It's who is the most visible.

This verbal exploration by the respondent brings into focus several intersecting issues that come with being a Diversity Coordinator. There simply isn't enough time in the day to address everything that Diversity Coordinators are being asked to address. And worse, because the Diversity Coordinator cannot "do it all" they are open to criticism with regard to areas of Diversity that do not address. Indeed, by serving as the visual representation of Diversity work, the Coordinator can be accused of having self-serving motives by focusing on one topic and not another, especially if that topic is race and the person in charge is a person of color.

Are schools setting Diversity Coordinators up for failure? The job is enormous and often only a portion of the Coordinator's school responsibilities. The Coordinator faces challenges, questions, and resistance from virtually all constituencies of the school including faculty, staff, administration, students, parents, alumnae, the Board, and more. And if a person of color is

hired to be the Diversity Coordinator—one of the few jobs, or perhaps the only job, within the NAIS where a significant number of people hired are people of color—then they are accused of being self-serving by doing their job.

Furthermore, respondents spoke to the relative lack of power that that the Diversity Coordinator position holds in many schools. Diversity becomes an overwhelming job with an underwhelming budget: "…and I think for a lot of people that have done this job before me, part of what they've run into is one, they were very young themselves, they were not given any budget, had no sense of power in their school" (Diversity Coordinator). With so much to accomplish and no real structure through which to accomplish it, Diversity Coordinators, by and large, cannot be expected to demonstrate great strides in Diversity work on campuses that impose these insurmountable hurdles over which Coordinators must jump. Another respondent explained,

> …basically a Diversity practitioner often has the same kind of interactions, maybe with the exception of development, as the Head of School does. I mean, you're with parents, you're with kids, you're with colleagues, what have you. The problem is the Diversity role often times is—you have no real budget and no resources, there is no real reporting structure. So you do all this important work but you do it in a vacuum. And then sometimes you might be appointed to the leadership team except, you know, it's always unclear what your role is (Former Diversity Coordinator).

The above excerpt speaks to issues already brought up—those of the vastness of the job and the lack of clarity associated with the responsibilities and location within the school hierarchical structure. The interviewee further underlines the limited power and resources that Diversity coordinators are afforded to accomplish the gargantuan tasks set before them.

More evidence of the difficult professional position of the Diversity Coordinator comes from the lack of institutional movement that Diversity Coordinators enjoy. An administrator in

any other position can expect upward movement through the ranks of the school over the course of his or her career, but not a Diversity Coordinator. One respondent made that clear,

> …one of the things that we talk about at Diversity conferences is that, if you get the title, "Diversity Coordinator", "Director of Diversity", "Director of Equity and Justice", whatever the hell we're calling it now…it's a dead end street. You're not gonna be promoted beyond and up the hierarchy because they're gonna see you as someone who's funneled out, like you're too specialized (Diversity Coordinator).

In a casual, personal catch-up with some White Administrators, I was told in hushed tones about "lack of effectiveness" of a certain Diversity Coordinator who happens to be part of my sample for this project. The Administrator, of course, did not know that. Not long before hearing the White Administrator's comments, I had listened to the vast and ever-expanding description of what this Diversity Coordinator was tasked with accomplishing. Now, I was being told that the Diversity Coordinator probably would not last too much longer at the school. Go figure. I am consistently stuck by the implication—from White educators, alums, and parents—that the Black Diversity Coordinators really do not know how to effectively manage "Diversity". The boldness of White criticism is flagrant.

It could easily be argued that a certain Diversity Coordinator is "too specialized", or perhaps unsuccessful in balancing his or her responsibilities, or perhaps seen as too argumentative because he or she seeks out conversations that make other people at the school feel uncomfortable. All of these potential labels of Diversity Coordinators would make them unlikely candidates for a promotion and likely candidates for dismissal. However, these generalized descriptions are the direct result of trying to do Diversity work at a campus that doesn't support the Diversity Coordinator whether through unrealistic job expectations, push-back from the community, a lack of positional power, a lack of funding, and usually, all of the

above. Perhaps what is most ironic (and frustrating) is that the job, itself, puts Diversity Coordinators on the chopping block.

All this being said, who lasts as Diversity Coordinators in these institutions? I think the answer is that usually, Diversity Coordinators do not last. As noted above, the average tenure of Diversity Coordinators is five years. That is hardly enough time to make any real and lasting strides toward change in these institutions, some of which have been around for longer than the U.S., itself.

Perhaps Diversity Coordinators at Independent schools serve the same documented purpose as the hypothetical "Black friend" for Bonilla-Silva's "color-blind racist". In a study on the emerging form of contemporary racism, Bonilla-Silva found that White interviewees prefaced racist statements with phrases such as "some of my best friends are Black", and this phrase served to absolve the interviewee of any "racist" label (Bonilla-Silva 2006). Having a person of color serve as a school's Diversity Coordinator while at the same time preventing substantive moves toward equity can serve the same purpose: we're not racist, we have a Black Diversity Coordinator.

Administrators of Color

While recruiting faculty of color is vital for the foundation of Diversity work, recruiting administrators of color is no less important. First of all, if schools genuinely want to make their institutions "diverse", schools will have to racially diversify their power structure. Black faculty who answer to a White administration, a White Board, and a White parent body is not a vision of equity. Within the power structure, among those who are hired (as opposed to the Trustee members who are each appointed, typically by the current Board of Trustees) Administrators

have the power to change an institution. White administrators, well versed in Diversity can certainly promote anti-racist policy and action. However, no White person will ever fully understand the experience of a person of color in the US. Again, a true commitment to "Diversity" means that people of color will not simply act according to existing policy, they will contribute to creating new policy. Having people of color in the Administration is proof that the school is open to promoting people of color; given the evidence from the discussion on Diversity Coordinators, it can by no means be assumed that schools are, in fact, open to promoting people of color. There is also evidence to suggest that hiring people of color for upper-level administration positions helps to attract teaching candidates of color. At one school, two Black faculty members accepted positions at that school specifically because the Head of School who recruited them was a person of color.

At any given school, there are relatively few administrators, and yet this upper echelon of staff wields more power than faculty when it comes to the school as an institution: curriculum, scheduling, budgeting, hiring, and much more. During the 2001-2002 school year, administrators of color represented 6.6% of all administrators nationally (NAIS), 4.3% of administrators in New England (AISNE), 5.7% of administrators in New Jersey (NJ), and 13.9% of administrators in New York (NY). As of the 2011-2012 school year, the percentage of administrators of color had increased to 13.0% nationally (NAIS), 6.9% in New England (AISNE), 7.0% in New Jersey (NJ), and 14.5% in New York (NY). All areas showed an increase in the percentage of administrators of color. However, the percentage of administrators of color in all areas was below that of faculty of color, which, in turn was below that of students of color.

Perhaps the statistic that is most revealing in terms of the continuing image of Independent schools as institutions for the White and the wealthy is the shockingly small number of Heads of color at Independent schools. As of 2012, there were 58 Heads of color out of approximately 1,400 member schools (NAIS 2012b), or 4.1%. That means that nearly 96% of Independent schools are lead by White people.

I interviewed a Biracial man and a Black man, both Heads of School. Evidence as to the persistently low numbers of people of color in the position of Head of School was offered in these interviews as well as in interviews with people who had applied for Head of School positions. It seems that the search process for Heads of School, and other administrators, for that matter, emphasize having a "Diversity" candidate in the pool to represent non-bias, but hiring a "Diversity" candidate is obviously the minority (pun intended) experience. In this case, "Diversity" is represented by a person of color or by a White candidate who is outspoken about Diversity efforts.

> You know, I think people [of color] climb to a certain level within Independent schools, but because boards and search consulting firms and others are involved somehow at the last clip somehow it just doesn't quite um, work. And I think often time you've got people tied into the same network and you have the feeling a Head of School needs to look and feel like this, and if you come at it from a slightly different angle, then it doesn't quite work (Head of Color).

> They were satisfied to have me in this pool, because then they could say to the constituency, 'we got Diversity into the pool'. It is a weird, is a weird rendering of it. So, now I'm so identified with the Diversity –they don't want me because I'm too radical (White Head Candidate).

Clearly, getting in the door as a Head of color—whether outspoken about Diversity or not—or as an outspoken, White, pro-Diversity candidate is difficult. Success or failure as a candidate has a great deal to do with the existing culture of the target school. The Board of Trustees and the upper-level administration often comprise and/or select the representatives on the search

committee for a Head of School, and those two constituency groups are the most powerful, often the most White and the most entrenched members of the institution; they have the most riding on maintaining a positive image of the school. Many people of power in an institution would baulk at change if only because the possibility of change encompasses the possibility of their losing power and the prestige that accompanies power. One Head of color explained, "you have to think about who are the search teams and who makes, who makes the decisions ultimately". Another respondent made the same point, "Who's doing the hiring?" (Diversity Coordinator).

Institutional reaction to change or to the possibility of change is important to consider when examining the hiring of Heads of color because, for 96% of Independent schools, hiring a Head of color represents significant change in institutional history. For many of the 96%, their school has never hired a Head of color. But these elite institutions are "successful" already. The elite prep schools of New England enjoy strong academic reputations and proven track records of getting their graduates admitted to the most selective colleges and universities. It's working. So why would they invite change? In describing some senior administrators, one respondent said, "They're not innovative, they're not creative, and they're all about, well, we're back in 1975" (Diversity Coordinator). When searching for a Head of School, there are markers of preparedness and worthiness that are also associated with wealth and Whiteness. A pool of applicants for such a search would be assembled prioritizing candidates' ability to relate to the different constituencies at the school, their fundraising expertise, and their administrative expertise (Former Assistant Head of School). Within the qualified pool, the following descriptors would be considered positive in an applicant: Independent school alum, elite college or university alum, having had a "traditional" college experience—ie. boarding, 4-year school completed directly after high school—, holding advanced degrees, experience in Independent

school teaching, experience in Independent school administration, and so on. Every one of these valued descriptors must be attained at predominantly White and predominantly wealthy institutions. So the "most qualified" candidate must have markers of Whiteness and wealth in order to be successful—even if they are a person of color. A current Head of color recounted,

> I remember a conversation I had with a Board member, African American Board member before my, kind of, final interview here, and he said, 'you're up against central casting'…but the way he kind of described--this is kind of what the community is used to, and this would probably be a safe bet: a known quality. And although I have all kinds of degrees from all kinds of different places, I would be this 'other' entity.

This Head's reporting of a job search as "casting" is telling in terms of a Head of School looking the part. Candidates of color, even those who have some of the same markers of privilege as White candidates are an "other". Candidates without the markers of privilege…are they even considered? Do they make it into the candidate pool? Is a Harvard alum more qualified than a Howard alum? Are both more qualified than a person who went part-time through a public institution because they had to work full-time, as well? The fact is that the Independent school power system values certain credentials over others, and those credentials have historically been associated with Whiteness and with wealth. Therefore, the "most qualified candidates" are most often White and most often descend from wealth. In order to change whom we value, we have to change our values.

Getting in the door, though, is only the first step for a Head of color, and even those odds are bleak. But a Head of color is such an oddity at an Independent school that it seems like the school community doesn't really know how to respond:

> And, you know, what does it mean to be a Head of color, especially at a place that hasn't…the first one, um… you know, I don't know whether you are under more

> scrutiny but I think certain people take a…they pause and just take a look and wonder what's happening there…There were a number of Diversity initiatives taking place, but it's almost as if they stopped once I got here. And I think in part they stopped because here they have a person of color who's the head of school… (Head of Color).
>
> And so, I think [the Head] is actively trying to do things, but he also has said at the first meeting this year, he feels there's less Diversity work going on at this school because…since he came. Because, you know, as a man of color, you know, [he'll] do it. We're done, like Obama, we're done (Diversity Coordinator).

A Head of color is such an unknown phenomenon to traditionally White Independent schools that there is evidence of confusion within the school community in terms of how to respond. Beyond confusion, though, there is also evidence of fear among the White population when a person of color is at the helm of a school's leadership. Is this a signal of change that will shift the power structure? "And in as organic a way as possible without freaking people out because they think he's a man of color, trying to like run a school that pushes White people out" (Diversity Coordinator).

Conclusion

There is no doubt that many Independent schools are enrolling and hiring people of color in increasing numbers. However, progress is slow and the extent to which the people of color on campus represent real change is questionable. It is naïve and somewhat irresponsible for institutions to lump all "people of color" together in their presentations of themselves and in their analyses of themselves. Enrolling an Asian-White biracial child is not the same as enrolling a Black American child with Black parents.

Issues of enrollment, hiring, and literally changing the face of these institutions are fraught with complexity. But from this complexity emerged two themes that will reoccur

throughout the following chapters. First, there is a tendency to individualize each student and to individualize the hiring or firing of each faculty member and administrator. Focusing on individuals prevents us from seeing and examining the broader, systemic patterns that continue to privilege some while discriminating against others. Second, money—and its partner, wealth—are inseparable from issues of race and issues of change within institutions. With limited money to spend, and with an historical dependence on wealth (and thus the wealthy), Independent schools, like other institutions, reveal their true commitment to any goal through their finances. The next chapter explores the relationship of money to racial inclusion.

Chapter 3: Financing the Vision

Money may be the most important factor in running any organization, and schools are no exception. Every year, Independent schools must raise the overwhelming majority of their annual operating budget in the form of tuition and donations—there are no certainties in budget allotments until money is collected. Tuition comprises by far the most income at Independent schools; of schools in this study, tuition represented between 77% and 95% of the annual operating budget. A distant, but important second is the annual fund, which calls upon current and past families, and really anyone who is or was associated with the school to donate money toward the school's operations and growth. If the school has an endowment, as most of the elite prep schools do, a small percentage of their operating budget may come from that, as well.

Independent schools run on annual giving from its families, in the form of tuition and additional gifts, and this requires schools to draw from wealthy populations. Without a guaranteed pool of wealth from which to draw, an Independent school would certainly fail. Although all school personnel spoke about the importance of "socio-economic Diversity", there is also a line that schools cannot cross if they want to retain the prized low classroom sizes—they must have a high ratio of paying families. One teacher put it plainly, "you need that money to come in to keep this place running" (Faculty Member), especially with median class sizes at fourteen students (NAIS 2012a).

Those schools that had the relatively smaller percentages of their operations budget drawn from tuition placed proportionally higher demands on their annual funds and endowments in order to make up the difference between tuition income and operating expenses. Ironically, if we follow this logic, those schools that place less pressure on tuition for their operating budget, it would seem, have more flexibility to offer greater gifts in the form of financial aid. These would

be the longer-standing, financially entrenched, wealthier schools—those with bigger endowments and reliable donations from families. At the university level, Harvard provides an example of this having announced in 2012 that families earning less than $60,000 annually would not be expected to contribute tuition for their child to attend (Harvard University 2012). Meanwhile, the median family income in the US in 2011 was $50,502 (American Community Survey 2011).

So there is a paradox—schools that have historically wealthy students speak about wanting "socio-economic Diversity" but are still completely reliant upon the wealthy. It seems that there is confusion, or perhaps a conflict of interest, or even a lack of self-awareness in terms of the way that schools talk about what they want and what is possible. These are elite institutions. There is a palpable fear around losing the "quality" of education as a result of admitting non-traditional (read: non-wealthy and/or non-White) students. Schools are unwilling to compromise their goals for building a new athletic complex or an arts center or whatever other priorities they designate. This is obvious in the new buildings that consistently pop up across the Independent school's landscape. Schools will raise many millions of dollars for new projects that keep them moving in a path of elite growth and physical representation of elite status. I write this and next to my computer is a newsletter from my alma mater: a picture of nine, apparently White girls and most donning pearl earrings illustrate the cover of the "Campaign for the Future". Inside, the text explains and the pictures show that the school is over the halfway mark of its 60 million dollar goal. Over 30 million dollars.

So it's not like the money isn't there. But, when it comes to financial aid, there is a "budget". One Head of School commented, "…we can only have a certain number of families on financial aid because our budget, we have a budget, we have to meet the budget, right?"

(Head of School). The real values to which schools are committed is evident based on the money that is budgeted to advance that value.

History of Wealth

It is well-established that Independent, prep schools were designed to be training grounds for the children of the elite, and the vast majority of these schools began as both racially and socio-economically homogeneous institutions: White and wealthy (Baltzell 2009). Even considering obvious movement from these schools, as a group, toward a not-quite-so-White and a not-quite-so-wealthy student body, they remain elite, tuition-charging institutions predominantly for the wealthy (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991; Cookson and Persell 1985). The following descriptions come from two individuals closely tied to Independent schooling: the first, a woman who recently graduated from a New-England prep school, the second a man who is an alumnus of an urban prep school, and currently serves as the Head of Admissions at an urban prep school. Despite the participants' personal differences, their descriptions of the current Independent school consumers are similar.

> "There are the people who are old money, or very, very wealthy. Kind of like the people who would be living on [name of street], 15 rooms in their house, those people. And then the next group would be kind of medium: their parents are doctors/lawyers. They were rich, but they were more like new rich. Maybe they had some type of money in their bank from like assets, and things like that, but they were more kind of middle class of it" (Alumna).

> "…those at the top level of wealth, talking about the one percent, it's huge now. Whereas before, when I was a student in the '90s, those at the top level of wealth—still consistently doctors, lawyers, professionals, they still made a lot of money. We're talking about people who are making 400 to 500,000 a year, I would assume. Now you're talking about the people who are making 20,000,000, 30,000,000, 40,000,000. Their net worth is, you know…they have private jets, they have yachts" (Head of Admissions, Alumnus).

These two people suggest that not only are the wealthy still very much the picture of the prep school family, but also that the "wealthy" are even wealthier than they once were. As the young alumna suggested, doctors and lawyers are the middle class within the prep school population.

As tuition charging institutions, Independent schools operate with a naturalized barrier to access in the form of wealth. The median tuition for NAIS member day schools nationally was $19,100 in the 2011-2012 school year (NAIS 2012b). Generally, tuition increases by grade level, so families with students in 12th grade would be paying significantly more per year than the median. In New England, tuition is notably higher, reflecting the concentration of wealth in the area. The median tuition for day schools in New England was $26,596 in the 2011-2012 school year (NAIS 2012a). Similarly, in New York and New Jersey, the median tuitions for day schools were $30,600 and $26,140, respectively (NAIS 2012c; NAIS 2012d).

In the more recent history of Independent schooling, the question of access to these private institutions has been actively taken up. This is the historical moment where the paradox of wanting to reach out to less wealthy students while remaining an "elite" institution comes into focus. A consultant and active member of the Independent school network offered the following perspective, "There's enormous class issues, and there's enormous class issues in our schools. And our schools are, they are elite institutions. We don't have to apologize for that if we don't behave in a way that's elitist" (Diversity Consultant). Whether spoken with these same words or not, other school personnel echoed the idea that while Independent schools remain enclaves for wealthy families, by giving access to a "socio-economically diverse" student body, these institutions have the power to "change lives" (Diversity Consultant). Through this modern "noblesse oblige" stance (although school personnel would rail against that term), a financial commitment to aiding less wealthy families gain access to these institutions was born.

Financial Aid: The Existing Paradigm

Financial aid is challenging to write about. By writing about financial aid, I am affirming the existing paradigm of aid. Financial aid, as we currently understand it in Independent schools, is a myth. Schools utilize every dollar that is given to the school—whatever the form or the label of the donator. Interested parties give what they can to help the school run. Alums, parents, parents of alums, grandparents of alums, faculty, staff—virtually everyone who comes into contact with the school is hit up for money at one point or another, or at many points. Every student—even the wealthiest student—benefits from the financial contribution of the other people who contribute money. Let me put it this way: one family, one student does not define the entire financial reality of a school. Each student is financially supported by all of the other financial resources of the school. Every student receives financial aid.

The paradigm of tuition and the related paradigm of aid are misleading. Those parents who want the power that comes from donating to their child's school, and who have the means, donate. In a crude way, this is comparable to a sliding scale tuition. In the tuition/aid paradigm, families that have more wealth "give" to the school and are rewarded with social accolades. How wonderful to be a philanthropist. Who could argue against the value of subsidizing education, especially when it's tax-deductable? In the tuition/aid paradigm, those who exceed the expected contribution—as in tuition—are generous. In the same paradigm, those who do not meet the expected contribution—those on financial aid—are supported by the school and by those who can contribute more. Those on aid owe their education to others.

Were schools to switch to a sliding scale paradigm, perhaps one based on a percentage of earnings or wealth, families may give the same amount as they currently give. The wealthy give

more, in dollars, the less wealthy give less, in dollars, but everyone is giving an equal contribution; everyone is giving what they are able to give. It strikes me that it may not be the actual amounts of money that would change were schools to switch from a tuition/aid paradigm to a sliding scale paradigm. What would change would be the story associated with the money given. Those who give more are no longer more generous, those who give less are no longer charity cases. When the expectation changes, the power that comes from not meeting or exceeding those expectations would change, as well.

Financial aid is difficult to write about because any description of aid, let alone commentary on or study of financial aid, requires stepping into the story of aid that has been created. The social construction of tuition and aid at Independent schools needs to be examined more than the function of dollars and cents as it relates to racial Diversity.

Nevertheless, I must relay the story of tuition and aid as it is told, with hopes that the critical reader will be able to step out of the tangled web of myth that we have created around the issue of money at Independent schools.

The Stories of Tuition and Aid

Without fail, financial aid was brought up by each interviewee as an important factor to Diversity work—particularly work around racial Diversity. However, financial aid brought up some mixed responses from school personnel. I don't mean to imply that interviewees had different responses from one another. On the contrary, interviewees agreed with one another about having mixed responses. Financial aid was talked about like a necessary evil.

Financial Aid, as an interview topic, prompted two responses 1) it was necessary to increase financial aid in order to increase students of color and 2) schools don't want to conflate

"financial aid" with "Diversity". These are two opposing statements, yet each one is powerful enough to prompt action from schools.

Back when the trend toward racial inclusion in Independent schools began, there was a moral imperative to reach out to students and families who wouldn't otherwise have access to Independent schooling. Bringing in students who couldn't otherwise afford this education was primary. The issue was, fundamentally, one of access—"But the tuition is the barrier to that, okay?" (Head of School).

One other Head of School also spoke to issues of access in relation to tuition and financial aid. He was clear that given the geographical limitations of having a school in a predominantly White, affluent area, students of color at the school were coming from nearby communities that were not affluent. "So it's just a reality" (Head of School). These two Heads were the only two interviewees to clearly state the need for financial aid without immediately qualifying that statement. He explained, "we've also gone from seven percent students of color to twenty. That doesn't happen by accident, and it doesn't happen without being, you know, very intentional about it in a lot of ways including financial aid" (Head of School). No other interviewee spoke so directly about the need for financial aid in recruiting students of color. And while the Head of School quoted above did not immediately qualify his statements, the qualifications came a few short minutes later…

Other administrators and educators spoke to the issue of the conversation of financial aid. School personnel clearly are troubled by the semantic of financial aid but instead of changing the semantic, they choose to avoid the semantic—or to try to separate the conversation about financial aid from current efforts to recruit students of color. A current Head of School in New York City acknowledged, "A lot of the initial talk about Diversity was the financial aid piece"

(Head of School). Implicit in that statement is that the conversation about Diversity has now separated from that of financial aid.

Administrators and Diversity practitioners were obviously frustrated about the claim that financial aid is a necessity to increase racial Diversity. Equating "financial aid" with "students of color" was a troubling connection for every adult engaged in this sort of Diversity work. Here are some examples of the voiced concerns from administrators:

> Without doubt we would like to break down the stereotype that all students of color are financial aid students, right? "…the message that, that um African, um, African American means can't pay, African American means financial aid is… is um…. a perpetuates a potentially negative stereotype that's not good for the kids of color and also not good for the ah, ah, the White kids (Head of School).
>
> First I need people to understand that not all people of color are poor people of color, right? (Diversity Coordinator).
>
> I think it's important for white students, Black students, Asian students for the only Black people they see to not just be on aid. Creates stereotypes (Head of Admissions).

Given the information that this sort of equation, between students of color—Black students in particular—and financial aid, is negative, a school has choices with how to respond. Schools have the choice to acknowledge the economic inequalities that fall along racial lines in this country. They could educate about the systemic and legalized inequality that has led to a racial wealth gap that puts darker-skinned folks at the bottom and lighter-skinned folks at the top. But this was not the choice that schools made.

Recruiting Wealthy Students of Color

When asked about recruitment of students of color, the first response from interviewees, without fail, was something along the lines of "I don't want to lump Diversity with financial

aid…" (Head of School). Schools want to separate issues of class from issues of race. Specifically, schools tried to counter the stereotype of the poor student of color by actively recruiting enough wealthy students of color to create a semblance of "balance" at their school, a balance that would not accurately reflect disparities in wealth. The response among school administrators, independent school consultants, and an NAIS representative, alike, was insistence that schools did not need to increase financial aid efforts in order to recruit students of color. Without fail, the major objective related to financial aid was to avoid it. In the following interview excerpts, people directly express that the way to counter stereotypes of relative wealth is to recruit the more wealthy.

> …and it was just an example of what I hear a lot which is, um, you know, "we really want to, um, have more African American and Latino families in our schools so we need to ratchet up our financial aid." And, you know, I said that that's—all of that's well-meaning, you are stereotyping African Americans and…African American and Latino families, um, when there are ever growing numbers of fully capable, full-tuition paying, you know, families. They're out there somewhere (NAIS Representative).

> But you also have to challenge the idea, like the idea that the only way you can, the only way you can be a diverse school is through financial aid, which is a…an idea that many Independent schools in New York City have. "Well the only way that we're gonna get kids of color is if we have financial aid." OK, there are plenty of families out there in New York who are middle class families who are capable of paying for your school, you know what I mean? So, you need to tap into those, too (Former Administrator).

> There is an increasingly large Black middle class and upper class. And that's a way to build Diversity in your schools without having to go to financial aid (Independent School Consultant).

> …do away with false perception… We do have families of color that can afford to pay for the school, and do. So that's important to us, and we've been intentional in trying to identify those families (Diversity Coordinator).

> I keep saying, we need highflying kids of color. Not every kid of color needs to be a scholarship student" (Admissions Officer and Diversity Coordinator).

Another administrator, the Head of Admissions at one school who refused to be directly quoted, expressed obvious pride in her explanation that their recruiting efforts for students of color do not involve money.

Whether intended or not, the unspoken result of these efforts has been an increase in wealthy, non-Black students of color. Schools are not enrolling many wealthy, Black students. Several interviewees specifically spoke to learning more about communities of wealthy Black families—through their reading suggestions, such as "Our Kind of People" which is a study of the Black elite, or their suggestions to reach out to middle-class and affluent Blacks through programs such as Jack and Jill, historically Black fraternities and sororities, and others. People spoke about wealthy Blacks as if in the discovery phase—'we' need to learn about 'them'. One interviewee spoke with more nuanced interpretation—that this is a group of Black Americans that could afford to send their children to historically White Independent schools. So we should spend some time and energy figuring out why they have not. He explained, "for those who can afford to send their children to Independent schools but don't do it. Consciously, right?" (Diversity Coordinator). One Head of School speculated,

> …People who are successful um African-Americans in the economic sense are saying, we're not going to come be your fodder for your Diversity initiative. Whereas people who don't have the resources see this as an Independent school that they think will give them leverage into other opportunity, so they'll come in and be –I'll be really rude here--be your flunky, 'fine, I can play your game, my kid's could get maybe a seat at Andover out of it, I'll do it, I'll work it'. (Head of School)

An NAIS representative offered different evidence, "an African American father came up to me, and he says, 'you know, I'm not sure about whether our son is going to stay in Independent school because I don't want him to grow up to be Carlton'—" (NAIS Representative). The father was referencing the bow tie-wearing, Princeton-attending Black son of wealthy Black

parents in the TV show, "Fresh Prince of Bel Air". Both the Head of School and the NAIS Representative give evidence that it is a conscious choice for wealthy Black families to avoid Independent schooling either by leaving Independent schools or by not enrolling in the first place.

In hopes of shedding some light on the conundrum of the "missing", wealthy, Black Independent school students, I turned to the 2011 American Community Survey (ACS). There are limits to this data for two main reasons. First, I argue that wealth more than income is a reasonable predictor of families being able to afford the exorbitant cost of an Independent school education, but the ACS does not have data on wealth. Second, the ACS does not distinguish among private schools in terms of religious or not. Historically, Black families have sent their children to Catholic schools in higher numbers than the Independent schools about which I am writing.

Despite these limitations, the results from the ACS data were interesting.

Table 2: Percent of Students Attending Private Schools By Race and Household Income

race	$250,000-$499,999 Household Income	$500,000 and higher Household Income
percent at private school (all)	28.1%	28.8%
percent at private school (White)	28.8%	33.2%
percent at private school (Black)	19.8%	23.4%

Table 2 shows that a smaller percentage Black students in each of the highest income brackets attend private schools than White students in each of the highest income brackets. These findings give credence to the idea that relatively few Black students attend private schools.

White folks, especially, wondered out loud about their difficulty recruiting wealthy students of color, with an attitude of 'who would not want to come here?'. Perhaps this is the result of being so sought out by so many: it is hard to understand that there may be people who, given the choice, would not want to be a part of an elite Independent school.

Nevertheless, the focus remained on recruiting the wealthy. The fact that school personnel are so focused on bringing in wealthy students of color is illuminating in many respects. This is no longer a question of access. This is a game of appearance. We don't mind if we are elite, as long as we do not look racist. This can give an impression of a level playing field of sorts… This is the most obvious place where there has been a shift of attention and intention among NAIS schools. The original question of "access" was only brought up at two schools where I conducted interviews.

We need to compare this thought process to the economic reality of racial and ethnic groups in the states. To separate race from socio-economic status, as schools, led by the NAIS, are trying to do, runs counter to the history of the US. Separating race from SES lessens the historical power of the intersection of these two sociological paradigms.

Schools—even those that appeared to be on the more progressive side of this study, spoke about wanting to have a "balance" of Black students, or students of color, who were "full-pay" and those who needed financial assistance. But what should "balance" mean in a country where the reality is far from balanced? Schools spoke to 50-50 as a natural point, and their logic was that at 50-50, the White majority knew that there were literally as many wealthy as poor Black students, so they couldn't make an guess based on ratio as to the likelihood of a Black student being poor or wealthy. "I would love to think that the, the, that our numbers reflect a

perfect balance so that we have as many students of color who can afford a (school's name)'s education, families of color doing that as families who can't…" (Head of School)

It seems that schools are trying to create anti-reality, utopian bubbles to avoid having to address the hard truths of inequality. There seems to be a hope that if schools create a delicate balance that equally represents every group—whatever the 'group' may be—, all assumptions will fly out the window, conversations will be balanced, and perhaps the issues present in the outside world can be ignored.

Financial Benefits and Burdens

It needs to be noted that while the reasoning behind the recruitment of wealthy students of color was reported to be an effort to undo stereotyping, schools benefit financially from having a higher ratio of "full-pay" students to "financial aid" students. Only one interviewee admitted the financial necessity behind recruiting wealthier students during his interview. In discussing increasing the population of students of color on campus, he reported, "Let's be honest, the majority of our financial aid goes to students of color…and, and that financial aid only goes so far, 'cause we don't have a bottomless well" (Diversity Coordinator). In so many words, he made it clear that there is a financial necessity to enrolling tuition paying students of color.

While other respondents were not so direct in their language, the evidence gathered makes it clear that the financial burden of recruiting students of color was weighing on each school. One school Head had the following explanation for recruiting wealthy students of color,

> By definition we, we, we, we can only have a certain number of families on financial aid because our budget, we have a budget, we have to meet the budget, right? And currently 15% of our budget goes toward financial aid. So in our case

> any way we can't be accused of [having a more selfish motive] because we, we just simply have a budget. We can't overspend it (Head of School).

Note that this Head of School deferred to the budget as an explanation for their recruiting actions. He made clear that the school has placed a financial limitation on supporting lower income students while at the same time offering a moral side-step to the possibly callous interpretation of his school's actions. The budget is not arbitrary, though. An institution designates more or less money relative to the value that it places on what it is funding. An Independent school consultant had little patience for deceptive explanations, "I mean there are things that schools need—no question. And you do need a good gym, for example. But do you really need a rowing center? Or do you want more money for financial aid?" (Diversity Consultant). As a note, the school whose Head deferred to the "budget" had just completed a successful campaign to increase the school's endowment by over $7 million and had recently finished construction on multi-million dollar building additions.

An Admissions officer at a different school paraphrased a recent conversation that she had with her colleagues regarding a recruitment mailing that they were going to send out. Certain addresses acted as euphemisms for less wealthy applicants:

> Oh, gosh it was, you know, "what's the range?" "Well, we're gonna send it all over the [city] area", and then they start talking a little bit about addresses, which addresses would be a little difficult to, you know, god, you know, "should we really send it to that, those addresses?" So you're saying that we would cut out a whole cohort of people because we're afraid that they would apply for aid? (laughing)… (Admissions Officer).

Conversations need not be direct for the participants to understand the tacit meaning. Just as the one Head of School wanted to absolve his school of the moral implications of difficult financial prioritizations, this Admissions staff didn't directly state that they didn't want to reach out to students and families who would potentially apply for aid, but they certainly showed resistance.

Several participants spoke to the stress that finances have on an institution and the resultant policy decisions. The financial security of the institution and of the greater society plays an important an obvious role in the furthering of racial Diversity efforts.

> So, recruiting students of color, I think really depends on the health of the institution. If the institution's fat and happy, they have the luxury, according to them… (Admissions Officer and Diversity Coordinator).
>
> …and in the middle of an economic crisis, what I was worried about is, oh my God, now suddenly you could really be far less diverse (Head of School).
>
> I also think that the recession has had something to do—the last couple of years that schools are thinking of Diversity as, um, an expendable commodity, and they're not putting as much into it (NAIS Representative).

Whether or not schools admit it, financial considerations are paramount in schools' decision-making processes. Without secure financial resources, an institution would struggle, and the wealthy consumers of Independent school education want to have security in the investment that they make toward their children's educational futures.

Finding and Funding the "Qualified"

While it is certain that graduates of elite, Independent schools have, from their establishment, attended the most elite colleges and universities, it has not always been the case that elite, Independent schools have been synonymous with "academically elite". Rather, these Independent schools began as socially elite institutions, and as waves of outsiders sought to gain entrance, the "elite" status of these schools changed to include the designation of academically elite institutions (Cookson and Persell 1985; Balzell 1958(1998); Mills 1956(2000)). Currently, these schools enjoy the label of being socially, financially, and academically exclusive (Speede-Franklin 1988: 21).

Schools boast their academic prowess by publishing lists of the top-ranked colleges and universities that their alums attend. In fact, prep schools are often ranked by outside sources for their ability to place their graduating students in Ivy-League institutions (Laneri 2010). Perhaps the public makes the assumption that Ivy-League institutions enroll only the most intelligent students, therefore schools that feed their students into the Ivy League must be academically elite. However, scholarship questions that assumption. Karabel (2005) and others chronicle not that the Ivy League, and its feeder institutions, therefore, enroll the most intelligent students but rather the most privileged. He writes, "the very definition of 'merit' [for the use in college admissions] systematically favors the privileged over the disadvantaged" (549).

The fact that elite, Independent schools rely on their "academic standing" for their elite status gives license for these schools to limit entrance not only to the most academically gifted, but also to the more academically skilled. School personnel shake their hands in frustration and report how difficult it is to find "qualified" students of color. "Preparation" is the word uttered when Admissions officers voice their concern about students and their ability to keep up with the high academic expectations at Independent schools. In fact, the entire mission of organizations such as Early Steps and Prep for Prep in New York City and Reach Prep in Connecticut is to prepare and place low-income students of color in Independent schools. Students who are accepted into such preparatory programs and then dedicate over a year of work above and beyond their daily school work with the hope of being accepted into an Independent school not only get "preparation", those students and their families demonstrate substantial commitment to the project of getting an Independent school education for themselves. One respondent noted that financial aid students, such as these, consistently graduated at the top of their Independent school class. They are "prepared".

So if schools have trouble finding "prepared" students of color, couldn't they simply accept more students from such preparatory programs? This is where the money comes in. One Head of School reported, "…it's like REACH, you know? We have so many kids who want to come, we can't take that many of them" (Head of School). The financial aid budget prevented schools from accepting all of the prepared students who want to attend their school.

If schools' main concern was finding "prepared" students of color, why don't schools pay more attention to bringing in students of color in Kindergarten or pre-Kindergarten if they are a K-12 school? The issue of preparation would be minimized. Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten are usually the grades where the most applicants are accepted into a school. In the later years, there are relatively few "open" spaces for new students, and it makes the competition for those spaces—academic and otherwise—fiercer. The later a student enters an "elite" school, the more academically powerful he or she has to be. Making efforts to establish a new class in Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten that represents the racial and socioeconomic Diversity to which these schools claim to aspire would eliminate so many of the issues that are present in admitting students into the older grade-levels. Several respondents, though, confirmed that schools tend to accept "financial aid" students in the later grades—often 9th grade—because the school would only be responsible for four years of tuition and not twelve, thirteen, or fourteen years of tuition that it would take to be a "lifer" at one of these schools. Clearly the issue is not "preparation". That would be easy to fix. The issue is money. Schools simply do not want to spend the money to racially diversify their student body.

As I write this, a somewhat horrifying memory is playing out in my mind. At the end of every marking period, Independent schools often have grade-level faculty meetings to review "students of concern". Where I taught was no different. At one such meeting, we were

discussing a student of color who had enrolled in the school through one of the preparatory organizations. At the time of the faculty meeting, her grades hovered in the low-B range, and the Head of Admissions at the time brought up her concern about this student. She felt that this student was not living up to her potential. The Head of Admissions had made a "deal" with the student that she needed to keep her grades up—presumably higher than Bs—in order to remain at the school. The financial standing of this student left her vulnerable to such "deals". The student left the school at the end of the year. One of the next students we talked about had no grade higher than a C. There was no discussion of her leaving the school. Her parents were reliable donors. So this begs the question, how much money negates the need for academic "preparation"?

Financial Incentives for Racial Diversity

The happy rationalization of commitment to Diversity work is that it is the right thing to do. This positive and selfless spin on aid and recruitment is a lovely concept, but it is more complicated than that. A representative from the NAIS gave the following "justification" (his own word) to the increased focus on "inclusivity" (his own word):

> "We're not forced to do this. We're not forced by court order, we're not forced by desegregation to integrate, if you will. We're not legally bound…There aren't any compelling legal reasons because the majority of our schools do not accept federal funds for them to, um, to do race work, or to have, you know, people of color in their schools—either as employees or as students. The justification, um, is the fact that it's mission driven, it's part of the mission of their schools" (NAIS Representative).

I admire the sentiment. Schools engage in this sort of work because it is literally their mission to do so. However, this NAIS employee did not accurately represent the entire truth. At least part of what was missing from his "justification" were the following facts. Yes, the US government

will not shut down Independent schools for failing to take on racial equity work. However, there is an enormous financial incentive for schools to declare their dedication to this work. In order for an Independent school to remain a not-for-profit entity, and therefore operate with tax-exempt status, it must submit yearly paperwork to the IRS demonstrating that the institution has met the following five requirements:

> **Organizational Requirements.** A school must include a statement in its charter, bylaws, or other governing instrument, or in a resolution of its governing body, that it has a racially nondiscriminatory policy as to students and therefore does not discriminate against applicants and students on the basis of race, color, and national or ethnic origin (IRS 2009, Section 4.01).
>
> **Statement of Policy.** Every school must include a statement of its racially nondiscriminatory policy as to students in all its brochures and catalogues dealing with student admissions, programs, and scholarships (IRS 2009, Section 4.02).
>
> **Publicity.** The school must make its racially nondiscriminatory policy known to all segments of the general community served by the school (IRS 2009, Section 4.03).
>
> **Facilities and Programs.** A school must be able to show that all of its programs and facilities are operated in a racially nondiscriminatory manner (IRS 2009, Section 4.04).
>
> **Scholarship and Loan Programs.** As a general rule, all scholarship or other comparable benefits procurable for use at any given school must be offered on a racially nondiscriminatory basis (IRS 2009, Section 4.05).

The IRS form quoted above goes into detail about exactly how schools may demonstrate their commitment to racial integration. It is certainly true that Independent schools must offer proof that they communicate and act in ways that are non-discriminatory in order to avoid the massive taxation compelled from for-profit organizations. And while in no way am I suggesting that schools respond to issues of racial equity only because they are directed by the IRS to do so, it is unreasonable to suggest that schools are not at least aware of the potential financial repercussions for not annually submitting proof of their non-discriminatory actions. Not including this fact in a

study of racial integration would simply be negligent.

Commitment and Power

As the data on financial aid illustrate, schools demonstrate commitment to a value or a mission by financially subsidizing such values or missions. Put simply, they put their money where their mouth is. Indeed, the same interview participants that alluded to the financial constraints inhibiting expansion of their Diversity programs, were also the same individuals who spoke to the importance of demonstrating sincerity for certain goals by financially committing to achieving those goals. When speaking about recruiting and enrolling students from outside of the immediate neighborhood—particularly students without their own means of transportation—one Head of School noted, "It's hard. And it's a real burden on families and frankly on our transportation budget. But there's no other way to do it" (Head of School). Money is necessary for programmatic change, especially as schools desire to welcome students and families who are not as wealthy as the traditional, White, wealthy, prep school community.

Another interviewee had worked in several different capacities at two different Independent schools over her years as an educator. She chose to describe one Independent school's commitment to Diversity in the following way:

> I really believe, given how much, how much financial resources that place has, they want to put a computer in every single student and faculty member's hands, to not…to not advance the conversation about how to empower adults around these issues of race and ethnicity is just crazy to me. It's a great way to rationalize why you have the system that you have (Diversity Coordinator).

There are the words and then there is the action. In Independent schools, money speaks louder than words. And in many cases the money reveals that there is commitment to financial aid and

to racial Diversity, but there are other commitments that far outrank those particular issues of equity and access.

Chapter 4: Embracing Diversity: Diversity Programming on Campus

Racial integration at predominantly White schools is certainly about numbers: bringing in people of color in order to racially integrate the historically White institutions. However, in the context of schooling, racial integration must also mean an integration of the knowledge presented at school. While the word "integration" was never used in my experiences in Independent schools, integration is precisely at what I am looking. Due to the political usage of "integration", it has come to be associated with bussing and violence and Black and White students. In this case, however, I am using "integration" to mean integrating the lives, experiences, and knowledge of people of color into the existing culture within predominantly White institutions.

For Students

Despite some recent advances, history and textbooks show a centering of whiteness and of the European and American experience and knowledge production in schools across the US (Banks 2006; Delpit 2006; Loewen 1995). The recent 2010 controversy over textbook changes in Texas, the state that often dominates the textbook market (and therefore often dictates textbook content) across the country, highlighted just how much power curriculum holds over the lives of students and educators. In this way, no matter how many people of color are present, schools that teach the White experience remain White schools. Integrating what is taught is arguably as important as integrating who is taught. Programming, then, in the form of activities, events, classes, and curriculum is a vital piece of integrating an institution of learning. Evidence of a school's progress toward social integration of students of color into the fabric of the traditionally White, wealthy community of Independent schools is present in the level of institutionalization of their Diversity program and in the type of programming at that school.

Diversity as Special Events

Diversity "events" are the first type of programmatic evidence of integration in Independent schools. In this study, schools with younger, less institutionalized Diversity programs relied on "events" to "celebrate" Diversity. Nearly ubiquitous among Independent schools is an assembly on Martin Luther King Day in January. Without fail, part of Diversity coordinators' jobs is to organize and run this assembly. One new Diversity Coordinator described the MLK assembly as the central element to his role. The assembly was really a "PR" event, and he took enormous pride in the staging, "script" (his word), and construction of the assembly each year. He described one such assembly, "So we got King talking to us. The next student comes up. She starts talking about the…the slights she had felt being here as a student. Another King moment. So, we're, we're doing this and in between, and we're switching podiums and things on the screen, so it's multi-media and this is going on" (Diversity Coordinator). He credits this assembly with the awakening of the general school population to issues of Diversity.

Assemblies can certainly be wonderful gatherings that bring together the entire school: students, faculty, and staff, in a way that rarely occurs in a school year. Assemblies are special events, though, and if a broad topic, such as Diversity, is limited to special events, then Diversity is being presented as special—as other than the learning that happens on a daily basis in schools. Events may highlight an issue, but they do not integrate that issue into the school because they remain in the "other" category. One school administrator, in response to my question about the structure of their Diversity program, responded: "we do special events all the time" (Admissions Director).

Another aspect of the "special event" version of Diversity work is that "Diversity" is limited to "celebrating differences" without necessarily teaching about inequality or about the existing school culture that sets certain people up to be "different". One Diversity coordinator lamented the difficulty of trying to put together celebrations for each cultural, religious, ethnic, and racial group present on campus:

> So now I've got a group of kids that are Israeli, and all of the sudden they want to do stuff. I've got my Asian kids now saying, you know, Chinese New Year's coming up, we've got this coming up, um, I've got my, my Indian students saying Diwali's coming up, you know, festival of lights. And everybody's starting to be more--wanting to be…and I'm going, "Look, we cannot do assemblies every week of this magnitude. It takes months to plan this. But, let's do something. I want to make sure that you're represented here, so what can we do?" (Diversity Coordinator).

This Diversity coordinator explained more about what he tried to do in preparing for cultural events, "We wanted to do some kind of decoration and we wanted food in the cafeteria that day to help celebrate" (Diversity Coordinator). Again, the "celebration" approach to Diversity is clearly alive and well in some schools, but when it is the only approach to Diversity, then I believe that there is a substantial risk that the topics related to Diversity will be sectioned off, far away from the 'real' work of school, and labeled as special.

There was an irony that emerged from the data regarding Diversity events. Schools were moving toward "celebrating" a wider variety of races, ethnicities, cultures, and religions while at the same time showing clear discomfort about "celebrating" Christianity. My experience as a music teacher exposed me to many schools approaches to their music programs for "Holiday" concerts (previously "Christmas" concerts) preceding "Winter" break (previously "Christmas" break). The trend among these concert programs was to have fewer Christian songs while intentionally including songs celebrating Hanukkah and Diwali, Kwanzaa and others. One

Diversity coordinator gave an example of a recent change at his school that had also occurred at other schools, "Here's a school that used to do a Christmas pageant where the big deal was to be Mary in the Christmas pageant. And all of the sudden, you've got Jewish students. We're not doing the Christmas pageant anymore" (Diversity Coordinator). Another Diversity coordinator spoke about the newly formed Gospel Choir at her school. The Gospel Choir represented positive efforts in racial Diversity; the school was supporting an historically African American art form. The Diversity Coordinator reported a conversation that she had at a Diversity Committee meeting with an administrator about the Gospel Choir: "…well we have a Gospel Choir, and one of the things [the administrator] said on the Diversity Committee was, 'I get uncomfortable when they start singing about Jesus and stuff'" (Diversity Coordinator). But it's a Gospel Choir. That's what they do. An African American teacher spoke to the Diversity Coordinator after the meeting: "—that's Gospel music. You can't have it both ways" (Diversity Coordiantor). You can't support this African American art and eliminate Jesus. So do schools want Diversity or do they want a utopian microcosm of an imaginary world where everyone gets along, the food is pleasantly tasty, and no one gets offended—ever? I love the image of the non-religious Gospel Choir.

Some schools did go beyond the celebratory event, but still limited their Diversity program to special events, nonetheless. The excerpts below describe events at two different schools.

> …and then we do it co-curricularly, as well, whether it's through assemblies heritage assemblies we have um, certain days where we speak to just um… a particular issue whether it's um… sexual orientation whether it's classism, whether its race we'll have um, evening--- events in the evening (Diversity Coordinator).

> On the same token, I wanted to make sure people were having conversations that were very, very difficult. I remember one conversation we read Angels in

> America, ah, for our Book Day book, so grades eight through twelve read this book, and I did a little exercise on the word 'faggot', which was, you know, we went through the community norms and we had…90 people show up, not 60, to this workshop (Former Diversity Coordinator).

The events described above certainly move beyond the more surface 'decorations and food', party-like celebrations, but these "evening" events are optional; they are not a part of the core, required elements of the school day.

Most unusual within the sample schools were required events, conducted as part of the school day, which dealt with the difficulties of Diversity, not just the entertaining aspects of Diversity. Participants reported resistance to required Diversity events among the faculty; resistance was largely expressed as Diversity taking time and focus away from academics. In the following excerpt, two teachers are speaking about an assembly run by the Anti-Defamation League entitled, "Names Can Really Hurt Us". This assembly addresses all of the different, negative labels that are assigned to people ranging in topic from mental illness to homophobia to classism.

> Respondent A: "It's easy to go to the students, let's do a "Names"[7] assembly, "The Truth About Hate", the this, the that. Bring in that great speaker for the kids. But the adults are sitting there picking their noses and looking at their grading, and the kids are going, 'oh, it's not important.'"
>
> Respondent B: "How important is it? You got your note pad out."
>
> Respondent A: "And then, all it takes is one teacher for them to go afterwards and the teacher goes, 'so, we done with all that stuff? Let's go back to work.' And the kids go, 'got it.' That's all it takes. And for me, that's what kills me."

It is clear that assemblies and events, without support from the various constituencies, are easily dismissed or disregarded as not being the real work of schools. One type of special event,

[7] For more information, see "http://www.adl.org/education/edu_awod/awod_pilot.asp".

though, stood out in addressing problematic and troubling issues that arose at schools. A School Head related the difficulty, but importance, of holding an emergency assembly, of sorts, after a note containing the phrase, "niggers suck" was found by a teacher on campus. He described the sequence of events, which included a special faculty meeting, a meeting with the Black Student Alliance, and a letter written to the Board of Trustees.

> "…and then the next day we have special all school assembly… where we got everybody—it was the first all-school event in our new auditorium, it had just been dedicated, so you can imagine…yeah. But we all gathered in there and um…I, this, I get tears about this, Bonnie, I, rather than standing on stage with a microphone, I sat on the front of the stage to talk about it….And I just went into it. I said, this was found, I read it to them, and I said the word, and I just sort of riffed and went on for, I don't know, five or six or ten minutes about my feelings about that and what that said and…if this person's in our community what an awful thing that is, and our mission and our values. And whatever. I just sort of went with it. Sometimes you prepare remarks. Sometimes you just go with your gut...What we told the faculty the day before is that we're going to have this assembly and then after we're going to break into advisory groups. So we basically cleared an hour and a half of our day during classes, to do this. After the assembly, advisory groups then met and we had prepared kind of questions and talking points for each advisor to go through with their advisees to just process it…So here's my point. We could have just said, 'Saturday night—maybe nobody saw it, I don't want to deal with this, it's too painful'. Instead, we decided actually I give [the Diversity Coordinator] credit for this, he said, 'you know what…, as bad as this is, I'm grateful to whoever wrote that, I'm grateful because now we can have this conversation'" (Head of School).

The administration at this school stopped all lessons to directly address the contents of this disturbing note. No matter how they chose to respond to the incident, the fact that they chose to respond at all, to have a mandatory event that involved students, faculty, staff, and even Board members in order to highlight a racist incident that happened within their community is notable…Actions such as these are rare. But I had mixed feelings about the school's response when I heard about it—and I was intrigued that the Head of School spoke about his reaction to the note with such pride. They did choose to draw attention to an incident that they could have

easily swept away. Perhaps this "stop the presses" reaction served to make an anomaly out of this event. However, to the Diversity Coordinator, apparently, the racist note served as an exhibit of underlying tensions surrounding race, and not an anomaly. According to the Head, the school's Diversity Coordinator was "grateful" for the obvious opportunity to have such a conversation. In a way, the all-school assembly approach to Diversity is efficient in that all students and faculty get the same message in the same way. But does this serve to further the "specialized" approach to Diversity as opposed to integrating Diversity work into the very fabric of the school?

Diversity events run the gamut of honesty and effectiveness. Programs that celebrate, that focus on entertainment above education promote a vision of Diversity that suggests that we are all equally fêted and equally relevant members of our respective institutions. Is that the reality? In these predominantly White, predominantly wealthy schools are all constituents actually equal? The facts suggest that, no, these institutions are far from operating with parity.

Diversity in the Classroom

Schools that are further along in the process of integrating Diversity work into school curriculum have courses or other parts of the established curriculum dedicated to issues of Diversity. The format of the Upper School, which in this study was entirely comprised of ninth through twelfth grades, seemed to follow the pattern of a core, required curriculum in ninth and tenth grades and a completion of core curriculum with time and space for electives in eleventh and twelfth grades.

Some schools had an established, semester-long freshman or sophomore course that dealt, directly or indirectly, with Diversity. Those participants whose schools required such a

course spoke about the course as having a flexible curriculum and focusing on critical thinking and global awareness. These courses meet once or twice a week, as opposed to the central academic courses which meet more often. One Head of School offered, "…I teach a seminar for all freshmen here, I just started that this year, and I call it Diversity, Ethics, and Globalization. And, you know, it's not a tight curriculum by any stretch of the imagination" (Head of School). Another school required that all sophomores take an Ethics course for one semester. The course description emphasized "critical thinking skills" (school website) and the ability to "understand the points of view of others" (school website). While these schools are beginning to make issues umbrella-ed under "Diversity" a required part of their curricula, it is important to note that in both cases mentioned above, these schools approach Diversity with an emphasis on thinking and communication skills as opposed to historical and current experiences related to racial difference and inequality—or, for that matter, any other type of inequality. Furthermore, these courses separate issues of inequity and difference from the traditional academic courses, and this continues the pattern of setting up Diversity as a specialty subject.

As these examples have shown, and as others will continue to show, two powerful patterns prevent a true integration of Diversity work into the existing educational system. First, Diversity is introduced and maintained as other than the real work of schooling. Second, school personnel have tried to squeeze Diversity into the existing framework of schools, their curriculum, and their schedule. Change cannot occur if we are not actually willing to change the structure that brought about inequality in the first place. Audre Lorde's immortal words ring true here: "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde 1984). Even schools that showed more evidence of curricular commitment to integration in the form of academic work had difficulty moving away from the "master's tools" and the "master's house".

Often, schools offered one or more elective courses to their eleventh and twelfth graders, most often a history or literature course that focused on under-represented groups. These courses relied on the knowledge, time, effort, and perseverance of a single teacher to design, establish, and implement the course. One Diversity Coordinator described, "I can make an impact in the classroom by starting my own African American studies course and actually change, um… how you view, um, Black history not just for the kids of color but for the, for the White kids, as well" (Diversity Coordinator). This course has undoubtedly had an impact on those students who elect to enroll in the course. The student response after taking this course have ranged from, a "White young man, who's at Bates majoring in African American studies" (Diversity Coordinator) to "I feel like I was cheated in my education here" (Diversity Coordinator). The students' actions and words speak loudly: these courses are valuable to them and the core curriculum overlooks these aspects of education to the point that students feel "cheated".

The Diversity Coordinator quoted above also spoke to the increasing demand for this course among the students and the subsequent reaction from his administrative supervisor: "What I'm getting now is um, kids asking can I teach both semesters, so I teach one semester, it's an elective, so it's for seniors and if there's any space, juniors can come in. Um, so now I'm being asked to do it two semesters by students and the Upper School Head is like, '[Diversity Coordinator's name] you know, great, but you're already doing too much'" (Diversity Coordinator). The extent to which schools make time and space for real education about real experiences of race and racial inequality speaks directly to that school's commitment to racial integration of the curriculum.

In the middle schools (most often fifth through eighth grades), there seems to be less resistance to or perhaps more flexibility in using school time for required work on issues of

Diversity. Several respondents spoke about more established, required curricula focusing on Diversity among the lower grades. There was a range of programming from grade-level or division-level "themes" that were explored both in a more academic setting as well as special events. One Diversity Coordinator described,

> Now we do, at the middle school level, um, um… have targeted ah, themes for each grade and so to your point, yes, the seventh grade, the theme for the year is poverty. And so we dove right in, and that's on a race level that's internationally. Locally, we take the kids to Harlem. Um, and they get the tour, they get to experience, you know, the inner city, but they get to see the inner city, in the city and the resources that come out of the city (Diversity Coordinator).

Other schools had begun to institutionalize classes for their middle school students that addressed Diversity on a regular basis. One Diversity Coordinator reported, "They have a whole curriculum, actually, at the middle school that's segmented out by grade level--towards this work. They have Diversity Wednesdays every other, every third Wednesday, um, they dress down and they have a whole curriculum" (Diversity Coordinator). This excerpt highlights the special status that Diversity holds: students can "dress down". Diversity is still an "other". A former administrator from a different school spoke to their middle school Diversity curriculum:

> So fifth grade, we talk about stereotypes, we talk about prejudices, we do different, you know, kind of mini-experiments with them. We give, you know, we show them pictures of different people and ask them, "what do you think their professions are?" we have a list of professions. And then they get to have a conversation about their own kind of …biases that we deal with. Because of the different perspectives we get from TV, radio, or from all over (Former Administrator).

This excerpt comes from a school that had just begun to implement an "anti-racism course" (Former Administrator) although schedule prevented them from implementing such a course beyond fifth and sixth grades. Nevertheless, a required anti-racism course is a statement about

the importance of anti-racist work. This school was arguably the furthest along the continuum of integrating anti-racist work into its curriculum.

Why are these curricula first appearing in Middle schools and not Lower schools or Upper schools? Fear about introducing potentially controversial courses in Lower Schools, typically first through fourth grades, centered around a language of "developmentally appropriate". Also, one Diversity Coordinator spoke to the difficulty of getting parental permission at the Lower School level for students to participate in such discussions: he referred to seeking permission as "walking on egg shells" (Diversity Coordinator). That parental permission is a requirement demands pause.[8] Parental permission is generally required for activities that carry some inherent danger—or at least for activities that are far outside of the normal function of the school. Seeking parental permission for Diversity work suggests, therefore, that the work is dangerous and unusual. What is the danger of such work? Is it merely that the existing power structure would be exposed? Is it that learning facts about inequality and difference could be upsetting?

There is no question though that for the vast majority of schools, Diversity work is in fact, far outside of the normal function of the school. Fear around introducing more required curriculum in the Upper Schools centered around (1) teachers not wanting to alter their curriculum and (2) teachers not perceiving Diversity as "academic". One Diversity Coordinator spoke about the culture of Upper Schools in terms of the "personalities" of the teachers: "Um…personalities of the Upper School teacher animal. Ah, much more territorial in terms of this is my stuff, we…you can't change" (Diversity Coordinator). Another Upper School faculty

[8] I am grateful to Keisha Goode for sparking this conversation.

member added, “There’s also this middle school-high school thing where, middle school, they do those kind of frilly, feelings things, and high school, we’re about academics” (Faculty Member).

Upper School teachers are not the only ones in the school communities that view Diversity as “frilly”. Schools and their representatives routinely contrast “Diversity” with “academics” as if an increased focus on Diversity will somehow diminish the academic prowess of the school. One Admissions Director suggested that I reach out to a different school in the area that is “smaller, progressive” (Admissions Director) as opposed to his school which “is super rigorous” (Admissions Director). Can a school be both “progressive” and “rigorous”? A Diversity Consultant used similar words to describe the academic culture at Independent schools: “And it seems like our schools, we use terms like ‘rigor’ and ‘excellence’ and um…those keep us in a kind of competitive ah, place” (Diversity Consultant). She was explaining the failed attempt at generating “empathy” within the White populations at schools. If schools continue both to set up and to view Diversity curricula as in opposition of academics, then resistance to curricular changes incorporating Diversity will also continue.

Some of the more seasoned Diversity practitioners were working to re-imagine the role that Diversity work could play—as a part of academics. Pushback from classroom teachers often comes in the form of a curriculum debate: what gets dropped from the curriculum if “Diversity” gets added? One faculty member explained his approach to responding to teachers who resist changes to their curriculum,

> You’re curriculum really doesn’t….you don’t go off the rails that much if you don’t, like, this is where I have to be on April 13th. You can still have those conversations and still be where you want to be on April 13th. But you do have to make some decisions, you have to realize, you have to decide this is important enough to have a conversation about it (Faculty Member).

He characterized curriculum—existing or new—as a choice, a decision. By choosing to maintain the status quo, teachers and schools are choosing to not educate on other subjects. This same teacher found ways to integrate discussions of "equity and justice" into his Math curriculum, and Math is often the subject that educators and people more generally view as "pure" and not related to Diversity. This teacher disagreed:

> I try to use my curriculum to help um, broach some equity and justice conversations. So Algebra 1 class, for instance, when we begin studying graphing linear equations, we will do a project looking at, um, mortgage…uh, the mortgage crisis and African Americans and Hispanics in Chicago and look at the rates of…you know racial proportions, who were getting mortgages, who weren't, what tax bracket were they in. So, you know, then eventually you ask the question, well why were White people, even if they were in the lower tax bracket more apt to get a mortgage as opposed to African Americans who were in a higher…yadda, yadda, yadda. So that's how I plan on…just kind of doing it in my little area (Faculty Member).

At Independent schools in this sample, teachers were given quite a lot of freedom with the execution of the academic curriculum, provided that they cover certain topics and material. This implies two things. First, teachers can be seeds of change within institutions, provided that they don't rock the power players of the institution. The above-quoted respondent knowingly added about his Mortgage Crisis project, "I'll do it and then we'll see what the fall out is after that" (Faculty Member). Second, teachers can be barriers to change and to provocative discussion, no matter what the material. Among English departments, for instance, there is often a "we've done Diversity" attitude because the 10th graders read a Toni Morrison novel. One Diversity Coordinator reported about a lunch-table conversation that she had with some colleagues about her wanting to examine the academic curriculum, "But one of the English teachers kept saying, 'but we do.' And I said, 'is that the only thing we teach?' Like it's great that we teach To Kill a Mockingbird and we're proud of that, but where else do they, what else do they see in terms of

role models of the types of people who are sort of under, underprivileged in that room?**"** (Diversity Coordinator). So, To Kill a Mockingbird is the Diversity book. So if there is one Black person in the book, is Diversity done? What aspects of Diversity are tacitly present in the other texts that are not seen as Diversity and therefore not addressed as such? White privilege? Wealth? If I were to examine the authors represented by a typical, Independent school core curriculum, what would I learn about who can be authors? Can To Kill A Mockingbird be taught without having a meaningful discussion about equity and justice? Absolutely.

Schools routinely go through reviews of their curriculum, both official and unofficial. These days, Diversity is often part of the discussion regarding curriculum, but this part of the discussion generates confusion and questions. "The curriculum is something we are, I think like most places, often times people don't quite know, well how do we attack curriculum? Does it mean we throw out the old canon and put in a new one or what exactly does it mean?" (Head of School). Many educators don't know how to approach the integration of their curriculum. Teachers who haven't been specifically trained in the skills of Multicultural education are fed the broad and ominous task of making sure that "Diversity" is "represented". Respondents indicated widespread ignorance among teachers in terms of making curriculum less White and less Euro-centric. One Head of School explained, "one discussion we're having right now is…so we can't really identify all the different quote-unquote diverse texts that we study from, six through twelve. And not only can't we identify, but why are we teaching them? And who is teaching them? And what are some of the same issues we run into, like, like the other schools do?" (Head of School). This points to token Diversity without true integration. To Kill a Mockingbird may be a part of the curriculum, but what exactly makes this a "diverse text"? If a class reads a Shakespeare play, is Othello a "diverse text" and Romeo and Juliet not? Does "diverse" mean

not White? Individual teachers have enormous power to introduce and guide discussion toward issues of equity and justice no matter what the text or topic.

Yet, teachers also influence the design of the curriculum: the selection of texts and topics. In the summer after my first year teaching at an Independent school, I was one of three teachers charged with the overhaul of the Middle School (fifth through eighth grade) math curriculum. That is a lot of power for a 22-year-old. Even a more seasoned teacher would not necessarily have the depth of knowledge necessary to plan a divisional curriculum, and yet, teachers are often the individuals to suggest and implement curricular changes in Independent schools. Where does Diversity fall in their thought process? That would depend on the teacher, but evidence from this study shows that Diversity is simply not a part of the thought process. "I don't hear discussions about…equity and justice or whatever. So, we're examining our curriculum, every department is. And ah, we're looking at the nuts and bolts and so on and so forth, and there's not one discussion about equity and justice...so that's not high on anyone's radar. That's not a—that's not a big deal to anyone" (Faculty Member).

On the other hand, teachers' power—especially collective power—can be turned toward curricular change. Individual teachers have managed to work toward altering the canonical curriculum at some schools to reflect a more "multicultural" stance. One Head of School explained the impetus for changes to his school's curriculum, "We had a number of teachers who felt passionately about and start thinking about what it means to have truly multicultural curriculum, and so our curriculum has diversified" (Head of School). This Head emphasized that the school had "a number" of motivated teachers, and that led to curriculum change.

Diversity Clubs and Affinity Groups in Upper School

A notable change on many campuses has been the creation and development of clubs and groups relating to Diversity. Schools in this sample had Upper School student clubs ranging from "Gay-Straight Alliance" to "Ping Pong Club". In this section, I am particularly interested in examining the clubs and groups related race and ethnicity and not others even though clubs such as a "Gay-Straight Alliance" would no doubt be considered a "Diversity" club.

The majority of schools represented in this study had a club for Upper School students who wanted to participate in racial Diversity discussions. Diversity clubs had names that emphasized inclusivity: "Cultural Awareness for Everyone", "United Students", and "Common Ground" are names that appear many times within the Independent school community. One Head of School put it simply, "we have CAFÉ which is Cultural Awareness for Everyone. Everybody, anybody can come" (Head of School). Another Diversity Coordinator described his school's Diversity club, "every student in the school [is able to participate]. And I think you would say the majority are students of color, but there are White students that are members of the club, as well..." (Diversity Coordinator).

Schools seemed perfectly amenable to establishing an all-inclusive club that talks about Diversity. One Head of School described such a club with a slight twinge of sarcasm as: "an umbrella group for discussions of difference and inclusion, which is lovely" (Head of School). Lovely. For many schools, Diversity clubs are their institutional nod to bringing interested students together while intentionally dismissing the idea of affinity groupings. Affinity groups generally function as a peer support network comprised of people sharing an "affinity" or a common quality. An example of an increasingly common affinity group at schools is a Students of Divorced Parents group. In the case of race, schools have approached affinity grouping in a

variety of ways. Racial affinity groups in schools range from the very broad: Multicultural Students to the more specific: Black Student Association.

Several respondents felt that a school's stance on racial affinity groups is indicative of their level of maturity with regard to issues of racial equity and justice. For instance, one Diversity Coordinator, whose school did not have racial affinity groups, said: "But once you start to talk about affinity grouping, then as a school, there's a little bit more sophistication that the institution has" (Diversity Coordinator). Those schools that had more established racial affinity groups started working with affinity within those groups, as well. One school held a special workshop, during the school day, for the Black girls who were a part of the Black Student Association. This is a clear indicator of the school's commitment to addressing the concerns and the needs of Black girls on campus. Further, the Diversity Coordinator—a Black man—collected information gathered from the students during this workshop and used it to give feedback to the upper rungs of the administrative power structure.

> …and the school gave me permission to have these girls um, miss their last two classes of the day, so they go lunch time through the end of the day. And then we got feedback, and I took it back to the administration, said, 'this is what these girls are feeling. This is what we need to bring their experience up to what the other kids experience is.' And we're going to have follow up from that (Diversity Coordinator).

Importantly, this Diversity Coordinator touched upon a tangle of issues that exist surrounding affinity groups and individuals' identity. In Independent schools today, "students of color" represent such a wide array of experiences, identities and family situations that a curious on-looker must wonder what is actually shared across this group—this diverse group? One alumna, who identified as "Black", spoke about the other students of color in contrast to her closest group of friends—a subset of the students of color: "Because even though I was friends with [the

students of color], it wasn't like I was as close to them as I was to my friends who, like, we're all first generation" (Alumna). So, in this case, a first generation, Black student, shared more affinity with other, non-Black, first generation students than she did with the Black American students.

There is overwhelming evidence both in my sample, as well as nationally, that multiracial students are the fastest growing and one of the most well-represented group of students of color in Independent schools. Many multiracial individuals approach their racial identity in different ways and with different considerations than monoracial individuals (Root 1996).

What about a child of color that was adopted by two White parents? How might that child racially identify? Is it possible that an Asian girl adopted by White parents may understand her racial identity differently than an Asian girl with Asian parents? Absolutely.

All of this complicates affinity grouping. Just as Independent schools group all of their students of color together to report their "Diversity Statistics", it is tempting to assume that all students of color, as racial minorities in predominantly White institutions, would have similar experiences to share and similar issues to discuss. Not only is this not the case, but even within more specific racial groups, the array of identities and issues is vast. There is no neat solution to affinity grouping, but, at the same time, there is very little conversation about the complexities of affinity grouping beyond "should we have affinity groups or not?"

Affinity Groups in the Younger Grades

In a select few schools, all with a self-reported "very liberal" (Head of School) customer base, opportunities to meet within racial affinity groups were provided to middle and lower

school students. Among my sample of Independent schools, such affinity groups among the younger students were exceedingly rare. One Head of School described:

> So, you know, we'll take six-year-olds, and with parent permission, the kids of color will actually separate from the classroom. Both sets of kids will get the same lesson, which is on advocacy, awareness, I mean, it could be something like what holidays do you celebrate, that sort of thing. Um, and then the kids come back together. But the idea is to…to let the kids of color have a time during the day when they're on their own or with themselves and have a teacher of color leading them through a lesson. Which, if we didn't have that, you could theoretically go through the school and not have that experience (Head of School).

Another former Division Head described another example of affinity grouping among the younger students:

> At ah, at my old school, they started, that's interesting, they started in the lower school, K through 4, they have, um, Diversity meetings, I guess they call them, and during that time, the students of color go to a shared space, go to the library and talk with other faculty of color about whatever it is that they're focusing on. Now the White kids stay in their homeroom and talk about that same issue (Former Administrator).

As with the Upper School population, affinity grouping in the younger grades is laden with issues. One issue particular to the younger students is this: at what point is it developmentally appropriate to introduce affinity groups? Psychologists and school personnel report racial 'incidents' in preschool-aged children. Tatum (2003) writes, "Questions and confusion about racial issues begin early. Though adults often talk about the 'colorblindness' of children, the fact is that children as young as three do notice physical differences such as skin color, hair color, and the shape of one's facial features" (32). One participant offered the following, "I think there's a misconception that children are innocent and that they don't think about these issues and that they don't occur to them until they get to high school. In nursery school, last year, we had a little girl say, 'you can't come to my birthday party 'cause you're brown'. They notice

difference as early as six months. You know, they begin to code based on the way people look" (Diversity Coordinator).

I have long assumed that students of color in predominantly White settings should have the opportunity to meet within affinity groups as early as possible. Similarly, I would argue that White students need to meet within affinity groups to talk about race and inequality as early as possible. However, a wise mentor challenged my view, and that has left me in a state of confusion that is both intellectually stimulating and personally frustrating. I want there to be a clear solution: a clear 'right' and 'wrong'. But these issues are far too complicated for a right answer or, for that matter, a wrong answer. Continued discussion is the 'right'. Silence is the 'wrong'. To honor the complexity, I offer a few questions: If educators separate young children of color from young White children, are they teaching children that they are fundamentally different from one another? If educators truly want to offer students the vision of an improving world, might there be great benefit in creating a mini, mixed-race utopia where that sort of separation and segregation does not exist? If we teach children about inequality are we in danger of reproducing inequality? If we expose children to a utopia, is it possible that those students would develop strong identities, foundational self-esteem, and a tendency to interact with one another based on sameness and not on difference? If we don't allow the opportunity for students of color to meet in a space where only people of color are present, are we ignoring the impact of difference and inequality that children internalize from a very young age? Imagine this: a seven-year old Black girl comes to her teacher and expresses her desire to become a Justice on the Supreme Court. Do you encourage her and tell her that there is nothing that she cannot do? Or do you tell her the reality of history? There has never been a Black woman on the Supreme Court, and the world is unfair, and you might want to pick a different dream. But if we only

teach from what we know and not what we dream, then positive change will never happen. Perhaps there is a lesson that acknowledges the whole picture: there is nothing that you cannot do, but your road may be more difficult than your White peers'—let me offer the support that you may need.

Unofficial Affinity Groups

Whether a school sanctions affinity groups or not, however, by the Middle School years, affinity groups are gathering and students are sharing experiences. Schools that resist the institutionalization of affinity groups in Middle and Upper Schools are seeking to deny the reality that affinity groups exist, whether institutionalized or not. Three participants at three different schools, none of which had official racial affinity groups, reported the following:

> "We don't have a Black student group, we don't have a Latino student group...it's unofficial" (Diversity Coordinator).
>
> "I know that I tap into affinity groups all the time, seamlessly. Some of them are school sanctioned and some of them are not" (Diversity Coordinator).
>
> "Kids do form affinity groups, I don't know if they're a part of the school day" (Head of School).

Schools do not actually have the choice of whether or not to create affinity groups. "Affinity groups are happening" (Faculty Member). Students of the same racial group hang out together at school. This phenomenon is so well documented that Beverly Daniel Tatum wrote a book entitled, "Why Are All of the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" This book holds a permanent position in the canon of Independent school Diversity work. One of many pieces of wisdom that Tatum (2003) offers is, "The developmental need to explore the meaning of one's identity with others who are engaged in a similar process manifests itself informally in school

corridors and cafeterias throughout the country" (71). So, yes, affinity grouping is a reality. Schools only have the choice of whether to institutionally legitimize the groups that are already congregating or not.

White Response to Affinity Groups

While there was White resistance reported in virtually all aspects of Diversity work, none was so apparent and pervasive as the negative responses from Whites toward racial affinity groups. Explored above, some schools will have a "Diversity Club" or similar group where all students are invited, regardless of race, to meet around issues relevant to Diversity; this is not an affinity group at all. Of the true affinity group model, schools often have a "students of color" group that invites all non-White students to participate. Schools with higher numbers of students of color and those who are arguably further along in their equity development have affinity groups for each of the different non-White racial and/or ethnic categories. It is these last two approaches to affinity grouping that causes heated responses from White students, parents, and school personnel. The following excerpts are examples from a variety of schools—from different states, from urban and suburban settings, comprising different grade levels, with varied percentages of students of color—and all have the same ring of White resistance.

> Uh, and so, over time, we helped created, you know, we have a, a, ah, we have affinity groups now which, which we had to fight hard for with parents and, and we have a very liberal community, you know, the mantra that "we don't see color" (Former Administrator).

> And [students of color] would always have that same response when they came back to every meeting, which was, "someone said, well why do we have that group, that's separatist, isn't that counter to what you say we need to be doing at our schools? Why can't I come?" (Diversity Coordinator).

> Bonnie: [And the] reaction to the Black Student Group?
> Respondent: Affinity groups are divisive (Diversity Coordinator).

> And honestly, affinity groups do cause some people in the majority population to go "what?"… you know, which I think is it's understandable but we need to help them understand why they're wrong. You know? (Head of School).

> We have kids of color groups in our school. We have one…which is 5th through 8th grade, then we actually have one…which is 1st through 4th grade. And actually, it's, it's…we've gotten some push back from parents about it because what it involves is…you know you said integration, we have a parent who thinks of it as segregation (Head of School).

> To be honest, [affinity grouping], ah…it's a hot button topic here because I say our families of color think it's great, some of the White families are sort of indifferent, but there are some White families who say, you know, I sent my kid here for...for the Diversity, and now you're separating the kids to talk about this? That doesn't fit well with my expectation of the school. And that's a minority of people, but I think it's still a, it's a constant question. (Head of School)

So rampant were the White attacks on non-White racial affinity groups, that students and adults, alike, had rehearsed responses when directly confronted by this sort of hostility. The first excerpt speaks about a way that a Diversity Coordinator taught her students of color to respond to other students, and the second excerpt speaks about a way that a Diversity Coordinator had developed to respond to White parents who questioned the need for racial affinity groups.

> [If] we had a divorced student group to support students, it wouldn't mean that they would be less involved in the life of the school. It wouldn't mean that they would hate people whose parents were together. It wouldn't mean that they would spend assemblies trying to dismantle the idea of marriage. But why would that be the same case, why would you think that would be the case? We wouldn't be sitting in a room with divorced parents…'we hate married people, what are we gonna do'…we wouldn't even care. We may share some anger around and some jealousy around the fact that we don't, that we can't tap into that…that sort of normalized experience, but that would be a fleeting moment, it wouldn't be the bulk of what we were talking about. So kids, they actually tried to say, they rehearsed, they got so good at it (Diversity Coordinator).

> Do you have a mirror at your home? Yeah. Could you imagine looking in the mirror and not seeing a reflection? What would that feel like? The term is called psychic disequilibrium. Well, you know what, we have kids who come to school every day and don't see an image of themselves. And so this is an opportunity for

> them to have a mirror and see an image of themselves. Who can argue with that? (Diversity Coordinator).

Participants speculated as to the reasoning or emotion behind these persistent attacks. The thought that they kept coming back to was that White folks are "definitely wanting to be in on the conversation. 'I've never been left out before, so why start now?'" (Diversity Coordinator). White people are not used to being excluded, especially when they are paying for their children and themselves to be included in an exclusive institution—in the form of an Independent school. In this country, the vast majority of Whites live in neighborhoods that are vastly White (Oliver & Shapiro 2006; Massey & Denton 1993) and are not used to navigating their race as part of their daily lives. A racially diverse school changes that. Again, Tatum's words are helpful here: "when the Black people are sitting together, the White people notice and become self-conscious about being White in a way that they were not before…" (89). I would argue, as a student of the Peggy McIntosh and Tim Wise perspectives on White privilege that perhaps the greatest White privilege that I and other White folks enjoy is that Whites rarely have to think about their whiteness. Affinity groups—especially those to which Whites are not invited—highlight whiteness for White folks, and therefore strip them of that particular privilege.

In one interview when this topic came up, the respondent spoke about the White folks' "fear of the unknown" (Diversity Coordinator), a fear that in non-White racial affinity groups the majority of what happened was derogatory talk about White people and "talking against the institution…" (Diversity Coordinator). This respondent laughed and said, "My grandma used to say, 'you know, baby, you'd worry less about what people are saying about you if you knew just how seldom they thought about you.' You're not on people's minds as much as you think you are" (Diversity Coordinator).

Affinity Grouping and the NAIS: The People of Color Conference

The People of Color Conference (PoCC) is an NAIS sponsored conference established in 1986 designed "by and for people of color" (Batiste 2006). The first conference hosted 100 people of color working within the Independent school system. By 2005, over 3,000 participants attended the conference. Yet the conference had been designed to be a supportive space for people of color—a national affinity group, and by the mid 1990s, the increasing participation of White conference attendees shifted the focus and meaning of the conference from being an affinity group to being a Diversity conference. Mirroring the discomfort and frustration that Whites expressed at being excluded from racial affinity groups at the school level, the need for Whites to be included at the PoCC overwhelmed the original mission of being a conference "by and for people of color". A "White Paper", an apt and perhaps dual-meaning report was published in 2006 by the NAIS in direct response to the growing number of White attendees at the PoCC conferences. The White Paper printed feedback that was collected reflecting the concerns that arose for people of color concerning White attendance at the PoCC. That feedback included:

> PoCC was …"accommodating the dominant culture".
>
> There was a shift in the quality of workshops, there were noticeable demographic changes in presenters and in attendees, and there was a shift in affinity group programming.
>
> Some participants of color resented the "teach me/show me" atmosphere of PoCC (in which people of color carried the burden of educating others about "minority" cultures.
>
> Why are white people here?
>
> (Batiste 2006)

Clearly, the PoCC was being subjected to the same criticism that racial affinity groups at schools were being subjected to. Specifically, Whites did not want to be excluded. Informal feedback to me from both Whites and people of color working in Independent schools confirmed that there continues to be significant tension over who is given the opportunity to attend the PoCC. The question of White participation has garnered an incredible amount of attention. Interestingly, the mere entertaining of concern over White participation is allowing Whites to direct the topic of conversation and to monopolize the attention of people of color at this conference—the opposite of the original intention of the conference. A "Redesign Report" for the PoCC was published by the NAIS in 2007, and that Report directly addressed this point. Among a list of things to "eliminate" from the conference was: "constant discussion of the role of white allies" (NAIS: Design Group 2007).

Another, slightly hidden thread within the "White Paper" and "Redesign Report" was the response to including an LGBTQ element to the PoCC. Specifically, the "White Paper" reported "some people were angry about inclusion of a LGBTQ constituent group" (Batiste 2006). This raised some questions for me. Was the LGBTQ group formed because people of color who also identify as LGBTQ wanted a chance to meet as an affinity group within an affinity group? Or was the LGBTQ group made up of primarily White, or even many White, folks who wanted to be recognized as underrepresented in ways similar to people of color? I don't know. This would be fascinating to look at in future research. In any case, the "Redesign Report" listed under items to "eliminate", the "LGBT caucus". It is a fight to keep the focus on race—even at a People of Color Conference.

For Faculty

Making substantive programming and curriculum changes for students demands that faculty be exposed to training both to learn about issues of equity and justice for themselves and also to learn about how to facilitate the learning of equity and justice for the students.[9] As shown above, if faculty resist or dismiss programming, the students quickly learn that it is not an important part of their education. Schools, again, show a wide range of commitment to educating the faculty about issues of Equity and justice.

Voluntary Participation

The most basic level of commitment to faculty training among schools is inviting faculty to participate in voluntary Diversity events and meetings. Several schools have started introducing programs that instigate thoughtful conversation and learning about Diversity among the adults on campus. One school held regular meetings for a Seeking Equity and Educational Diversity, or SEED[10], group for faculty and staff. SEED groups engage in monthly conversations about a range of issues involving inequalities in hopes that the members of the group will act as seeds for the growth of more discussion around the institution. When I asked who participated in the SEED group, the Diversity Coordinator, who acts as the sole facilitator, responded, "…like twelve people, ten to twelve people…It's a self-selecting group. Um, and it's

[9] Throughout the writing, I have chosen to adopt different terms as an indicator of specific meaning and content. I will use "Diversity" to refer to the programming in schools that deals with everything from race to gender to sexuality to socioeconomic status. In contrast, I will use "Equity" or "Equity and Justice" to refer to issues of inequality, specifically historical issues of systemic inequality. "Diversity" implies a more celebratory stance and "Equity" implies a more critical stance.

[10] SEED is a program founded by Peggy McIntosh, a well-known White ally. Aspiring facilitators attend an intensive training program and then establish groups on their campus that follow the learned curriculum of the SEED program.

teachers, administrators, ranging from the Head of the Upper School to Assistant Head of the Middle School to rank and file teacher" (Diversity Coordinator).

One former Diversity Coordinator explained the trouble with this approach: "But the hardest part of Diversity is…so many of the people that show up to the events are the choir. So you find yourself preaching to the choir" (Former Diversity Coordinator). Curious as to the level of involvement with such an approach, I had the following interchange with this participant:

> Bonnie: What percent of the faculty have any involvement in Diversity?
>
> Participant: At any given time, maybe thirty percent. And not just faculty of color, some of the faculty of color want nothing to do with it. I'm starting to think about who shows up to events, who's involved… (Former Diversity Coordinator)

The above participant brought up a piece of information echoed throughout the data: there are notable numbers of people of color at Independent schools that do not want to be a part of institutionalized Diversity work. There is frustration among faculty members of color because of the expectation that Diversity work is the job of people of color and that all people of color should participate—especially when there is no expectation that all of the White faculty will participate. One faculty member expressed his view:

> Well, I think what happens is it becomes, right, it becomes, you know, Diversity work is our job, it's the people of color's job, it's not a White person's job or they have more stake in it, really. What's their stake in… "Okay, yeah, I have a couple of lessons that have some Diversity in them", but that's not…you know, I think that often times, my experience has been that there are plenty of teachers who get caught up in, "but this is my content, this is what I teach, I don't do the other…and why is that, oh, I get it's important, so you guys take care of the African American males who have issues or whatever those issues are, and I'll teach history, like that's what I do." And that burns me up…for a number of reasons… (Faculty Member).

The major issue with voluntary education and training on Diversity work is that White people do not associate Diversity with themselves; it is not their issue. Knowledge holders and knowledge

distributers see their information (and themselves) as pure and unbiased. One Diversity Coordinator both acknowledged that attitude among teachers and questioned it: "…you, as a teacher have, like a…you have a place that you inhabit, it's not neutral. And teachers don't like that, it's like, 'I'm neutral, I'm just delivering, I'm channeling'" (Diversity Coordinator).

The other issue with voluntary participation—in any aspect of a teacher's working life—is that it is a demanding job without adding extra time to the day, without adding more meetings, and certainly without choosing to enter into difficult, uncomfortable, and potentially upsetting conversations. Two Heads of school expressed clearly:

> "If you don't want to work hard you can't do this work" (Head of School).
>
> "Diversity is messy work, and it's never ever finished. It's like Plato's Republic, you're never gonna get it. Wherever 'there' is, you're never gonna get there" (Head of School).

Why would someone volunteer for this work, then—especially if they don't see Diversity as being a part of their life?

The primary challenge, then, for schools truly committed to Diversity work and to working toward equity, is to reach the teachers. One former Administrator explained, "You got to do a lot of work beforehand before you can start…you know, before you can begin. Well, in my experience, it feels like you have to have a lot of conversations with faculty, you have to be on, you have to get buy in from faculty" (Former Administrator). Schools that are further along in the development of their Diversity programs place "expectations" on their teachers: participation in professional development around issues of equity is expected. Schools sent teachers and administrators to external conferences and workshops that directly dealt with issues of Diversity, equity and justice.

> We also have an expectation that you get professional development around these issues, right, and we use several vehicles to do that. Um, we use the Names[11] conference, we use Milton[12], or now it's called…, we use, um…I want to use the White Privilege Conference that we've not sent people there yet (Diversity Coordinator).
>
> One thing we've done for the last several years, we send folks to the White Privilege Conference, we send people to the People of Color Conference[13] (Head of School).
>
> So they pledged that all the admin [sic] would go to Undoing Racism[14], which they all did. And then they were going to get every teacher to go, which probably half of our faculty members have gone. So that even just changed the conversation because everyone had a common language (Former Administrator).
>
> It's been our um, anticipation that we want everyone that has an opportunity to go to Milton, it's part of my budget, our professional development budget, and I've gone through the whole Administrative Council, and my goal is to have every administrator on the Administrative Council have attended Milton. And so, I think I might have of the, you know, twelve or thirteen people on the Admin [sic] Council, um, maybe three or four haven't been yet. So, so we're getting there (Diversity Coordinator).
>
> That year four of us went [to a Diversity Conference] and at least one and often two have gone ever since, …The more people who can go, the more people who come back with this message, because everybody comes back transformed (Head of School).

The conferences and workshops cited above are well known and often used, as people from a variety of schools in the northeast were sending their constituents to the same conferences and workshops. These professional development opportunities were most often the way that schools

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[11] "Names Can Really Hurt" is an assembly program developed and run by the Anti-Defamation League

[12] Milton Academy used to run a well-known and respected weeklong Diversity conference for adults within the Independent school community. This conference is no longer held at Milton Academy, but the organizer now runs virtually the same conference with the new title, "Diversity Directions".

[13] The "People of Color Conference" is run by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and happens every year for several days in December.

[14] "Undoing Racism" is a multi-day workshop run by The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond.

provided their adult population with knowledge and skills dedicated to Diversity work. Interviews with upper-level administrators and Heads of School reveal that often a personal "transformation" at such a conference of an Administrator led directly to more concerted efforts in Diversity work at their school.

Markedly fewer schools hosted professional development for their faculty, administration, and staff on campus. One Diversity Coordinator spoke about bringing in a professional consultant, Enid Lee, to conduct an "Equity Audit" at his school. "Enid Lee" is a name spoken with reverence among the most fervent equity and justice educators. She is an experienced educator regarded as brilliant, direct, and enormously influential.

> So we had Enid Lee come in and do some stuff for us. Yeah, we did an equity audit which was intensive. When I tell most schools that we did that, they go, 'where did you get the resources from?' Like, that's expensive! I was like, 'it's worth it.' I didn't want to do a self-assessment, I wanted someone else to come in and assess us. Um, and then there's training that way for faculty (Diversity Coordinator).

Being the subject of an "Equity Audit", from someone as well respected in the field of Equity and Justice as Enid Lee, means opening the institution up for judgment and critique from a Diversity expert. It is a rare institution that seeks out criticism.

Those schools that had developed and implemented affinity group opportunities for students during the academic part of their day also had on-campus faculty meetings for organizing this work. One participant explained that with the support and direction of the Diversity Coordinator, the faculty selects activities, curriculum, and anticipates communication with the parents. This Head of School spoke specifically to the training of faculty members so that they could act as facilitators for student of color groups.

> So we train the facilitators, who are primarily teachers of color who will then work with the kids of color who separate out, and then we train the classroom

> teachers, as well, who are staying behind and instructing the um, the kids, now, some of those classroom teachers are teachers of color, and they'll, you know, they're part of that, but they're teaching, you know, the White kids for lack of a better word, who are staying behind. (Head of School)

Providing opportunities for faculty training is evidence of a school's commitment to pursuing Diversity work. Requiring training is a stronger statement by a school of its intentions to educate teachers, and through teachers, students to the issues encompassed by Diversity. To train teachers, on campus, as part of the scheduled day reveals a commitment to the content as well as a commitment to the implementation of the content by dedicating two of their most valuable commodities—time and money—to the education of teachers.

For Parents

As some of the participants above alluded to, it is essential that parents, both as the primary socializing agents of their children as well as the money-holders and purchasers of a given school's education, support the efforts made toward any kind of change in the institution. When it comes to dealing with issues of inequality in an inherently exclusive institution, it is even more vital that parents be brought along for the ride if school leaders want to make permanent advances in their institutional approach to addressing issues of inequality. One Head of School, whose school was further than most along the development and institutionalization of Diversity work on campus, offered the following statement: "I feel like we've got the kids in a good place. I'm now spending all my time working on the parents" (Head of School). Another Head of School stated, "You've got to talk about parents, how do you get parents involved" (Head of School). Schools who were well-into their work, as opposed to just beginning their work, dedicated time, effort, and resources to working with parents.

One Head of School spoke to the issue of engaging the parents: "I want to talk about parents for a minute. One of the great insights that [the Diversity Coordinator] had that has, in some ways, been the most important thing we've done, is to think about the parents" (Head of School). This Head of School, though, was not speaking about parents in general; he was speaking about parents with children of color at the school. This school had recently begun an affinity group for these parents. Both the Diversity Coordinator and the Head of School spoke to the importance of creating this group. "It's an opportunity for multicultural parents—let me take that back, for parents of multicultural children, 'cause we have White parents—interracial, multiracial kids who have an affinity and just want to come talk about issues" (Diversity Coordinator). The Head of School clarified, "so it wasn't just people who identified as people of color. And that came from issues from people who maybe whose kids were adopted, or whatever. Or parents who were in a mixed race marriage…" (Head of School). This school not only had affinity groups for students of color, they also established an affinity group for parents. The Head went on to say that creating this group was the single most effective step that the school has taken toward helping these families feel connected to the school. "What it's done is it's given people who formerly felt really disconnected, a community. Also, the confidence that the school is there for them; the leadership cares and is committed" (Head of School).

Groups such as these offer both discussion and social opportunities for families with students of color. When speaking about these Multicultural social gatherings, more than one respondent went out of their way to make it clear how much they liked these parent gatherings:

> We have a lot of gatherings, and it was far and away our favorite gathering ever (Head of School).

> In terms of Diversity events, I have to admit, those are things [the Head of School] actually enjoys (Admissions Director).

I didn't put these excerpts together until one day, in listening to NPR discuss a recent Romney event during the 2012 presidential campaign, I heard similar language from Ann Romney describing an event in Puerto Rico, "I had the most rocking time in Puerto Rico at a political rally than I've ever had in my entire life. You people really know how to party" (Robbins 2012). Why is this pattern emerging of White people emphasizing how fun people of color are? To my ears, these comments speak to an underlying sense of insecurity or perhaps the desire to convey the message that I, White person, enjoy you, person of color, and your culture. Something is a little odd about this emerging pattern.

In any case, schools that commit to bringing together parents of students of color encountered significant resistance from the White parents. At one school in particular, the new Multicultural Parents Association suffered severe criticism from the long-standing Parents' Association. At this school, and at many others, the Parents' Association is a volunteer organization that has its meetings during the day—preventing participation from any working parent. This school found that parents of color, in particular, felt excluded from the Parents' Association both racially and economically: the parents of color tended to be working parents. And yet, it was the White parents on the Parents' Association who pushed against the exclusivity of the Multicultural Families Group. The Diversity Coordinator reported:

> It started last year and --rumblings surfaced more at the beginning of this year. "So what's this multicultural group? Like, that feels very exclusive, like, I have a culture, how come I can't be a part of it?" And that's like the White woman from [a wealthy suburban town]. And it's like, wait a minute, when it was only eight parents, it was fine. And now it's the thing that everybody's talking about and you feel like you're on the outside of this exclusive group? Like who thinks that being poor is exclusive right? Like who thinks being a person of color in America is exclusive? Right? (Diversity Coordinator).

The irony of exclusiveness is overwhelming at Independent schools. These schools are inherently exclusive institutions, both overtly: not all applicants are admitted, and tacitly: the prohibitive wealth required to pay tuition. The Parents' Associations within these schools further exclude those parents who work. Yet it is the White parents who feel excluded from a Multicultural Families Group? The exclusivity upon which we choose to focus is illuminating.

For the Board of Trustees

Perhaps nothing exhibits a school's intentions regarding Diversity work more than the involvement of the Board of Trustees: the most powerful governing body of any Independent school. Working with the Board, though, is more complicated than with other constituencies within the school community. Schools may seek to 'educate' their Board members as to the issues involved with Diversity work, but the Board also serves as the validating body for the school. Heads of School, in particular, are very familiar with the fact that the school's Board of Trustees must be supportive in order to make substantive and effective change to the institution.

Despite the undeniable power of the Board, only two schools' participants spoke directly to Diversity programming for their Board of Trustees, and both of those schools demonstrated their position at the leading edge of Diversity work. The game-changing step for one of these schools was when the Board approved a "Diversity Plan" for the school. The Head of School proudly reported, "In 2005, uh, when we published our last strategic plan…First step of which was to develop a…a…Diversity Plan. And, so we committed ourselves to come up with a public statement that the Board would approve, therefore take responsibility for, right?" (Head of School). Board approval is the gold standard of institutionalization at schools. Along with a Diversity Plan, this school also started a Board-level committee on Diversity and, as the Head

explained, "which we felt was important— as a Board—was important to affirm our commitment to the work" (Head of School).

Beyond setting up a structure that supports Diversity work, this school and its Board committed to consistent opportunities for education of the Board itself in the area of Diversity. The Administration of the school, together with the Board, was actively seeking to integrate Diversity into the existing structure of the Board, both in representation in the form of a committee and in reporting at Board and committee meetings:

> We made a commitment actually two years ago on [the Board's School Life] committee that um…at every meeting of that committee, that there would be attention paid to Diversity—either a report from [the Diversity Coordinator] or from a task force or an… another agenda item relating to our Diversity Plan. In fact, last year at every meeting of that committee [the Diversity Coordinator] reported on one element of the Diversity Plan and how we're doing against it. Because we decided that every thing that that committee did had to be done at least partly through the lens of Multiculturalism. That's pretty significant (Head of School).

I agree.

Finally, this same school has created educational opportunities for its Board members and other power players to learn about and deepen their knowledge of inequality in Independent schools, in the larger American society, and in the world.

> We had a Board and Administration and Parent's Association retreat… and we brought in people who had done the work—[at other schools]. And we did this weekend retreat, and it wasn't always comfortable, but we also spent some Board meetings having the trustees do readings. We were lucky enough to have a couple of trustees who were committed (Head of School).

It is undeniable that if schools are truly seeking to make change at their institutions, the Boards of Trustees must be involved and committed to that change. Those schools that, despite push-back and discomfort, seek out opportunities to have their Boards engage with issues of Diversity

and inequality are making a clear and obvious statements about their intentions to integrate Diversity work into the culture of their institution.

Conclusion

The extent to which a school commits to including issues of Diversity in its school program is clear evidence of the level of commitment of a school toward addressing issues of Diversity. Further, the type of programming, the material covered, the designation of "voluntary" or "required", and the audience for whom it is intended all contribute to illuminating the goal or goals of a school's Diversity program.

Diversity programming brings up resistance from privileged white folks in schools. Whether this resistance stems from frustration from being "excluded" or fear of losing existing power within the institution, few findings in this study were so vastly consistent as the fact of white resistance to Diversity programming.

All of the evidence gathered thus far contributes both to a new, emerging definition of "Diversity" and continued evidence of racism in Independent schools. These parallel notions will be explored in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter 5: The Meaning of Diversity

Language: "The Work" and Other Terms

Like any other social group, Independent schools and those working with Independent schools are in a continual state of developing, defining, and changing their language. Language pertaining to Diversity is no exception. Efforts that began as "racial integration" have gone through verbal shape shifting over the decades. To a certain extent, those in the inner circle of practitioners of these efforts have taken to calling it, simply, "The Work" both as a shibboleth and in an effort to find a common term to use instead of the variety of labels attached to the same efforts in different institutions. One Head of School began his explanation of efforts in the following way, "Well this whole area of work, or 'The Work', as we, as we say…" (Head of School).

However, schools cannot simply put "The Work" on their websites and expect visitors to understand what "The Work" means. Schools have each gone through their own history with terminology and have come to rationalize their choices. The excerpts below come from participants working at two different schools:

> We went through the period of "Diversity", and then we went to "Multiculturalism", then we came back to "Diversity". Now we've kind of gotten into "Equity and Justice" as being kind of the terms used for "The Work" as we call it, quote, unquote (Diversity Coordinator).

> To me, the word [sic] "Cultural" and "Multicultural" states [sic] what we're, states what we're doing better than the other [terms]. "Inclusion" sounds sort of kumbaya. Nothing wrong with kumbaya, love camp fire, love singing, and love inclusion. But – include, "Inclusion" is sort of a copout too. I can include people, but am I really respecting them? Am I really, really doing the hard work that's involved? (Head of School).

So varied are the terms for this work that several participants offered their published definitions of each of the involved terms. The first excerpt below comes from an NAIS representative.

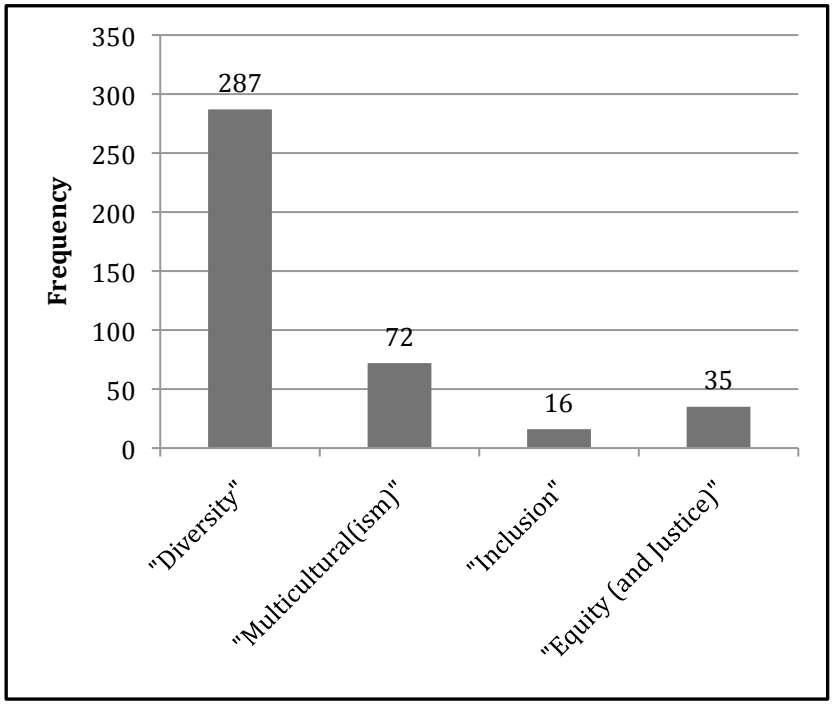
> The first paradigm is "Diversity", which is about the numbers and is quantifiable, "Multiculturalism", which is about building and sustaining a community around the four Ps: people, policies, programs, and practices, and "Equity and Justice" is how you sustain that (NAIS Representative).

Diversity Directions, is a consulting group that is specifically designed to work with Independent schools. Diversity Directions is led by Christine Savini, a woman frequently associated with Diversity work in Independent schools as a result of her establishment of the "Milton Diversity Institute" and following "Independent School Diversity Seminar". These programs are well known and respected within the Independent school system. This is evident in the fact that over half of the school personnel interviewed for this project had participated in one of these programs. Diversity Directions published the next set of definitions (abridged).

> **Diversity**
> is who we are. It is a quantitative and evolving representation of gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, family structure, language, socio-economic status, physical ability, appearance, learning ability, and religious affiliation.
>
> **Multicultural Practice**
> is the qualitative partner of Diversity. Multicultural Practice means acting on the commitment to create an inclusive school and classroom environment, instructional strategies, communication skills, staffing, curriculum, relationships, materials, resources, and ongoing professional development based on multiple cultural perspectives.
>
> **Inclusion**
> is a quality in an organization's policies, programs and practices that gives everyone the opportunity to participate fully, and values the talents, background and viewpoints they bring to the institutional culture. Diversity is the quantitative foundation from which to establish inclusion and effective multicultural practices will sustain inclusion.
>
> **Equity and Justice**
> focuses on empowerment and co-ownership of the community in strategically building on and sustaining Diversity, multiculturalism, and inclusivity.
>
> (Diversity Directions)

Despite all of the effort gone into developing and defining new terms, school personnel still use "Diversity" as the primary term to describe their efforts in this area. Figure 4 below catalogs the number of times that each of the terms defined by Diversity Directions was used by current school faculty and administrators in their interviews with me. Overwhelmingly, "Diversity" remains the most frequently uttered of these terms.

Figure 4: "Diversity" Term Usage in Interview Data



In this chapter, I will use the term "Diversity" to signify a school's work in any of the defined areas above for two reasons. First, for the sake of clarity, it is easier to refer to similar work with the same name when the difference the commonly used terms is truly semantic. Second, for the sake of anonymity, it is more responsible as a researcher not to refer to the specific names or labels given by certain schools as that would compromise their ability to remain anonymous

participants in this study. I felt that it was correct to adopt the term "Diversity", rather than the other terms used, for two reasons. First, "Diversity" was used with much more frequency than any other similar term. Second, "Diversity" doesn't seem to have the positive or negative spin attached to it that some participants did attach to the terms "Multiculturalism" and "Inclusion"[15]. The worst that a participant may say about use of the term "Diversity" is that it is not as current as the other terms. However, even a simple count of usage among participants, as shown above, negates that critique.

The Meaning of "Diversity"

When "Diversity" first started to appear in Independent schools, it was without question a euphemism for racial Diversity and issues of access along race lines. To a large extent, the day-to-day usage of "Diversity" still signals a focus on race. "…People always boil Diversity down to it's simplest factor—which are Black/White issues. They can't help it" (Admissions Director). And still, "Diversity" acts as a euphemism for "race"—a word seemingly uncomfortable for many people to speak. The following excerpts clarify that race is the central issue of Diversity and that, for many, Diversity means racial Diversity.

> More families are saying now, "well we want a diverse", meaning "we want more kids of color, because coming from [an affluent suburban town], we don't have a lot of them, and we think, we want our kids to be exposed to those kids of color because we know they're gonna be in college…" (Admissions Officer).

> They don't even say it, [they say] "well we have to have some Diversity", like well we have Diversity: we have boys we have girls, we have soccer players and we have field hockey players, you mean racial and ethnic Diversity (Admissions Officer).

> The number one thing I hear when a school contacts my colleague to try to book

[15] This point is made clear by the participant's explanation above that his interpretation of "Inclusion" was a negative one.

> me, not to try but to book me is, almost in an apologetic kind of confession way in saying, "we're not very diverse". Which for me is code for we're not very racially diverse, and we want to understand why. Because, um, Diversity is far broader than what they're thinking. They…so, one is a lack of comfort in coming out and saying, "we're worried about…we're worried that we don't have any people of color, and how can we…how could we improve that…that issue in our school?" (NAIS Representative).

Aside from race, the most frequently brought-up topic under the umbrella of Diversity was sexual orientation. Increased awareness of heterosexism across the country is reflected in these schools as a hot button issue. At every school in this sample, the school supported a Gay-Straight alliance (GSA); several schools in this study did not support racial affinity groups. Along with the institutional support of a GSA, school personnel also reported that sexual orientation was on their radar.

> Um, we were beginning to wrestle with sexual orientation a bit more (NAIS Representative).

> Now, sexual orientation is something that…I don't know where to put that, 'cause we have no—we have no way of making that a mirror for people—yet. You know, in the system, is there a place for there to be two mothers? You know, the drop down menus are all Mr. or Mrs. or…Within the system, your experience is seen as not normal. You know?...It started to hit me like, wow. It's just fraught with straight privilege. Assumed heterosexuality (Admissions Officer).

The increased and increasing importance of sexual orientation as a Diversity topic was made clear both by direct statements from participants as well as by the way that "sexual orientation" was often tagged on to the end of a list of Diversity examples.

> …let's talk about race or class or sexual identity or what have you (Head of School).

> And what I like to do is layer, so it's like okay, what we talked about last time was race, now can we talk about race and class? Or last time we talked about gender, now gender and sexual orientation (Diversity Coordinator).

For some schools, Diversity is treated as a grab bag of topics: the school administration selects a Diversity topic upon which to focus and then they can check off the Diversity box. This was specifically the case with regard to sexual orientation. As a result of sexual orientation being seen as a very progressive—dare I say trendy—issue, school personnel who feel that their schools are doing a "good job" (Admissions Director) with addressing issues of sexual orientation as a result feel that they are doing a "good job" with Diversity, more generally.

One school that participated in this project had an active GSA and boasted more "out" gay and lesbian students than its neighboring schools. However, the school lagged behind the other schools with its efforts in the area of race. The administration felt that racial affinity groups were "more divisive than inclusive" (Admissions Director). This school did not have any person whose job it was to lead its Diversity efforts. The administration felt that "if you choose one person to head the Diversity program, there are groups that get better attention than others" (Admissions Director). However, this school was more limited in its Diversity focus than any other school that participated in this project. Their Diversity program was almost entirely limited to sexual orientation. And this school was the only participating school without a Diversity Coordinator. Go figure. The school's reasoning was not sound. At the end of each interview, I asked the participant if there was any way in which I could be helpful to them in his or her Diversity efforts, and this question yielded valuable data. For all but one participant, this question generated a discussion on the available academic literature on Diversity. All but one participant was interested to find out if I knew of any academic texts or resources that could support their work. The administrator from this particular school, though, simply shook her head and said, "no".

The Road to "Inclusion"

Despite some schools' focus on specific issues within Diversity, and despite the tendency to use "Diversity" as code for "racial Diversity", the focus of "The Work" has expanded tremendously since "Diversity" first appeared on the Independent school scene. "Diversity" appeared in the title of a number of articles in the NAIS publication, Independent School Magazine. The subject matter addressed in these articles in the last decade included "cultural" Diversity, "gender" Diversity, "ecological" Diversity, and "learning style" Diversity, among others (Romney, Ferron and Hill 2008; NAIS 2005; McDonald and Riendeau 2003). An NAIS representative spoke to the history of the language used as evidence of encompassing more than just race: "And the language, if you notice…well, I've seen earlier versions and the language before was more race-based and the language now is more Diversity based" (NAIS Representative). Other participants also spoke directly to the history of Diversity: "it started out, I think, based in race, but I think very quickly people saw that it was more than race, and it…a lot of the work NAIS did was based on what they call the eight cultural identifiers. So, race was there, class, gender, religion, ah…ageism, sexism, ah… homophobia…" (Diversity Coordinator). Despite noting the "eight" identifiers, this participant stopped his recitation after only seven; he forgot "ability" which is the broadly accepted eighth identifier. The Diversity Coordinator quoted above, by citing the NAIS, underlined that each school alone did not generate its definition of Diversity. Rather, the use of "Diversity" and the meaning of "Diversity" are social phenomena within the Independent school system. Much like Omi and Winant's (1994) theory of racial formation, which allows for the constant, social production and reproduction of "race", "Diversity" is constantly formed and reformed. The similarity of how various schools currently define Diversity speaks directly to this social phenomenon.

> Bonnie: When you say "diverse", what are you talking about?
> Participant: I mean, in every way: racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, religiously, ah, globally, ah..um…just, ah, perspectives. (Head of School).

> I think sexuality, gender, socio-economics, race, age, geographic Diversity, these are things that are [part of Diversity] (Admissions Director).

> …If we didn't talk about all kinds of Diversity….um….religious, socio-economic, um, um, sexual orientation, um, ethnic, um, um, physical ability, cognitive ability, that we were, that we were not supporting our mission, frankly, and our culture as a school (Head of School).

One Admissions Director put it simply, "The Office of Diversity does a lot of things and we're trying to do more things" (Admissions Director). In a way, the generality of this last excerpt seems to be the most accurate with regard to the development of the Diversity movement. People are always trying to "do more": to expand Diversity until it houses everyone. One Diversity Consultant offered me some advice: "I think it would be good in terms of your developing professional areas around this is that you decide what are the areas of my expertise within this. And, um, because it's very comprehensive. And because it involves almost everything" (Diversity Consultant).

Why is the momentum of the Diversity movement one of expansion? Why is it that the Independent School system seems to have a limited attention span when it comes to specific topics relating to Diversity—specifically to racial Diversity? Several respondents pointed out that racial Diversity, as well as other forms of Diversity, is a politicized issue, and schools do not want to hang out in the realm of politics for too long.

> And as soon as we talk about race or ethnicity or religion or sexual orientation, sexual identity, it becomes politicized. And it becomes seen as a negative (Diversity Coordinator).

> Equity and justice are moral issues, and I think they've gotten—because our nation had to move politically in order to achieve equity and justice for some people, continuing having to do that, it stays in the political place, but I think schools can't be in that political place for too long (Diversity Consultant).

Perhaps the problem is not that these issues are political, it's that these issues are often on the opposite political side of those who historically have attended Independent schools. Investigating "equity and justice" from the perspective of those excluded by the power structure means investigating the current power structure that enables the wealthy to hoard the benefits of wealth (Tilly 1998): in this case, Independent schooling. This may shed some light on why schools gravitate toward addressing certain identifiers within the "big eight" instead of others. For instance, race and class are the historic and continued lines of separation between the social group in Independent schools and the rest of society. To invite in less wealthy, non-White families would be introducing entirely new members to the social group. But somewhere within those original White, wealthy families are members whose sexual identities are other than "heterosexual". And somewhere within those original families are members who have a "disability"—physical or learning. So by seeking to address those aspects of Diversity, schools are moving in a more "progressive" direction without actually having to change the social group of their institution.

As more evidence of the politicization of Diversity issues, and the selectivity of support for certain Diversity issues, participants spoke to ways in which parents bring attention to issues that would benefit themselves and their children, and they work to include these issues under the umbrella of "Diversity". "…And people have their own agendas. For instance, learning differences. People are very much now, and there's a lot of conversations in Independent schools of wanting to wrap that up into Diversity…That way the elite can have a reason to get

their kids tested to get more accommodations" (Admissions Director). This respondent went on to insist that learning differences are vital for schools to consider and to put resources into, however, his point was that by wrapping up learning differences into Diversity, it was a way for the elite to make Diversity benefit them. "Learning differences" is a far cry from racial inequality—especially when the ones who are highlighting the importance of "learning differences" are those who already have every educational advantage that money can buy.

On the other hand, experienced Diversity practitioners want to make progress, and they will take whatever routes enable them to progress. Diversity practitioners assert in unison that the way to make progress is to find ways to include everybody in their Diversity efforts and, specifically, to make even the wealthy and the White feel that they and their children benefit from Diversity.

> Because if it's about those people over there, you know, it's like what is it to me? Somewhere there has to be enough of a connection even if I talk about somebody else—that there is, you know I need to understand it, I need to feel it in a palpable way. You know, what's in it for me? (Head of School).

> What had helped us enormously in the work is shifting White parents' understanding from…they formerly thought this was just about closing the achievement gap for Black kids, giving them access, to hey, we all learn better in diverse environments. My kids will benefit from this, too (Head of School).

> Um…there was a, one of my mentors…used to say, …she would say you need to get them on channel WIFM—what's in it for me (Diversity Consultant).

One Diversity Consultant put numbers and a strategy on her theory of inclusion:

> I think in any institution, around this work, you'll have about twenty, twenty-five percent or so who are going to be on the vanguard. You're gonna have fifty percent who are what I call people of good will, who if they have the proper information and training, will move along. And then you'll have a quarter who'll be resisters. And how do you get the people in the middle? Cause if you get the people in the middle, the resistors will either come, eventually come along or they'll leave. But you've got to get that middle ground. And I think…you can

> get that middle ground by starting to talk about inclusion…People have to feel that it's about us and not just about them (Diversity Consultant).

"Inclusion" is the new form of Diversity. Inclusion is an obvious and natural extension of the ever-expanding meaning of Diversity. In the distant past lies the issue of Black American access to historically White schools. In the more immediate past lie issues of inequality, more generally. Today, Independent schools are speaking about hearing different voices: the modern-day relative of celebrating different cultures at a potluck dinner. Participants expressed this clearly:

> …[we are] trying to be inclusive, trying to make sure that different lenses and perspectives are being respected and looked upon (Diversity Coordinator).

> Diversity is not about, you know, just about equity and justice, but it's really about how do you get the broadest and varied ideas on to the table that you can have a tug-of-war about and then try to figure out what's best (Head of School).

Perhaps even more telling than the descriptions of an Inclusion philosophy are the reasons that faculty and administrators give in support of current efforts toward an Inclusion program. It is not about equity. It is about cultural fluency.

> I mean, this is who you're going to be interacting with. And you're going to come across many different ideas and thoughts, and you should be able to deal with those ideas and thoughts in a safe place and have those conversations about these things and being able to form your own identity from um, from a place where you're being influenced from many different directions, not just one (Faculty Member).

> And one of our teachers said, "well, they should really call it Cosmopolitanism"...and the whole idea is that I want students to not fear other people that they don't know (Diversity Coordinator).

> I think that's the fundamental reason for doing this—you want to give…you want to prepare kids for, if it's high school or if it's college or if it's beyond, you know, most of us are going to be working with people in different…ah…who've been raised differently or raised elsewhere or with a different religion or different background or different race or ethnicity, and I think the idea is to expose kids to

> that…and so that they're prepared is the wrong word, but that they've had some experience navigating that (Head of School).

One Head of School described a new class offering that he felt represented the cutting-edge of Diversity work:

> There's an exciting, it's just a mini-course that's being taught in the Upper School in February. So I have my Chinese teacher and my French teacher they are gonna collaborate with the two classes. And at first you'd think, you know, why would a Chinese and French teacher teach, you know, work together? But then we're gonna add a business component. And we happen to have two [business] executives…work here. They are French, conduct a lot of business in China so what we're going to try to tell the kids is, you know, if you were to have a joint French-Chinese venture, what are the issues you would have to deal with? How would you go about it? …So this is more a matter of, you know, how can you make money, earn a livelihood somewhere else that you are unfamiliar with? And what we know about successful businesses: they actually get to know the place and the culture and the customs (Head of School).

In an effort to make even the wealthy and the White feel as though they benefit from Diversity, schools are losing their focus on addressing inequality. Inclusion is now about preparing the students to be more successful in their places of business by exposing them to a variety of perspectives and cultures: the perfect education for future CEOS in a globalized marketplace.

Inclusion and Its Ironies

Using the rationalization of an increasingly diverse and global working-world, schools are deliberately working to create a utopian school for their students in terms of constructing a diverse environment. This is done in order to expose students to a variety of cultures and perspectives. The following excerpts speak directly to the intentionality of this constructed experience:

> I think, you know, the true vision is probably, if you are going to have Diversity in such a way, you know whether it's bringing in people of color or whatever it is,

> if you can get to a place where it's part of the normative experience, so let's say you walk into an AP class, and you cannot predict that only White kids are going to sit in there or only boys are going to sit in there. Or the science and math department chair, you know, it could be an African American woman or whatever it is. You know, that would be the kind of utopia that there is…you just can't tell. So a certain blend (Head of School).
>
> That's the experience we're trying to construct for people (Head of School).

The word "utopia" implies an unreachable future: a "Plato's Republic", as one Head of School offered. Other participants put a subtly different spin on their desire to create a diverse environment in their schools: they spoke about creating a microcosm of the existing community outside. One Head of School explained:

> I mean, I think it's…it's always been an attempt to…you know, schools should be preparing kids for the future and sort of a microcosm—this is what I say here, at this school at our open houses, I say that in the true progressive, sort of, philosophy, schools should be a microcosm of, of the larger society. And so, that helps us think about Diversity in a way that we want to make sure that our student body, sort of, looks like, you know, the…the community outside of the school building (Head of School).
>
> Um, and I think we would think that we do a…we do a good job, not necessarily a better job than other schools, but we do a good job of trying to replicate what life is really like for kids or for people as they grow up and develop into, into adults (Head of School).

The irony lies in the idea that participants used the language of creating a "microcosm" or of preparing students for the world into which they will enter. Even the Head of School who adopted a language of "utopia" later spoke directly to a future diverse workplace for their students. But in what community or business place is there a true Diversity of peoples? America remains racially segregated in its residential communities (Oliver and Shapiro 2006; Massey and Denton 1993). America's workplaces are segregated by race and sex (Charles and Grusky 2004; Okamoto 2003; Kaufman 2002; Grodsky and Pager 2001). It seems that schools are trying to

naturalize what is unnatural in modern America: Diversity is simply not the reality. America is a segregated country in many, many ways. Instead of speaking to the segregation, speaking to the inequality, schools are speaking of a larger world that simply does not exist. But in order for schools to admit that this "microcosm" is equivalent to the "utopia" toward which schools may be reaching, in order for schools to admit that Diversity is a goal and not a reality, school personnel would be forced to speak about the inequality and segregation that do exist and that is the reality. This would threaten the legitimacy of the current power structure—the same structure that privileges the wealthy and the White and allowed them a place at an Independent school in the first place.

Perhaps, with the best of intentions, school personnel are, indeed, attempting to create a utopian environment in their school knowing full-well that their school may be the only place that students experience a truly diverse environment. Perhaps their efforts would even be considered noble. But it is nothing less than confusing to try to understand why educators—knowledge conveyors, no less—do not seem to be aware of the segregated spaces into which their students will be entering. At the very least, educators are not speaking to me about it, and I am certain that the vast majority of educators are not speaking to their students about it. For what are students really being prepared?

I struggle with the inherent oxymoron of the "inclusive" Independent school. Independent schools, as I have written before, are exclusive institutions. They are by definition, exclusive. That's the whole point. Independent schools handpick their community: from students to faculty to staff all the way on up to the Board. The history and tradition of Independent schools is one of exclusion. Exclusion is fundamentally how these schools create and maintain a position of power within the broader educational community and perpetuate the mystique of their

superiority. If any student and every student could attend an Independent school, then there would be nothing special about having graduated from one. But there is.

Several participants spoke to the fundamental exclusivity of Independent schools and the irony of "inclusion". An NAIS representative put it plainly:

> You know it's somewhat of a paradox that we're even having this conversation of inclusivity, particularly when it comes to race because by our very nature, we're exclusive, you know, we don't accept every family, we don't accept every student, we are, you know, Independent schools—we're private schools, right? (NAIS Representative).

The fact that this participant chose to highlight this paradox "particularly when it comes to race" requires some elucidation. These schools are historically White institutions. I recently attended a conference where one presenter pointed out that since we acknowledge certain institutions as "Historically Black" (HBCUs) that we should acknowledge the others as "Historically White". That prompted some laughter. Our status quo in America, and particularly in the Independent school system, is one of historic whiteness, and this demands recognition.

The whiteness of Independent schools was neither accidental nor innocent: whiteness was protected, time and time again, throughout the history of Independent schools. One example followed the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling that prohibited the segregation of public schools. Reactionary private schools were established as all-White havens that protected segregated schooling. Documented White flight into private schools occurred in all areas of the country (Clotfelter 2004, Green 2004). Another example of the purposeful whiteness of Independent schools comes from a description given by one participant upon arriving as a first year teacher at an Independent school:

> …So I noticed that it was very White. And "White" meaning like an established White. It was like it was on purpose that it was White. It was like, we're here. We don't have any signs about where we are, there's no sign at the end of the

> street, there is no sign at the gate to say, "this is an exclusive environment". If you are here you have to have been invited or you have an on-going cycle of connection with this place (Admissions Director).

Yet, while participants in this study were willing to claim the historic and continued exclusivity of Independent schools, the negative side of exclusivity was always rationalized away for one reason or another. One common follow-up to an explanation of exclusivity was by placing emphasis on the few poor, Black students that did benefit from an Independent school education. A Diversity Consultant offered the example of President Obama, who attended an Independent school in Hawaii, followed by a lengthier example of Governor Deval Patrick, the current Governor of Massachusetts, who also attended an Independent school:

> And our schools are, they are elite institutions. We don't have to apologize for that if we don't behave in a way that's elitist. Um, we can provide, we can change lives…that's why I said Deval Patrick is one of many examples…And you're not just changing an individual life, you're changing a life for generations. When I think of, you know, not only was Deval's life changed, but his children's life. What would his children's life have been if he was still in Chicago, south side. So you're changing generations of lives (Diversity Consultant).

It is common practice now to rebut an assertion of inequality with the exception to the rule. Independent schools are no longer exclusively White institutions, they are predominantly White institutions, and they serve as a foundation for graduates who are "success stories"—for whom elite education most simply changed their lives. Absolutely. But those students are not common.

Other participants emphasized that these relatively few students of color who do attend Independent schools will have an impact on future generations of students of color. One teacher explained his "role" as a Black male role model for Black students, "at these institutions, especially knowing that…probably these kids, as well, are going to be opening some doors,

hopefully for other kids in the future" (Faculty Member).

Feeling the need to justify working in an exclusive environment, several participants struggled to find words and their language was riddled with hesitation. One Head of School offered the following:

> So if you have one percent, whoever goes through our system…ah, doesn't matter whether you're a high achiever or not, most individuals will come out of the other end…ah, you know, quite, quite qualified to do all kinds of…wonderful things. Now some of the folks are going to be…you know, folks of color. So I think…ah…most of the individuals who are going to be as successful as, as any other, so I think…you know, as we prepare…you know, students and alumnae to engage in other endeavors and become leaders, you know some of that…you know, will, will, will rub off, and I think ah…so that certainly is a role (Head of School).

Independent school educators looked at educating the few students of color as the beginning of an expanding web of influence. Those who graduate from Independent schools will help others who will help others, and so on. Independent school educators know that they are training future leaders of the business, political, academic, scientific and other realms of influence. Credentialization (Collins 1979) starts early, and Independent schools stake their livelihood on their ability to open those doors of status and power for their students.

Justifications of the elite nature of Independent schooling did not stop with highlighting the relatively few success stories of students of color. Participants also justified their work within the system by the effect that they hoped to have on the wealthy, White students who were born into elite families and whose elite future was predetermined. I know this to be true because when I worked in an Independent school and felt nagging guilt about educating the already privileged, I used the same logic. Clearly, I was not the only one. One Diversity Consultant spoke to the importance of educating the future leaders. "Allies", in this case, is a term reserved for privileged people who actively work against the inequality from which they benefit.

> Yes, so creating institutions that create allies who can also make changes in our society um, because Independent schools have been, always have been, graduating individuals who become key players in our society. And if those people have the right values, we're going to be having a powerful impact (Diversity Consultant).

A self-identified African American man spoke at length about the internal struggle that he faced in choosing to become an Independent school educator. He found his own justification for working in such a privileged space:

> I said wow, yeah these people don't need me, there are so many resources here there's so much privilege here and I'm just giving them one more resource. But then I thought about it, and I said, you know there are those in the trenches, right, on the front lines on grassroots who are doing the work, right? And I can be there, as well. But there aren't many of me on the other side where privilege is, to show people of privilege…Listen, the children I work with will one day go on to be CEOs of companies, own their own companies and prior to me coming here, [this school] had not hired an African American male in the Upper School –an African American period in the Upper School in its 80-some odd year history. I was the first, right…But they needed to see somebody of color in authority in academia so that when they went on to, to…hire in their companies or they went out into the world that they understood that there are um, people of color ah, who have integrity who are brilliant (Diversity Coordinator).

This logic creates tension for me. On the one hand, it is true. Changing the power structure from within can lead to changes in the system of power, itself. However, while the logic may be worth exploring, the reality of the situation does not support this logic. Those schools who are truly revolutionizing the education of the elite and future elite are few and very far between. With Diversity programming for both students and faculty that is largely optional and rarely integrated into the category of "academics", the mass of students will not be greatly changed in attitude.

Those rare schools that are bucking the system and the systemic inequality are not putting their focus on influencing the already elite. They are dealing with issues of access and

confronting their exclusivity as something to be changed.

The Meaning of Diversity Work

So, after all of this, what is the real meaning of Diversity work? There are pockets of well-meaning, well-intentioned groups and individuals who are working to create less exclusive environments in Independent schools. These individuals, though, are the same ones whose justifications of working with elite students and families are cited above.

The most cynical part of me sees Diversity work as one big PR effort to make historically White and historically wealthy institutions appear less racist and less classist. It is about the appearance of equality. I have watched schools "change", but only up to a certain point. Diversity is welcomed as long as it does not interfere with the "real" work of education. Those who require financial aid are welcomed as long as their needs fit within the established budget and as long as their presence does not anger the full-paying customers. This reminds me of the classic Henry Ford line: the customer can choose any color car he wants, as long as it's black. You can have Diversity here as long as fits with what we are prepared to offer.

Students of mine, when I was teaching at Independent schools, used to complain when the publications office would ask students to be in pictures for the schools' magazines. The White students were frustrated because they were never asked to be in a photo, and the students of color complained that they were always asked to be in a photo—and they knew why. One participant with a history in publications echoed this finding: "so at school, there were almost no pictures of kids of color, and faculty of color, and so I started to really focus our school publications on some of these issues, you know, slowly, incrementally. And starting to change the face of the school—the public face of the school" (Diversity Consultant). A quick glance at

school websites and publications confirms that schools intentionally present themselves as racially diverse. The publications are more diverse than the schools.

Beyond photos, Diversity events themselves are PR campaigns. One Diversity Coordinator admitted, with pride, "It is, you know, it's public relations because…we have a PR person here on campus, and she's trying to give it a presence and trying to, you know, highlight it. And so, I have to bear in mind what we do, and how that can be translated to an event that can be informational and newsworthy, and sell what I'm doing, and help to propel what I'm doing to the next step" (Diversity Coordinator). No matter what the next step turns out to be, for now, Diversity is about PR.

Conclusion

The current meaning of "Diversity" is vastly different from the original meaning of "Diversity". Far from issues of racial inequality and access, the meaning of "Diversity" is ever-expanding, and with each "included" group or issue, attention to racial inequality is muted or diluted or simply gone.

Largely unwilling to challenge the elite and exclusive nature of Independent schools, Diversity practitioners are choosing to work within the establishment. "Inclusion" and working within the establishment only serves to strengthen and legitimize the existing structures of inequality. Very little must actually change in a school for that school to be able to claim progress along the lines of "Diversity". Why are schools, then, engaging in what amounts to little more than a public relations campaign?

The findings of this chapter make it clear: addressing issues of racism is not the focus of "Diversity". The logical question that follows, then, is this: to what extent is racism present in

these predominantly White, Independent schools? The next chapter seeks to answer this very question.

Chapter 6: Evidence of Continued Racism

In this era of "post-racialism", of "color-blindness", it is essential to point out the many, varied ways in which race and racism are still daily factors in Independent schools in the US. Yes, we have a Black president; racism still exists in America. Yes, there are more students of color in historically White schools; that doesn't mean that the situation of people of color in Independent schools is the same as the situation of White people in Independent schools. Evidence of continued racism was found throughout this study.

Experiences of Racism

The numerical data presented in Chapter 2 illuminate the decreasing representation of Black students on Independent school campuses. This, alone, is evidence of systemic inequality against Black young people. Beyond the numbers, though, Black folks on campus recount vivid experiences of racism around which they were forced to navigate in order to 'succeed' at these exclusive, predominantly White institutions.

Overt Racism

Racism is a campus fixture. Despite much of the literature written today describing the covert, rather than overt, nature of racism in the contemporary United States, there are still everyday encounters that reek with the stench of in-your-face racism. As I wrote in a previous chapter, one Head of School described a recent situation at his school. A faculty member found a "note written --downstairs on the bottom floor—on an envelope that was supposed to be people putting in suggestions for Black history month. The note read, 'niggers suck.' That's all it said, it wasn't even a note, it was just 'niggers suck'" (Head of School).

Black Men and Racism

Much of the reported acts of racism on campus were directed at Black men. The intersection of race and gender within this study brought to light the image of the dangerous Black man. Two young Black male teachers in their early 30s each told a similar story of their experience as a high school student at Independent prep schools. Granted, their time in high school was not as recent as the above episode, but the striking commonality—and the fact that both men chose to tell me the story—speaks volumes.

> When I was 14, and the first person I met at [the school] asked me if I've ever been shot because I was from the Bronx… (Faculty Member).
>
> When I was in 8th grade, a girl asked me if I'd been shot…I was kinda taken aback. It kinda hurt. But I said, 'No, why would you ask that?' 'Oh, well you know, you live in the Bronx, and you know' Blah, blah, blah…A year later a different girl asked the same question (Admissions Director).

While perhaps not carrying the same impact as "niggers suck", the bias exhibited by different people at different schools speaks to the pervasiveness of the image some people hold of Black men: violent. A Black woman participant explained her perspective of why there are so few Black male teachers in Independent schools, "they're not gonna hire a man cause a man's too dangerous…Because he's not trusted around our children. You can't trust him around our children…" (Diversity Coordinator). The same participant at another moment was talking with her colleague and with me. The two colleagues were trading stories about faculty responses to students of color and to issues of inequality. She gave an example of teachers' responses to Black, male students:

> Like, you teach the brothers, you lock them out of choice, you don't have expectations of them, you're scared of them, but they know it. You know, so your teacher is afraid of your student and you're wondering how they're supposed to move through the experience of your school and you don't think it has anything to do with you. And you teach history! (Diversity Coordinator).

Clearly there is a persistent image of Black men—students and teachers, alike—as dangerous, violent, and scary. This combined with the racist note written at one school begins to show that racial prejudice, overt and subtle, is a part of Independent schools.

Microaggressions

A number of respondents reported interactions that are starting to be labeled as "microaggressions". Sue (2010) defines "microaggressions" as "the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group" (5). A question about being shot because you live in the Bronx would certainly be considered a microaggression. A Diversity Consultant spoke of "microaggressions" and of Sue's book in particular as being cutting-edge and relevant. She told the story of a staff member at one school who was continually questioned: "What? you live at home? You don't have your own place now?" (Diversity Consultant). Every time a colleague questioned her about this, the staff member felt her economic separation from her colleagues: she couldn't afford her own place. The Diversity Consultant used this as an example of the small, steady ways in which people are made to feel different or less-than. She explained further, "but at a lot of the schools I'm working with, people are sharing microaggressions. Um, the unconscious, um…comment that is painful made with all the good intentions but …intention versus impact" (Diversity Consultant). Although she offered the language of "microaggressions", she was by no means the only person to report having witnessed such interactions.

Microaggressions stem from ingrained stereotypes and myths that we have about a target group. A frequently reported stereotype was that people of color were less capable than White people; underrepresentation was, in one way or another, a result of weaker ability. One former Diversity Coordinator explained the story created around the fact that attrition among students of color was higher than among White students.

> And we noticed that there were kids of color leaving the school, the attrition rate was much higher. [The Administrator] who was admissions, started doing some fact checking. The faculty's sense was, oh they were leaving school because they really can't do the work. And, uh, [the Administrator] started looking at kids' grades and why they were leaving. Or some people would say, oh well I think they got into…there were a lot of myths, we create myths. And myths were usually, couldn't do the work or discipline. And when he, he, he started to do fact checking around this, and to really look into grades and to look at previous disciplinary records, he found that that's not why they were leaving (Diversity Consultant).

One Head of school described a situation at a Board meeting for the school,

> I tried to make a case several years ago that we should, that we should set a target, we should have these targets in our student body and for our faculty [for percentages of people of color]. And very well meaning trustees questioned that. Saying, that, golly, you can't do that, you're gonna dilute quality…And it wasn't because the people in there were overtly racist, but those comments reflected a lens that felt racist. Because the assumption was to increase the number of Black people or Asian people at the school you had to reduce quality. Think about that (Head of School).

From these questions of quality, there seems to be a sense of White protectiveness over the institutions that they see as theirs.

Intrusion by outsiders may be discouraged with talk of "quality", but there are also migroaggressions that are direct responses to the presence of students and faculty of color. One Diversity Coordinator explained that, "Um, so there are a lot of issues like that for us…um, that people, you know, and…and…they often say things that you just go,…woah" (Diversity

Coordinator). He gave an example of one such interaction; he witnessed a tour being given to White alums of the school. After "seeing Asians and Blacks and Latinos walking in the hall, and Indians…I was coming down the hall and I heard somebody go, 'why are these people here?' You know? And it's like, excuse me? But you don't get into that. You take it" (Diversity Coordinator). The fact that he feels like he has to "take it" is another example of the hostility and lack of belonging felt by people of color at historically White schools.

Questioning the Sincerity of Diversity Efforts

Respondents, particularly Black respondents, spoke to these everyday incidents by questioning the sincerity of the alleged desire of White school personnel to racially integrate their student body and faculty. For example, an admissions staff member talked about recruiting efforts and the complexity in comparing the relative "strength" and "weakness" of applicants. She was left questioning the intentions of the admissions office:

> …When I piece it together with some of the other conversations we've been having about who do we recruit and who we need to be careful not to recruit, and what backgrounds do they have, and who's weak and not weak. I mean, it's a little more complicated because these students don't have the same profile, they just don't. But they don't come from the same school systems. My question is, so how do we, if we really want to diversify by race and class, …do we want to diversify by race and class? Don't know if we do… (Admissions Officer).

The stagnant, and in some cases decreasing, representation of Black Americans as students in these schools support this participant's fear that schools may not really want to diversify.

The Well-Intentioned and Avoidance

Given the data cited above, it seems a natural course to question the veracity of the claims

of wanting to diversify. However, the sheer number of times that respondents couched their evidence of continued racism with claims that the people committing these micro (or macro?) aggressions are "well-intentioned" or "good" people is astonishing. This speaks to the complexity of identifying and addressing persistent issues of bias within Independent schools.

"Have a Nice Day Racism"

Independent Schools are "very polite institutions" (Diversity Consultant). They "have a culture of politeness, right? We don't really like to have difficult conversations" (Head of School). "But we're a little too polite" (Diversity Coordinator). No one wants to appear antagonistic or resistant, let alone racist. While there are examples of overt racism, as those described above, on the whole, the racial prejudice experienced in these institutions is subtle. But, as one respondent pointed out, "it's so much more powerful because it is subtle" (Diversity Coordinator). Aversive or color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva 2006) need not come from aggressively antagonistic people. The well-intentioned, these days, have even more power to perpetuate racism because their views, suggestions, and opinions are not dismissed as being anachronistic. One Diversity Coordinator explained her view of the "well-intentioned":

> …[sigh] well intentioned racism. It's 'have a nice day' racism. It's like White…well-intentioned White folks who say "I'm not racist. I love all people. I tell my kids to love all people. I don't care about color….ba ba da ba da…" They're not seeing that as equally as pernicious as someone, you know, on Youtube going "Nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger." Because they have power to enact these prejudices, these racial prejudices, that's what makes it so pernicious. You know, that's why I find that we have trouble (Diversity Coordinator).

The following excerpt from a Head of School highlights the paradox of "well-intentioned racist" that many participants voiced:

> Well, it's very difficult because, because, these are good people. Very committed to the school and sincerely wanting to do the right thing… but this is coming from a different lens, call ignorance, call it lack of experience, call it …being somewhere on the curve toward believing the right thing but not fully committed yet or not fully understanding it, whatever it is (Head of School).

How well-intentioned can racism be? Sure, we can call it any number of other names: "ignorance", a "different lens" but if the results are the same, then does it matter what we label the action? To paraphrase Thomas and Thomas (1928), Racism is real in its consequences.

Avoidance

In these schools where it is obvious that politeness is a virtue, and where difficult or "messy" conversations are undesirable, another form of aversive racism is avoiding the conversations about race and racism altogether. Power and privilege are evident by who gets to decide on the topic of conversation—in the classroom, at the faculty meeting, at the department meeting, around the Board table. Choosing not to address issues of inequality is tacitly approving the status quo. A number of respondents reported that having the "messy" (Diversity Coordinator) conversations is the first step toward addressing issues of racial inequality. However, a number of respondents also reported that the conversations were not happening. Notice, too, the language of the well-intentioned that weaves in and out of descriptions of avoidance:

> And…some people could come along on that conversation, but some people couldn't –even some people with reasonably good will (Diversity Consultant).

> Like most of our schools, not just um, um, majority culture White, upper-middle, upper crust but, frankly, doesn't do the real nitty-gritty of Diversity the way it needs to be done. Again, not because they aren't sincere, committed people, but just in terms of numbers, in terms of resources, and in terms, frankly, of the conversation (Head of School).

> So if you can, if I can, um…educate them in some way about the role of race, the role of class in our society, what's happening now, um, you know, people talk about post-racial society—there is no more racism, all that kind of stuff. But kids want to believe that. Our kids in this school from the three months that I've known them, and at my old school, one of….they don't want to have to talk about those things (Faculty Member).

> Race and class are excellent paradigms for talking about power and privilege and disadvantage. The difficulty I have is that I find that White women check out of the conversation and White men don't want to be part of the conversation when we start with that (Diversity Coordinator).

Again, the evidence from participants prompts uncomfortable yet central question: how well-intentioned are people who run from their own discomfort when faced with facts about, or even the topic of, racial inequality? Simply put, in avoiding the discussion of current racism, schools do not have to face their complicity in furthering racial inequality. Perhaps the instinct to get away from the topic of race apparent in school personnel is part of the issue. A Diversity Coordinator thought out-loud, "Yeah, race is big. I think it's bigger than we even want to admit 'cause it's such—it's painful" (Diversity Coordinator).

The above excerpts have shown the desire that individuals have to not talk about race and racism. One Head of School went as far as to say that the fact that people try to get race off of the discussion table is evidence enough that it is the most important subject to address: "the one that wants to roll off the table and never come back up on is race which tells me it's the answer. That means, the issue is race (Head of School).

Much of what I found in these interviews suggests that in avoiding the conversations of race, members of school communities tend to highlight other aspects of inequality that are apparent, but not as volatile a subject as race. Specifically, when race comes up as a topic in conversation, White adults and students often move the conversation to a different subject. The following excerpts come from faculty reporting the responses of White Board members, parents,

and students when issues of race have come up. Not all respondents attached the meaning of abandoning race with the instigation of other conversations, but the pattern across schools and personnel was clear.

One Head of School described the difficulty his Board of Trustees had when the idea of focusing on race within Diversity was brought up:

> Oh! We debated that. Because [the Diversity Consultants] made that point at our retreat. "We really chose to focus just on race", that's what they said. And I really got that, I really did, but there was a very strong push here that we not do that. That if we didn't talk about all kinds of Diversity….um….religious, socio-economic, um, um, sexual orientation, um, ethnic, um, um, physical ability, cognitive ability, that we were, that we were not supporting our mission, frankly, and our culture as a school (Head of School).

A former Diversity Coordinator at another school explained his frustration at the growing number of topics that are umbrella-ed under "Diversity":

> For instance, learning differences, people are very much now, and there's a lot of conversations in Independent schools of wanting to wrap that up into Diversity. I don't agree. I think it is somewhat a separate issue (Former Diversity Coordinator).

A Head of School was describing the school's response to an issue of racism that came up recently. The administration decided to hold an all-school assembly, and after directly addressing the issue at hand, the Head described,

> …and then a couple of the seniors, a couple White kids, our seniors are standing up there saying, "hey, before we leave, let's remember that it's not just about racism. Too many of us say things like: 'that so gay' and we've got to talk about that too" (Head of School).

It is hard to argue to a White audience that choosing to focus on issues such as learning differences and sexual orientation is evidence of bias. In fact, one Admissions Director was absolutely adamant that "moving on" from the topic of race was "progressive" (Admissions

Director). Issues such as sexual orientation and learning differences are certainly worthy of directed conversation, and those issues are being talked about and addressed--even at schools where race is the focal conversation. That sexual orientation, socio-economic status, gender, physical ability, learning differences, and other topics are addressed in schools is not the problem. The problem is that when asked to talk about and address issues related to race, White folks avoid the conversation by deferring to a different "-ism". It is true that class and race are interrelated in this country. However, the evidence showed not that people were investigating the interrelated nature of race and class. Rather, folks were avoiding the conversation of race altogether. If you introduce a conversation about socio-economic status and I respond by saying, "Class is a big issue", great. Let's talk. If you introduce a conversation about race and I respond by saying, "Class is a bigger issue", then we have a problem.

Programmatic Avoidance

Programmatically, as shown in Chapter 4, schools avoid core curriculum and programming that directly addresses issues of current, US racism. However, social mores dictate that schools demonstrate a commitment to "Diversity" or to "equity and justice". A recent trend among these schools is to expand the discussion to "globalism". There is certainly Diversity across the globe, and if a community service event helps children in fill-in-the-blank African country, then they certainly can't be accused of racism. "Somehow it becomes an easy out to: 'we're raising funds for books in ah…Namibia,' you know?" (Diversity Consultant). But what does a focus on globalism have to do with addressing the unique beast of American racism? Using the now familiar language of the well-intentioned, a Diversity Consultant spoke to this issue several times throughout her interview:

> Now what some schools have done is they got…the more confrontational approach was frightening, and some schools didn't want to go back there. They, they opted for embracing globalism (Diversity Consultant).
>
> So, what you will see at a lot of schools, you see it on their web pages...Um, this embracing globalism is a way that continues, still to exoticize some of this. And it moves away from race—I don't know if it will ever get back to it. I think the globalism route is a way to—schools have to be reactionists in some way now. The expectations of NAIS, they have to be engaged (Diversity Consultant).
>
> I think, I think in some cases, [the intentions] are good. But if you're not looking at American society, it's a way to not deal with what's going on in this country around race, class, sexual orientation, et cetera. It's a way to, to…whether it's intentionally a way, whether you intentionally want to avoid or you don't, it avoids it. It takes you out of the issues in this country (Diversity Consultant).

Another respondent, a Head of School, had similar comments about "global" issues as a stand-in for "Diversity":

> Some schools respond to the call for inclusion by focusing on global, I think a focus on global's good, but it's a copout if that's your response to Diversity. It really is a copout (Head of School).
>
> We all, we need to, we need to make sure every child has some sense of global literacy, right? Cultural literacy. No question about it…the kind of inclusion in a school we're talking about is –right? It's not global. It's, it's local. It's right here, and it's damn uncomfortable much of the time, right?...You might have the best, you have seventeen partnerships with schools around the world, right, and you're sending every kid in the…, but you're not dealing with Diversity, right? (Head of School).
>
> …To say "oh, we're really, we're so diverse because we have all this global stuff"--you should have global stuff and that's good, and you should be commended for that. But that's not a substitute for…dealing with Diversity (Head of School).

If our lens is so wide as to include the entire globe, while the picture may be beautiful, all detail and subtlety is lost. All of the jagged edges of US racism cannot be seen with such a macro perspective. Just as "inclusion" has replaced "race" in the working meaning of "Diversity", the

momentum to expand to a global perspective, sacrificing images of local pain, is clear and present in these schools.

Bullying

Another programming choice, often among middle school (typically 5th-8th grades) faculty and administration, is to address issues of racism within the broader context of "bullying". By choosing this path, schools do not speak to the specificity of racial targeting. By addressing "bullying" and not "racism" or "racial prejudice", schools speak to a common symptom of the middle school years—"bullying" and "middle school" are nearly synonymous.

Bullying is a nightmare for schools and students, and it is fundamentally about targeting meanness toward a specific person. Racism, however, is quite the opposite. Racism is fundamentally about denying individuality and systemically disadvantaging an entire group of people. In response to the push to treat racism as acts against individuals, one participant commented, "If we see it as just individualized meanness then we're not going to be able to dismantle the system that allows for those individual acts of meanness to impact peoples' lives broadly" (Diversity Coordinator). By definition, racism and bullying are very different phenomena.

Yet schools continue to belittle the societal importance of race by making it a mere sub-category. One respondent, in arguing against the need for a specific "Diversity Coordinator" at her school explained that if an "issue" comes up, it should be addressed under the purview of the upper-level administration "if it's about bullying—whether it's racial or not" (Admissions Director). Again, racism was understood as only one segment of the broader issue of bullying.

When asked about programming that addresses race and racism, a Diversity Coordinator talked about the middle school efforts:

> Um, in the Middle School, it's a really tough place because you're growing up and your body's growing and your mind is growing and everything. I don't know that we're really dealing with the issues of race as a part of that. We've talked about bullying, we do the bullying piece all over campus (Diversity Coordinator).

Putting aside, for a moment, the fact that racism and bullying are fundamentally different, treating racism as one prong of the larger bullying issue is a way of saying that we all encounter meanness—there is no difference between picking on the new kid at school and picking on the Black kid at school. To place "racism" under an umbrella of "bullying" dilutes the continued and specific relevance of racism.

Conclusion

Racism is very much a part of day-to-day life in Independent schools. The numbers reveal that Black Americans are severely underrepresented on campus. Those Black folks that are on campus continue to face racist acts, in the form of overt ignorance and bigotry, as well as in the form of more subtle cues that make clear just who belongs and who does not. To a certain extent, I do not believe that it is possible to live in a country such as the U.S., with our racialized history, and not encounter ignorance and bigotry. However, to avoid the conversation of racial inequality, both historical and current, and to minimize the continued importance of race is to be negligent—especially in institutions of learning. This negligence amounts to an obvious form of contemporary racism. While schools seem to tip-toe around race so as not to make the privileged uncomfortable, while schools reduce systemic racism to individualized bullying, another generation of students will suffer from a lack of knowledge about racial inequality.

Ignorance is a privilege afforded to those already in power. And as ignorance gets passed on, racism remains embedded in our society and largely unquestioned by our most elite schools.

Chapter 7: An Exception

In this study, one school stood out from the rest. Where other schools had long since moved off of the conversation of race and racial inequality, this unusual school continued to define race as central to their institution. Still an Independent school, still historically and predominantly White, still subject to the same social and financial pressures as other institutions in this study, this one school seemed determined to face the realities of systemic inequality among peer schools who were not even acknowledging systemic inequality.

The Blakely Academy[16] is an Independent, K-8 school on the edges of a city in the northeastern part of the U.S.. John Hughes[17] is the Head of School as he has been for nearly two decades. Another Head of School said that John is known as the "Diversity Head" (Head of School), and with the focus on and growth of racial Diversity at Blakely Academy, that title is both fitting and limiting.

On paper, John looks like any number of school Heads. A self-described WASP with two degrees from Harvard—in fact his family history at Harvard is evident in building names across the famed campus. He carries "the markers that give confidence to the consumer that [Blakely] must be a good place" (JHughes).

John's clarity of purpose is unmatched within this study. It is not about "Diversity" or "Inclusion" or "celebrating difference". It is not about Blakely Academy or even the "spec of dust called Independent schools" (JHughes). It's about upsetting the "system", the "cycle of oppression" and about educating children to issues of systemic racism and privilege so that they "understand what's really going on" (JHughes). When he decided to commit to this path, John

[16] The names of the school and personnel are pseudonyms. All identifying features of the school will be kept vague in the hope of preserving anonymity for the institution and for the participants of this study.
[17] Pseudonym

knew full well that true dedication to exposing and undermining the "system" might cost him his job and his career. But it hasn't. After almost two decades under John's leadership, though he calls himself a mere "soldier", Blakely has made tangible progress. The school has nearly 30% students of color in each grade and 27% faculty of color; Black Americans are well represented in those numbers. They are revolutionizing the way they think about "financial aid". Their multicultural curriculum fully integrates issues of inequality with academics. All this, and the conversation stays on systemic racial inequality. Why? "Because we put it there" (JHughes).

The Blakely Academy isn't functioning in an alternate universe; it is subject to the same pressures and constraints that other Independent schools in the northeast are facing. Finances, power structures, and heated resistance all pose obstacles to change within Independent schools. Despite these pressures and constraints, Blakely is succeeding in its efforts to racially diversify and to interrupt systemic momentum. Through clear and intentional work, including seeking out critical feedback, institutionalizing new programs and positions, and a persistent focus on issues of racial inequality, Blakely School has made a place for itself far beyond the vast majority of Independent schools.

A Vision of Diversity

Students

Bringing in students of color to traditionally and predominantly White institutions is where "Diversity" began. As of 2012 in New England, the data show that 20.4 percent of students are students of color. Black students make up 4.5 percent of all students (NAIS; AISNE).

Blakely Academy is nearly 30 percent students of color. John relates, "our application pool is so different than when I came its like ridiculous" (JHughes). The largest "group" within the student of color population is "multiracial". Black students make up approximately ten percent of the student body. This is more than double the regional average. Why does John Hughes focus so heavily on the numbers of African American students when other schools end the discussion at "students of color"?

In a previous chapter, I quoted a Diversity Consultant who talked about "easy" Diversity. To a large extent, first-generation Asian students are deemed to be "easy Diversity". John's approach is anything but easy. His goal is to upset and expose the "cycle of oppression" in the U.S.. Absolutely foundational to that cycle of oppression is the way in with the US system has historically, and continues to treat African Americans—descendents of enslaved peoples.

In New England Independent schools, the percentage of Black American students began and ended the last decade at 4.5 percent of the Independent school student population. No true growth. Blakely Academy's results fly in the face of this pattern. John explains, "just from a pure visual sense, I want you to be able to walk on this campus and see race. And that would probably mean in and in the near term I want to advance the community of African Americans in this school" (JHughes). That's where the NAIS community seems stuck, so that's exactly where John aims to go.

Faculty

The national data on faculty of color in Independent schools for the 2011-2012 school year reports 14.4% of faculty are people of color (NAIS 2012b). In New England, that number falls to 9.3% of faculty (NAIS 2012a). At Blakely Academy, 27% of faculty –or nearly triple the

regional ratio--are people of color. Furthermore, "we have not only teachers of color --that's progress --we have long-standing teachers of color. We have teachers of color who have here for 10, 12, 13 years now" (JHughes). The majority of those teachers of color are Black. Blakely is literally changing the image of an Independent school to one that is clearly a more inviting environment to people of color. Also, by recruiting and retaining a significant percentage of faculty of color, Blakely Academy is changing the image of its power structure. Those individuals who have the most power and the most access and the most time to influence students are the classroom teachers. John offered the following advice for people assessing schools' commitment to addressing racial inequality, "the first place I would check today would be who's employed to teach my children all day long and if there's no progress there then there's nothing happening in the school" (JHughes). For John, though, the faculty of color at his school represent even more than meaningful influence over children. Having a steady base of faculty of color is John's "biggest asset" on his path of effective change. He put it this way, "I don't want to disappoint the power players on the, on the faculty of color because if I do, I lose them, I've lost everything. I've lost everything. Everything" (JHughes).

Again, in the faculty as well as the student body, John puts heavy emphasis on having visibly African American members of the faculty. If the fundamental racial division in U.S. society is between Black and White, then addressing that division is the most important milestone toward racial equality. In John's mind, this is absolutely the case. "I will say in terms of changing the culture, the politic having evidently brown African-American teachers—we, we, we have men and women who are African American" (JHughes).

The Diversity Coordinator

"You've got to have someone whose job it is continually push it, push it, push it" (JHughes). This person is the Diversity Coordinator. At Blakely Academy, Alicia Scott[18], PhD is the Diversity Coordinator. An experienced child psychologist and an experienced Diversity practitioner, Alicia is a Black woman in her 40s. She verbally underlines her perspective on racial development in children by citing scholars and research. She's the real deal.

Recruited to Blakely by the Head of School, himself, Alicia recounted, "the school's reputation preceded" itself. Originally hesitant to relocate her family for the position, Alicia was drawn to Blakely because it was so "different" from other Independent schools.

> The first clue was look around the table at the people interviewing me, it was a real diverse group of people. And in these schools, you just don't really see that very much. There were two African American teachers, a Pakistani woman, a woman from Korea…but when I saw just the mix of people sitting around the table and the kinds of conversations we had, it made me feel like, wow, this is different (AScott).

It is different. As a full-time Diversity Coordinator, resource for the school, advocate for the students, and as someone who's positional responsibility is to constantly question the institution from the lens of racial justice, Alicia's presence is one of the main reasons that Blakely is different.

Echoing the concern of other Diversity Coordinators, Alicia did speak to the lack of institutional power that her role carries. "I still don't have any real supervisory power over anybody. So my job is more programmatic than it is evaluative" (AScott). That is an excellent point, and that is a reminder that Blakely Academy faces the same challenges that other Independent schools face. The Diversity Coordinator is a relatively new position in these institutions, and power is often slowly gained.

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[18] Pseudonym

Nevertheless, Alicia is the primary resource for teachers in their Multicultural education practice, which I will explore a bit later in the chapter. She organizes affinity groups for students and teachers. She meets with every candidate that applies to teach at Blakely. And perhaps most importantly, she has the respect and ear of Head of School, John Hughes. In encouraging me to speak with Alicia, John said the following, "because as a…a Diversity practitioner, I don't think there's anybody better you could talk to" (JHughes). The level of respect with which Alicia and John spoke about one another is indicative of their successful working relationship.

Financing the Vision

The language and perspective that Blakely Academy has chosen to adopt around issues of tuition and access is starkly different than the language that every other school in this study has chosen. Perhaps the word "chosen" is the most important word to highlight: there is a history, and therefore a tradition of "financial aid" at Independent schools. Where administrators in other schools speak to the financial aid budget and the ensuing enrollment limitations, Blakely—and John Hughes as its head—is dismissing the paradigm of "financial aid" in its entirety. "It's a problem," John explains, "because whenever you say in your school that you're offering someone 'aid' you're saying a statement about relative value or you're saying that there's people who are okay and then there are people who need help" (JHughes). Tuition payments are vital for the everyday functioning of Independent schools; there is no doubt. Also vital, though, are yearly gifts made to the school through donations from all constituents through a school's annual fund. "What we get is what we put up to run the school" (JHughes). It is as simple as that. Money comes in and money goes out.

John described the paradigm that Blakely Academy adopted: "So there's one person who's a full-pay customer at Blakely," John explained. The family who pays tuition and who donates the largest financial gift is the single full-pay family. The truth of how an Independent school functions is that every person at the school reaps the benefits from that largest gift. "Everybody else is subsidized because if they didn't pay that gift…you see what I'm saying? We wouldn't have the money. So instead of there being you know, 'Fifteen percent of the kids are on financial aid'. No. No. Ninety-nine percent of the families are on financial aid" (JHughes). By shifting that paradigm and exposing the financial reality of running a school, Blakely Academy is breaking up the entrenched duality between "haves" and "have-nots".

Among would-be Independent school families, Blakely Academy is known to offer admission—and financial subsidy—to families that could not afford the advertised "full tuition" which peaks at $26,745 for students in 6th through 8th grades. In fact, 27% of the student body receives financial subsidy of some kind (Blakely website). Blakely's commitment and radical approach to financial subsidy of students' education has been an important factor in changing the face of Blakely Academy and increasing accessibility to "non-traditional" students. John explained, "…and our application pool is so different than when I came, it's like ridiculous. We have open houses more than half of color. They know about Blakely. And it does include people of color who don't have the economic resources to be in Independent schools, and they heard Blakely will allocate aid" (JHughes).

So the "consumer" of the Multicultural education-focused Blakely Academy has changed. Blakely is not the "country club" that other schools reportedly are (Cookson and Persell 1985). "The people who want a social experience of whiteness and privilege don't come and look at our school anymore" (JHughes). Those who want to buy in to the social capital

being offered at traditional prep schools are no longer Blakely's primary market. John explained,

> So um, kindergarten's one of our main entry ramps. Applications have doubled. The need for, uh,…75% of those applications need financial aid. But here's the thing. A few years ago I would have said, "oh, woe is me" or "oh shit, it's all going to hell in a hand basket. There's not enough people who can pay coming to [Blakely] School." I think differently about it today. That's the demographic that's here in [the state] that would want our product. So hallelujah, they came. They're in the house now how do we get them into the classroom? And as long as the 25% who are full pay applicants really want Blakely and will come up when they choose between [the neighboring Independent schools], we're good (JHughes).

What a stark contrast to the Head of School quoted earlier who deferred to the budget: "By definition we, we, we, we can only have a certain number of families on financial aid because our budget, we have a budget, we have to meet the budget, right?" (Head of School).

The conflation of "students of color" with "financial aid" is a touchy subject among Independent school personnel. School administrators have frequently voiced the concern of confirming a stereotype among the wealthy, White population that all people of color are poor. Schools are also looking to increase their student of color percentages without committing to increasing financial aid budgets. Each of the schools that took part in this project—with the exception of Blakely Academy—spoke to the pointed efforts to recruit wealthy families of color to their school. From the NAIS on down, the wealthy family of color is confirmed to be a sought-after Independent school family. However, John and Alicia had different perspectives on racially diversifying Blakely:

> …until you show me the census data in [our state] that suggests that, you know, there are a lot a rich Black people around, you should expect to see Blakely Academy, as it commits to racial Diversity, to have probably more people of color not paying full tuition as the White people [sic]. That's just what it is (JHughes).

> There's no such think as a separation between race and class. I mean, especially in this country, if you look at how, I mean it's just been 50 years since they

> passed the civil rights bill, like 51, 52 years. And there's been an economic cost to racism and discrimination. So, I'm first generation, I was born in a segregated hospital…and so discrimination has held many of us back, so we haven't had hundreds and hundreds of years of access. So many of us will need financial aid to be able to access these schools. But having said that, there are those of us who can pay and there are those of us who do pay (AScott).

John and Alicia each cited evidence, current and historical, that explain the racial gap in wealth and thus the higher proportion of students of color, particularly Black students who cannot afford to pay about $26,000 per student, per year for their children to attend an Independent school. Meanwhile, school personnel from other schools actively recruit wealthy students of color. Given our particular history as a country, wealthy Black families who wish to send their children to historically and predominantly White schools are few and far between.

Embracing Diversity

For many, Diversity is about numbers of people of color present. Issues of recruitment and retention are paramount. However, the Blakely Academy approach doesn't stop there. Getting people in the room is only part of the approach. Blakely has also completely transformed its curriculum.

Multicultural Education

Issues of inequality, power, and varying perspectives are just a few of the themes present in Multicultural Education. These issues are not housed under any particular subject or talked about as any particular historical moment. Rather, "the teachers here would say [Multicultural Education is] what they do. It's math, it's what they do. It's science; it's what they do. It's French; it's what they do. It's physical education; it's what they do" (JHughes).

Blakely's primary missions are academics and racial Diversity. Moving all aspects of the school in concert with the mission of racial Diversity has meant a dramatic shift in the consumer. Independent schools have been referred to—by academics—as country clubs: places where social capital trumps academic knowledge (Cookson and Persell 1985). The new consumer of Blakely wants Multicultural Education: "The lion share user of Blakely Academy isn't buying being in a social club. They are buying academic, racially diverse ... That's what they're buying—all day long. They want it, they want it" (JHughes). Those families who don't want it go down the road to one of the other Independent schools.

Affinity Groups

While other schools debate the importance of affinity grouping for students of color, Blakely has an established and funded affinity group program, beginning in first grade, as a weekly part of the school day. Not only are affinity groups supported by the school, they begin at a young age and they are integrated into the schedule of the students. At Blakely, Diversity is not the "special event" that it is at many other schools; Diversity is truly integrated into the school programming. Alicia described an affinity group gathering for the younger students:

> It's taking children out for an hour a week and having them play together, having them talk about the difficulties of maybe not looking the way they think they should be looking. Helping them to build some confidence and self-esteem around the way they look. I mean, we're working on those issues in broader ways, but to pull those children out and have them, to be able to have that conversation, they—a teacher can't address that to the one Black child in her class. You know what I mean? (AScott).

Clearly, Blakely Academy is engaged with the conversation of what is best and healthiest for their students of color who remain in the minority within the academic classrooms.

Alicia recounted her thoughts about Blakely's work with Diversity in her first years as the school's Diversity Coordinator:

> …We focused a lot on the impact of racism on people of color, but I don't think White people had done enough or any real investigation of well, how has racism impacted me? How has it impacted me as a teacher? How has it influenced the way that I see the world and how I engage with students? (AScott).

For the Independent school community, these are revolutionary thoughts, and because of them, Blakely Academy now has an established program of affinity group meetings for its White faculty and staff. These meetings are funded; attendance is required. Furthermore, every adult on campus participates: from teachers, to staff, to the grounds crew. All parts of the community must join the conversation on race.

The Meaning of Diversity

At Blakely Academy, "Diversity" has not moved from a fundamental commitment to addressing issues of racial inequality. Among Independent schools, three parallel trends are occurring. The first trend is to treat "Diversity" as special: as other-than academics. The second trend is to broaden "Diversity" toward "Inclusion". This movement to be all encompassing as a Diversity program has the result of decreasing or sometimes no attention placed on issues of race and racial inequality. The third trend is to individualize racial discrimination as opposed to recognizing the historical, systemic pattern of racial discrimination. Cutting racism down into individual acts of meanness completely ignores the larger power of racism in the US today.

Blakely Academy focuses its efforts on precisely that from which other Independent schools are fleeing. This is intentional work. By implementing a structure of Multicultural Education, Blakely Academy has integrated conversations on difference and on inequality into the daily life of the classroom, the playing field, the cafeteria, and every other campus space.

John put it simply, "I don't differentiate between excellence and Diversity" (JHughes). Why has "Diversity" remained centered around race at Blakely? "Because we put it there" (JHughes). Far from watering down their efforts on race in response to White resistance, Blakely responded to White resistance with mandatory White affinity group meetings that focus on the impact of racism on Whites. Finally, Blakely teaches about the history of race and racism in the U.S. and therefore uncovers for their students, the systemic nature and intentional maintenance of racism in this country. Alicia said, "I don't see how you can talk about race and not think about the historical, psychological, sociological, biological impact that all of it has on where we are today" (AScott). This represents the broader perspective taken by Blakely Academy in its Diversity efforts. The culminating event for Blakely students is a Civil Rights trip that brings eighth graders to the historic locations and the people linked to the Civil Rights Movement.

The most basic goal of John Hughes at Blakely Academy is to expose systemic racism and to interrupt it. This is not easy work, and perhaps that is why Independent schools on the whole deny the existence of structural racism by remaining silent about it.

> The deeper you get and understand what you want to do, the more you upset the system that's in place, which you and I would know the cycle of oppression. You're upsetting it. So is it gonna get easier? No. Until, until the beast dies, which won't be in our lifetime, … and it might not die. It may actually devour the intention. But I'm not gonna let little people coming into the world and not be given an opportunity to understand what's really going on (JHughes).

When John said this, I was stunned. Having conducted interviews with many other Heads of School and having literally grown up in the Independent school world, I knew these remarks to be nothing less than radical. It is commitment to truth of systemic racism that has led to all of the other progress made at Blakely Academy. The "Diversity" at Blakely Academy is not the "Diversity" at other Independent schools.

Resistance and the Power Structure

The obstacles that Blakely Academy face are a direct result of the power structure at Blakely, which is the same power structure at most Independent schools—certainly all of the schools that took part in this project. It is a well-established, wealthy, White power. And resistance stems from trying to "sustain conversations on difficult topics that White people would rather not talk about because it means they're gonna lose their power" (JHughes).

Power structures in Independent schools are complex systems, but there are also overarching patterns of power that appear in every tuition-based Independent school. Fundamentally, though, money runs the institution. Tuition-paying families, as a group, have power because if a school loses too many tuition-paying families, then it has lost its primary revenue source. Alums, a large donating group, wield power. Boards of Trustees wield enormous power in part because many, if not all, on the Board are the schools' largest donors. Within the Board also lies decision-making power about budget, about hiring and firing, and about the mission and strategic plan of any given school. If a school Head were to upset one member of the Board of Trustees, it is well within the scope of reality that the Board member would leave the school and take his or her monetary gifts away, as well. If a school Head were to upset several members of the Board of Trustees, it is well within the scope of reality that the Head of School would lose his or her job.

Another powerful constituency within a school is its well-entrenched members—be it Board members, families, or faculty. Well-connected and long-standing members of the institution come to define the very nature of that institution. They hold credibility through their institutional memory and through their ability to speak to other power-wielding constituencies.

Change threatens existing power. Therefore the existing power structure of any institution is both the path and the obstacle to change. At Blakely Academy, change is approached with a clear anticipation of the resistance that it will meet. John points out, "everything is a negotiated settlement in these schools around race" (JHughes). He knows that considering the power structure, and the resistance within it, is vital to making progress.

Tuition-Paying Families

Like any other institution, an Independent school's sustainability depends on consistent revenue from which to operate. For many schools, tuition is their largest source of yearly income. That traditional Independent schools have to "lean into wealth" (JHughes) is a daily reality, and because of this, tuition payers are also power players. Furthermore, those who traditionally purchase Independent school educations for their children often want to place their faith and their finances in an institution that has a proven track record of acting as a gateway to college or to a prep school, as is the case with Blakely. Substantial change threatens the value of a proven track record. Also, people who pay for schooling don't necessarily want it pointed out that they are elitist or racist. As John said, "no one wants it to get tough. I mean, come on. 'We're paying a lot of money, don't make it tough. That's not why we came here'" (JHughes). Whichever of the many explanations for resistance, it is clear that the resistance is present—especially among White, tuition-paying families.

Almost immediately after voicing a commitment to engaging in issues of racial inequality, John experienced direct negativity from families.

> [I have] to manage the disappointment of the White community here or the frustration or the lack of interest… When I make a move to hire or in any way evidence is my commitment to the constituency that might be called the Brown constituent-- students or faculty-- I get pushback (JHughes).

> The pushback comes from the…it would be, it's, it's all from people who can afford to pay for Independent education. Um, it's mostly White people so I don't want to say that it doesn't include some people color, it might include that. So um, mostly White people, and it's more around saying, "well, the Diversity thing, I understand it's important but um, but let's not lose focus on other things…we have to make sure we continue to offer a strong academic program" (JHughes).

Because the pushback is common, John is well aware that he has to engage the concerns in order to maintain a strong revenue base. It is clear that money is the major factor in deciding how to handle voices of resistance.

> So the sound so the sound of it is the still the dominant culture of tuition, full-tuition payer of course it is exaggerated by some people who have even more resource and can make things move, um, in otherwise--and I have to work with that. I've got to get— The building still has to look pretty and so on to get the revenue stream into the building [sic] and then if I have the revenue then, then I can continue to pay the teachers and we can do the practice (JHughes).

It's a bit of a catch-22. John's goal is to "do the practice" of Multicultural Education and exposing racial inequality. It is the practice that brings up resistance. But he has to honor those that resist in order to keep their business—their money—so that Blakely can continue doing "the practice."

John is forced to make tough decisions about how and when to negotiate for change. There are many times when he has to say,

> We're not going to be able to make that move now because of having to sustain the confidence of the White constituency, and their confidence is, is based on some version of aversive racism. So I … but it doesn't mean I'm not going to make change. I will make it, but I can't make it now because the revenue base of the school is that. And so if I push too hard and the customer base says we're done with it, and, and it's rough here at [Blakely] around that… um, then they go and if ten of them go I'm talking to the, to the Board about having to cut back on staff (JHughes).

Again, John is very clear on the direct line between having tuition-paying consumers and being able to function as a school.

At the end of the day, though, John and Blakely Academy have moved faster and farther than most—and not only on issues of racial Diversity, although that continues to be the focus at Blakely. This movement requires that John disappoint and anger families.

> And we have a lot of people at Blakely that used to--that have left the school because their friends left because we committed ourselves –the thing on sexual orientation really blew the thing out of the water. So really rich, conservative people just went away because they don't want to have homosexuals around (JHughes).

Families with money continue to have power in Independent schools, even in the more progressive Independent schools. Right now, the Independent school model requires that tuition be paid by a significant number of families. So there is a delicate dance being performed between keeping tuition-paying families happy and simultaneously teaching to issues of inequality. This is, at times, an impossible task. Schools have to decide whether to risk losing wealthy families or whether to give up working toward an environment that resembles equality.

Board Power

This conundrum is even more pronounced when talking about the Board of Trustees. Typically, there is an expectation that Board members will contribute, substantially, to the school. Losing the backing of the Board is at worst professional suicide for a school Head and at best a serious financial concern.

In John's case, he has encountered criticism and resistance from individuals on the Board, but he has never lost the backing of the Board as a whole. When speaking about furthering the mission of addressing racial inequality, John explained, "the Board has to have the political stomach to stay it, otherwise it gets killed. It's easily stamped out. There are Board members right now that are, not intentionally, but are in the way of us moving forward" (JHughes). At

other moments, financially influential Board members have threatened to leave the school, and the Board supported John through that dissent. In fact, Blakely has lost Trustees as a result of doing progressive, race-aware work. John sees himself as lucky, though, to have had what support he did. "But I had the Board. You see the Board holding in there, too. I had the Trustees who left-- with million-dollar gifts – were trustees. And the Board didn't turn to itself and say, 'holy shit, get rid of him, someone's got to manage John.' Well, I've had good trustees, I guess I did. I guess I do" (JHughes).

Entrenched Resistance

Blakely Academy has faced resistance from all angles as it seeks to change the focus of the education it offers. It seems that no constituent felt quite as threatened by this change as those who were firmly entrenched in the Blakely and surrounding communities. Long-standing faculty members, local business owners, and others who represent power within a social network have all presented themselves to John and to Alicia as resistors at some point along the way. Perhaps the particular threat for this group is that if the school changes into a different institution, those power players may not hold onto their seats of power.

A week before our interview, John had a meeting with a local equestrian teacher who came to report to John that current and potential Blakely families were becoming disillusioned with Blakely school because of their "Diversity" efforts. John acknowledged those networkers as important people to heed, no matter what the message:

> Those little hubs come into your office, network hubs in the body of a human being, and they talk. And they might come in and say, "God dammit, get going on the racial Diversity. What is it? There's nothing here?" So I got to work with that. Or, you know, "we got to stop the racial Diversity thing." But I've got to watch that because I need the money to come in to pay the teachers and to, you

> know, to make the program go. So that's what I do for a living –you just saw it. That's what I do every day (JHughes).

In the case of the equestrian teacher, John interpreted her remarks as genuinely well-meaning (a familiar theme): she was trying to let him know what was being said about Blakely and the image of Blakely that was present within the wealthier parts of the community. Hearing this unfiltered feedback is important in addressing resistance because a lot of times, people are not vocal and direct with their resistance. Granted, John gave me plenty of examples of vocal and direct resistance, but there is also an image of "inclusion" that Independent schools and wealthy, liberal minded folks are trying to portray. It is unseemly to argue against racial inclusion. The traditional consumer of Independent school education has been served very well by that education. Why would they encourage change? Especially when that change would not "benefit" them? John commented, "their liberalism is very thin and so it gets quickly triggered into like, well I didn't mean that we'd change anything, but I want talk about much I like change" (JHughes).

On the other side of influence at Blakely Academy is the faculty. Drastically changing the curriculum means an incredible amount of work and commitment from the faculty. "If you don't want to work hard you can't do this work" (JHughes). It is as simple as that. But John reported of pushing the work at Blakely,

> The resistance in the faculty was robust. It was crazy. I mean, I had huge attrition because teachers said…I had….last year "I'm not going to work here because we talk too much about race. I'm going to the school next door." So out goes the White educator …many White parents say, "that's the best teacher at the [Blakely Academy]"…and our White families say, "Uh oh. There it is. Just like it, you know [Blakely's] gone too far now, this stuff on race…their best teachers are even leaving" (JHughes).

With faculty, though, the strongest resistors have left or are leaving and it remains clear that Blakely is not going to give up this work. To a large extent, teachers who wanted to keep their jobs stopped resisting. These days there is little active resistance from within the faculty. However, not every faculty member shares the same level of drive with the work of multicultural education, and Alicia reported some passive resistance in the form of not fully engaging in Multicultural Education.

> So there are still some teachers in here that are deciding that they don't really believe in multicultural education and aren't maybe practicing or teaching in that way. And so it can feel optional. So I would say, probably 80% of the teachers in here are really trying to work on their Multicultural practice, and are really actively engaging in the readings and the thinking that it takes to be able to do that. But there are some teachers who are like, "I don't want to do that, and I don't have to" (AScott).

Since Alicia does not have the positional authority to evaluate teachers, she feels little power to hold the non-practicing 20% accountable. Despite this, having the vast majority of the faculty actively participating in Multicultural Education represents an enormous perspective shift that, for Blakely Academy, has only truly gained momentum in the last decade.

Why it's Working

Despite noted obstacles to progress, Blakely Academy has made unparalleled headway in confronting issues of inequality. There are a number of reasons why this is the case, including actively seeking out critical feedback, hiring strong and qualified staff and faculty, institutionalizing programs and positions, and the structure of the school, itself. None of these factors would matter, however, were it not for a genuine commitment from the Head of School to acknowledge and address the systemic nature of racial inequality.

Commitment from the Head of School

John Hughes' fierce commitment to expose and deal with issues of systemic racial inequality is the single most important factor in the achievements that Blakely Academy has made. Without persistent directives from the Head of School, none of the other important factors would have even made it to the table. John's desire to move toward true equality is evident in what he chooses to read, with whom he chooses to engage, and how he speaks. Nothing is as important to John as actively working on these issues.

An interesting commonality among many of my interviews was what I was told to read by the interviewees. Without provocation, I was offered different examples of the "most important" and "most relevant" book for Independent schools working with issues of "Diversity" today. Two people suggested that I read "Our Kind of People", a history of the Black upper class in America. Every educator that I interviewed spoke about the importance of recruiting wealthy Black Americans to their schools in order to accomplish two tasks: first, to undo the stereotype of all people of color being poor, second, to increase Diversity without increasing financial aid. This book, then, given schools' goal of recruitment, is extremely relevant today. Other suggestions of important books included "Microaggressions", and "Covering"—books about not being able to be your true self in our society and in our schools. Many of the schools represented in this study spoke about "Inclusion" as being the best approach to Diversity work: the "big tent" (Diversity Consultant) theory of Diversity where every person has a stake in the work. These books speak to the dedication toward individualizing Diversity—drawing on issues of individual experience in order to gain a more "inclusive" outlook. John suggested that I read "Slavery By Another Name", which is a history of the Black folks in this country who continued to live as enslaved people well into the 20th century: long after the official end of "slavery". So,

on the one hand, we have people studying wealthy Black people—absolutely relevant to Independent schools and their recruiting efforts. On the other hand, we have issues of individual identity and efforts to help every person feel "included" in our community—relevant to the more "cutting edge" of Independent schools. And then far off in another place all together, we have the persistent issues of systemic racial and economic subjugation and enslavement. John is simply operating in a difference space than the majority of Independent schools today.

John relishes the opportunity to set the ignorant on the path of reality. He invites dissenters into his office. "So when someone says to you, 'I don't want to, I'm sick and tired of paying a portion of other people's tuition.' Great, let's talk. Can we talk?" (JHughes). John treats dissenting arguments not as threats to his vision or to school progress, but as opportunities for education and as signposts for where more work needs to be done.

Stepping Away from the Crowd

No one is more aware than John of the limitations of following the path of the larger group. Radical change must be…well, radical. Although he didn't say it in exactly these words, the National Association of Independent Schools—the accrediting and guiding body for Independent schools in America—was more of a hindrance than a help to making substantial change at Blakely Academy. It is clear that as Blakely Academy moved further away from the NAIS as a group, the NAIS stopped really including and recognizing Blakely Academy. Eventually, John just lost patience with the lack of clear commitment from the NAIS.

In the early 2000s, Blakely was recognized by the NAIS with an award celebrating their Diversity efforts. In the decade since, John has felt somewhat spurned by the NAIS. "They've kept arms length from me," (JHughes) he reported. The NAIS runs a Diversity institute for

Heads of School. And although John and Blakely Academy have been credited by the NAIS for doing "great work", "they've never even called me. So, I mean not that—I don't need it, but if I'm allegedly doing such great work … why wouldn't you want to call me?" (JHughes). According to John, the NAIS is "clubby". He went on to say,

> It feels like patting each other on the back, and then some Native American will get out on the stage with a spotlight and hit a drum and do a thing. And they're great people—I'm sure they're amazing leaders. But then we're all saying, "wow, that was something". And then we go back to our schools and then were out doing nothing. I can't do it anymore. I just get depressed (JHughes).

Ultimately, John knows that he is not part of the "club". His choices not to "shirk" the work have led him being very much on the outside of the NAIS. "I don't want to walk the hallways of NAIS and not feel connected into the club 'cause I don't go. I haven't gone to the Elementary School Heads Association for 15 years because I went to one in Cape Cod, and I couldn't believe the bullshit of it, so I don't go. I'm not networked in" (JHughes).

Not being "networked in" is both evidence of Blakely's unusual position among Independent schools, and perhaps also a blessing in disguise. As nice as it may be to feel welcomed and included, it is clear that schools that make real progress must not follow the general direction in which Independent schools are heading. That John no longer wishes to be included in the NAIS community gatherings means that he will not look for support or guidance from this community. This appears to be beneficial to progress at Blakely Academy.

Seeking out Critical Feedback

While John is clearly frustrated at the lack of action from the NAIS as well as not truly being included, this exclusion has also led him to seek out resources and counsel from people outside of the Independent school world. This seems to have been a critical measure taken by

John and Blakely Academy: seeking out criticism from people who have no personal stake in or relationship to the school. Enid Lee is a familiar name to many in schooling and in anti-racist work. She leads a consulting firm that engages with all types of educational environments; she was not a natural insider within the Independent school community. Blakely Academy hired Enid Lee to evaluate and support their growth. "Enid Lee has been fundamental in that, fundamental. All day long. And the only thing that Blakely did that was smart was we stayed in conversation with her. We employed her for a long time she still works with us, and so we never stopped thinking about it" (JHughes). One other school employed Enid Lee's consulting team to administer an "equity audit". I applaud that, and I am not trying to minimize the importance of that school's connection with Enid Lee. However, Blakely Academy has worked continuously with Enid Lee. This sort of action from Blakely shows a genuine desire to change into an institution that is battling systemic racism.

John quickly gives credit to others when he is praised for his work. It is clear that seeking out feedback, again, was critical in his development of understanding when it came to being an effective leader in the effort to change the exclusiveness of the traditional Independent schools. Mocking himself, he explained, "my God, when I was a little boy here thinking we wanted Diversity, I had no idea what I was even saying" (JHughes). The support that he sought out from those around him led him to his current level of understanding: "I was mentored by really, really strong and able people. So I didn't know what I know any of it when I came. I know a lot, a lot now because I've learned it, not because I went and studied it. I've been led by people-- educators mostly --who have taught me how to manage and lead in this work, for sure, for sure" (JHughes).

John continued to seek out strong, knowledgeable, and well-read individuals to support his own development and the development of the school. He is very clear that there must be people who are a valued presence at the school whose job it is to give the hard feedback. "I can't fool myself, I can't lie to myself if I go off in a direction that seems to be unaware of what's really going on, I have people who are employed here to tell me get off your bullshit and start working" (JHughes). The following example is illustrative of his passion, his commitment, and his willingness to accept critical feedback:

> You need a position that pushes these schools and constantly kicks them right in the nuts, excuse me, to say yeah—just to say it. You guys are bullshitting. Yesterday we were working on this conversation around hiring. [On] our administrative team, [Alicia] and I had a spat because she was saying that "you know you got to recognize, [John] that not every teacher of color or every teacher is going to tell you the truth, they're going to tell you what they think you want to hear." And I came back at her and said, "give me a break" because I feel like I'm honest and transparent. But she's right. So, but if she hadn't been there, if she had not been there-- say that in that meeting-- off we go in another direction (JHughes).

The people in the room are the ones that have the conversations. They are the ones that can challenge each other and make change. Whether it relates to Blakely Academy or to his own, personal development, John's greatest asset may be that he knows that he doesn't know everything. Therefore, he seeks out, surrounds himself, and staffs his school with people who reflect his own passion and who bring a critical, forward-thinking brain to the equation.

Institutionalization

For all their emphasis on "tradition", Independent schools are malleable institutions. The current leadership sets the course for a school. Insiders consistently report that change of any type within an Independent school takes "commitment" from the Head and "buy-in" from the

Board. In making change that one hopes to see stabilized within an Independent school community, one of the biggest challenges is to institutionalize that change. With every positive step that Blakely makes, John—supported by Alicia—is looking to institutionalize their progress. "It's a house of cards. And you know, certainly a concern of mine or for [Blakely Academy] would be when I leave the school, is it sustainable? Well I don't know. But we have been trying to institutionalize things along the way" (JHughes). John's creative approach to institutionalization is another key factor in his successful movement toward working against systemic racism.

As a first step, Blakely Academy has institutionalized staffing positions and curriculum within the school. Creating a full-time Director of Diversity has been paramount. John explained, "When these schools are talking about change, their question is: 'Really? What's …what's gonna force the change?' It's either permanent positional authority or political authority and what's the more reliable source? Positional authority. Because politic can change" (JHughes). This was his perspective on bringing in full-time staff whose job it is to constantly push the conversation to deal with the web of issues involved in this work.

A hallmark of education at Blakely is now their culminating 8th grade Civil Rights class trip. Other participants in this study had heard about the trip and marveled at the accomplishment that that trip represents. John let me know that, "we've endowed our Civil Rights trip. That's permanent. So we'll always be talking about race culminating in 8th grade exploring the history and the current…" (JHughes). Knowing that funding in schools is a typical reason for cutting back on programming, Blakely Academy has found a way to ensure that funding is never an excuse to get rid of that Civil Rights trip.

Another important piece of the Blakely community now is their relationship with a neighboring university. Blakely offers an on-site learning space for Masters students who are studying Multicultural Education. In fact, Blakely has been accredited by the state Department of Education to serve in this capacity. This is important for a number of reasons. First of all, Blakely is now accountable to a nearby university. This relationship helps to further the institutionalization of Multicultural Education at Blakely. This is an example of institutionalization by creating ties not only outside of Blakely Academy, but outside of the NAIS: outside of the community of Independent schools altogether. Another important aspect of this relationship is that there are now eight Masters students in the building on a daily basis asking questions about Multicultural Education and its implementation in the classroom. This ensures that there is constant communication, thought, and reflection upon Multicultural teaching practice at the level of classroom teachers. By creating a web of accountability, Blakely Academy has made it that much harder to undo their progress toward addressing inequality and practicing Multicultural Education.

The Structure of the School

It is important to think about the fact that Blakely is a "K-8" school: it serves students from Kindergarten through 8th grade. I anticipate that if asked why they could not achieve what Blakely Academy has achieved, Independent prep schools that work with the process of getting their students into college would point out that Blakely does not have that concern. John spoke to this when pointing out that many people at other schools separate work on "Diversity" from "academics". As if focusing on issues of inequality would draw into question the level of their students' preparedness for college.

I would argue, however, that Blakely makes use of every moment that a child is enrolled at the school in order to teach about the way that inequality is systemic and to teach about the multiple and varying perspectives that are alive and well in the world. From the moment that students arrive at Blakely, Multicultural Education is the education that they receive. Administrators, teachers, parents are working with issues of inequality no matter the age or level of the students because students, at a very young age, are fully cognizant of issues of inequality. John gave an example, "those kids by the time they are nine are aware of the socio-economic culture of the classroom. For sure they know where they fit" (JHughes). Other schools tout phrases like "developmentally appropriate", and yes, educators should be, and are, aware of how to teach to the different age groups. But the difference at Blakely is that no topic is off the table because the students are too young.

An important factor related to Blakely being a K-8 school is the fact that it is not a "prep" school in the traditional sense. It is a prep school for prep schools. And while other schools may, in fact, argue that Blakely doesn't face the same pressures of getting their students into college, Blakely does face significant pressure, and sometimes difficulty, getting their students into high schools. John takes this part of his job very seriously. "If we're gonna load in the race and economic Diversity into the school and we're a feeder school, then I have a responsibility to prepare the high schools to admit them" (JHughes). In the middle of our interview, the phone rang and after John apologized for taking the call, he said that I should stay and listen to the conversation. One of Blakely's 8th graders, a Black student, had applied to a nearby prep school but had not been admitted yet. John "made a big stink about it", and the school called him during our interview to let him know that they were "reconvening the Admissions Committee". This example brings to light an issue that stems from being unusually forward-thinking as an

institution: if collaborating institutions are not as forward-thinking, then the sustainability of boundary-pushing programs, like Blakely's, could be in question. Independent prep schools thrive on the promise of ultimate admission to a top-tier college or university. In Blakely's case, their website speaks to "life after Blakely" and posts lists of historically elite prep schools that their graduates attend. Clearly part of selling Blakely Academy is selling the future admission to the high school. As I pointed out earlier, investigating this issue brings up a theme that was voiced throughout this project: the distinction between "Diversity" and "academics". John and others pointed out that Independent school constituents often separated Diversity from academics. He related his experience talking with personnel at other schools, "what it sounds like is 'yes, Blakely is really good at Diversity and that's good for Blakely. But here, you know, we're focused on academics.' And I'm not even making that up. That's just the message" (JHughes). He also quoted a Blakely parent, "well, the Diversity thing, I understand it's important but um, but let's not lose focus on other things…we have to make sure we continue to offer a strong academic program" (JHughes). A Diversity Consultant echoed, "we use terms like 'rigor' and 'excellence'. Those keep us in a kind of competitive, ah…place" (Diversity Consultant). Academic "rigor" and "excellence" are issues of the "head" whereas "Diversity" is classified as an issue of the "heart" (Diversity Consultant). Alicia echoed, "I think that there's an implication around that Multicultural Education is some sort of feel good, love everybody, and we're not really teaching hard skills" (AScott). However, Alicia and John do not speak about the "heart" with issues of inequality. Rather, both speak about knowledge. "We're teaching children how to value the power of knowledge" (AScott). It's not about engaging our empathetic side, it is about learning what we have not been taught and re-learning what we have been mis-taught. Perhaps couching "Diversity" under a "heart" rather than "head" umbrella provokes the

ongoing resistance that schools exhibit toward digging into issues of injustice, and particularly that of racial injustice. By entering into "Diversity" through the lens of empathy and not the lens of knowledge, schools and educators may be setting up Diversity initiatives to fail. Integration of the multicultural with the education—hence Multicultural Education—is standard practice at Blakely. And perhaps this is a cause of Blakely's success with keeping issues of racial (and economic and gendered and…) injustice on the table. John put it simply, "I don't differentiate between excellence and Diversity" (JHughes).

Conclusion

John Hughes and Alicia Scott would be the first people to tell you that Blakely Academy is not where it "should be" in terms of access to "non-traditional" students and in terms of their program more generally. Alicia spoke frankly, "it's an Independent school at the end of the day. And people pay $26,000 a year to go here, and so you definitely have some of what is at [the other schools]" (AScott). In speaking about the number of African American students at Blakely, John said: "Ten percent of the overall population of students. So that's what it is. But it's too small, it's ridiculous" (JHughes). Despite all of the progress that Blakely has made, John knows that as an institution, it has a long way to go. It's path and commitment, though, appear to be unique among the sample in this study, and surely rare within the Independent school community nationally. John summarized the highs and lows of his progress, "You don't need to bring much race into the building for people to feel like 1: you're making progress and 2: like you've gone too far" (JHughes).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Throughout the course of this dissertation, I have tried to accomplish two tasks. This first task was to give voice to Diversity practitioners in Independent schools. The Diversity movement is widespread yet previously unstudied in terms of how it is approached and managed by adults whose job it is to implement Diversity in their schools. The second task was hold side-by-side the verbalized efforts toward and goals of "Diversity" with the current state of racial integration in Independent Schools. It is this second task—one of assessment, really—that is vital to the documentation of social progress.

In speaking directly with Diversity practitioners, the over-arching theme of the "well-meaning" came to the foreground. Schools have worked toward "Inclusion"; schools have improved their statistics. There are historically White schools whose student bodies are now significantly non-White.

The phenomenon of the "well-meaning", however, has not meant clear progress toward racial equality. Much of the increased presence of students of color on campuses can be explained with increases in Asian and Multiracial students, but not Black students. National numbers show and Admissions officers confirm relatively low numbers of Black American students in Independent schools.

Herein lies the crux of my research. How can the "well-meaning" communities of Independent Schools move toward progress for some and stagnancy for others? My efforts to untangle this paradox will no doubt cause bruised egos for those "well-meaning" folks. Nevertheless, my research has uncovered a number of factors that have lead to an illusion of integration and not a reality of integration for Black Americans. What follows is a summary of these factors.

Summary of Findings

First, the National Association of Independent Schools conducts analyses of racial integration using a lumped category of "people of color", complete with people who are "White" by many other standards. This has lessened much of the attention and efforts previously devoted toward bringing Black Americans into these institutions. Creating statistics based on a "people of color" category opens the door for schools to pursue "easy Diversity" with the least amount of disruption to the existing power structure, both socio-economic and racial.

Second, school administrators and Boards of Trustees do not want to devote more money to bringing in Black students. Especially when there are wealthy "students of color" knocking on the door, schools are choosing not to back up their spoken efforts with financial support. The problem here is two-fold. First, there are wealthy Black Americans who could afford to send their children to historically White Independent schools, but most do not. Future research should look closely at this phenomenon as it could shed light on how these schools are perceived by wealthy Black folks. Evidence suggests that Black families are well aware that Independent schools want them, and they simply do not want to be used as Diversity "fodder" (JHughes). Second, schools are either ignorant of or unwilling to acknowledge the historical and persistent connection between class and race in this country. They are inseparable. The wealth gap between Black and White Americans is enormous and exacerbated by the recent recession. If schools want Black students to attend in significant numbers, schools will need to dedicate more money to that initiative.

Third, integrating programming and curriculum at schools is progressing even slower than integrating students and faculty. Education about race, identity, and inequality is rare in

Independent Schools and nearly always separate from the "real" academics. Assemblies and special events, often voluntary, comprise the vast majority of teaching about race. A Martin Luther King Jr. assembly is the programmatic equivalent of the "I have a Black friend" (and therefore I am not racist) mentality. This is not progress; this is highlighting the exception to the rule. It is much harder to argue that a system promotes racism, let alone to attempt to change that system, if there are one or two exceptions to the rule. How many times have President Barack Obama, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell, and Clarence Thomas been invoked to argue against the existence of racial discrimination? Those rare times and places where school sanctioned events put people of color in the majority—affinity groups—White folks from every part of the school community pushed back.

Fourth, similar to how a focus on Black folks has been replaced by a focus on people of color, schools' attention to race has been replaced with much more varied and more nebulous attention on "Diversity" or "Inclusion". In many schools, this has meant a retreat from race. "Diversity" is a grab bag of topics from which schools may select whichever topics they want. For many, Diversity is no longer about addressing access and inequality, as it once was. Rather, Diversity is now about fostering a business-minded cultural fluency among predominantly White and predominantly affluent consumers of Independent school education. Yes, there are individuals and some groups who still push an "access" agenda, but those people are not the majority. In its crudest form, Diversity is a PR campaign: an illusion of integration.

Finally, racism is very present on campuses. Yes, racism may not present as the physically violent form that was once commonplace. However, there is overt racism. There is also the more subtle form of racism very much in the vein of Bonilla-Silva's (2006) "color-blind racism". Black men are associated with violence. People of color are assumed to be less

intelligent than White folks. Schools and their personnel avoid the topic of race in favor of anything else, it would seem. This cultivates intentional ignorance around the subject of race and therefore promotes the racially unequal status quo. It is not neutral to do nothing.

Each Independent school operates as part of the larger social network of Independent schools. As a self-evaluating network, Independent schools must not stray too far from the prevailing norms if they wish to be validated by the larger community: a real concern for schools that rely upon their elite status to survive. Facing all of the same concerns and limitations of every other Independent school, some schools are moving toward a more true representation of racial integration than their peers. I studied one such school.

Blakely Academy was more racially integrated, both in terms of personnel and programming, than the other schools. The integrative trajectory of this school was defined by a Head of School who spoke directly to issues that Administrators from other schools generally avoided. These issues are race and inequality. By centering the issues of race and inequality, and constantly asking questions about how to improve its efforts toward true racial equity, the Administration at Blakely Academy found that there were certain fundamental aspects of the school that needed to be changed. Currently, Blakely Academy promotes Multicultural Education as the foundation for all school curriculum and associated activities. Also, the Head of School is working to change the current financial paradigm that honors the wealthy and belittles those who are not. It is less that Blakely Academy has achieved certain markers of integration and more that Blakely Academy is operating with a different set of intentions. Access. Equity. Exposing systemic racism. The fact that Blakely Academy has chosen this path highlights the fact that other schools have chosen to follow a different path. Striving toward integration is possible; Blakely Academy proves this.

The Current Discussion in the Sociology of Education

Beyond segregation, integration, and race in schooling, my research contributes to the Sociology of Education by entering the national discussion of attendance patterns as researchers debate public vs. private vs. Charter vs... As recently as January 2013, the Census Bureau published a paper entitled, "The Decline in Private School Enrollment" (Ewert 2013). Ewert tracks the overall attendance patterns of private schools, which include religiously affiliated schools not addressed in this study, using data from the American Community Survey (ACS), the Community Population Survey (CPS) and the Private School Universe Survey (PSS). She concludes that in the last decade, there has been a noted decline in private school enrollment across the country. However, Ewert struggles to find data that provides reasons for this decline. She points to the economic crisis, homeschooling and the increase in Charter schools as possible answers to the question of private school decline. Further, she notes that non-Hispanic, White student enrollment has declined, but data on other racial and ethnic groups was murky at best.

I have no doubt that this overall decrease in private school enrollment will be studied by Sociologists as evidence of social change in the field of Education. My research will be useful in this emerging discussion by offering evidence of clear racial/ethnic trends in Independent school enrollment. Beyond this, I offer explanations as to the causes for the increase in certain racial/ethnic group representation and the decrease in others.

Broader Implications

In 1977, Rosabeth Moss Kanter published "Men and Women of the Corporation". Her research offered a valuable window into theoretical approaches toward understanding the

complex relationships between people and organizations. She concludes, "Opportunity, power, and relative numbers (proportions) and social composition have the potential to explain a large number of discrete individual responses to organizations" (246). Kanter laid the groundwork for theories of organizations that would follow, and indeed, many researchers and academics have followed. Now, thirty-five years later, her work remains relevant.

After several years spent researching and analyzing Independent schools and organizational policy and action, I have no doubt that my research stands on the shoulders of theoretical giants such as Kanter. Independent schools may be preparing the future CEOs of our nation, and in that way, they relate directly to the organizations studied by Kanter. However, we do not have to wait until after students graduate to see the relationship between Independent schools and their workplace counterparts. At its core, an Independent school is another institution that is subject to societal trends and existing power structures—just like any other. "Opportunity, power, and relative numbers" are the very same themes that structured my own research. Building upon Kanter and others (Reskin, McBrier and Kmec 1999; Kaufman 2002; Roscigno, Garcia and Bobbitt-Zeher 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey and Stainback 2007; McTague, Stainback, and Tomaskovic-Devey 2009) who showed the importance of these three factors, my research starts where others have left off. I begin with the question, not whether "opportunity, power, and relative numbers" are significant, but rather how "opportunity, power, and relative numbers" are approached and managed in the institution of the Independent school. Additionally, these are institutions run by actors who have vocalized their desire to change "opportunity" and "relative numbers" within their institution. How successful were they? There is no doubt that "opportunity, power, and relative numbers" matter when approaching the inclusion of a previously excluded group, but what institutional approaches to these factors leads

to the change that they want? It is precisely in seeking the answers to this question where my research serves its most important function. The findings stated above have relevance to institutions of all kinds. I sincerely hope that the findings from this research contribute to sociological inquiries of institutional policy and practice.

Racial Segregation Within Organizations

Within the Sociology of Organizations, the topic of racial segregation is prevalent. Current trends in the study of Organizational segregation include (1) proving that there is segregation, and (2) explaining that segregation with national trends and influences upon the organization, such as industrial Diversity and lack of proper oversight (Kaufman 2002; Roscigno, Garcia and Bobbitt-Zeher 2007; Tomaskovic-Devey and Stainback 2007; McTague, Stainback, and Tomaskovic-Devey 2009). However, the Sociology of Organizations, as an area, does little to explain inner-institutional patterns that contribute to the continuation of racial segregation in the workplace. That is exactly where my research may be useful to the on-going investigation of racial segregation. Furthermore, much of this previous exploration assumes a discriminatory stance from the organizations. What about organizations that are attempting to achieve some level of integration? What about the well-meaning? Again, my study is exploring uncharted territory, and thus adds a needed perspective to the discussion.

Suggestions for Future Research

Within the Sociology of Organizations, the management of Diversity should be investigated in a number of different types of institutions. In doing so, future research could both complement and add to the research that I have conducted by answering the following questions. To what extent are the same phenomena present in different types of institutions? What is unique about managing Diversity in schools? Are there successes or struggles that we could learn from other sectors of our society and apply those lessons to Independent schooling or vice versa?

This project focused on the implementers of Diversity: those tasked with managing the project of Diversity. Other players in this project can and should be studied. In terms of developing an area within the Sociology of Education that looks at Independent schooling, researchers should take a close look at the formation and function of the Board of Trustees as it relates to institutional change and progress toward racial integration. The power of the Board is undeniable, and access to the Board is very limited. A window into the inner-workings of such a group would go a long way toward explaining why Independent schools follow certain paths of change and not others.

Another group whose actions have a great effect on Diversity work are those "resistors": particularly White parents, faculty, and other community members who speak out against Diversity efforts. Financial aid and affinity groups are the two biggest triggers for such resistance, and more research should be done investigating the reasons behind this.

Also interesting would be to investigate those people of color—particularly Black Americans—who intentionally choose not to send their children to predominantly White

Independent schools. There is much to be learned about how Independent schools are perceived by various communities, and it may be helpful both in the academic world and for Independent schools, themselves, to understand (1) that despite entrance to these schools being highly competitive, there are those who do not want to attend such a school, and (2) the negative perceptions that these schools have among outsiders is often based on race; perhaps this could help schools better understand their situations as institutions with thick racial meaning attached.

Recommendations for Schools

From the outset, I was intent upon this research being productive, not only academically critical. What follows are recommendations for Independent schools that stem directly from the findings of my research. I will not be able to cover all of the necessary steps for schools that wish to move toward true racial integration, but I will do my best to highlight those most fundamental to progress and those that challenge the current Diversity trends. I believe that there are schools and individuals who want to work toward racial integration in an honest way. These recommendations are for those folks.

1. Appoint a Diversity Director. Hire a person who has the credentials and experience to be deemed an expert in the field of race. Give this person direct access to the Head of School. Put this person in a seat of power on the highest Administrative level. Give this person a realistic and substantial budget. Let this person hire a team of Diversity professionals to both evaluate and educate.

2. Calculate percentages of students, faculty, and staff by each race. Do away with generic terms like "people of color" for statistical purposes. Monitor the percentages of visibly Black people on campus.

3. Change the paradigm of "tuition" and "aid". Simultaneously devote critical attention to examining whether or not those with more money have more power within the institution. And in the mean time (because this will take a while…)

4. Devote more funds to financial aid. Recruit visibly Black students to the youngest grades.

5. Make the study of race, identity, and racial inequality required. Train the teachers, and evaluate them on their ability to integrate their curriculum. Train every adult on campus. A part-time basketball coach, for instance, spends many hours and exerts much influence over students.

6. Make the study of race about facts, numbers and history. Don't put "Diversity" into the group of touchy-feely subjects. Make this about knowledge.

7. Establish affinity groups. Each member of the school community should participate in a school-sanctioned group that can act as a safe space to talk about issues of race. This includes the White folks. Make sure that there are trained facilitators leading these groups on a regular basis.

8. Center the topic of race. Resistors will do almost anything to get the conversation off of race. Keep race on the table. Always.

9. Combat racism. Be ready to counter racist assumptions and actions with data and evidence that speak the truth.

10. Be ready to be different. If schools worry a little less about alienating their traditional constituents and peers, there will be more room for positive change. Schools are created a rigid space of existence that relies too much on the already powerful, the already wealthy. Be ready to lose some "friends".

Final Thoughts

I grew up in Independent schools. I am grateful for the education that they provided: both intentional and unintentional. If I could ask one thing of the Independent School community, it would be this: Be Who You Are.

Some schools are out there, masquerading as inclusive institutions: as springboards for equal opportunity. Their publications feature carefully crafted images of a racially diverse community, although day-to-day progress is far from tangible. These schools, by not truly committing to racial integration, produce those dangerous exceptions to the rule: the exceptions that allow inequality to persist and to resist positive change. Among those few Black students who graduate from such institutions may well be the next CEO, the next Supreme Court Justice—even the next President. But success of the few is not evidence of the equality of the many. "Diversity" without integration creates a façade of equal opportunity with no real substance to support it. The façade is more dangerous to progress than honestly admitting that racial integration is not a top priority for schools.

Some schools want to be centers of change and of true equality. Many schools who value works like "tradition" do not know how to proceed given the current climate that shudders in the face of institutional and social change. I challenge these schools to honestly admit that they will make racial integration a priority—perhaps even the priority—and to risk the alienation of those "traditional" sources of stability.

Those schools that have put themselves out there as leaders in the move toward true racial equity know that the backlash against them will be constant and often severe. A disruption to the existing power structure will always inspire backlash. But, be who you are.

If we choose to ignore the evidence of persistent racial inequality in the Independent school system—and it is a choice—we will simply reinforce the existence of that inequality. A system of segregation in Independent schools will continue. Even more upsetting to the prospect of positive change, though, is the current path of Independent schools, as a whole, toward

Diversity and away from racial equality. If we continue along this path, the result will be a legitimized system of segregation in Independent schools. And this is far worse.

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