

Increasing Educational Equity by Redrawing School Catchment Boundaries in Monroe County, Indiana

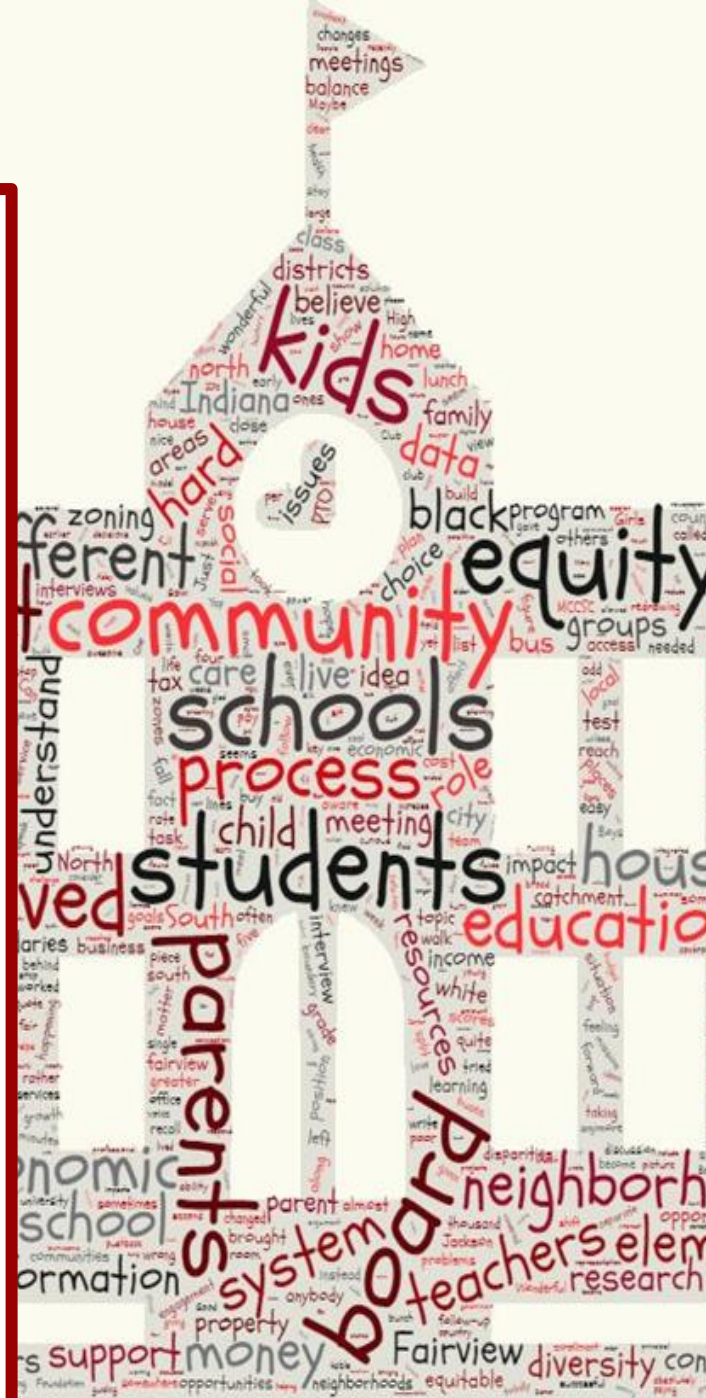
Increasing Educational Equity by Redrawing School Catchment Boundaries in Monroe County, Indiana



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Indiana Coalition for Public Education
Monroe County



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Note: Because of limitations in the data available to the capstone team, the team’s proposed new maps do not reflect accurately the poverty rates at the different schools, and therefore should not be perceived as a starting point for actual boundary proposals, but rather as indicative of a strategy for redrawing boundaries. The capstone team emphasized that MCCSC, should it embark on redistricting, would have access to all the relevant street-by-street student data.



Executive Summary

Our Capstone course in the Master of Public Affairs program at the Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs (O'Neill) at Indiana University (IU) prepared this report on behalf of the Indiana Coalition for Public Education - Monroe County (ICPE-MC).

In an effort to increase school equity within the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC), ICPE-MC requested that our team analyze school catchment boundaries to:

1. Evaluate current racial and socioeconomic disparities across schools in MCCSC
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of redrawing school catchment boundaries as a mechanism for increasing equity
3. Employ geographic information system (GIS) mapping tools and relevant demographic data to propose new catchment zone boundaries that achieve increased equity across racial and socioeconomic lines
4. Conduct stakeholder interviews with key community stakeholders to determine the political feasibility of implementing new catchment zone boundaries.

In addition to analyzing current maps and proposing an alternative, we also undertook a broad literature review of existing research on school equity in order to identify other recommendations and policy solutions that ICPE-MC may pursue in order to increase equity across MCCSC schools.

This report focuses on elementary school catchment zone boundaries, because they exhibit substantial racial and socioeconomic disparities that do not persist at the middle and high school levels. We present two alternative elementary school catchment zone boundaries that ensure that no school experiences an overall enrollment count change of more than 36 students, or approximately 8% of current enrollment. The first alternative, which maintains contiguous catchment zone boundaries, was only modestly successful at improving measures of equity because marginal changes in existing school boundaries do not sufficiently re-sort students across schools on the basis of race or poverty status. Our second, preferred alternative "Equity Model" proposes non-contiguous elementary school catchment zone boundaries. This alternative boundary map achieves racial and socioeconomic equity without meaningfully changing school transportation time for elementary school students.

To evaluate the political feasibility of each proposed model, as well as attitudes toward redrawing catchment boundaries in general, we conducted stakeholder interviews. Stakeholders discussed key factors related to racial and socioeconomic equity in Monroe County, the 2005 process of redrawing catchments, major arguments for and against changing school boundaries, issues related to housing availability, school transportation considerations, alternative opportunities for increasing equity, and overall recommendations for how the process of redrawing should unfold. Stakeholders were most commonly concerned about the

potential for the school board to fail to include marginalized communities in the redrawing process. Additionally, stakeholders were concerned about losing “neighborhood schools” and fragmenting Monroe County communities.

Collectively, we employ results from our GIS analysis and community stakeholder interviews to make a series of recommendations for ICPE-MC across five areas: how to build a coalition of support around this proposal; the most salient issues to consider if MCCSC pursues new catchment zone boundaries; guidelines for the process of redrawing new catchment zone boundaries; developing a continuous process for monitoring and evaluating equity within MCCSC after implementing new boundaries; and additional efforts ICPE-MC may pursue to increase equity further within MCCSC.

This report presents results from these analyses. We organize the report as follows. First, we define key technical terms. Second, we review research on the importance of school equity, and various mechanisms through which to improve equity measures. We establish why redrawing catchment zones may be preferable to other options for MCCSC. Third, we analyze stakeholder interviews to assess community members’ views of school equity, as well as the process of redrawing catchment zones. Fourth, we explain the metrics we use to evaluate equity, and we incorporate GIS tools to analyze existing catchment boundaries and to propose new boundaries. Finally, we revisit the literature review and stakeholder interviews to assess the political feasibility of implementing our proposed alternative boundaries, as well as to make recommendations to ICPE-MC for moving forward.



Key Terms

ArcGIS

A standard GIS mapping software. This study employs ArcGIS to create MCCSC maps that display demographic data and enable data computation for creating new catchment zone boundary maps.

Census block group

A geographic designation assigned to an area by the US Census Bureau to organize and analyze census data. Monroe County consists of 33 census tracts, which collectively consist of 112 census block groups. For the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, the census block group is the smallest level of geographic aggregation for which demographic data are available. Census block groups typically consist of 600 to 3,000 individuals.

Contiguous / non-contiguous

We use these terms to describe school catchment boundary lines. With contiguous boundaries, a catchment zone consists of one, unbroken shape. With non-contiguous boundaries, a catchment zone may consist of several distinct shapes, disconnected from one another.

Equity

In the context of this report, equity refers to access to a fair and just educational experience for all students, starting with balanced racial and socioeconomic distributions across schools. We use the term "educational equity" to refer generally to both racial and socioeconomic equity in schools.

Equity measure

A method by which researchers can study levels of equity or inequity among people of different groups in society. In this study, we primarily measure equity along racial and socioeconomic lines using *exposure* and *unevenness* measures.

Exposure

A common measure of equity that describes the average racial or socioeconomic composition of schools, districts, or neighborhoods of students. For example, at Childs Elementary School, if 126 out of 549 total students are non-white, the percentage of non-white students is 23%. We can say that for a non-white student at Childs, 23 out of every 100 other students at the school also are non-white; the exposure score is 0.23.

Redrawing school catchments

The process of making changes to the size, shape, and/or location of school catchment boundaries. This process also is known as redistricting, realigning, or rezoning schools. We have refrained from using those terms in this report except when employing direct quotes from stakeholder interviews. We have opted to use the term "redrawing" to differentiate the process of changing school boundaries from the processes of changing school board member districts

(redistricting), or other types of zoning ordinance changes (rezoning for land-use, housing, etc.).

Regular/irregular zoning

Regular school catchment zoning refers to the formation of district boundaries using recognizable geometric shapes. School districts may achieve “regular” zoning by dividing boundaries by streets, borders, and other landmarks. This type of zoning is the most common form of boundary formation. Irregular school catchment zoning refers to generating targeted catchment zones that employ demographic data to generate boundaries.

School catchments

The bounded, geographical area where students must reside to attend a particular school. We alternatively refer to school catchments as catchment zones/areas, attendance zones/areas, school boundaries, etc.

School names

As elementary schools are the main focus of this report, we identify them by name (e.g., Fairview, Childs, etc.). We refer to middle and high schools using their full names (Tri-North Middle, Bloomington High School South, etc.) or provide context to differentiate.

Slices

In this study, the team sometimes had to split census block groups into smaller geographical groupings, which we refer to as slices. Census block group boundaries are not contiguous with school catchment zone boundaries and often overlap multiple school catchment zones. To align US Census data with school catchment zone boundaries, we employed ArcGIS to, create smaller slices of Census block groups so that we were able to align the Census block group boundaries with the school catchment zone boundaries. This process enabled us to calculate population-weighted demographic data for the existing and proposed school catchment zones.

Unevenness / unevenness measure

A common measure of equity that describes the difference in average school, district, or neighborhood racial or socioeconomic composition. In this study, we analyze unevenness at the district level, for elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. For example, if the exposure level of low-income students to other low-income students in the district is 0.3, and the exposure level of non-poor students to low-income students is 0.2, the unevenness measure is the difference between these exposure levels: 0.1. In other words, on average, non-poor students encounter 10 fewer low-income students per 100 students than low-income students.

Purpose Statement

We prepared this report for the Indiana Coalition for Public Education - Monroe County (ICPE-MC) as part of a Capstone course for Master of Public Affairs students enrolled in the Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs (O'Neill) at Indiana University (IU). The O'Neill Capstone is a semester-long, collaborative project focused on providing policy analysis to a client organization.

ICPE-MC is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that “advocates for all children to have high quality, equitable, well-funded schools that are subject to democratic oversight by their communities.”¹ ICPE-MC requested that we conduct an in-depth evaluation of educational equity in Indiana’s Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) for this O'Neill Capstone project.

ICPE-MC asked the O'Neill Capstone class to:

- Analyze school catchment boundaries to determine current racial and socioeconomic disparities in the Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC).
- Evaluate whether redrawing school catchments could increase educational equity across MCCSC schools.
- Employ demographic data and Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping tools to propose new catchment areas that improve racial and socioeconomic equity for MCCSC students.
- Conduct community stakeholder interviews to gauge the challenges and opportunities involved in redrawing school boundaries.
- Determine the political feasibility of redrawing catchment boundaries.
- Make a recommendation regarding whether and how MCCSC should redraw school catchment boundaries.
- Identify actionable policy solutions for increasing educational equity in Monroe County.

¹ Indiana Coalition for Public Education–Monroe County. (2020)

A Look at Educational Equity

This section explores the concept of educational equity and how MCCSC might achieve it. We outline the benefits of equitable schools and analyze several methods that other school corporations have used, ranging from controlled choice to redrawing catchments. We also review previous research on the historical and cultural context of educational equity.

What MCCSC can Gain from Increased Racial and Socioeconomic Equity

Currently, schools within MCCSC do not exhibit equitable distributions by race or socioeconomic status. White and non-poor elementary school children overwhelmingly attend different elementary schools than do non-white and low-income children. When school boundaries create schools that are less socially and racially diverse, they limit the ability of low-income and racial minority students to choose where they receive their education. Further, a lack of diversity in schools encourages the continuation of segregation in schooling.

Research shows that children and communities benefit when schools exhibit balance along racial and socioeconomic lines. Racial and economic balance fosters broader student access to high-quality educational opportunities, promotes more equitable access to resources, and produces a high return on investment; attending an integrated school can be a more effective academic intervention than allocating additional funding to high-poverty schools. According to the Century Foundation,² benefits of equitable schools include students with higher average test scores, who are more likely to enroll in college, less likely to drop out, and who exhibit peer-to-peer learning. As adults, students who attend equitable schools are more likely to seek out integrated settings later in life, earn higher average incomes, exhibit improved health outcomes, and are less likely to be incarcerated. Racial and ethnic minorities who attend racially balanced schools also are more likely to be employed in white collar jobs. Equitable schools help to reduce racial achievement gaps; encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity; and can improve students' satisfaction and intellectual self-confidence. Integrated schools can help to cultivate meaningful relationships between individuals with different racial or socioeconomic backgrounds, which in turn impact how diverse students treat one another; attending a diverse school can help reduce bias and counter stereotypes. Diverse classrooms prepare students to succeed in a global economy and produce more productive, more effective, and more creative teams.

Without improving equity along racial and socioeconomic lines, MCCSC is unable to reap the substantial rewards associated with equitable schools. Moreover, the persistence of racial and socioeconomic inequities across MCCSC schools perpetuates unequal access to educational

² The Century Foundation. (2019)

resources and opportunities among non-white and low-income children. Nearly 70 years after the US Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* established that racially segregated schools are inherently unequal, MCCSC continues to exhibit significant levels of racial and socioeconomic inequity across its elementary schools.

MCCSC Elementary Schools are not Equitable

Our analysis of MCCSC elementary schools reveals sharp disparities across catchment zones along racial and socioeconomic lines. Using MCCSC's existing catchment zone boundaries and data from the Indiana Department of Education, we mapped the distribution of low-income students--as measured by the share of students enrolled in free or reduced-price meal programs--and Black or Hispanic students across elementary schools. Map 1 depicts the distribution of students enrolled in free or reduced-price meals programs, a common measure of school poverty, across elementary schools. Map 2 depicts the distribution of Black or Hispanic students across elementary schools. For Map 1, the darker the color gradient, the higher the concentration of low-income students in a school. For Map 2, the darker the color gradient, the higher the concentration of Black or Hispanic students in a school.

These maps illustrate clear disparities in the share of low-income and Black or Hispanic students across elementary schools. While 84% of the students enrolled at Fairview Elementary are low-income, only 9% of the students enrolled at Childs Elementary are low-income. Similarly, while nearly a quarter of the students attending Fairview are Black or Hispanic, fewer than one percent of students attending Marlin Elementary are Black or Hispanic.

This disparity is also evident in Charts 1 and 2 on the following page. The red line denotes the average percentage of students across the district eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, or who are Black or Hispanic. If the schools were balanced racially and socioeconomically, each of the bars would be of similar height and close to the red lines, meaning that each school's racial and socioeconomic compositions are similar to the average racial and socioeconomic composition of the school corporation as a whole.

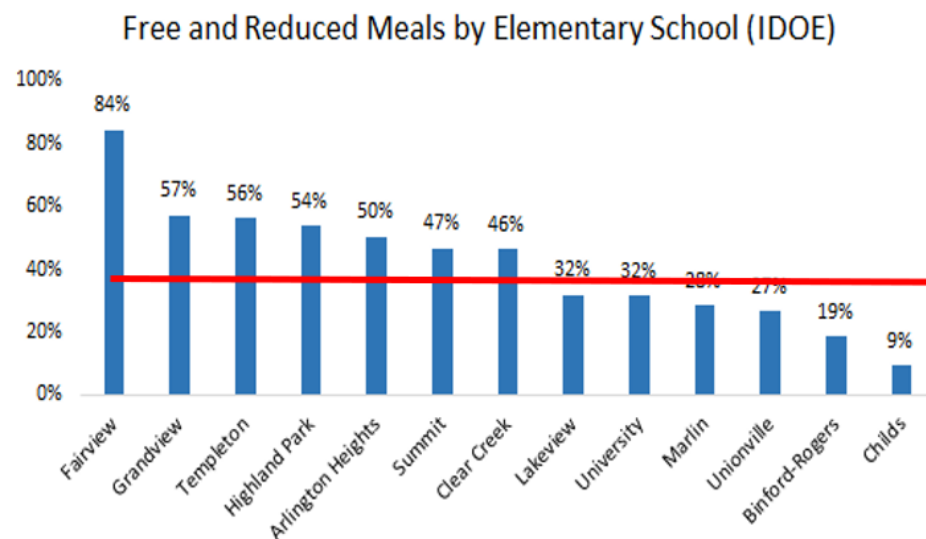


Chart 1

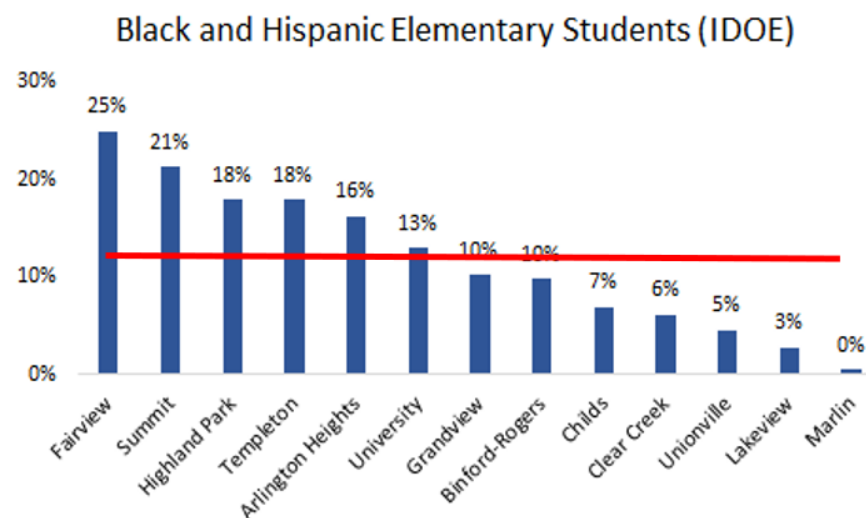
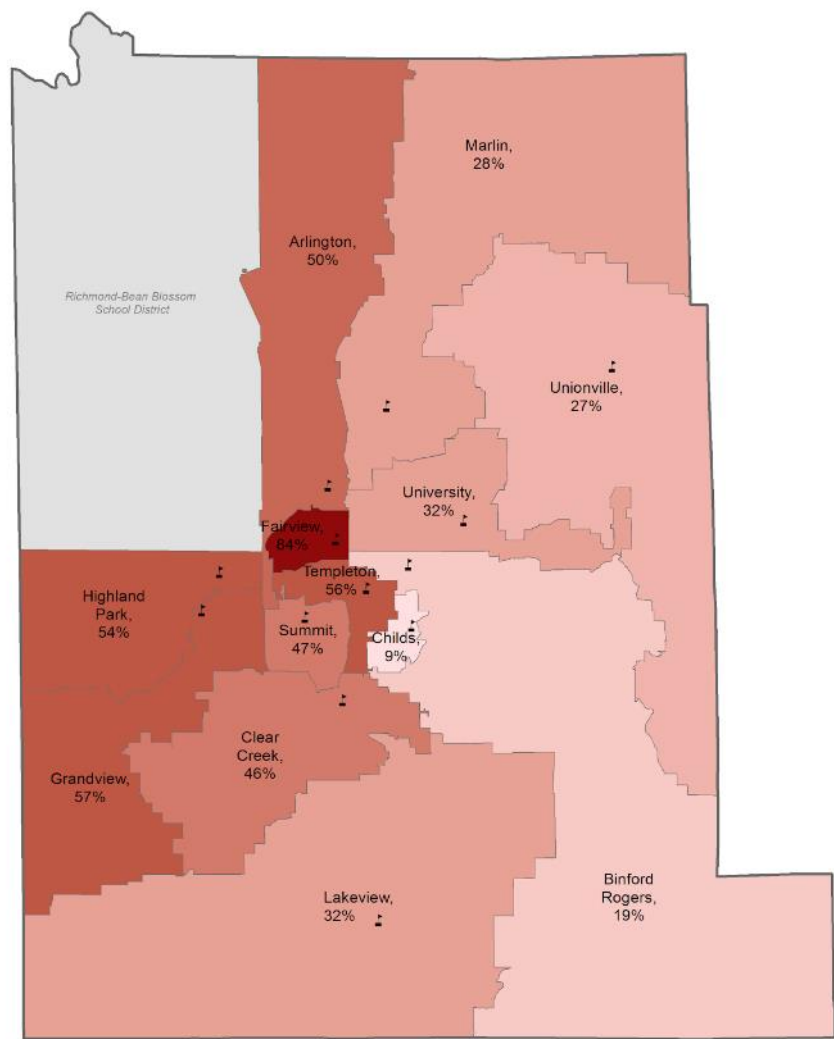


Chart 2

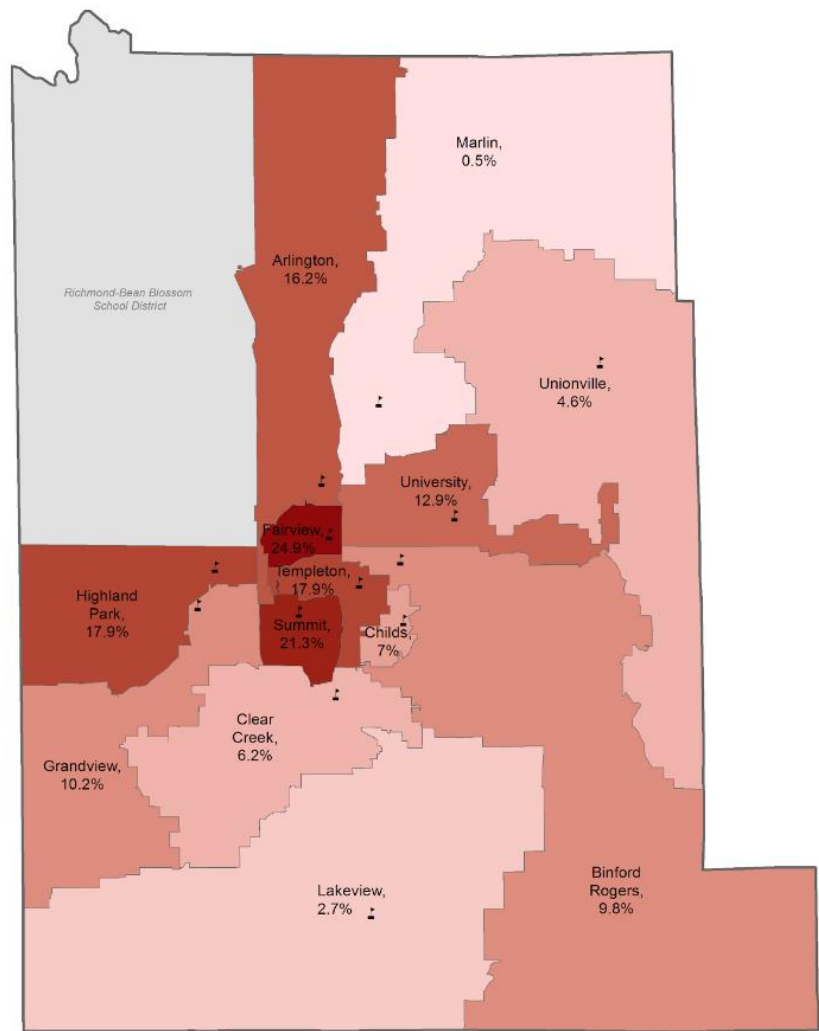
While many MCCSC elementary schools received federal accountability grades indicating that they either meet or exceed expectations and state grades of either an “A” or “B,” Fairview, Templeton, Grandview, and Clear Creek received both federal grades of “Approaches Expectations” and a state grade of “C.” In addition to these schools, Summit also received a federal grade of “Approaches Expectations” and Highland Park received a state grade of “C.” With the exception of Clear Creek, elementary schools receiving a rating of “Approaches Expectations” or a grade of “C” also exhibited higher concentrations of Black and/or Hispanic students and higher concentrations of low-income students.

The following schools also exhibited a higher share of students receiving special education services: Highland Park (27%), Grandview (25%), Fairview (25%), Templeton (23%), and Arlington (23%). Elementary schools with higher concentrations of students receiving special education services also exhibited higher concentrations of low-income students.



Percent of students receiving free or reduced price school lunch, 2019

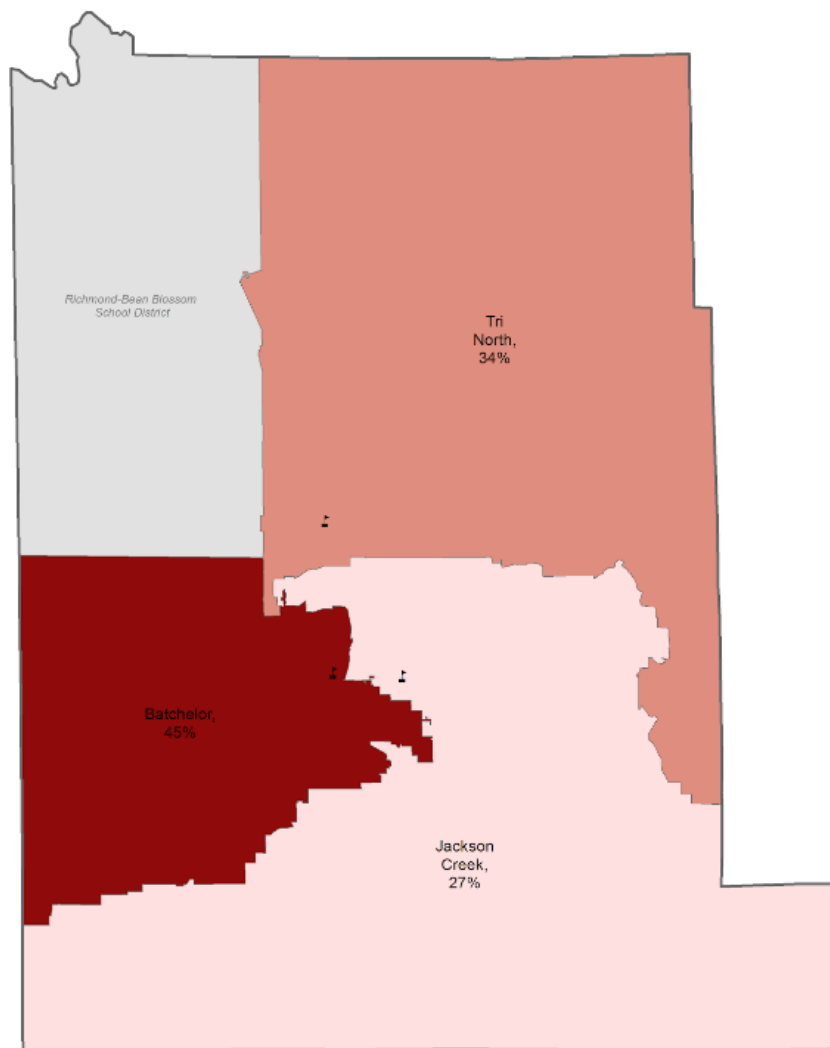
Map 1



Percent Black or Hispanic students, 2019

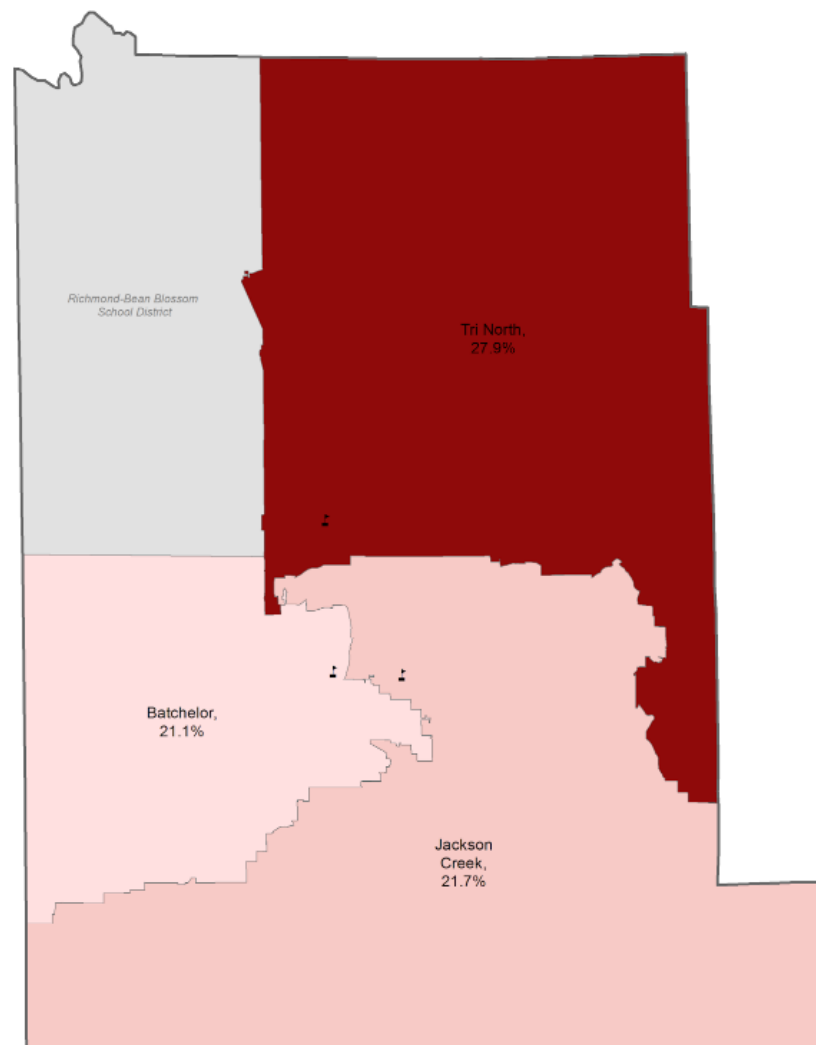
Map 2

In comparison, middle schools exhibit less disparity; further, racial disparities are far less prominent than socioeconomic disparities. Maps 3 and 4 show that 34% of students attending Batchelor are low-income, followed by Tri-North at 34% and Jackson Creek at 27%. The middle schools exhibit remarkably balanced shares of Black or Hispanic students of 15%, 13%, and 10% at Tri-North, Batchelor, and Jackson Creek, respectively. Each middle school received a federal grade of “Meets Expectations,” and a State grade of “B.” Batchelor exhibited the highest share of students receiving special education services, at 19%.



Percent of students receiving free or reduced price school lunch, 2019

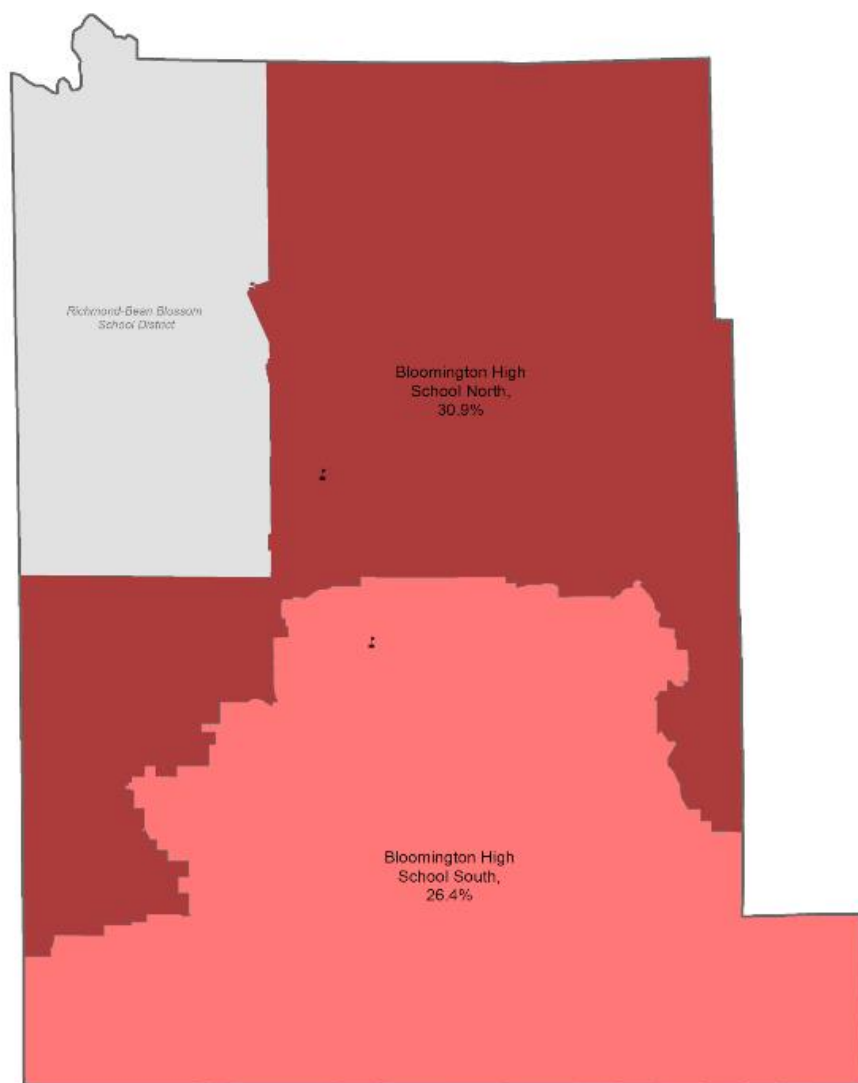
Map 3



Percent non-white studentst, 2019

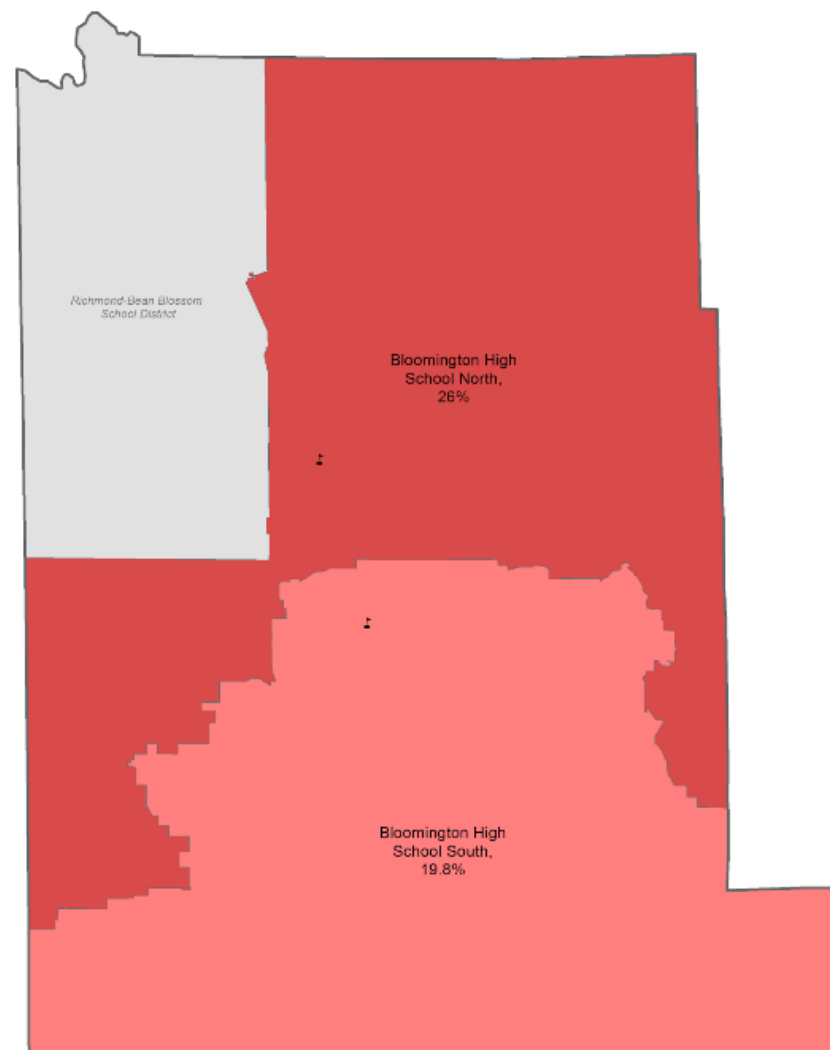
Map 4

Maps 5 and 6 also depict relatively similar shares of low-income and Black or Hispanic students across high schools. About 31% of students enrolled in Bloomington High School North are low-income, as compared to 26% of students at Bloomington High School South. At Bloomington High School North, 13% of students are Black or Hispanic, as compared to 9% at Bloomington High School South. Bloomington High School North received a federal grade of “Meets Expectations,” and Bloomington High School South received a federal grade of “Exceeds Expectations.” Both high schools received a state grade of “A.” Fifteen percent of Bloomington High School North’s students receive special education services, and 12% of Bloomington High School South’s students receive such services.



Percent of students receiving free or reduced price school lunch, 2019

Map 5



Percent of non-White students, 2019

Map 6

The appendix includes additional maps depicting additional characteristics of MCCSC schools across levels, including attendance rates, percentage of English Language Learners, state and federal school quality grades, the shares of students receiving special education services, and total funding per student.

This section describes stark racial and socioeconomic disparities across MCCSC elementary schools, and motivates why reducing these disparities benefits children, families, and communities. The following sections position efforts to improve equity across schools within a broader historical framework, and outline methods for equitably distributing students across schools.

The Historical Context of School District Equity

The topic of school equity is not new, and more than 250 court cases throughout US history document various challenges to achieving greater racial integration across schools. Most notably, the 1954, US Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* unanimously declared that segregation of public schools violates the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution. Despite this ruling, many families employed tactics to reinforce de facto school segregation, including “change of residence from controlled to uncontrolled school districts by moving to rich school districts and paying higher property taxes, admission in private schools, homeschooling, or choosing segregated tracking within so-called desegregated schools (for example, putting your child in the “gifted program”)” (Caldas and Bankston III, 2007 pg. 4). Further, as Richard Rothstein’s *Color of Law* documents, many policies at the federal, state, and local levels have reinforced de jure housing segregation throughout much of the 20th century, which reinforces observed racial and socioeconomic disparities across school catchment zones. Taken together, these patterns of de jure and de facto segregation contribute to many of the inequities across schools that persist today throughout the US.

Mechanisms for Enhancing Educational Equity

While equity in schools leads to better outcomes for students, and most stakeholders agree that equity should be a priority, little consensus exists regarding the best approach for balancing schools by race and socioeconomic status. As a result, both our literature review and interviews with community stakeholders revealed several possible paths forward for MCCSC. Both the policymakers who established the current school choice framework within Indiana and the groups that oppose these policies appear to have similar equity goals, which underscores the lack of consensus regarding the best mechanisms for enhancing equity.

While our report focuses on redrawing catchment zone boundaries within MCCSC, this section discusses additional policy mechanisms that also aim to achieve racial and socioeconomic balance.

These alternatives generally fall into three categories: non-education mechanisms, namely housing interventions; education policies that enable families to re-sort themselves across schools (i.e., “school choice”); and education policies in which school districts re-sort students across schools. Here, we consider policy alternatives within these categories.

Housing policy mechanisms for enhancing educational equity

Neighborhood schools reflect the neighborhoods they serve, so housing policy is a mechanism for addressing educational equity. Housing policies may play a particularly important role in reducing socioeconomic inequalities across school catchments, as “a growing body of research shows that residential segregation by income has risen sharply over the past few decades.”³ For example, the Center for American Progress suggests that “[S]tates can foster economic integration in public schools by funding mixed-income housing development projects.” (Boser, 2017, para 31) Housing policy also may address the unequal distribution of families by race across catchment zones resulting from decades of *de jure* segregation. Examples of *de jure* segregation range from the federal denial of mortgages issued to Black Americans, to the construction financing of white-only neighborhoods and suburbs, to redlining (Rothstein, 2017).

Potential housing policies that may increase the equitable distribution of students across schools include the public funding of mixed-income housing; tax credits for developers who build mixed-income housing; housing vouchers; repealing laws/ordinances and banning practices that effectively prohibit a class of people from moving into a given neighborhood; and inclusionary zoning policies. Because these policies fall outside the jurisdiction of the school board, we recommend that ICPE-MC coordinate with state and local housing agencies to explore additional options for enhancing equitable access to public schools.

Education policies that enable families to voluntarily re-sort students across schools

This section describes various voluntary mechanisms that allow families to attend schools that differ from their neighborhood public schools. The re-sorting of students across non-neighborhood schools may change the distribution of students by race and socioeconomic status.

Indiana’s School Choice Framework: The State of Indiana permits families to exercise public school choice in a variety of ways. Indiana state law allows for open enrollment across school districts.⁴ In addition, the state provides a tax deduction to families who choose to home school or send their children to a private school;⁵ has expanded the operation of charter

³ Boser, 2017

⁴ IC 26-20-1, 2016

⁵ State of Indiana, 2020

schools; and operates the largest voucher program in the United States⁶ to help parents defray the cost of sending their children to private schools.

Various groups support school choice policies. While Republican administrations implemented the policies in Indiana, school choice policies receive bipartisan support. For example, the more left-leaning Boser agrees that “[s]tates should have dedicated funding streams that support the creation of high-performing, diverse-by-design charter schools.”(Boser, 2017, para 27)⁷ Similarly, Understood for All, a national foundation that advocates for “people who learn and think differently,” suggests that vouchers are a “way to give parents choices in what school their child attends.”⁸

A major goal of school choice programs is to improve educational opportunities by enabling students to attend schools other than the neighborhood schools to which they are assigned. However, while school choice programs do re-sort students across traditional, charter, and private schools, they do not necessarily enhance equity as measured by increased racial or socioeconomic balance. For example, since the inception of the Indiana voucher program in the 2011-12 school year, participation has become less diverse and more affluent over time as the growth in upper income and non-minority participants has outpaced the growth in the lower income and minority participants the program intended to help.⁹

The school choice policy environment within MCCSC is limited due to the presence of relatively few charter and private schools. Because state law mandates these school choice policies, MCCSC has little control over the extent to which these policies ameliorate or exacerbate existing racial and socioeconomic inequities across schools.

Intra-district transfers: In addition to inter-district transfers, Indiana state policy allows for intra-district (i.e., within-district) transfers across school catchment zone boundaries. Because the state no longer allocates general fund dollars to public schools via local property taxes, Republican lawmakers under former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels argued that a student’s zip code should no longer determine the public school that they attend. Theoretically, Indiana public school students are able to exercise intra-district choice by choosing to attend public schools outside their catchment zones. However, each school corporation may set the policies under which students may exercise intra-district transfer rights. While MCCSC has such policies in place, numerous community members remarked in our stakeholder interviews that these policies (and other choice options) are only viable for a small number of families. Students cannot exercise intra-district choice to transfer to a school with full enrollment, and

⁶ Indiana Department of Education. (2020)

⁷ Boser, 2017.

⁸ Kelly, 2014.

⁹ Shaffer, Dincher, 2020

MCCSC does not provide busing to schools outside a student's assigned catchment area. Because many elementary schools are at enrollment capacity, and many parents are unable to drive their children to and from school every day, intra-district transfer opportunities within MCCSC are limited.

Some school districts across the country have taken a different approach to intra-district transfers.¹⁰ For instance, in 2013, Boston Public Schools adopted a "controlled choice" model through which they assigned students to multiple potential schools in addition to their "default" school, providing each student with a limited set of school choice options. Similarly, in 2010, Denver Public Schools adopted the concept of "shared enrollment zones," in which the district guaranteed families a seat at one of multiple schools in their area. And in 2015, Washington, D.C. adopted a new lottery-based scheme that allows families to rank their top 12 choices for school attendance. These controlled choice options might be better suited for the large urban districts that they serve. Boston, Denver, and Washington, D.C. are densely-populated urban areas, with 125, 162, and 111 schools within their systems, respectively. MCCSC, by contrast, is home to only 25 schools.

Another form of intra-district choice comes in the form of district-administered magnet schools. These schools typically specialize in a particular type of curriculum, such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) or the arts. Students sometimes gain admission to these programs via an application process. Due to the specialized nature of these programs, they aim to attract students from across a district with particular needs or interests. And, while many magnet programs may strive to increase opportunities among students with diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, these programs do not explicitly aim to improve the equitable distribution of students across the district along racial or socioeconomic lines.

Reserved seats: Many school districts employ a reserved seating scheme, which reserves some public school seats for neighborhood students, while allocating remaining seats to students according to other criteria such as demographic characteristics. While some schools reserve seating for low-income students, the 2007 Supreme Court ruled in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* that race cannot serve as a basis for preferential admission to over-subscribed public schools. This ruling prohibited school district practices in Seattle and Louisville that accounted for student race as part of an effort to equitably allocate students across schools on the basis of race (Rothstein, 2017). Thus, MCCSC is unable to employ reserved seating as a tool for achieving racial equity across schools.

Education policies that mandate student re-sorting across schools

In addition to policies that enable the voluntary sorting of students across schools via school choice, several additional policy instruments aim to re-sort students across schools by changing

¹⁰ Hanover Research, 2015

the assignment of students to neighborhood schools. These policies often explicitly aim to increase racial and/or socioeconomic equity across schools.

Quotas and desegregation busing: Quota systems involve school district assignment of students to schools outside of their catchment zone in order to meet predetermined quotas along racial or socioeconomic lines. Quotas formed the basis of desegregation busing initiatives in the 1960s and 1970s, but districts have largely phased out these practices since the 1980s.¹¹ Ellen Brantlinger's 2003 book *Dividing Classes* features interviews with Monroe County parents that highlight attitudes in Monroe County towards such schemes; she quotes one parent as saying:

*"Like many parents in this area, we want a neighborhood school. I don't like the idea of busing. These bus rides are not good for kids. I know the idea of mixing different socioeconomic groups is good, but I don't like the practice. I like the schools to be close by."*¹²

Busing desegregation largely occurred as a result of consent decrees. In the absence of such a decision, and given the expiration of many such plans, busing desegregation is an unlikely solution to the racial and socioeconomic inequalities across MCCSC elementary schools.

Redrawing catchment zone boundaries: A final alternative is to redraw school catchment zone boundaries to achieve greater racial and/or socioeconomic balance across neighborhood schools. Two methods exist for redrawing catchment zone boundaries: "regular" zoning and "irregular" zoning. "Regular" school boundaries refer to zones that follow a common polygonal shape, such as a rectangle. School districts and other local government units commonly implement regular zoning areas by drawing boundaries on a map within a reasonable geographic distance. Regular school boundaries typically follow natural boundaries defined by major roadways and landmarks. However, this method often results in racial or socioeconomic imbalances across schools by replicating patterns of residential segregation that follow similar natural boundaries. Figure 1 on the following page illustrates how regular zoning may reinforce inequities across school catchment zones.

¹¹ Boser, 2017

¹² Brantlinger, pg. 125, 2003

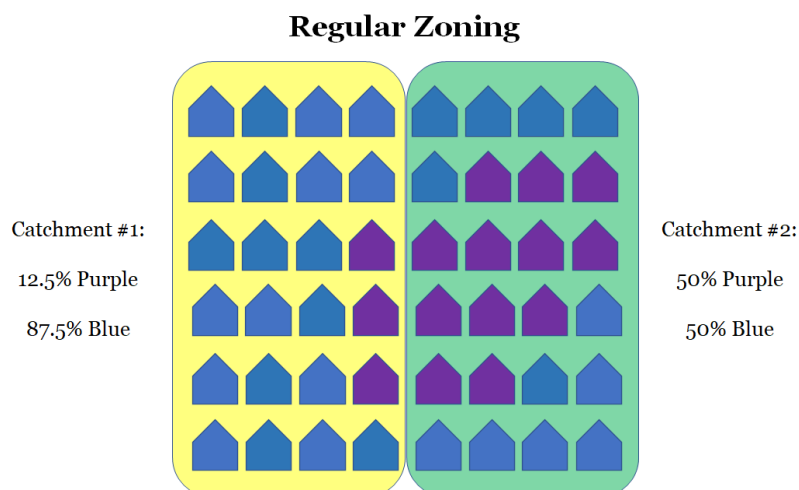


Fig. 1

In contrast, “irregular” school catchment zones often explicitly aim to increase equity. School districts and other local government units may form “irregular” boundaries by employing demographic data to equalize the racial and/or socioeconomic distribution of students and/or residents across boundaries. The resulting school catchment boundaries often do not follow a common polynomial shape, because the goal of the “irregular” boundary is to foster greater integration across neighborhoods. “Irregular” zones may appear to have an interlocking shape, as Figure 2 illustrates.

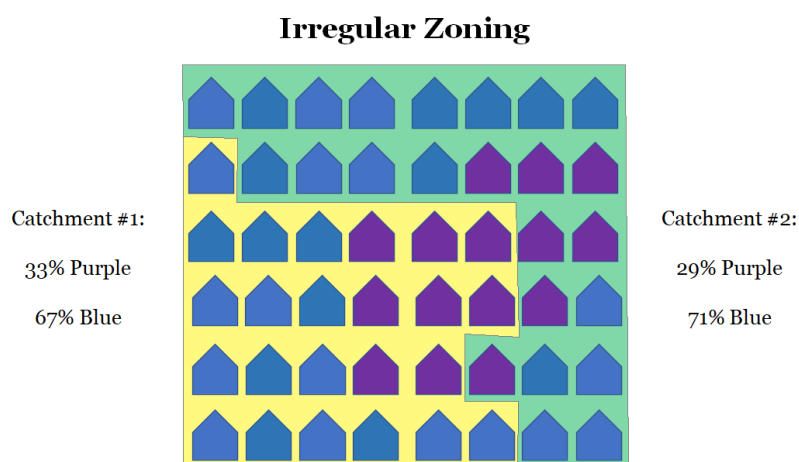


Fig. 2

In cases where school districts have re-drawn school catchment zone boundaries to reduce transportation times, school districts often experience a commensurate increase in racial and socioeconomic disparities across schools. These disparities increase because narrowly circumscribed catchment zones reinforce rather than dismantle existing racial and socioeconomic disparities across neighborhoods.

Redrawing MCCSC Catchment Zone Boundaries to Achieve Educational Equity

Per ICPE-MC's request, this report examines the viability of redrawing school catchments as the primary mechanism for increasing educational equity in Monroe County. Re-drawing catchment zone boundaries is an attractive option for MCCSC for many reasons, including;

- Unlike housing policy or the current school choice framework in Indiana, catchment zone boundaries fall within the jurisdiction of the local school board.
- Re-drawing school catchment boundaries is less complex than other intra-district policies for re-sorting students, such as controlled choice.
- Policies that enable voluntary re-sorting across schools, such as school choice policies, exhibit ambiguous effects on racial and socioeconomic balances across schools.
- Unlike quota and busing systems, new catchment boundaries can achieve a desired level of racial and socioeconomic balance that does not excessively burden transportation functions.

In short, redrawing catchment zone boundary maps is the simplest, most effective, and most efficient way to re-sort students in a way that achieves educational equity and remains within the jurisdiction of the school board.

Community Stakeholder Analysis

Two major analyses comprised our study: an empirical analysis of the school catchment zone boundaries, and a political feasibility analysis to inform ICPE-MC regarding the challenges and opportunities of redrawing catchment zone boundaries within MCCSC. This section describes our methodology and major findings from approximately one month of interviews with Monroe County stakeholders. We list the interviewee participants and address important limitations to the interview process, before exploring the interview results in depth.

Stakeholders Interviewed

We interviewed 21 stakeholders for this project. Twenty interviewees agreed to be identified in this report. We list the remaining interviewee anonymously, providing only the name of their organization for reference. We cite direct quotations from interviewees throughout this analysis, though several interviewees requested that their comments remain anonymous in the report.

ICPE-MC Board Members:

- Byron Turner, Indiana Department of Child Services
- Cathy Fuentes-Rohwer, MCCSC School Board of Trustees
- Deborah Myerson, Executive Director, South Central Indiana Housing Opportunities

MCCSC Board Members:

- Brandon Shurr
- Elizabeth Ruh
- Jacinda Townsend
- Sue Wanzer

Education Stakeholders:

- Martha Chamberlain, Retired Fairview Teacher
- Mike LaRocco, Director of Transportation, Indiana Department of Education
- Teresa Eineman, Former Superintendent, Crown Point Community School Corporation
- Anonymous, Indiana Department of Education

Stakeholders Involved in the 2005 Task Force to Redraw Catchments

- John Carter, Community member
- Karin St. John, Community member
- Scott Smart, Community member

Group Affiliations of Interviewees

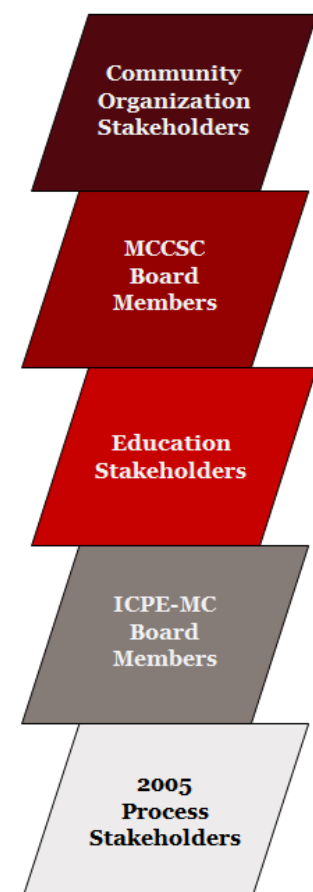


Fig. 3

Community Organization Stakeholders:

- Brian Richardson, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University
- Erik Pearson, Program/Facility Coordinator, Banneker Community Center
- Erin Predmore, President & CEO, Bloomington Chamber of Commerce; MCCSC parent
- Jeff Baldwin, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington
- Steve Hinnefeld, "School Matters" Blogger, "Herald Times" Journalist, Retired
- Tina Peterson, President & CEO, Community Foundation of Bloomington & Monroe County
- Kristin Bishay, Executive Director, Monroe County Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children

Interview Methodology

To engage community stakeholders and gauge their opinions on redrawing catchment boundaries, our team conducted interviews with community members in Monroe County. We chose to conduct interviews because they provide interviewees with the opportunity to share more nuanced opinions than would be possible in a survey. Further, we found that face-to-face interaction with the interviewees, coupled with tactful questioning, encouraged participants to be more forthcoming. To encourage openness, we additionally offered several options to interviewees for how we would share their interview data in the final report, including complete anonymity. We devoted significant effort to finding and contacting a diverse slate of stakeholders whose views represent a wide range of communities affected by catchment zone changes.

Our team combined purposive and snowball sampling methods to identify stakeholders who represented a range of backgrounds and perspectives. We contacted interviewees with influence in their communities, whether via direct election, business leadership, or community organizing. We additionally emphasized outreach to stakeholders who work with historically marginalized communities, to understand not just the opinions of those in positions of power, but also the opinions of the communities they serve. Our initial collection of subjects included about twenty individuals affiliated with the MCCSC school board, MCCSC, community organizations, and the private sector. Some of our initial interviewees introduced us to additional individuals, which led to more confirmed interviews. We also asked every interviewee for names of additional people to contact. These introductions and additional names were crucial in our effort to identify more stakeholder representatives from marginalized communities. Still, we were unable to make contact with some important individuals due to various constraints.

Overall, interviewees were responsive to interview requests. We were able to interview 21 out of 27 prospective subjects. Subjects were more likely to respond if a previous interviewee

identified them or introduced them to the team. Additionally, subjects were more likely to respond if they already supported redrawing catchment boundaries. We attempted to reach some MCCSC board members who have opposed redrawing in the past, but did not receive responses. These school board members included Martha Street and Keith Kline. We were unable to interview MCCSC administrators or faculty, including the Superintendent, due to delays in obtaining evidence of this project's Exempt Status from Indiana University's Institutional Review Board (IRB); MCCSC requires this documentation for collaboration with Indiana University researchers. However, MCCSC staff were responsive to outreach and could potentially participate in future research. We also attempted to reach representatives from various Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and the president of the Bloomington chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), but did not receive responses.

The interview team designed an interview template covering a range of concepts that aimed to address both overall attitudes toward educational equity and specific opinions on redrawing MCCSC school catchment zones. After establishing the interviewee's background and building rapport, the interviewers began with questions on racial and socioeconomic equity, framing later questions on redrawing while considering equity-minded goals. We also included subject-specific questions. These questions enabled the interviewee to describe how their role in the community shaped their attitude toward redrawing catchment boundaries. The interview template served as a guideline so that interviews could flow naturally, and we could use our limited time to ask high-priority questions. Please see Appendix B for our interview template.

Limitations

We faced some important limitations throughout the interview process, including remote, online work; time constraints; IRB approval; and nonresponse bias. Our team had less than ten weeks to complete the entire project during the Summer 2020 term, and our functional interview window was limited to only four weeks. We conducted all interviews virtually and recorded them with the interviewee's consent. While these virtual meetings enabled us to meet face-to-face with interviewees via Zoom, we could not establish the nonverbal cues that help build trust and rapport during in-person conversations as easily. The short time window, combined with the virtual format, meant that we could not always ask every question we planned to ask. We also had limited time to follow up with interviewees. While we believe that these limitations did not compromise the quality of interviews, they did constrain the number of interviews we completed. Therefore, these interviews constitute only a cursory analysis of possible stakeholder perspectives.

Additionally, we encountered delays in receiving approval for our Exempt IRB protocol through the Indiana University's Office of Human Subjects. These delays meant that we were unable to interview a key group of stakeholders, MCCSC administrators and faculty, who require evidence of IRB approval before consenting to interviews with any Indiana University-affiliated researchers. We received approval in July; however, this approval followed the closure of our

interview window, as we were nearing the end of our project. Further, we were not able to access individual student-level contact information to conduct student interviews, because these data are considered private information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This limitation also impacted our data analysis and map creation and prevented us from asking more detailed and tailored questions during our stakeholder analysis.

We also struggled with nonresponse bias and an over-representation of interviewees who support redrawing catchment boundaries. Individuals who support redrawing appeared to be more likely to respond to our interview requests, and in turn provided us with additional contacts to interview who also supported redrawing catchments. Individuals who might be opposed were less likely to respond, which limited the range of perspectives captured in this report. While we attempted to conduct interviews with every member of the school board, some school board members were either non-responsive or declined to participate. Our political feasibility analysis attempts to present perspectives both in favor of and opposed to redrawing catchment boundaries, and to discuss the main barriers to redrawing catchment boundaries, despite the limitations on our ability to engage a more balanced representation of stakeholders.

Finally, due to the combined factors of time constraints, IRB restrictions on interviewing minors and conducting surveys, and the lack of access to student data, we were unable to interview any families or students from within MCCSC. Our analysis includes the viewpoints of some parents only to the extent that many of the stakeholders interviewed are also parents of current or former MCCSC students. We attempted to identify key stakeholders who represented entities with broad community and family interests to better gauge the public perspective; however, the perspectives we present in our analysis largely represent the viewpoints of community leaders in positions of power.

Stakeholder Interview Results

We categorized interview responses according to several recurring topics. We discuss these major themes in detail below. We start by discussing the terminology used by stakeholders, then move to examining comments on racial and socioeconomic equity, followed by comments related to specific schools in MCCSC, and insight into the 2005 process of redrawing catchments in MCCSC. We next examine interviewee opinions for and against redrawing school catchment boundaries, and present two issues in greater detail: transportation and busing concerns, as well as how school diversity depends largely on housing options and residential diversity. We conclude by sharing stakeholder recommendations and additional considerations for the process of redrawing school catchment boundaries and provide interviewee perspectives on who should be involved in this process moving forward.

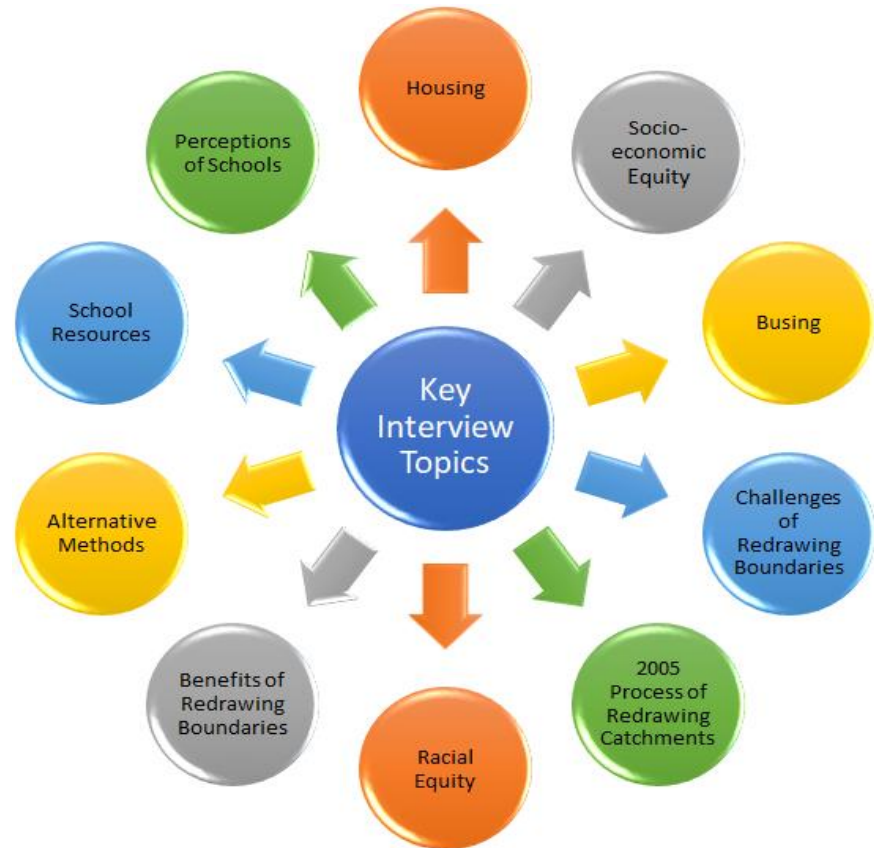


Fig. 5

Stakeholder Terminology

During the interviews, stakeholders demonstrated that word choice is key in speaking about issues of educational equity and redrawing school catchment boundaries. Although we chose to avoid the term *redistricting* in this report (to avoid confusion with the concept of school board member districts, which are distinct from school catchment zones), interviewees most frequently referred to the redrawing process as *redistricting*.

Eight interviewees used the word *redistricting*; however, several participants explained that *redistricting* carries a negative connotation and that advocates should avoid using the term. Four other interviewees used the word *rezoning*, while two referred to the process as *realignment*. When referencing the areas in question, interviewees alternately employed the terms *catchments*, *catchment zones*, *attendance districts*, and *boundaries*, with no clear

preference among the community members interviewed. Several stakeholders referred to *neighborhood schools* to describe schools that draw students primarily from the surrounding neighborhoods.

On the subject of equity, interviewees most commonly used the term *equity*. Other frequently-used terms included *integration*, *inclusion*, *segregation*, *segregated*, and *desegregated*. To describe economic composition, four respondents referred to *SES* (socioeconomic status), while others used terms like *poverty*, *poor*, *affluent*, and *wealthy*. The interview participants also described low-SES populations as *low-resource*, or *underserved*.

When describing racial composition, interviewees employed the term *diversity* most often, followed by specific descriptors like *Black*, *brown*, *Latino*, and *white*. Other community members also used the term *minority populations* to refer to non-white populations. Several stakeholders referred to the Bloomington population as being largely *liberal* and *white*.

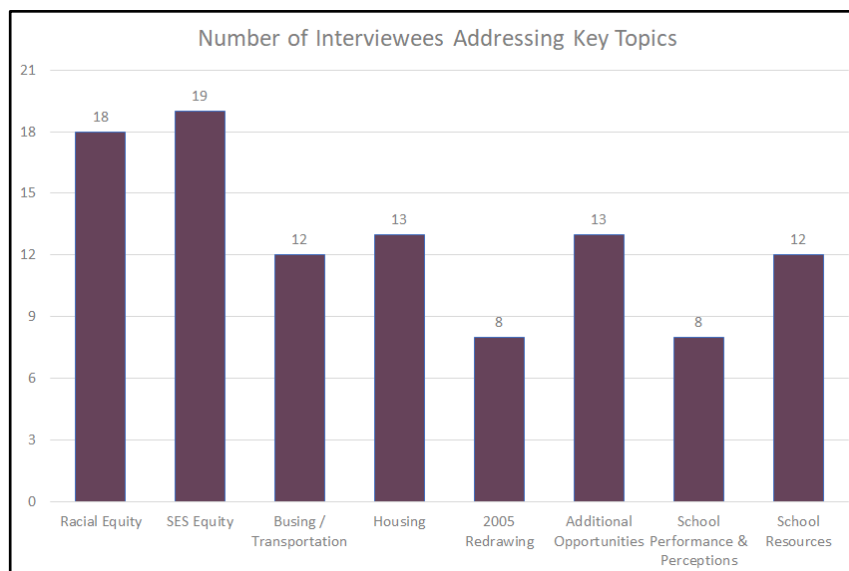


Chart 3

Racial Equity

We directly asked eleven of the stakeholders whether MCCSC has achieved racial equity. Ten of the eleven stakeholders responded no, citing disparities across the schools attended by students who are racial minorities (the eleventh respondent did not directly answer yes or no). Many Black, Hispanic, and Asian families are concentrated in only two of MCCSC's fourteen elementary schools. Interviewees indicated that the low racial diversity in MCCSC elementary schools results in feelings of isolation for students of color in predominantly white classrooms. We also heard one perspective that MCCSC should prioritize balancing students across schools on the basis of poverty status rather than race, because Bloomington has a small Black population. MCCSC last redrew the school catchment boundaries in 2005, and since then the district has implemented initiatives that aim to increase school diversity; these initiatives include considering redrawing school catchments again. However, several interviewees

explained that the redrawing process requires more diverse approaches and shared ownership among community members than did the 2005 process, which focused primarily on redrawing school catchment boundaries to equalize the number of students attending each school, and better align enrollment numbers with school capacity. We provide a more substantive overview of this 2005 process in the section titled “Redrawing Catchments in 2005.”

Benefits of Diversity

Karin St. John succinctly explained the importance of racial diversity in schools: “Clearly exposure to diversity, whether it’s racial or socioeconomic, is a good thing for children. It’s a very good thing, because the world is full of that. And if you aren’t taught that early on – it’s a heavy lift when you get out, and it’s hard, and it does you a disservice.” Schools are able to achieve greater equity when they serve a diverse mix of students, such as at Fairview and Templeton.

Many parents who are part of the Indiana University (IU) community choose to send their children to certain schools to reap the benefits of diversity, which raised the question of whether creating diversity results from voluntary sorting among parents, or arises due to natural patterns of residential sorting. Elizabeth Rue emphasized that the culture in diverse communities “needs to be understood, appreciated, and accommodated.”

Limited Racial Diversity in Monroe County

Several interviewees noted the challenge of Monroe County’s limited racial diversity, which the school demographics at MCCSC reflect. Bloomington has a small non-white population that is approximately 4% Black, or about 4,500 people, not all of whom are school age. Interviewees commented that Fairview Elementary exhibits the lowest share of white students, while Childs Elementary exhibits the highest share of white students. While interviewees tended to believe that Childs has the highest share of white students, Marlin Elementary’s proportion of white students is higher.

The topic of socioeconomic equity also surfaced when we asked interviewees about racial equity. Some interviewees considered these equity measures to be related, while others specifically distinguished between the two. We also learned that community and social service organizations disproportionately serve racial minority students who attend MCCSC schools. Despite limited diversity, one participant shared that the community protects the predominantly white and higher-income schools, whose families tend to have the loudest voices and overshadow other schools in the district.

“Bloomington is a place where people want to say that they are inclusive and accepting, but they do not always practice that.”

-Anonymous Interviewee

One interviewee indicated that populations at some MCCSC schools have changed since the 2005 redrawing of catchment boundaries. These changes include more Latinx students attending Templeton Elementary School, and the movement of Asian students to another apartment complex as a result of the redrawing efforts. MCCSC also has improved its diversity and inclusion practices by hiring more people of color, particularly at senior levels; however, more work remains. Many stakeholders emphasized the importance of diverse representation among teachers, staff, and school board members.

“Faculty and staff should reflect the student demographics...children like to see adults who look like them when they are at school.”

-Martha Chamberlain, former Fairview teacher

Experiences of Minority Students and Families

Several participants expressed concerns related to schools with higher shares of minority students but largely white faculty, and the negative impacts these students may face when school leadership are not representative of the student body. For instance, at least two stakeholders indicated disparities related to discipline, as they have

observed students of color being punished more often than white students. One interviewee referenced research that confirmed his observations that students of color are more likely to attend lower performing schools, and that students of color are more than twice as likely to attend a high-poverty school than white students.

The interview dialogues supported research articles defining an equitable education as providing every child an opportunity to secure a good education. Further, the exclusion of non-white and low-income students from equitable education opportunities can beget other forms of inequity. One interviewee recommended a need to recognize the historic inequities of traditionally segregated neighborhoods, while bridging the gaps between African American, Latino, and the white families. That stakeholder noted that separating the small number of African American children among classes to create diversity will not solve diversity issues when there is only one African American student in a class.

Similarly, one interviewee cited different perceptions of and reactions to Black and white students and informed us that isolating Black children in mostly white classrooms hinders their ability to build cultural identity with Black student peers. This interview highlighted the importance of understanding the perspective of the only Black student in a classroom with all white students.

One community member who works closely with Fairview expressed that families in the community feel forgotten, or that they are excluded from certain things, places, and experiences. Further, generations of families have shared with this community member that Bloomington doesn't necessarily value them.

Initiatives to Promote Racial Diversity in the Community

We learned that Monroe County began several initiatives to promote a more racially diverse and inclusive community. The Regional Opportunities Initiative (ROI) advocates for racial equity in job opportunities, especially in STEM fields. The Community Foundation of Bloomington, Monroe County funded ROI to conduct focus groups with Black residents regarding their experiences of feeling included and welcome within the community. ROI also created a quality of place plan that supports diversity by creating cultural hubs and providing grants to the Banneker Center to foster a secure and welcoming place for Black residents.

The Krimson Leadership Academy for young men of color is a 10-week program offered at Fairview and Arlington Heights. The program seeks to build leadership skills and confidence among male students of color. In 2016, Brian Richardson, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at the Indiana University O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, introduced the Academy at Fairview.

"I don't think anyplace has truly achieved [equity] yet because I think it's a process. For us to say that we have achieved that, I think that would be detrimental to us in the progress that needs to be continually made."

-Brian Richardson, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Additional Stakeholder Suggestions for Improving Racial Equity

Participants expressed additional views on approaches to achieving racial equity. In addition to redrawing school catchment zones, these approaches included outreach and engagement with more diverse students, addressing the history of racial inequality in the curriculum, and providing implicit bias training in the schools. Interviewees voiced that the racial composition of faculty and staff should reflect the racial composition of students, as students like to see adults who look like them at school. Stakeholders noted the limited retention of Black teachers.

Socioeconomic Equity

A majority of interviewees indicated that MCCSC has not achieved socioeconomic equity and referenced large disparities across schools in the share of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Many interviewees identified Fairview as an example of a school with a high share of students in poverty and discussed how redrawing the catchment zones would impact these students and their families. Many discussions focused on the effects of living in poverty on education, and the importance of recognizing this impact on students, families, and educators. Several participants also referenced the need to achieve equity in access to resources, funding, and opportunities for all students and schools.

When asked about socioeconomic diversity, several interviewees observed that just a few elementary schools serve almost all of MCCSC's low-income students. The interviewees mentioned Fairview and Templeton as schools with limited resources and large low-income populations, and occasionally also mentioned Arlington Heights. Interviewees specifically mentioned the Crestmont neighborhood's predominantly segregated and low-income population, which also includes an affordable housing complex and the Boys and Girls Club. On the opposite end of the spectrum, interviewees cited Childs as a school with very little socioeconomic diversity and higher wealth.

One interviewee explained that socioeconomic status was not a major factor in the last redrawing effort in 2005; however, the task force did initially consider socioeconomic status in its deliberation. The task force ultimately decided not to redraw district lines using socioeconomic status as a factor, preferring to limit its scope to fixing capacity issues. One stakeholder observed that Childs was less diverse following the 2005 redrawing. The taskforce discussed moving the student population living in the Crestmont affordable housing complex to Childs, but Childs did not have the capacity to serve those students. Many interviewees agreed that if the focus of redrawing is to balance socioeconomic status, the school board will have to make difficult choices about which students attend which schools and how to divide the communities.

Interviewees also cited disparities across schools in the level of resources and financial support. For example, Fairview exhibits a strong community and family-oriented culture and hosts a new building that helps students feel proud to attend school there. However, we also heard that Fairview parents, teachers, and students would welcome the opportunity to rezone to balance socioeconomic disparities and diversify the student population.

"To be honest, I feel as though [parents and teachers] would accept [redrawing school catchments] either way. It would make Fairview have a more diverse population of students and the staff would welcome that. I also think students would welcome other students from across the city to come to Fairview as well. I think they would welcome the idea and take it on as a challenge like they do most things at Fairview."

-Martha Chamberlain, Former Fairview Teacher

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) reported that the share of students enrolled in free and reduced-price lunch in schools is the highest predictor of student performance and that the state uses this data to identify performance gaps. However, IDOE stated that each community is responsible for using these data to identify the most equitable solution to close those gaps. Overall, stakeholders expressed a desire to reduce socioeconomic inequities across MCCSC schools.

Effects of Poverty on Education

Many community members expressed concern about Monroe County decision-making processes excluding low-income families. Even organizations that provide services to low-income families may not fully value their input or champion their interests. Interviewees stressed the importance of organizations with representation from the groups they serve, both racially and socioeconomically.

While many stakeholders favored neighborhood schools, they also acknowledged that neighborhoods tend to be racially and socioeconomically homogeneous. Low-income families are more likely to face instability related to housing and employment, leading to higher turnover at schools serving high shares of low-income students. For example, 25% of students at Fairview are new each year. Stakeholders also mentioned lower school performance, difficulty in attracting and retaining teachers with specialized skills, and little parent involvement as additional challenges associated with serving low-income students. One interviewee stressed that parents may have multiple jobs and other responsibilities, which limit the time and resources they can commit to educationally productive activities.

“Those individuals who struggle economically are forgotten in our community or relegated to the side.”

-Erin Predmore, MCCSC Parent

One interviewee shared that because poverty is highly concentrated in certain catchments, many students in these catchments may face poverty-induced trauma. Teachers and staff in high-poverty schools must attempt to support these students with limited training and resources.

Some interviewees challenged the assumption that low socioeconomic status leads to low performance. One interviewee suggested that students can achieve at all levels and that prejudices held by school leadership, rather than poverty per se, induces poor performance. This interviewee believed that hiring the right leaders and teachers is the best way to improve performance.

Community members emphasized that economic instability places stress on families that negatively impacts a child's ability to learn. This stress also may lead to substance abuse and mental health crises. One interviewee described Bloomington as a “bubble” with many highly paid and educated people employed at the university who do not have to worry about the same problems as those living in poverty. Outside the “bubble,” Monroe County has one of the highest poverty rates in Indiana.

One community member who works closely with MCCSC explained that many individuals living in poverty do not have the resources to manipulate the public system or hire their own attorneys. They have different stressors than those who have privilege and power. Parents living in poverty also may have lower interaction with the schools than parents affiliated with wealthier schools, which may manifest in parent-teacher organizations that have vastly different resources and fundraising capabilities.

“Lack of parental participation...hurts students more than anything. That contributes to lack of equity.”

-Martha Chamberlain, Former Fairview Teacher

Specific Factors to Consider Related to Socioeconomic Equity

Interviewees indicated several factors to consider when attempting to increase socioeconomic equity across schools:

- Disparate levels of participation and fundraising among PTOs
- Special needs students and access to appropriate resources
- Costs of and access to before- and after-school programs
- Access to extracurricular activities, such as arts education and after-school programs
- Additional support for students and teachers to address trauma and stress related to poverty and other factors

Many interviewees said that the community needs to take responsibility to foster greater equity rather than placing the burden on the school district alone. Limited funding at MCCSC has resulted in diminishing resources to reduce inequity. Another stakeholder highlighted that schools should have an equal amount of resources and opportunities to achieve desired levels of equity. That stakeholder referenced evidence that economically integrated schools benefit low-income students without disadvantaging higher-income students, even when accounting for cultural differences. Concentrating low-income students in one school does not benefit low-income students.

Last, children have the opportunity to adopt their own narrative and do not have to accept the limitations placed on them because of their personal situations. We heard many interviewees express the need to change the perception that low-income students are “bad students,” and instead consider the potential and opportunities they can bring to other students from wealthier backgrounds.

Stakeholder Discussions of Specific Schools

Fairview

Sixteen participants referenced specific schools throughout the course of our interviews. Each of these 16 participants referenced Fairview. We created Fairview-specific questions for two interviewees due to their personal and professional involvement with the school. Two

additional interviewees referenced Fairview because their professional roles facilitate engagement with Fairview students.

Three participants referenced the level of resources that MCCSC allocates to Fairview. While two interviewees pointed out that MCCSC allocates more funding to Fairview, one stated that despite enhanced resources, Fairview remains segregated. One participant referenced Fairview's small class sizes and thought the district structured Fairview this way as a trade-off for serving a higher proportion of low-income students.

Four participants referenced Fairview as serving a high proportion of low-income students. Two interviewees described Fairview as diverse, with one stating that Fairview is the only MCCSC school in which "being white isn't the default." One interviewee felt that discipline disparities between Fairview and other MCCSC schools existed in the past. Another mentioned that the way residents speak about Fairview within the community is disheartening.

Four participants described benefits resulting from Fairview's transition to an Artful Learning Academy. Several interviewees indicated that this transition could draw in a more diverse group of families. One interviewee emphasized, however, that the transition is not a replacement for realignment of the catchment zones. Two interviewees mentioned that the Artful Learning model helped to increase parent engagement and build trust between parents and teachers.

Three interviewees with personal and professional connections to Fairview articulated positive perspectives associated with the school environment. One interviewee felt that the environment is uniquely "family-like," while another described Fairview as having a "community of family" feeling. A separate interviewee felt that teachers and administrators at Fairview go "above and beyond."

"You'll find that on this whole question of redistricting, I'm very torn, I'm very divided. I really like Fairview the way it is. I know the teachers, the staff there are very concerned about losing that community, what they feel is a special community. On the other hand, [...] there's a lot of research that says it's not good for kids to be separated that much."

-Steve Hinnefeld, Writer, School Matters

In terms of performance, one interviewee pointed out that Fairview performs above average in terms of growth in scores on standardized tests. Another interviewee felt that Fairview does a good job working to ensure that the diversity of staff matches the diversity of the student population,

and that other MCCSC schools could improve in this regard. One participant felt that the Community and Family Advocate position within Fairview worked exceptionally well, and that other schools within the corporation should consider creating this position.



Depiction of frequency of specific schools mentioned by interviewees

Fig. 6

Templeton

Nine participants referenced Templeton. Four interviewees described Templeton as serving a high proportion of low-income students. Two interviewees emphasized the positive nature of Templeton's multi-age education program, and one interviewee stated that this program may draw more middle-class families into the school. This participant felt that the share of students enrolled in free or reduced-price meal programs may have decreased at Templeton over time.

Other Frequently Mentioned Schools

Eight participants referenced Childs, primarily describing it as an affluent, high-performing school. Interviewees twice described Arlington Heights as serving rural, low-income families.

Seven participants referenced Tri-North Middle School. One interviewee mentioned that some within the Bloomington community previously questioned the safety of Tri-North due to its location. Another mentioned that they felt parent involvement at Tri-North increased after the 2005 redrawing efforts. One participant mentioned that having three middle schools feed into two high schools is problematic and questioned whether one elementary school should transition to a middle school. In terms of high schools, one participant felt that the district for Bloomington High School North resulted in a diverse mix of students.

School Performance and Perceptions

One interviewee lamented that parents associate school quality with the letter grades issued by the Indiana Department of Accountability. Despite student and parent satisfaction, some schools in MCCSC have a bad reputation based on these grades. One board member said that MCCSC chose to take down banners on “A” schools because they sent the implicit message that the district places a higher value on those schools. Interviewees expressed that the Indiana Department of Education is not involved directly with most public schools in the state, so their letter grades do not truly reflect instructional quality. Test scores have become too influential

“It's not just about your child. If these schools aren't good enough for you children, whose child are they good enough for? This is about the world you want to create for your children. If other children are struggling and doing poorly, that's going to affect the world your child lives in.”

-Cathy Fuentes-Rohwer, MCCSC Board Member

in the conversation about redrawing catchments, and some interviewees argued that they sometimes serve as a proxy for racial and socioeconomic diversity when community members argue against diverse schools.

School Resources and Programs

We spoke with several interviewees, including a former school board member, who noted that PTOs in wealthy communities frequently raise thousands of dollars for new school services and equipment. PTO fundraising has widened the gap between schools serving low versus high shares of low-income students, though low-income families need additional services the most.

Some interviewees also expressed that honors classes and the Gifted and Talented program should be available equally across all schools and open to students regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status. The board could also expand other programming, such as arts education, beyond

“The way we've divided the community along school attendance area lines is not a healthy thing. I think that it sends a message to kids, and I've heard this from kids who are on the east side in gifted, talented programs...they get the message that they're better, and I don't like that.”

-Steve Hinnefeld, Writer, School Matters

Fairview and to other schools. Interviewees broadly praised Fairview's artful learning program, arguing that it encourages parents to visit the school for performances, and engages students with learning challenges. Expanding the program could address the concern that Fairview families will lose art programming if moved into a different catchment zone.

Redrawing Catchments in 2005

We interviewed three individuals due to their prior involvement with the 2005 Elementary and Secondary Realignment Task Force, which worked to shift MCCSC catchment boundaries 15 years ago. In addition to these community members, six additional interviewees also discussed aspects of the 2005 process. Task force participants acknowledged that because the realignment effort occurred 15 years ago, they faced difficulties recalling exact details of the proceedings.

Those involved with MCCSC during the 2005 redrawing process indicated that population growth towards the south of Bloomington prompted realignment. Several schools including Childs experienced overcrowding, while other schools like Unionville were below capacity. One interviewee recalled that MCCSC considered purchasing property or pursuing annexation to address overcrowding but ultimately elected to redraw attendance boundaries instead.

A school board-sanctioned, community member task force spearheaded the 2005 process. The superintendent at the time provided some general direction to task force participants, but largely left them to determine the priorities and course of action for the redrawing effort. Details on the task force assembly process are unclear, as one interviewee stated that he had volunteered, while a school principal contacted another community member and asked her to participate. Other task force members were teachers or parents who served as representatives across all schools.

Task force participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of developing guiding principles. Interviewees acknowledged that their memories were limited in their ability to recall the exact principles but remembered several factors the task force prioritized. One recalls that the task force felt it necessary to make small adjustments to existing zones rather than seek substantial change. All task force participants remember working hard to balance student populations. One remembers discussing neighborhood schools and attempting to maintain their integrity as much as possible to minimize long bus trips and enable students to walk to school whenever possible. The task force attempted to ensure that as many student groups as possible remained together from elementary to middle school to high school. One participant remembers that when shifting students from one district to another, the task force worked to ensure that a group of students would shift together. Each interviewee involved with the 2005 realignment process remembers discussing socioeconomic status; one remembered reviewing statistics on the shares of students enrolled in free and reduced-price meal programs. While the task force considered this information, the task force did not shift attendance lines to reduce socioeconomic disparities across schools. Task force participants also remember staying mindful of the goal to create boundaries that would remain viable throughout future population shifts.

The task force met privately to create alternative catchment zones. One participant framed the rationale behind private meetings as an effort to promote efficiency, highlighting the need to

manage the large size of the task force. While participants remembered that public comment occurred throughout the task force's deliberations, participants emphasized that the most significant opportunity for public comment emerged during public meetings. During these meetings, the task force presented realignment options they developed throughout private meetings. All task force participants and several additional interviewees highlighted the emotionally charged and highly confrontational nature of these public meetings. One interviewee recalls dissatisfied parents alleging that school board members were possibly receiving monetary incentives from developers to change school boundaries in certain ways, highlighting the importance of a transparent process and the need to explain publicly the priorities the task force used for decision making. Participants did not mention school board involvement outside of feedback presented at public meetings. The task force developed many options for the school board to consider, and recommended alternatives that the greatest proportion of task force members supported. The task force also developed additional alternatives based on school board feedback.

While task force participants recall significant pushback from those opposed to the realignment options, interviewees articulated a sharp decline in pushback after the adoption of new zones. Participants acknowledged, however, that they may not have been in a position to hear criticism after the adoption of new zones. One interviewee highlighted that several families were very concerned about attending Tri-North Middle and Bloomington High School North but ended up loving their experiences at both schools. Another interviewee felt that transportation seemed to adjust smoothly post-adoption.

Task force participants provided several recommendations for future realignment efforts. One suggested the need to enhance the transparency of task force meetings. Rather than deliberating privately, future realignment initiatives could allow public observation of task force meetings. One interviewee articulated the need to prepare task force members for the highly emotional and divisive nature of serving on the task force. Another interviewee communicated the need to ensure that equity guides the process of selecting task force members. All participants emphasized the importance of adopting guiding principles early on in the process.

Stakeholder Opinions For and Against Redrawing Boundaries

While many interviewees expressed specific opinions either in favor of or in opposition to redrawing catchments, others were indifferent or did not want to indicate a strong position. Some interviewees shared that if redrawing boundaries achieves more equity, they will support it. Others indicated a need for new catchments but expressed that doing so would be difficult and require community buy-in; they also expressed fear that new catchments could fragment communities and the strong connections built within the schools. Many interviewees said they wanted to learn more and would be open to engaging in a discussion.

Arguments for Redrawing Catchments

Some interviewees favored redrawing because it can lead to increased school diversity. In particular, one participant shared that no MCCSC schools reflect shares of Black students that mirror the district-wide share of Black students, so MCCSC should use intra-district transfers to achieve more equity. Other participants agreed that redrawing catchment boundaries would diversify student populations and expose students to other ways of life. One interviewee focused on the benefits that redrawing would bring to Fairview and opined that the teachers and students would welcome this process because it leads to positive, equitable outcomes. Many interviewees highlighted the value of enhanced exposure to students from a variety of backgrounds. One interviewee stated that redrawing catchment boundaries could reduce the isolation Black students experience when they are the only student of color in their entire grade. Interviewees generally agreed that exposure to diversity produces stronger educational outcomes and also generates long-term benefits. One interviewee pointed to the value employers place on the ability to work with others from a variety of backgrounds.

Another argument for changing school catchments is that disparities in PTO resources between schools can exacerbate socioeconomic inequalities. Many participants expressed concern about these disparities. With diminished funding available to MCCSC, interviewees felt that PTOs play a critical role in generating much-needed resources for schools. While some PTOs have the resources, time, and connections to generate substantial amounts of funds, other PTOs face challenges in doing so. According to Brandon Shurr, “There are PTOs in certain schools that can raise \$80K to get equipment, pay an [additional] librarian, or build a new playground. Meanwhile, there are schools that don’t have a licensed librarian.” Fostering greater integration across schools could help to ensure that PTO resources are distributed equitably throughout the district, producing benefits for all students. One interviewee commented that districting the Hyde Park neighborhood to Tri-North Middle during the 2005 redrawing efforts allowed Tri-North Middle to have more parents who could get involved and advocate for the school via PTO participation.

Most interviewees shared that they believed redrawing catchments is feasible, but that some parents and community members may push back and create barriers to moving forward. One participant said that imbalances between Childs and Templeton are logistically easy to fix because they are physically adjacent to one another.

Redrawing catchments provides an opportunity to address pervasive inequalities. Overall, many interviewees recognized that the process would be challenging but worth the benefits. If MCCSC does not take action, the district will continue to face the problems caused by educational inequity. One community member advocated for the school board to take a stand on educational equity, and another participant echoed this sentiment, urging the district to commit to its values and move past the fear of losing constituent support in the process.

“Yes I think we need to do it, yes I think it’s going to be totally painful and everyone will hate it, but I also think if we don’t do it, the same problems are going to continue and then we’ll be guilty of recognizing the problem and doing nothing about it.”

-Anonymous Interviewee

Arguments Against Redrawing Catchments

Many interviewees expressed reasons for why they oppose redrawing MCCSC catchments at this time. Some interviewees said that MCCSC should instead focus on changing leadership, discipline, and teaching practices to achieve equity. One interviewee believed that fostering a sense of belonging is more important for students than ensuring they attend a diverse school. Redrawing catchments is not a panacea for achieving equity; pride and investment in the community are also vital.

“I think there are some myths or long understood opinions of redistricting that make it almost dead on arrival.”

-Erik Pearson, Director, Banneker Community Center

Many interviewees brought up the difficulty of earning community buy-in. They anticipated resistance from families across racial and socioeconomic lines. Some participants believed that community resistance is significant enough to prevent any attempt at redrawing catchments. Several interviewees also linked societal disparities with public schools. Many

interviewees expressed the importance of ensuring that marginalized communities participate in the redrawing process and felt that any effort to redraw catchment boundaries should include special efforts to reduce barriers to participation.

Many participants communicated that the School Board tends to hear from those opposed to initiatives within MCCSC, including potential redrawing efforts. One interviewee communicated that although this perception may be misplaced, some within the larger community feel as though the school board makes decisions, receives public input, and elects to move forward with their initial plans. Another participant described redrawing as a political campaign. In the case of redrawing catchments to increase equity, the school board is unlikely to pursue new catchments without strong community support.

One interviewee shared a concern that families will re-segregate themselves if forced to move to new schools, though MCCSC could mitigate re-segregation by updating catchments regularly as demographics change. Several interviewees also communicated concerns about existing divisions within the larger Bloomington community. One interviewee commented that low-resource families can be invisible to others within the community; the demands of modern life prevent these individuals from associating with community members from different backgrounds. Another participant referenced the Crestmont and Pigeon Hill neighborhoods and indicated that families living in these areas can feel as though Bloomington does not value them.

Interviewees also referenced how perceptions of certain schools can pose challenges to the community's reaction to realignment efforts. One interviewee indicated that families use coded language to describe schools with predominantly white populations as "good" schools. Another participant recognized that parents' perceptions of schools may be misplaced, but that these flawed perceptions would play a role in the community's response to redrawing. One interviewee mentioned that some questioned the safety of Tri-North Middle due to its proximity to an area of Bloomington frequently in the news. These perceptions can compound the territorial feeling parents may hold about their current schools, inciting feelings of fierce protectiveness.

Among all potential barriers to redrawing catchment zones, interviewees most commonly cited the potential of new catchments to break up neighborhood schools and local communities. One interviewee highlighted the benefits of peer group support, which is stronger when groups share demographic characteristics. Several interviewees expressed concerns regarding changes to Fairview if MCCSC

decides to move forward with redrawing. Interviewees described Fairview as having "a special sense of community" and "a community of family." Another interviewee described that a unique sense of unity exists within Fairview, in the sense that students feel "we are all in this together."

"I think all of it is a delicate balance of how do you provide more diversity without disrupting the natural community that comes from keeping some of that diversity together."

- Anonymous Interviewee

Several interviewees referenced the challenges Fairview experienced in the past that stemmed from Indiana Department of Education school accountability grades; those challenges resulted in a tumultuous period for students and teachers. One interviewee sensed that after a period of turnover, teachers now feel positively about Fairview. Some interviewees also cautioned that balancing the share of low-income students across schools could result in the loss of eligibility for Title I funding at schools like Fairview. One interviewee argued that even if minority students are distributed more equitably across schools, they will be more likely to be disciplined than their white peers, and less likely to be selected for the Gifted and Talented program.

Several interviewees also cited logistical challenges to redrawing catchments, such as transportation, school equipment and capacity constraints (including cafeteria capacity constraints), and availability of unique resources at individual schools. Interviewees also communicated concern for potential funding challenges associated with redrawing. Several interviewees referenced MCCSC's reliance on referendum funding, and one interviewee referred to an impending "financial cliff" (we believe this financial cliff refers to the expiration of the 2016 referendum in 2022). In addition, at least four interviewees expressed concerns regarding the potential for families dissatisfied with redrawing efforts to leave the district to attend charter schools, taking their per-student funding with them.

"A lot of people used to assume that [redrawing school boundaries] would solve our problems, that if we committed to this, and it finally got done, and instead of having a lot of socioeconomic disparity in Fairview and Templeton and these other schools, that we would spread it out and things would get better. But I think that is kind of a naive way to look at it. I'm not saying that it shouldn't happen in some way, shape, or form, but I think there are more, difficult things to change in the culture of our schools and our corporation and how we go about our business, that is more sustainable in the long run, I think.

-Erik Pearson, Director, Banneker Community Center

Transportation and Busing

Twelve interviewees identified transportation and busing as major considerations when improving educational equity and redrawing catchments. One community member stated that if the community wants equity, busing is the only way to get it done. Two stakeholders opposed excessive busing, and one explained busing only poor or Black students to create more equitable schools is wrong. Interviewees felt that busing was a complicated issue, with one participant also raising concerns regarding the environmental impacts of additional busing time.

One interviewee, who was generally supportive of redrawing school catchment boundaries expressed concern that longer travel distances to school might negatively impact parental involvement, stating: "We know that we get more parental engagement often in schools when schools are close and so you don't have to travel to them." While a few community members discussed how people like the idea of neighborhood schools in part because students can walk to school, Steve Hinnefeld argued that busing makes equitable schools a possibility:

"A lot of kids, a huge majority of kids, ride buses in MCCSC. Or *can* ride buses, maybe their parents drive them instead. But the percentage of kids who walk to

school on a daily basis is very small. Once you're on a bus, you can go anywhere, really. So you could do it, you could draw the lines in much more equitable ways."

Four stakeholders discussed the roles of transportation and busing in school transfers and school choice, stating that providing bus transportation to children attending charter schools or schools outside their catchments was neither viable nor equitable. One interviewee stated that the school corporation cannot bus everyone who opts for school choice, because doing so would require students to travel all over the district on buses, and would cost too much money. These four interviewees also shared that the option of transferring to another school is only available to students whose families have their own car, and who have access to car transportation to and from school each day. One stakeholder stated:

"It impacts equity in a different way...the very kids that you would like to have the opportunity perhaps to go to a different school are the ones that likely don't have the transportation to do that."

We interviewed Mike LaRocco, the Director of Transportation for the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE). Through his role, he has experienced three efforts to redraw school catchment boundaries in other school districts. He stated that the Director of Transportation has access to all GIS information regarding where students reside within the district, so school districts must employ IDOE's transportation system before implementing changes to attendance boundaries. He explained that the IDOE electronic routing system, VersaTrans, enables IDOE to tag students according to their demographic characteristics or any other parameters that a district seeks to prioritize in redrawing the catchments. The VersaTrans program allows him to come up with the most efficient way to re-sort students, given the desired parameters. LaRocco characterized the process as technically simple; he stated that he could reassign school boundaries in an hour and design an efficient transportation system that balances the distribution of low-income and minority students across schools. He emphasized that the primary barriers to adopting new catchments are the willingness of school districts to adopt new catchment boundaries and school capacity constraints.

LaRocco explained that changes to the attendance boundaries will impact school corporation operational expenses. Changes in catchment boundaries may lower transportation costs due to efficiency gains but are more likely to increase transportation costs due to lost efficiencies that current catchments provide. Lost efficiency in student transportation might result in the need to purchase more buses or hire additional drivers. LaRocco suggested that districts could offset these costs by searching for efficiency gains. Two examples of innovative practices that reduce transportation costs are triple-tier routing serving elementary, middle, and high school students on the same routes, and altering and staggering school start and end times. He explained that transportation costs comprise a huge portion of school district budgets due to fuel costs. School districts have little control over the cost of commodities such as fuel.

Intersection of Housing and School Catchments

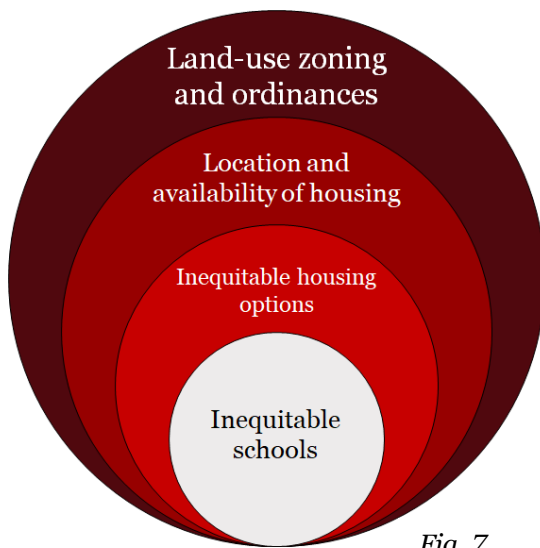


Fig. 7

Thirteen interviewees raised issues related to housing when discussing redrawing school catchments. Many community members recognized that where children live largely determines where they go to school; therefore, the inequities across schools in Monroe County reflect underlying inequities in the community. The comments related to housing largely fell into two main categories: how land-use zoning affects the availability and location of housing, concentrating certain populations in certain areas within the school corporation; and how school catchments influence real estate and property values.

Many community members addressed the fact that the issues of school equity and housing equity are inextricably linked. MCCSC School Board member Jacinda Townsend Gides stated: “We all know that school segregation breeds residential segregation. If we actually care about ending it, why would we let this fester?” One stakeholder explained that if the community is going to address segregation, the community needs to approach the issue using a multi-sectoral approach that includes housing. Another interviewee remarked that a lack of integrated housing options leads directly to low levels of diversity across schools. She explained that the City of Bloomington recently updated the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), which controls land use and development. In updating the UDO, downtown neighborhoods expressed a preference for allowing only single-family housing and did not want to increase multi-family housing options. However, the interviewee advocated for integrated housing stock to increase household access to areas typically zoned for single-family residences. Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, and larger apartment buildings make communities more accessible for low-income families. The stakeholder expressed that the county also needs to examine its zoning ordinances to ensure that a variety of housing options exist in a variety of neighborhoods, as housing codes that perpetuate the spatial stratification of low-income housing lead directly to schools that serve inequitable shares of low-income children.

Several community members expressed similar sentiments about the recent UDO changes, and the need for additional multi-family housing. One interviewee explained that because land-use zoning restricts where multi-family developments can be built, lower-income families tend to concentrate in the areas that permit multi-family construction. Therefore, the new UDO will impact where students live in relation to schools for a long time. The community member expressed the importance of looking at the big picture when evaluating school catchments. She stated that when people have more choices about where to live, schools will naturally become more diverse. Several interviewees reiterated the point that the county needs to diversify the stock of low-income housing across the county. Two stakeholders stated that individual,

voluntary decisions lead families to choose where they live. While this characterization of moving decisions may be true of more affluent community members, another interviewee referenced the book, “The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America” by Richard Rothstein, which addresses the historical context of how housing policies have impacted minority populations and led to racially segregated housing patterns that persist to this day.

Two stakeholders mentioned the intersection of housing and poverty, pointing out the risk of housing instability for low-income families. One interviewee thought this instability contributes to increased student mobility in school catchments with more low-income housing, and another interviewee brought up the impact on renters seeking affordable housing. Because not all landlords accept housing choice vouchers, residents of housing developments that do accept housing choice vouchers tend to exhibit higher levels of poverty. Another stakeholder said that redrawing school catchments to reduce the concentration of poverty often is difficult because doing so may require the division of large housing complexes across different catchments. A different interviewee mentioned that MCCSC previously drew the catchments for Templeton and Fairview to divide public housing and reduce poverty concentrations.

“They say public school accepts all, but if you are from a certain income and don’t have parents who have time and resources, you’ll go where you can afford to live.”

-Brandon Shurr, MCCSC Board Member

The second main topic that interviewees raised was how school catchments affect real estate decisions and property values. Several interviewees mentioned that when new people move to the area, they strongly consider the school catchments of their potential new homes. Stakeholders argued that families buy homes based on their perceptions of the surrounding schools, the school ratings available on websites like www.greatschools.org, or word-of-mouth recommendations -- especially for parents tied to the university community. One interviewee regretted the fact that she chose her home in Bloomington based on the school rating, saying that she didn’t realize that she was inadvertently buying into segregation. Another community member expressed that schools predict housing markets – building a new school will spur new housing in that area.

A few community members raised the issue of the link between property values and school catchment boundaries. One interviewee pointed out that Childs is a highly desirable school and is located in an area with more expensive real estate. Some interviewees indicated that changes in school boundaries will be met by public pushback, as families feel like they have selected their homes based on the school catchment and assume that local school quality is capitalized into their home value. These families may characterize redrawing the catchments as an erosion of their property values, choosing to focus on this perceived loss rather than the greater social good of increased equity. An interviewee familiar with the 2005 process to redraw school

boundaries expressed that he did not think housing prices changed after the new catchments took effect. One interviewee expressed that the community cannot be fearful of the impact on property values, or of white families leaving Bloomington (“white flight”). She believed that the community has to take a stand to pursue equity and accept potential costs.

Stakeholder Recommendations and Priority Factors

Community members acknowledged many important factors to consider when redrawing catchments and made key recommendations about how the process should unfold. Several interviewees voiced the importance of framing the problem clearly and setting the stage for redrawing catchments by engaging in broader equity conversations in the community. One stakeholder remarked that simply telling the community that we need to redraw catchments would be a mistake. Instead, stakeholders agreed that community leaders need to communicate why equity is important and what changing school boundaries will achieve and ask the community for help in addressing equity concerns. Leaders should address the current inequities across schools, providing a broader context for the goal of increasing racial and SES equity. One interviewee thought the community should start with identifying how many students can walk to school. They stated that the catchments are gerrymandered and have not substantially changed in 25 years even as the population has changed.

“I don’t know how you weigh all those different pieces to figure out what is the most important for children. How will children be most successful? Will they be most successful if we change the catchment area and we create more mix, but kids are coming from farther away or having to travel longer distances? How does that impact their feeling of belongingness and participation in the school?”

-Anonymous Interviewee

A few interviewees expressed that the timing of these conversations was important, and that recent events (namely, Black Lives Matter protests and changes to school infrastructure due to COVID-19) provided an opportunity to engage the public. One stakeholder thought that recent events would better inform the process of redrawing catchments. Brian Richardson suggested that now is an apt time to take action on equity in schools: “The more voices that we can have around the table to discuss the importance of this

topic, particularly around this time where everybody is wanting to do something to create change, I think this is a prime time to do a lot of assessment of what hasn’t been working and what are some innovative ways to create change, and not performative change where we just come out with statements, but more what are the action steps past the public displays to make sure that these things are sustainable.”

Interviewees disagreed on a timeline for redrawing school boundaries, with one community member saying that the process should evolve naturally, rising out of conversations about

equity, and gaining buy-in from the community without a deadline or destination in mind. One community member thought that setting a specific timeline would better facilitate community involvement and create a sense of urgency around the problem. She argued that community leaders should take the firm stance that equity issues merit attention: “Announcing we are going to solve this problem, [and] this may involve all these things and we want to hear from you – how you think we should solve this problem, because we are not leaving it like this. Like just taking a stand: we recognize this is not going well, and so we are going to change it, and here is our deadline. We are moving forward with this, please be part of it so we can hear from you.”

Stakeholder interviewees regularly emphasized the importance of community buy-in when redrawing catchments. Stakeholders said that having public support would be critical for success, and that an ideal approach would bring others out to support changing school boundaries and to work together in partnership. Along these lines, one school board member stated that a community- rather than board-initiated movement to redraw catchments may garner greater community support.

MCCSC School Board member Elizabeth Ruh explained: “There’s no way to make significant impact changes without taking time to try to give the community a chance to be involved, have a voice, address fears that come along with it. Unfortunately, it’s also hard to make sure the community gets the information to be involved. You’re never going to get it all out there, you’re never going to get the participation, and then some splashy headline in the Herald Times and they will say “this is the first time we’re hearing about it” even though it’s been put out multiple times. To me we have to be responsible about it. If we’re going to make these big changes, we have to have a community conversation to give a chance for the community to work through their fears. Maybe it will be positive, it could be both.”

“We needed to frame the argument of why this is important, and what it’s going to achieve and why we want to do it and asking people to help...Maybe not even that the end product is rezoning, but we have to do it first as a conversation to talk about how do we achieve more racial and economic equity and justice in our schools. And maybe we’ll never rezone, I don’t know, but let’s have people – let’s make this the community decision...let’s get a lot of people involved in those discussions.”

-Sue Wanzer, MCCSC Board Member

Interviewees also emphasized the importance of inclusion in any process to redraw catchment boundaries. Stakeholders widely agreed that any effort to change school boundaries needs to include diverse and representative individuals from the affected communities. Erik Pearson, Program/Facility Coordinator for the Banneker Community Center, called attention to Monroe County power structures that have historically disenfranchised minority families.

"I think there is a gatekeeping system in place to accomplish a lot of things in town, schools included, that [the families we serve] feel that the schools are lumped into this power structure that they are exhausted from dealing with."

***-Erik Pearson, Program Coordinator,
Banneker Community Center***

Interviewees identified a need for diverse representation among leaders, as well as a need to intentionally include under-served families in the redrawing process. One interviewee suggested soliciting advice on how to engage specific populations. Other stakeholders expressed the importance of building relationships and creating a broader sense of shared community to cultivate community buy-in. Several interviewees noted

that community leaders must go beyond welcoming and including diverse participants, by actively reaching out to underrepresented populations and finding better ways to include them in the process. MCCSC must find ways to include more types of parents: those who work, families in poverty, parents who are intimidated by schools, those who have had negative interactions with schools, and parents with lower education levels. These parents may exhibit lower levels of school engagement, and MCCSC needs to include these parent perspectives in its deliberations.

Interviewees suggested that greater inclusion calls for non-traditional approaches and a good communication strategy. Community leaders need to include diverse voices by employing various methods not limited to public after-school meetings. Interviewees mentioned using surveys, focus groups, in-person meetings, and creating different channels of community engagement to elicit broader community participation. One interviewee recommended outreach to specific housing complexes to solicit participation, as well as identifying and developing community advocates to facilitate engagement on redrawing catchments. A different interviewee thought that churches may be important venues for engaging community members. Another stakeholder emphasized the importance of a solid communication plan to provide advance notice to the community, advise community members of the steps involved in the process, and disseminate information to community members, schools, and families.

Erik Pearson described the need to identify alternative methods of reaching low-income families: "There are neighborhoods that are more affluent, that are really powerful in controlling some of these decisions...And then inevitably, what happens is you have more low-income areas where families and parents are less likely to be engaged in the process. And so instead of finding ways to meet them where they are to get the feedback on rezoning, the

assumption is 'Oh, well they just don't care.' And that's not the case at all. I think a lot of these things do impact these families and they have opinions on them, they just don't have - they're constantly juggling a priority list of their day, and that's just not up there."

Many interviewee recommendations also related to creating a community task force to determine the best way to move forward with redrawing catchments. Stakeholders recommended that the task force should exhibit diverse representation and should not be too large. A task force should include diverse representation from MCCSC leaders, teachers, and families, as well as non-parents, home-owners, renters, and community leaders, and should include a variety of members with diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. One interviewee stated that MCCSC should train task force members to prepare for and deal with severe community pushback.

Many other comments focused on more technical aspects of how Monroe County should approach redrawing catchments. Interviewees advised taking into account the geographic spread of the population in Monroe County, considering future population changes, using research and data to inform our understanding of equity, and also considering the implications and limitations of certain data points when determining how to make decisions. One stakeholder suggested hiring a demographer specifically to help with redrawing catchments, which would enable the community to make more informed decisions regarding new catchment boundaries. Another interviewee advocated for focusing on creating change where it is needed, rather than wholesale change. Interviewees also remarked that MCCSC should draw new catchments with specific principles in mind, taking into account transportation needs. A few interviewees lamented that Monroe County schools are located in strange places, which renders the redrawing process more difficult and results in strangely- shaped catchments.

Finally, a number of interviewees addressed the perceptions of schools as a key source of pushback against redrawing school boundaries. One stakeholder suggested that the district employ marketing techniques to challenge negative perceptions of particular schools or their surrounding neighborhoods.

Interviewees stated that changing the perceptions of schools, perhaps through public campaigns to share data and positive experiences, would be a viable strategy to help ease public pushback and facilitate the transition to new schools following changes in catchment boundaries. One interviewee described a need for a school exchange program in which students, parents, and teachers have an opportunity to experience schools beyond the one they attend or at which they teach.

***"Inequity starts early and is compounded
by the zoning and perceptions about
schools."***

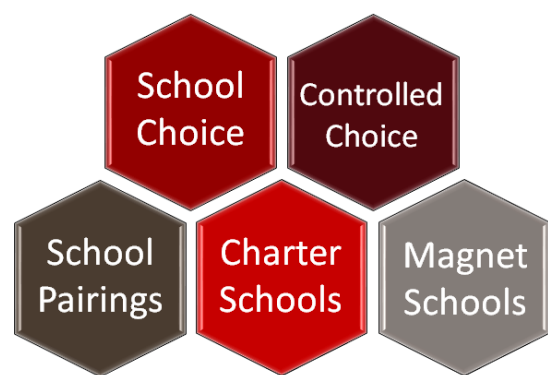
-Anonymous Interviewee

Additional Opportunities for Increasing Equity in MCCSC

Interview participants discussed many additional methods for increasing equity in Monroe County schools. The main suggestions included school choice (including charter schools), magnet schools, and controlled choice. Stakeholders focused mostly on school choice when discussing opportunities to address educational inequity. Although many community members discussed the merits of providing parents and students increased options to address their educational needs, they also cautioned that limited transportation options result in unequal access to school choice. Several interviewees noted that the provision of additional school options without accompanying transportation networks is problematic. They stated that the school corporation does not have the resources to bus all students to the school of their choice; thus, school choice is only a viable option for students with access to private, reliable transportation. Community members expressed that this limitation reinforces problems of privilege and access to resources, as many low-income families may not have a car, or be available to drive their child due to their work schedule. One interviewee thought these constraints can lead to less parent participation in schools, because families without cars cannot participate in school activities as easily if they do not live in close proximity to the school.

School choice discussions centered around creating options to draw in specific groups of students and parents. Interviewees mentioned the importance of intra-district transfers to families, who may need to exercise choice to find a school that meets their child's specific needs; the most geographically proximal school may not be the best fit for all students. One interviewee discussed Fairview's Artful Learning model, which may attract a more diverse population. That stakeholder suggested that the Artful Learning model also encourages parental involvement in schools via recitals and exhibitions of student artwork.

Another interviewee suggested redrawing the catchments for Fairview to send students in the Crestmont neighborhood to other neighboring schools. The school corporation could then convert Fairview into a magnet school, giving children who live in the area access to school choice, and encouraging other students to consider Fairview as a desirable option. In fact, several interviewees brought up the possibility of magnet schools to facilitate equity across the school corporation.



Some additional opportunities discussed by interviewees

Fig. 8

Most stakeholders expressed support for increased school choice options via magnet programs, especially those that offer opportunities for specialized studies (e.g., in the arts, STEM, etc.). However, one community member raised the concern that barriers to magnet school admission may pose an obstacle for increased integration. The interviewee pointed out that magnet schools and other programs typically require letters of recommendation for

admission, and that Black and low-income students are not recommended at the same level as their white or affluent peers. Because the magnet admissions process is involved and subjective, it necessitates increased parental participation. The interviewee maintained that magnet schools can be a great option for increasing integration, but that magnet schools alone are not sufficient to address large-scale inequities in the school system.

Other interviewees discussed alternative models like controlled choice. One stakeholder explained that cities like Champagne, IL; Louisville, KY; and Cambridge, MA had all employed controlled choice to address equity in their school districts. He stated that controlled choice results in a lengthier change process than redrawing catchments but does not accompany the same levels of upheaval. He felt that parents may be more receptive to controlled choice because they may opt into change, rather than facing a mandated change. Another stakeholder also referenced the controlled choice process in Louisville, KY. She explained that the school district offered parents select choices for where their child could attend school and promoted the controlled choice options through a magazine that included data on all the schools to enable families to make informed decisions.

Other interviewees discussed options that would change the allocation of schools and grade levels across schools. Interviewees offered several alternatives to recombine schools in different ways. These recombinations included school pairings, which involves combining school catchments and reallocating the grade ranges that each school serves (as one example, MCCSC could combine two school catchments, with one elementary school serving children in grades K-3 and the other elementary school serving children in grades 4-6. Recombination likely will shift the demographic composition of these schools and offer additional benefits for teaching and learning. One interviewee stated that this option had the potential to raise school costs, especially with respect to transportation; however, if the schools are in close proximity to one another, this option would be less expensive. Interviewees also suggested a similar alternative, which included adding more multi-age classrooms in schools (Templeton currently offers this option).

Some interviewees also proposed that MCCSC add a fourth middle school to smooth the transition from middle to high school without splitting up student cohorts. This option could involve building a new fourth middle school or converting an existing elementary school to a middle school, which would provide an opportunity to reallocate students between schools and more equitably distribute student populations across schools. Several community members stated that Monroe County schools are simply not in the right places, and that the district should construct any future schools in strategic places to encourage diversity and help reduce the disproportionate concentration of low-income or racial minority children in particular schools. One interviewee noted that the school corporation budget and allocation of resources are the main parameters that will circumscribe efforts to address educational equity, and local school corporations can work within those parameters to identify the best options for their students.

Beyond changes to the public school system, at least four interviewees addressed charter schools in their comments. The interviewees mentioned the impact of charter schools on the public school system, and mainly expressed a fear that charter schools would direct students and resources away from the school corporation. One interviewee expressed concern that Indiana is experiencing a trend toward privatized education including vouchers and charters, which siphon resources from the public system, thereby undermining its ability to provide an equitable education. Because families self-select into charter schools, only those with the privilege of choice and ability to travel to a different school may exercise choice effectively. Two community members characterized charter schools as leaving behind the students with the greatest needs to be served by the public school system, resulting in a higher share of public school students who may be costlier to educate. Some interviewees expressed a belief that while public schools share an obligation to ensure an equitable education for all, private and charter schools may not share this obligation.

“Choices and competition should be motivating schools to get better and to serve communities better. In fact, it’s motivating schools to not upset people. I think that’s a real challenge for looking at this topic.”

-Steve Hinnefeld, Writer, School Matters

One stakeholder explained that in an environment characterized by school choice, accountability demands, and a desire to reform schools, children and schools face considerable pressure to meet performance metrics. The stakeholder stated that the state’s accountability system is punitive, which can cast community schools in a negative light. Another interviewee noted that parents will seek charter

school options if they perceive that schools are failing students. A different interviewee mentioned that although charter schools have accountability mechanisms aligned with state measures, charter schools can supplement or change their performance metrics entirely.

Other interviewee comments addressed additional inequities that compound inequalities for school-aged children. One interviewee explained that children require support, and that they don’t just come to school ready to learn. He stated that the school system cannot hold sole responsibility for addressing inequity, and that the community also needs to consider additional support systems and early interventions to intercede in the lives of children before they start school. Community stakeholders further discussed inequalities across available childcare options, daycares, and preschools. Several interviewees also described large inequities across school PTOs and suggested that merging PTO funds and redistributing money equally across all schools would be another way to advance equity.

Interviewees offered many other suggestions for addressing educational equity within MCCSC, including the importance of confronting bias, examining school finances and funding, and a need for more teacher diversity in terms of male, Black, and Hispanic teachers. One community member said that Monroe County should reevaluate how they elect the school board. She

explained that school board member districts are uneven, resulting in many school board candidates in some districts, and few candidates in other districts. Changing the boundaries of these board districts could diversify school board representation and encourage wider community engagement.

Additional Stakeholders to Involve

Interviewees also identified other individuals, groups, and organizations that they felt would be essential to involve in the process of redrawing catchments. Community stakeholders expressed consensus regarding the importance of community buy-in, created by engaging with diverse stakeholders early, often, and through a variety of means. Sue Wanzer, a current MCCSC School Board member who also served during the 2005 process that redrew catchment boundaries, advocated for wider inclusion of the community throughout this process, saying, “It needs to be broader than what we tried before.”

Primarily, interviewees cited the need to work with parents and families, as well as with schools, the school board, superintendent, principals, teachers, and school staff. Beyond internal stakeholders, interviewees discussed the importance of including a wide range of external stakeholders in the process, including neighborhoods, community groups, churches, labor unions, the chamber of commerce, local businesses, and nonprofits. Several interviewees mentioned that stakeholders with specific areas of expertise need to inform the process. These stakeholders might include city and county offices, housing and planning authorities, transportation experts, social workers, and other service providers.

Many participants stated that any future efforts to redraw catchments should branch out by identifying new and different methods for reaching a diversity of stakeholders. Several community members suggested that community members with the loudest voices--in this case, white and comparatively affluent voices--can overwhelm stakeholder discussions. Those involved in redrawing the catchments will need to be mindful of this dynamic and make efforts to specifically include people of color and low-income individuals.

Interviewees also stressed the importance of outreach to groups who may not be able to participate otherwise via traditional means, because not all families are able to be involved in their child's school through PTOs, after school meetings, school board meetings, etc. Interviewees recommended outreach to some families through community organizations outside the school, like churches, nonprofits, or other community groups. A common refrain was the need to include those parents and families for whom redrawing the catchments would substantively change their educational choices, as well as to hear from “underrepresented” voices and “marginalized” groups.

Brian Richardson pointed out: “I think we also need to make sure there's representation of those parents and the voices of those students represented at those tables...I think oftentimes we have these conversations about what needs to be done, and you get all these well-to-do

people around the table and they're throwing out great ideas, but we never have representation of people who are actually experiencing this, speaking on their own experiences."

In addition to identifying general groups of stakeholders to include, interviewees also named several specific organizations and individuals that could provide worthwhile insight and expertise into the process of redrawing catchments. The following list includes all the recommended contacts. An asterisk denotes that we interviewed the individual or a representative of the organization as part of this project.

Specific Stakeholder Organizations:

- Banneker Community Center*
- Black Lives Matter – local chapter
- Bloomington Housing Authority
- Boys & Girls Club*
- Centerstone
- Chamber of Commerce*
- Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County (CFBMC)*
- Community Kitchen
- Cook Medical
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)*
- Department of Transportation*
- Family Solutions
- Foundation for Monroe County Community Schools
- Hoosier Action
- Indiana School Board Association
- Indiana University*
- The Mind Trust
- New Hope Family Shelter
- Stand for Children
- South Central Community Action

Individuals:

- Beverly Calendar-Anderson – City of Bloomington, Director of Community and Family Resources
- Brandon Schurr – MCCSC Board of School Trustees*
- Don Griffin – local realtor and activist, started the Monroe County Black Democratic Caucus*
- Elizabeth Ruh – MCCSC Board of School Trustees*
- Emily Pike – New Hope Family Shelter
- Jacinda Gides – MCCSC Board of School Trustees*
- John Carter – past Director of Planning during 2005 redrawing
- Karin St. John – sits on City Planning Committee, previously sat on 2005 Redrawing Committee*
- Lindsey Smith – CFBMC Board Member
- Lisa Tansel – General Counsel for Indiana School Board Association
- Terry Spradlin – Executive Director of Indiana School Board Association

- Jim Sims, President of NAACP, Monroe County Chapter
- William Hosea – Chairman of the Bloomington Housing Authority, president of the Monroe County Black Democratic Caucus

**previously interviewed by our team*

Community Member Perspective

Summary of MCCSC's "The Fireside Update & Overview"

Due to the limitations we faced for conducting wide-scale interviews of community members, we strove to include additional information in this report gauging the broader community perspective on redrawing catchments. On November 20, 2019, MCCSC held an event entitled "The Fireside Update & Overview." This community engagement event focused on two topics:

Topic 1: A historical perspective of redistricting in the corporation

Topic 2: An overview of the children we serve in MCCSC

During the event, community members engaged in breakout discussions focused on five major questions:

- #1: What information did you hear this evening that stood out or surprised you?
- #2: What are your hopes and dreams for our school community related to redistricting?
- #3: What factors should MCCSC take into consideration as it explores the topic of redistricting?
- #4: What concerns exist within our community regarding redistricting?
- #5: What suggestions do you have for MCCSC as they relate to redistricting?

The recording of the event is available for viewing on the MCCSC website.¹³ MCCSC also distributed notes from the event, which we summarize here to reflect the perspectives of the community members who attended the event. Though these notes from a single, voluntary event do not allow us to claim that the public largely supports redrawing catchments, the event does provide some additional insight into how community members in Monroe County think about redrawing school catchments.

Overall, community members expressed strong support for redrawing catchments in Monroe County, and their feedback largely echoed the input we gleaned from key stakeholders during interviews. Common themes expressed included the importance of examining socioeconomic diversity, as well as broadening the conversation about school catchments to include additional stakeholders like the city and housing authorities. Community members focused on the main goals and priorities for changing school catchments. Many participants voiced concerns

¹³ Monroe County Community School Corporation. (2020).

regarding how to maintain existing neighborhoods, while avoiding schools with a high density of low-income students. Attendees emphasized that the school board may need to prioritize one factor over the other and should rely on data to inform decisions.

Conversations also revolved around ensuring a fair distribution of resources and equitable facilities for all schools and their students, regardless of school performance or student demographics. Community members stressed the importance of equitable access to programming at all schools and noted that schools need access to funding and resources to improve the quality of education for all children. Participants also mentioned the possible effect of changing school catchments on housing prices. Other noteworthy comments focused on resource availability and distribution, areas of poverty in MCCSC, and opinions about school choice.

Ellen Brantlinger: A Historical Look at Community Perspectives

Dr. Ellen Brantlinger, a former Indiana University faculty member and prolific advocate for public education and equitable schooling for all, published the book “Dividing Classes -- How The Middle Class Negotiates And Rationalizes School Advantages” in 2003. In that book, she discusses the loosely-pseudonymed MCCSC and describes disputes over elementary school redistricting and the sorting of students into “winners” and “losers” on the basis of family background. She discusses a resistance movement by families in her neighborhood against an MCCSC plan to transfer children to schools that served larger shares of low-income families. Brantlinger’s book describes the educational expectations prevalent among MCCSC’s middle class, and discusses how socioeconomic status plays a key role in the academic success of individuals. As one of many examples, she quotes an interview of a community member citing the importance of class in determining education outcomes in MCCSC:

“I think that you can see the difference in the students from different types of neighborhoods. Not that a student from a neighborhood from a lower socioeconomic [class] can’t do well, and I think he gets a good education here, but you can see the differences. You take Kinder school, which is made up of a neighborhood where the socioeconomic status is high, your at-risk rate is low...and there’s a standard in those neighborhoods that’s kept. And it’s not only a standard of finance, but it’s a standard of behavior and expectation that comes in those neighborhoods. That’s why that school does so well. To be in those neighborhoods, your parents have got to be educated.”
(Page-161)

Brantlinger also argues that relatively high-income and middle-class families and communities control the structure of schooling in ways that perpetuate existing power structures and benefit white, affluent families. Brantlinger also describes how local school enrollment patterns in MCCSC are gerrymandered to retain class homogeneity. For example, MCCSC sometimes assigned residents of newly-constructed affluent subdivisions or subsidized housing complexes to socioeconomically similar schools, despite long distances and bus rides. One interviewee in her book stated:

“Like many parents in this area, we want a neighborhood school. I don’t like the idea of busing. These bus rides are not good for kids. I know the idea of mixing different socioeconomic groups is good, but I don’t like the practice. I like the schools to be close by.” (Page 46)

Brantlinger advocates for middle- and upper-class families to set aside their own self-interest and advocate for greater equity, which may come at the cost of privilege:

“The only way to reduce class disparities is for those who currently have more to give up some of their status and advantage. If equity is desired, it is essential to question the motives of professionals who occupy top positions (Apfelbaum, 1999) and of parents who insist on advantages for their children (Eichstedt, 1998; Kohn, 1998).” (Page 168)

Though Brantlinger’s book was published nearly 20 years ago, several of the themes she highlights persist today.

Methods for Mapping Alternative Catchment Boundaries

In addition to the community stakeholder analysis, we conducted an analysis to consider alternative catchment boundaries in MCCSC. As we discuss at the start of this report, MCCSC elementary schools exhibit stark racial and socioeconomic inequalities. In this section, we first document the data sources we employ to examine inequalities across elementary catchment boundaries. Next, we describe the methods we use to characterize racial and socioeconomic inequalities. Then, we describe how we employ our data sources within Geographic Information System (GIS) software to draw new catchment boundaries that exhibit greater racial and socioeconomic equity than do the current boundaries. Ultimately, we recommend a new catchment boundary map, which we call the “Equity Model.” This model substantially improves our measures of racial and socioeconomic equity across MCCSC elementary schools.

Data Sources and Methods

Ideally, our research team would have access to student-level data from MCCSC for this analysis. These data would include student addresses, as well as demographic information on students, such as race and ethnicity and eligibility for free or reduced-price meals (a common measure of poverty). Using this information, we would be able to plot MCCSC students on a map, overlay maps of current elementary catchment boundaries, and calculate racial and socioeconomic disparities across the catchment boundaries. We could then employ GIS software to manipulate the catchment boundaries and re-calculate these disparities under different catchment boundary scenarios, enabling us to assess whether new boundaries improve equity.

Unfortunately, our team was unable to access student-level data in MCCSC due to privacy restrictions under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). As a result, our analysis relies on aggregate rather than individual-level data. If MCCSC pursues redrawing catchment boundaries in the future, we anticipate that the school corporation would employ the student-level data we describe above to construct the new catchment boundaries. Thus, we view our analysis and map recommendations in this section as providing a heuristic model for how MCCSC could approach this process in the future. Moreover, our analysis and resulting maps highlight the need for MCCSC to consider innovative methods for defining elementary school catchments in order to achieve desirable levels of racial and socioeconomic equity.

We obtained data on all MCCSC schools from the Indiana Department of Education¹⁴ (IDOE). For all Indiana public schools, IDOE provides data on enrollment totals, as well as data on the shares of students by race, ethnicity, sex, English language learner status, special education

¹⁴ Indiana Department of Education, 2020

status, and free and reduced-price meal status. IDOE also provides information on school state and federal accountability ratings, attendance rates, and funding per student. We used these data to examine current levels of inequity across MCCSC schools. Please see Appendix A for school profiles summarizing these data for all MCCSC schools in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Because we do not have access to student-level data linking precise locational data to student demographic characteristics, we are unable to use the school-level IDOE data to hypothesize how changes in catchment boundaries would change the distribution of students by race and socioeconomic status across schools. To explain this point further, consider a spatial map of existing MCCSC school catchments. While IDOE data provide the average demographic characteristics of students attending schools within each catchment, those data do not include information on where students live and the demographic attributes of those students. Thus, we are unable to calculate how the racial and socioeconomic attributes of schools would change with adjustments to the school catchment boundaries.

To overcome this limitation, we sought data sources that would provide demographic information on households and children at a lower level of geographic aggregation than the school catchment zone. We obtained data from the 2013-2018 5-year American Community Survey (ACS),¹⁵ which is a US Census Bureau survey administered to a sample of households in interim years between the Decennial Census administrations. Because the US Census Bureau is unable to conduct a full population census every year, it relies on sample survey data in interim years. Over the course of five years, the Census Bureau compiles a sufficient sample of surveyed households to construct estimates of household attributes at relatively low levels of geographic aggregation. The lowest level of geographic aggregation for which these data are available is at the Census Block Group level. A Census Block Group is a US Census Bureau-defined geographic unit that typically consists of between 600 and 3,000 individuals. Importantly, MCCSC contains 90 Census Block Groups, which form geographic units that are far smaller than the 13 elementary school catchment boundaries that comprise the school corporation. For each of these 90 Census Block Groups, we were able to obtain ACS estimates of (1) the shares of elementary school-aged children by race, and (2) the share of households with children who live in poverty.

Next, we used GIS software to overlay a map of Census Block Groups on a map of elementary school catchment boundaries. Because Census Block Group units are not coterminous with school catchment boundaries, we divided the Census Block Groups into smaller geographic “slices.” With sufficiently small slices, we were able to reconstruct existing MCCSC catchment boundaries using small Census Block Group slices.

Using the ArcGIS Calculate Geometry tool, we determined the areas of each Census Block Group and each slice. Then, we assigned the ACS Census Block Group estimates of (1) the

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, 2018

shares of elementary school-aged children by race, and (2) the share of households with children who live in poverty to each slice. Next, we aggregated the slices within each MCCSC elementary school catchment boundary and calculated, for each catchment zone, estimates of (1) the shares of elementary school-aged children by race and (2) the share of households with children who live in poverty. To form these estimates, we took averages of these variables across all the slices, weighted by each slice's proportional contribution to the total area of the catchment.

Figures 9 and 10 illustrate this process.¹⁶ Figure 9 depicts the overlap of block groups and catchment zones. Some block groups fall completely within a single catchment zone, while others straddle the boundary of two or more catchment zones. By using the ArcGIS Intersect tool, we were able to create new shapefiles of Census Block Group slices, which we depict in Figure 10. These slices are coterminous with catchment boundaries.

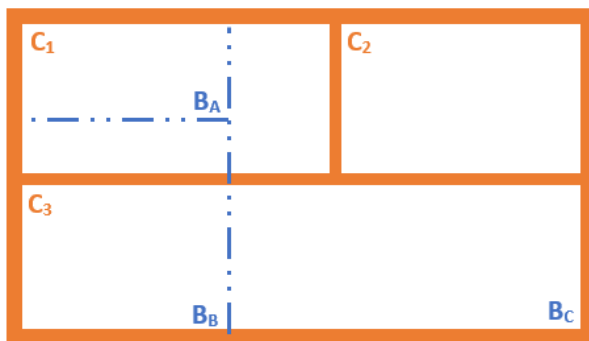


Fig. 9: Stylized example of block group and catchment zone boundaries

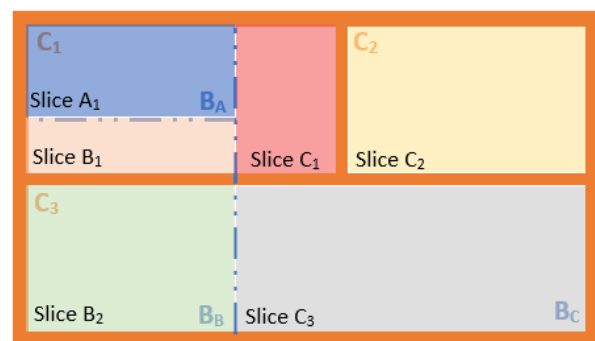


Fig. 10: Stylized example of slices from the intersection of catchment zones and block group boundaries

This process allowed us to calculate, within each elementary school boundary, the shares of elementary school-aged children by race and the share of households with children who live in poverty. These variables are proxies for IDOE data on for the share of Black or Hispanic children attending the local elementary school, as well as the share of children eligible for free or reduced-priced meals. This “slicing” method also enabled us to experiment with creating new catchment boundaries by constructing different geographic aggregations of these slices. We could then calculate the shares of Black/Hispanic and low-income children in these newly-constructed catchment boundaries and compare their distributions to the current MCCSC distributions.

Measures of Inequity

We are able to use a range of methods to measure equity. Broadly, researchers have classified inequity measures as measures of exposure (sometimes called isolation measures) and

¹⁶ Warren, 2019

unevenness (sometimes called dissimilarity measures). Exposure measures of equity describe the average racial or socioeconomic composition of the schools, districts, or neighborhoods of students of a given category (such as a given race, or socioeconomic status). For example, the average share of Black students in a Black student's school constitutes a measure of racial exposure of Black students in the school. Unevenness measures describe the difference in average school, district, or neighborhood racial or socioeconomic composition between children of different races or of different socioeconomic status.¹⁷

Exposure measures always take on a value between 0 and 1, because they are proportions. Similarly, unevenness measures always take on a value between 0 and 1, because they are differences in proportions. The closer an unevenness measure is to 1, the more inequitable is the district.

The simplest way to examine inequity is by comparing the shares of students by race across schools, or by comparing the shares of students enrolled in free or reduced-price meal programs. Here, we've made a table illustrating the share of non-white students in each elementary school in MCCSC.

SCHOOL	# NON-WHITE	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	% NON-WHITE
Marlin	9	224	4%
Unionville	14	235	6%
Lakeview	34	492	7%
Clear Creek	59	424	14%
Grandview	98	488	20%
Highland Park	83	395	21%
Childs	126	549	23%
Arlington Heights	85	314	27%
Binford Rogers	241	904	27%
Summit	160	550	29%
Templeton	178	508	35%
University	242	621	39%
Fairview	151	315	48%

Chart 4

A chart like this is useful for illustrating the stark differences in the shares of non-white students across schools. One way to increase equity is to equalize the shares of non-white students across schools. Using that basic measure, we could create new maps of catchment zones with that aim.

At the school level, exposure measures of students to a particular type of student are equivalent to the shares of students in that school. For example, for a non-white student attending Childs Elementary, approximately 23 out of every 100 students in the school also are non-white

¹⁷ Reardon, 2015

(because 23% of students in the school are non-white). Expressed as a proportion rather than a percent, the exposure is 0.23. The exposure of white students to other white students at Childs Elementary is then $1 - 0.23 = 0.77$. In other words, for a white student attending Childs Elementary, approximately 77 out of every 100 students in the school also are white. And the exposure of white students at Childs Elementary to non-white students is also 0.23. We can easily calculate these exposure measures for each school using the table above.

For purposes of this study, it is more illustrative to calculate exposure and unevenness measures at the district level rather than the school level. To calculate the district-level exposure of non-white students to non-white students, we simply take a weighted average of the share of non-white students across elementary schools, weighted by the total enrollments of non-white students. Using the numbers from the above table, we would calculate the following:

$$\begin{aligned} &[(.04*9) + (.06*14) + (.07*34) + (.14*59) + (.20*98) + (.21*83) + (.23*126) + (.27*85) + \\ &(.27*241) + (.29*160) + (.35*178) + (.39*242) + (.48*151)] / \\ &(9+14+34+59+98+83+126+85+241+160+178+242+151) \end{aligned}$$

This total is about 0.30. In other words, for an average non-white student in an MCCSC elementary school, about 30 out of every 100 students also is non-white.

Then, we can calculate the district-level exposure of white students to non-white students. We take a weighted average of the share of non-white students across elementary schools, weighted by the total enrollments of white students. That weighted average is 0.23; in other words, for an average white student attending an MCCSC elementary school, only 23 of every 100 students is non-white.

We can calculate the district-level unevenness measure by taking simple district-level differences between the exposures of non-white and white students to non-white students. In our example, the unevenness measure is $0.30 - 0.23 = 0.07$. In other words, on average, a white elementary school student in MCCSC is exposed to 7 fewer non-white students per 100 students than an average non-white student.

We can calculate exposure and unevenness measures for many different combinations of student types. This report focuses on racial and socioeconomic equity in MCCSC schools. The resulting unevenness measures show that greater racial and socioeconomic inequity exists at the elementary level. Dissimilarity measures at the middle and high school levels are much lower.

The “Current MCCSC Inequity Measures” table in Appendix A reports the exposure and unevenness measures for different combinations of student types, given the current racial and socioeconomic compositions of MCCSC elementary schools. We find that at the elementary school level, the exposure of Black or Hispanic children to other Black or Hispanic children is

0.16. In other words, for Black and Hispanic children on average, 16 out of every 100 students is also Black or Hispanic. For white students, exposure to Black or Hispanic children is only 0.11, implying that only 11 out of 100 children in an average white elementary school student's school is Black or Hispanic. This difference implies an unevenness measure of 0.05 (0.16-0.11). These exposure differences at the middle and high school levels are closer to zero (just 0.02 and 0.01, respectively), indicating little inequity at those levels.

Examining the exposure of poor students to other poor students also reveals inequity. For an average low-income student attending MCCSC elementary schools, nearly half of all other students in the school are low-income. In comparison, for an average non-poor student, only about a third of students in the school are low-income. This difference in exposure to poverty between low-income and non-poor students amounts to an unevenness measure of 0.16. The unevenness measures at the middle and high school levels are much lower, at 0.02 and 0.01, respectively.

Finally, we examine the disproportionate exposure of Black and Hispanic students to low-income students, relative to white students. Importantly, Reardon (2015) and others find that the disproportionate exposure of minority students to low-income students--in other words, the concentration of Black and Hispanic students in high-poverty schools--results in significantly worse outcomes for minority students than does racial or poverty-based inequity alone. We find that for an average Black or Hispanic student attending MCCSC elementary schools, 46 out of 100 students are low-income; in contrast, for an average white student, 38 out of every 100 students are low-income. This difference in exposure corresponds to an unevenness measure of 0.08. These unevenness measures again attenuate significantly at the middle and high school levels.

In the sections that follow, we use these exposure and unevenness measures to evaluate the performance of alternative elementary school catchment boundaries in reducing racial and socioeconomic inequities.

Alternative Catchment Boundaries

Current MCCSC elementary school catchment zones are inequitable. In general, the boundaries circumscribe neighborhoods that concentrate minority and low-income students in a small handful of schools that tend to exhibit lower performance-based accountability grades. On average, schools exhibiting higher performance-based accountability grades report substantially lower shares of minority and low-income students. MCCSC can work to create greater educational equity by redrawing these boundaries. In this section, we illustrate two methods of redrawing boundaries to illustrate the efficacy of this approach. As we discuss above, we only redrew boundaries for elementary schools, because MCCSC middle and high schools exhibit less disparity.

First, we used GIS software to create maps depicting the sharp inequities across elementary schools that we document in the section “MCCSC Schools are Not Equitable” and in our discussion of exposure and unevenness measures above. These maps enable us to identify opportunities for redrawing boundaries. For example, Childs serves very low shares of students receiving free or reduced-price meals, Black or Hispanic students, or students receiving special education services. Meanwhile, many schools that are geographically proximal to Childs--such as Summit, Fairview, Templeton, and Clear Creek--exhibit some of MCCSC’s highest shares of low-income, minority, and special education students. The geographic proximity of concentrated shares of low-income and minority students to schools serving predominantly white, non-poor students provides a clear opportunity to redistribute boundaries while maintaining short travel times between students’ homes and schools.

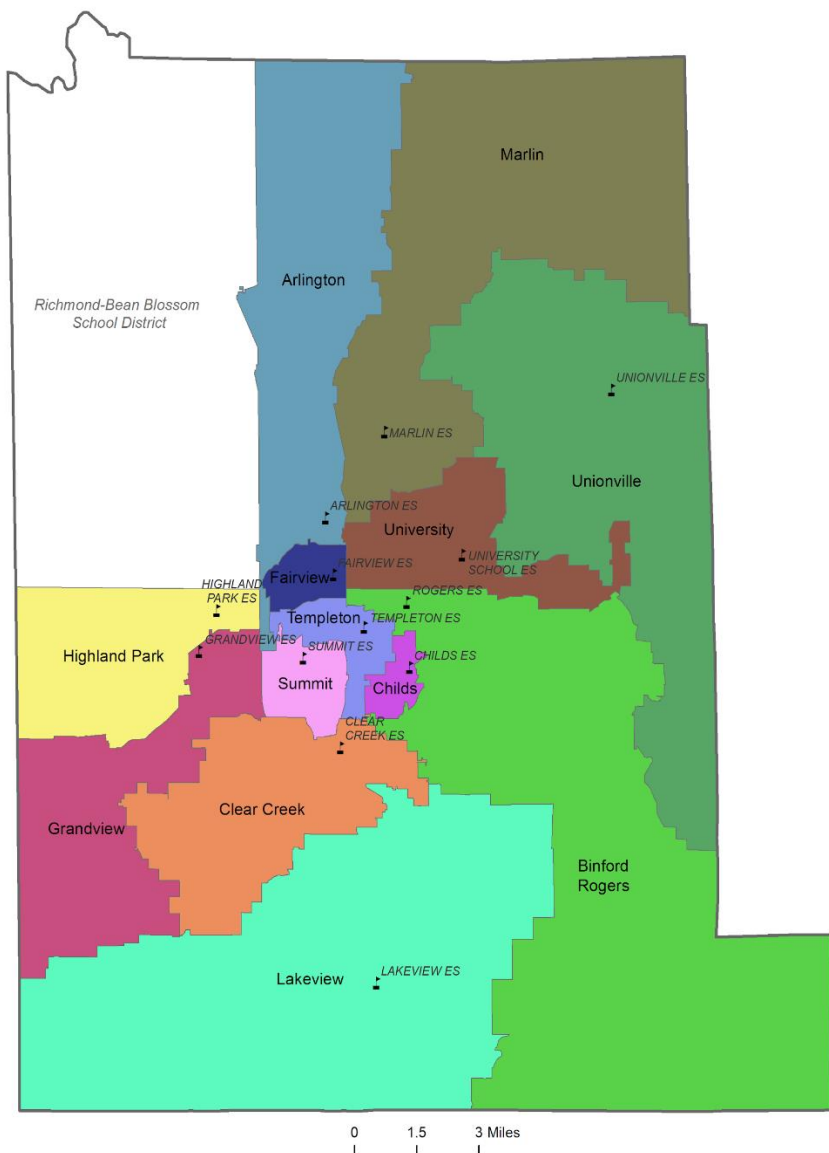
Next, using the methods we describe in the “Data Sources and Methods” section above, we created new catchment boundary maps by redistributing Census Block Group slices across existing catchment boundaries. Our goal was to equalize the share of low-income and Black and Hispanic children across catchment zones, without meaningfully changing the enrollment levels of current elementary schools. Importantly, we considered school capacity when redrawing boundaries; both methods that we employed do not change total enrollment in elementary schools by more than 36 students, or by more than 8.2%.

We present results from two efforts to redraw catchment boundaries below. The first model, which we call the “Contiguous Catchment Boundaries” model, redistributes Census Block Group slices along the borders of existing school catchment boundaries. This model largely maintains MCCSC’s existing boundaries, while making marginal adjustments to the racial and socioeconomic shares of students within schools. As we describe below, this model does little to shift meaningfully the distribution of Black and Hispanic or low-income students across schools because changes at the catchment borders do not reduce the neighborhood concentrations of minority and low-income children. The second model, which we call the “Equity Model,” achieves substantial improvements in racial and socioeconomic equity across MCCSC elementary schools. To achieve this balance, we propose an innovative model of non-contiguous catchment boundaries that reduces the concentrations of minority and low-income students within elementary schools. We depict both of these models below using new map layers illustrating how the new boundaries redistribute students across schools by race and socioeconomic status.

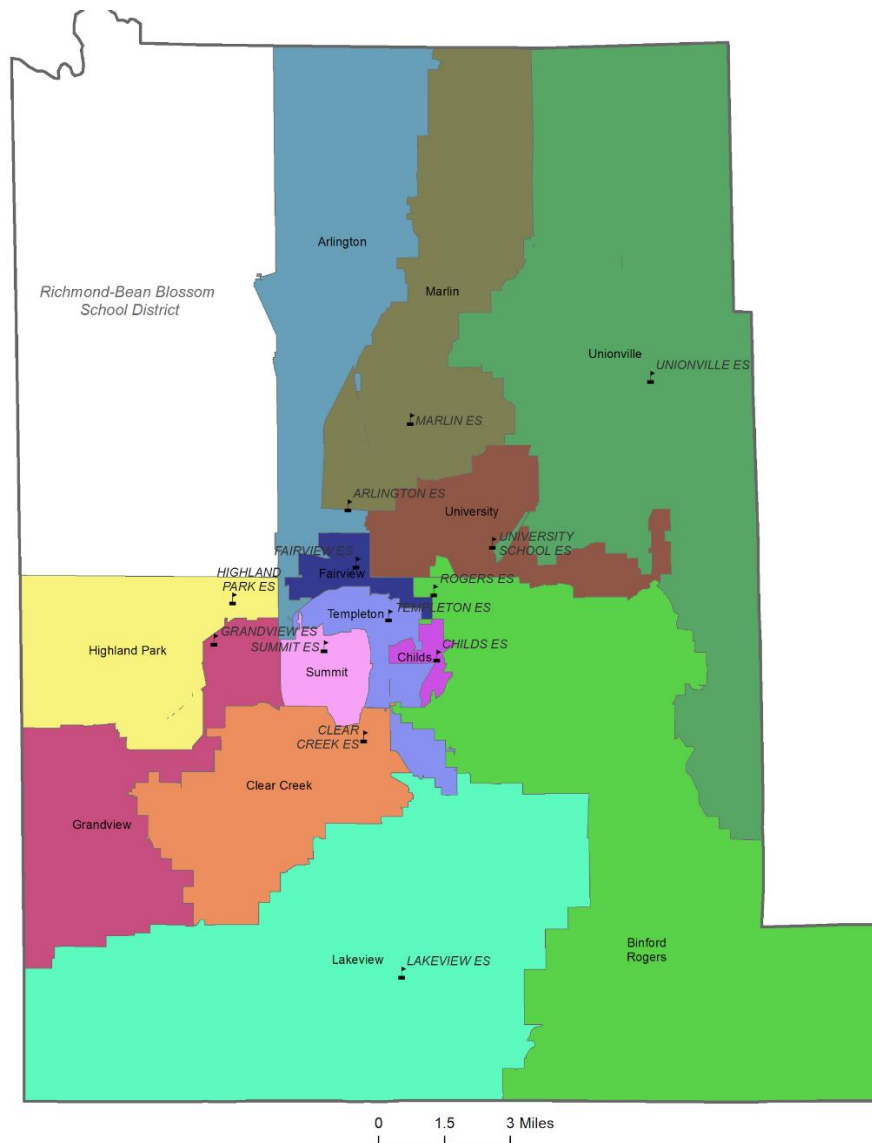
Again, note that the maps we share below rely on data from the American Community Survey, rather than actual student-level data from MCCSC. As a result, stakeholders should not view these maps as definitive, but rather as providing a heuristic for how MCCSC could construct non-contiguous catchment boundaries moving forward.

Model 1: Contiguous Catchment Boundaries

NOTE: Because of limitations in the data available to the capstone team, the team's proposed new maps do not reflect accurately the poverty rates at the different schools, and therefore should not be perceived as a starting point for actual boundary proposals, but rather as indicative of a strategy for redrawing boundaries. The capstone team emphasized that MCCSC, should it embark on redistricting, would have access to all of the relevant street-by-street student data.



Current Boundaries



Model 1

MCCSC catchment boundaries currently consist of a single, uninterrupted shape. Our first option retains this standard, with contiguous catchment boundaries. We redistributed Census Block Group slices at the borders of existing catchment boundaries to achieve the greatest level of racial and socioeconomic equity feasible, without substantially changing school enrollment totals. The maps above display current elementary catchment boundaries on the left, and the new elementary catchment boundaries on the right.

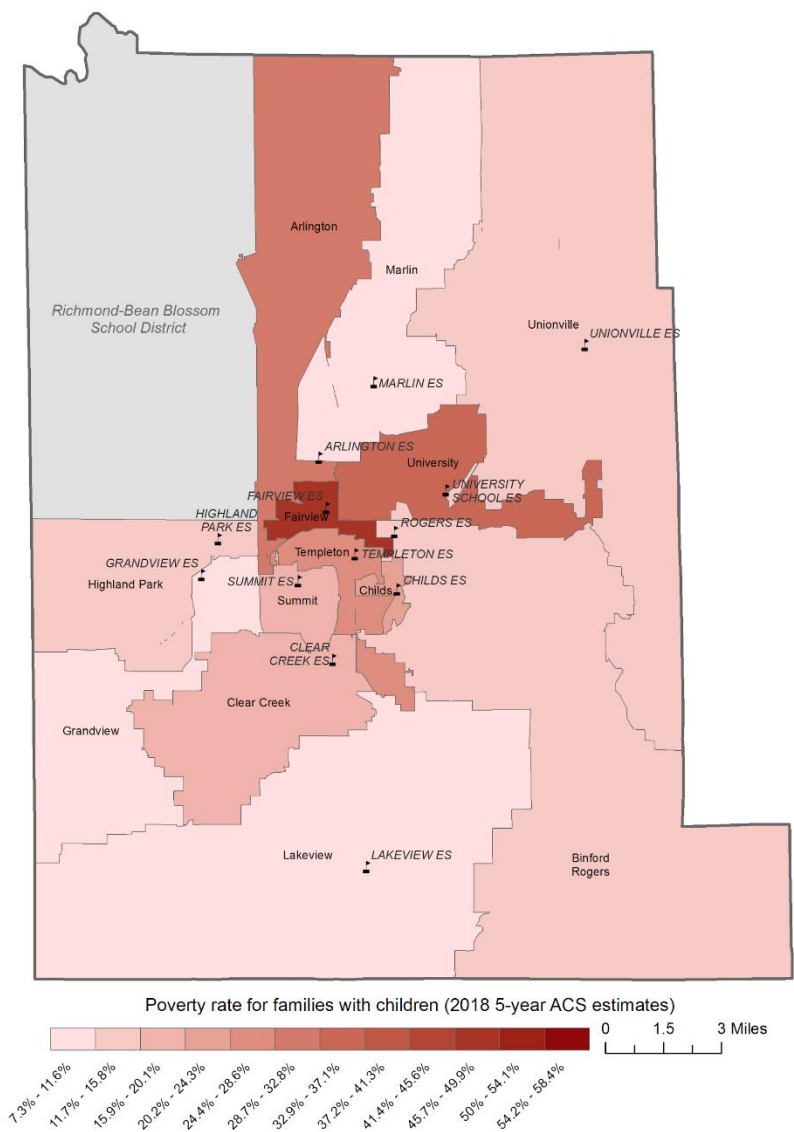
This method produced only modest increases in equity across elementary schools. Map 7 depicts the distribution of households with children in poverty across the new catchments, while Map 8 depicts the distribution of elementary-aged Black and Hispanic students.¹⁸ For Map 7, the darker the color gradient, the higher the concentration of low-income students in an elementary school. For Map 8, the darker the color gradient, the higher concentration of Black or Hispanic students in a school. Appendix A displays these maps alongside the current MCCSC gradient maps (Maps 1 and 2 in the “MCCSC Schools are Not Equitable” section above). The disparities in color gradients in Maps 7 and 8 are slightly less pronounced. We confirm this marginal increase in equity in Charts 5 and 6. Chart 5 depicts disparities in the share of households with children in poverty and a red line denoting the 35% MCCSC enrollment average of children receiving free or reduced-price meals. Chart 6 depicts disparities in the share of Black and Hispanic students across elementary schools and a red line denoting the MCCSC enrollment average of 12%. If the schools were balanced racially and socioeconomically, each of the bars would be of similar height and close to the red lines, meaning that each school’s racial and socioeconomic compositions are similar to the average racial and socioeconomic composition of the school corporation as a whole. The blue bars in each chart represent the shares of these students in existing catchment boundaries, while the green bars show how the shares would change if we shifted catchment boundaries to improve equity. The blue and green bars remain relatively similar, with only slight improvements in equalizing the shares of Black and Hispanic and low-income students across schools.

MCCSC school catchments currently exhibit a 51 percentage-point gap in the share of households with children in poverty between elementary schools with the highest and lowest concentrations of poor students, and a 28 percentage-point gap in the share of Black and Hispanic students between elementary schools with the highest and lowest concentrations of Black and Hispanic students. Chart 5 reports that the highest share of households with children in poverty among current elementary catchments is 58%, as compared to just 7% in the catchment with the lowest poverty rate. The Contiguous Catchment Boundaries model reduces the 51 percentage-point gap in these shares, but only to 42 percentage points. Chart 6 reports that the highest share of Black and Hispanic students among current elementary catchments is 29%; the Contiguous Catchment Boundaries model reduces this share by just five percentage points, to 24%. Similarly, the lowest share of Black and Hispanic students among current

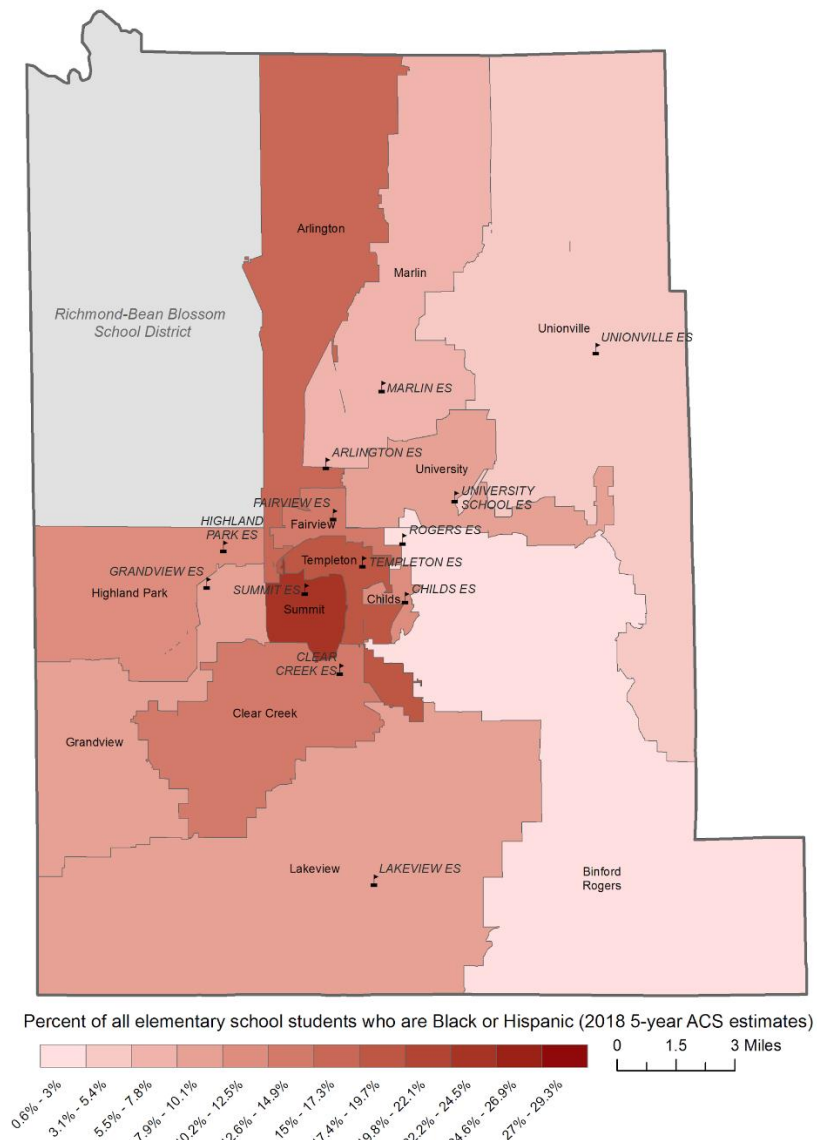
¹⁸ All data for these maps are from the 2013-2018 American Community Survey.

elementary catchments is 1%; the Contiguous Catchment Boundaries model increases this share to just 3%. These gaps remain too large to indicate a substantive equity improvement.

The reason why making marginal changes to existing school catchments does not substantially improve equity is because children are highly concentrated by race and socioeconomic status within MCCSC. As these maps reveal, the areas with the highest concentrations of Black and Hispanic or low-income students are concentrated geographically, so small shifts in existing boundaries do not sufficiently re-sort these students across schools. Therefore, we do not recommend that MCCSC continue to draw catchment zones in perfectly contained shapes because doing so does not address racial and economic inequities.



Map 7



Map 8

See note on p. iv about data limitations affecting the maps.



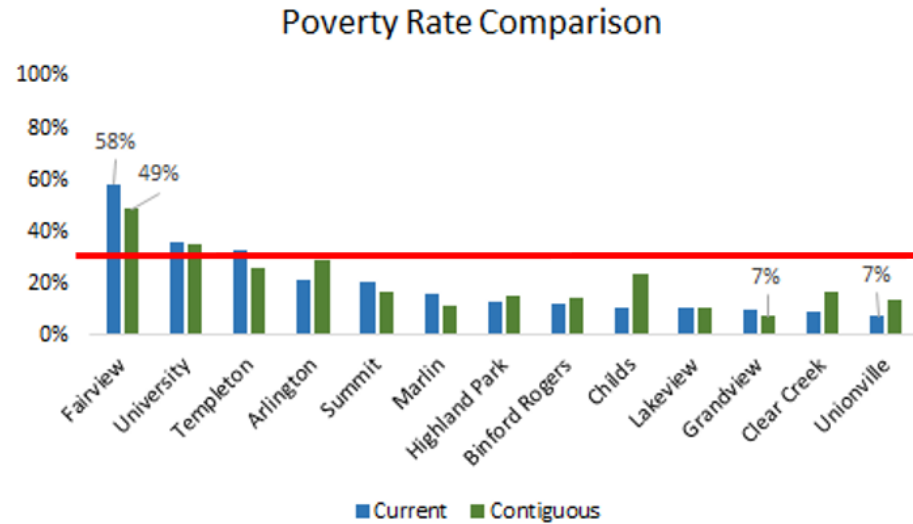


Chart 5

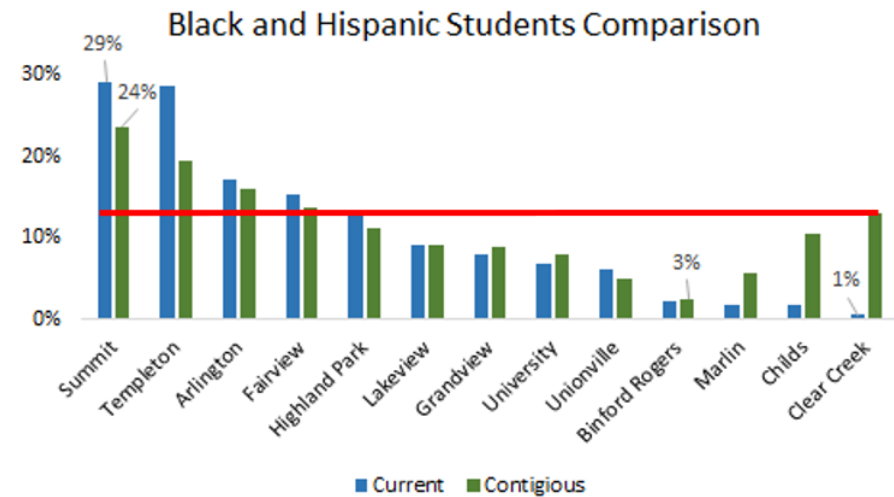
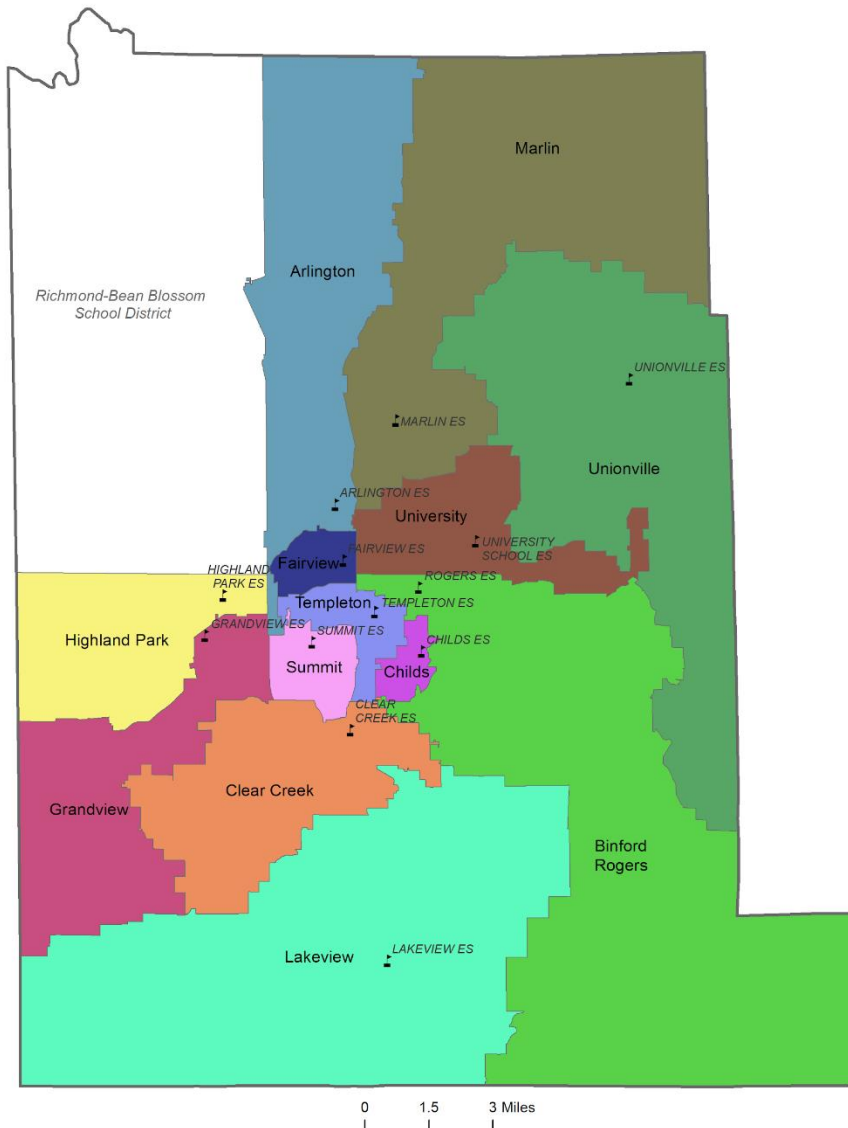


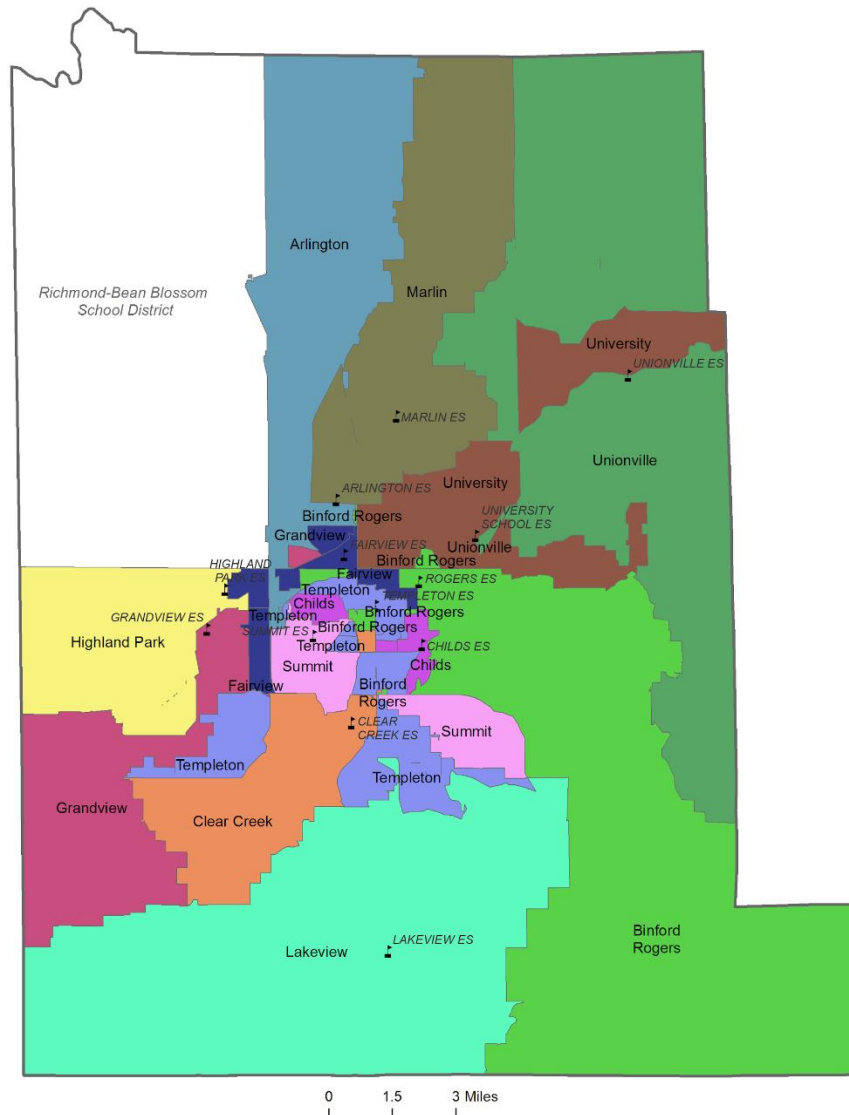
Chart 6

Note: Because of limitations in the data available to the capstone team, the team's proposed new maps do not reflect accurately the poverty rates at the different schools, and therefore should not be perceived as a starting point for actual boundary proposals, but rather as indicative of a strategy for redrawing boundaries. The capstone team emphasized that MCCSC, should it embark on redistricting, would have access to all the relevant street-by-street student data.

Model 2: The Equity Model (Non-Contiguous Catchment Boundaries)



Current Boundaries



Model 2

NOTE: Because of limitations in the data available to the capstone team, the team's proposed new maps do not reflect accurately the poverty rates at the different schools, and therefore should not be perceived as a starting point for actual boundary proposals, but rather as indicative of a strategy for redrawing boundaries. The capstone team emphasized that MCCSC, should it embark on redistricting, would have access to all of the relevant street-by-street student data.



Next, we drew on research from various regions of the U.S. revealing that catchment zones that follow natural boundaries such as roadways and rivers, or that circumscribe particular neighborhoods, tend to reinforce racial and socioeconomic inequity. To address this problem, some school districts have adopted irregular catchment zones with interlocking and non-contiguous shapes to improve racial and socioeconomic balance. We next examined whether we could balance the distribution of students by race and socioeconomic status by constructing elementary school catchments that do not conform to MCCSC's current model of consisting of a singular, uninterrupted shape. We redistributed Census Block Group slices to achieve the greatest level of racial and socioeconomic equity feasible, without substantially changing school enrollment totals. To achieve this balance, we constructed non-contiguous catchment boundaries that reduce the concentrations of minority and low-income students within elementary schools. The maps above display current elementary catchment boundaries on the left, and the new "Equity Model" elementary catchment boundaries on the right.

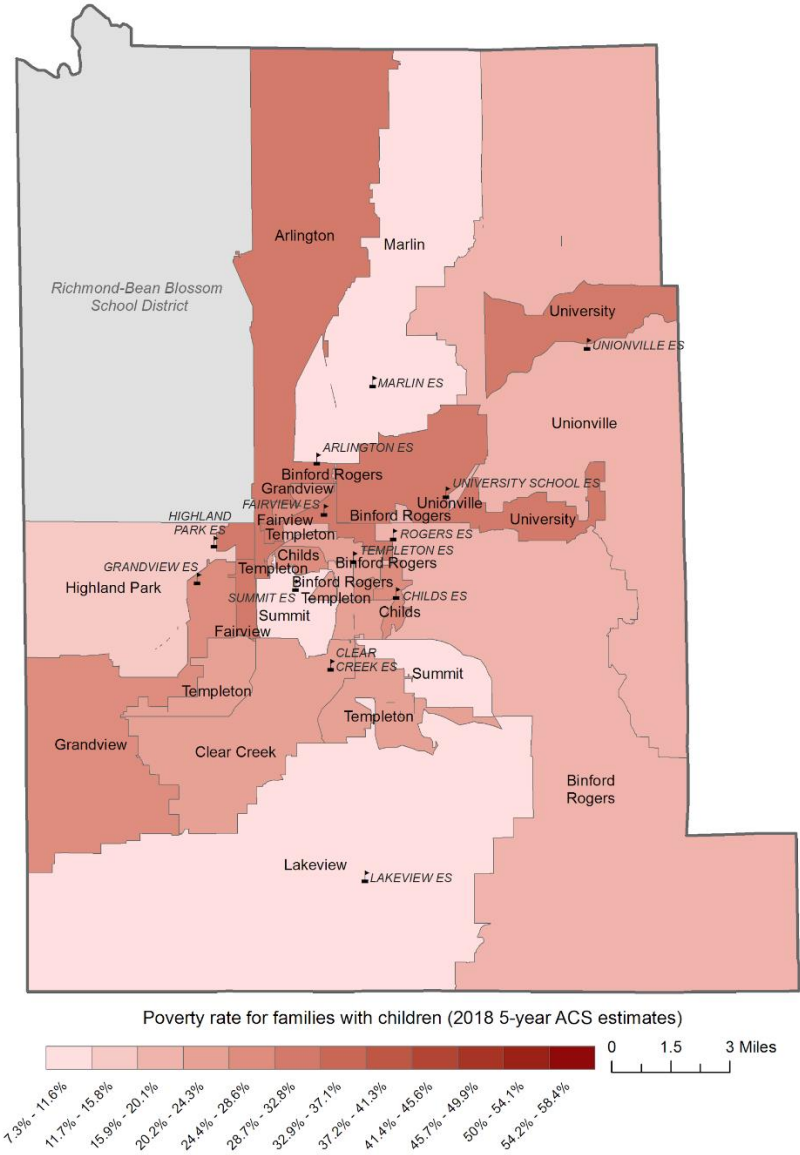
This method produced substantial increases in equity across elementary schools. Map 9 depicts the distribution of households with children in poverty across the Equity Model catchments, while Map 10 depicts the distribution of elementary-aged Black and Hispanic students.¹⁹ For Map 9, the darker the color gradient, the higher the concentration of low-income students in an elementary school. For Map 10, the darker the color gradient, the higher concentration of Black or Hispanic students in a school. Appendix A displays these maps alongside the current MCCSC gradient maps (Maps 1 and 2 in the "MCCSC Schools are Not Equitable" section above). Note that, in comparison to the current MCCSC gradient maps, the disparities in color gradients are much less pronounced. We confirm this equity increase in charts 7 and 8.

Chart 7 depicts disparities in the share of households with children in poverty and a red line denoting the 35% MCCSC enrollment average of children receiving free or reduced-price meals. Chart 8 depicts disparities in the share of Black and Hispanic students across elementary schools and a red line denoting the MCCSC enrollment average of 12%. Again, the blue bars in each chart represent the shares of these students in existing catchment boundaries, while the green bars show how the shares would change if we adopted the Equity Model catchment boundaries. We find that the Equity Model maps substantially equalize the distribution of students by race and poverty status across schools, as evidenced by green bars that are much more similar in height.

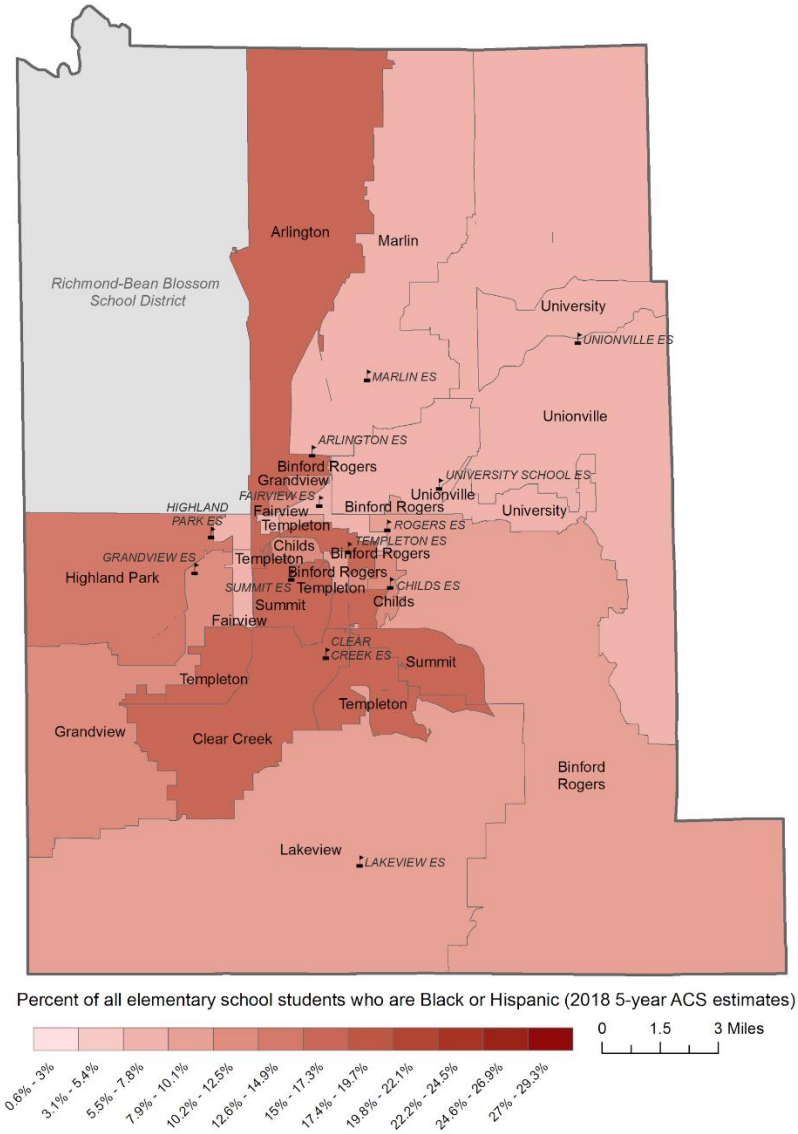
Notably, the Equity Model reduces the 51 percentage-point gap between elementary schools with the highest and lowest shares of households with children in poverty to just 19 percentage points. Currently, data from the 2013-2018 American Community Survey estimates that in the Fairview catchment, more than 58% of households with children live in poverty. The Equity Model redistributes these families across catchments and reduces the Fairview poverty rate to

¹⁹ All data for these maps are from the 2013-2018 American Community Survey.

29.3%. Chart 8 reports that the Equity Model also reduces the 29 percentage-point gap between elementary schools with the highest and lowest shares of Black and Hispanic students to just 10.5 percentage points.



Map 9



Map 10



Poverty Rate Comparison

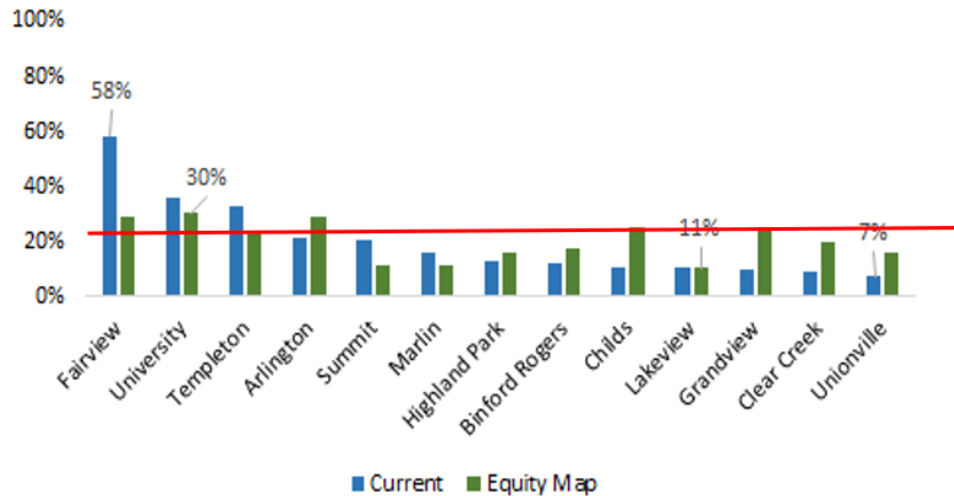


Chart 7

Black and Hispanic Students Comparison

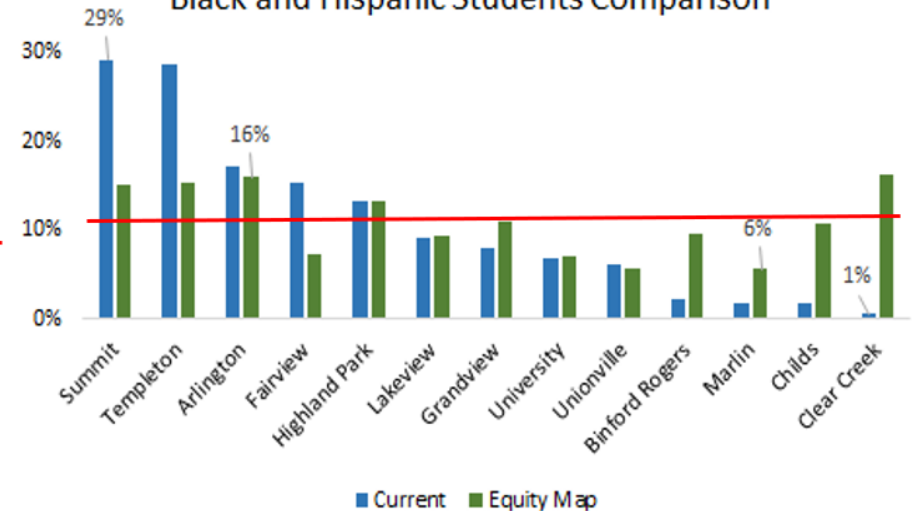


Chart 8

NOTE: Because of limitations in the data available to the capstone team, the team's proposed new maps do not reflect accurately the poverty rates at the different schools, and therefore should not be perceived as a starting point for actual boundary proposals, but rather as indicative of a strategy for redrawing boundaries. The capstone team emphasized that MCCSC, should it embark on redistricting, would have access to all of the relevant street-by-street student data.

Finally, we compare exposure and unevenness measures for current MCCSC elementary catchments to those we propose under the Equity Model (see Appendix A for the relevant tables). We find that the exposure of Black or Hispanic children to other Black or Hispanic children changes from 0.16 to 0.12 in the Equity Model, with no change in the average exposure of white children to Black or Hispanic children. The Equity Model therefore reduces the unevenness in exposure rates from 0.05 to 0.01. Similarly, the exposure of low-income students to other low-income students reduces from nearly half to 0.23. The Equity Model reduces unevenness in the exposure of poor and non-poor students to poor students from 0.16 to 0.03. We also examine the disproportionate exposure of Black and Hispanic students to low-income students, relative to white students. Currently, the unevenness in exposure to poor students between Black or Hispanic and white students is 0.08. In other words, an average Black or Hispanic student attending MCCSC schools is exposed to 8 additional poor students per 100 than an average white student. Our proposed Equity Model reduces this unevenness measure to just 0.01. While these comparisons of unevenness measures between the current zones and the Equity Model are not exact (due to the usage of IDOE data to calculate the exposure and unevenness measures for current MCCSC schools, and the usage of ACS data to calculate the measures for the Equity Model), the vast improvement serves as a proof of concept for this non-contiguous boundary drawing method.

The proposed Equity Model also does not substantially increase transportation time to school. We compared the greatest distances that students travel to school across the current catchment zones, Model 1 (the Contiguous Catchment Boundaries model), and Model 2 (the Equity Model).²⁰ The greatest distance a student may need to travel remains the same across all three models: 19.6 miles for a student to travel from the farthest point in the Rogers-Binford catchment to school. Across all current MCCSC elementary catchments, the average greatest distance between the farthest point in the catchment to school is 8.8 miles. The Contiguous Catchment Boundaries model actually decreases this average slightly, to 8.6 miles. The Equity Model slightly increases the average greatest distance traveled by only a half mile, to 9.3 miles. Overall, we recommend that ICPE-MC and MCCSC should pursue a strategy of redrawing catchments using non-contiguous boundaries. Our proposed Equity Model demonstrates the potential for MCCSC to improve racial and socioeconomic equity across schools without substantially changing school enrollments or increasing transportation distance to school.

²⁰ See the “Greatest Driving Distances” table in Appendix A.



Implications and Recommendations

This final section of the report explores the political feasibility of the alternative catchment boundary maps we present above and provides recommendations for ICPE-MC advocacy moving forward. We highlight the benefits and disadvantages of each map and make a final determination on their political feasibility.

Implications of Alternative Catchment Zone Maps

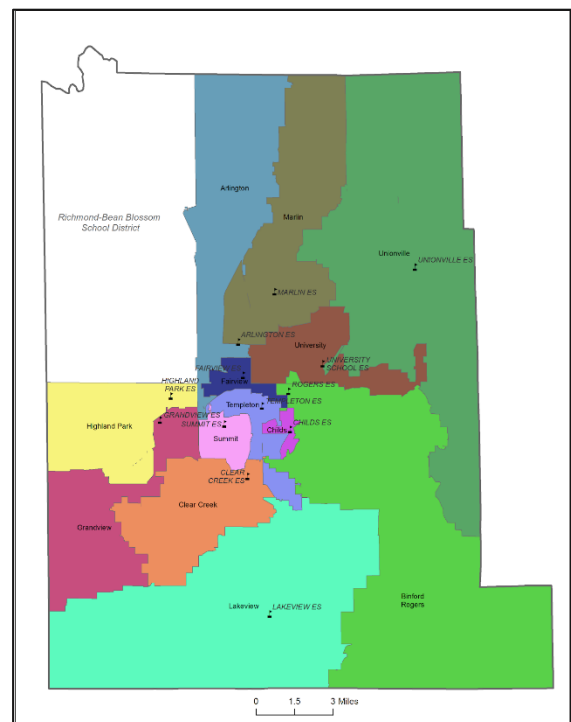
Note that for both alternative boundary maps, we redraw catchments for elementary schools but not middle or high schools. As a result, students who attend elementary school together may not attend the same middle schools and/or high schools. We anticipate that some community members may raise concerns about this outcome, but we do not view this issue as a major barrier to the political feasibility of redrawing catchment boundaries. ICPE-MC may counter opposition by explaining that due to the number and placement of middle and high schools within Bloomington, some elementary students attending the same school in MCCSC already do not attend the same middle and/or high schools.

Model 1: Contiguous Catchment Boundaries

The alternative contiguous map would marginally increase economic and racial equity across MCCSC elementary catchments without dividing catchment zones. This map could face resistance from community members who prefer more significant change. This map also may face resistance from residents who seek to preserve “community schools.” ICPE-MC may counter this resistance by demonstrating that many MCCSC students already attend schools within their catchment boundaries that are farther from the school most geographically proximal to their residence. However, this catchment boundary map may be more feasible to adopt than the Equity Model, because it requires only small changes to existing catchments.

The process for implementing marginal changes to existing catchment boundaries could closely follow the 2005 process but should include greater community engagement and transparency. The community is more likely to accept smaller changes because they impact fewer families and residents may be less concerned about impacts on property values. We anticipate property values and transportation times will be key community concerns in any discussions regarding new catchment boundaries. Finally, several interviewees noted that we now find ourselves in a

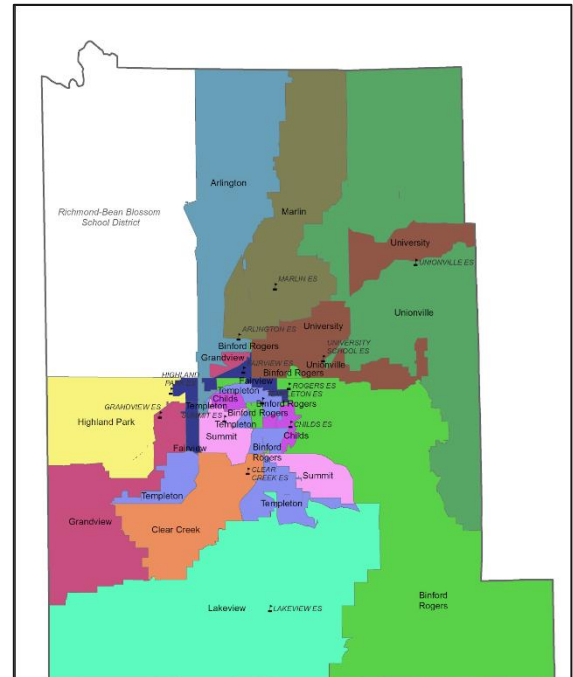
See note on p. iv about data limitations affecting the maps.



unique moment in history, wherein the community may be open to more significant changes in order to achieve equity. Maps that make more significant changes to existing catchment boundaries, like the Equity Model, may be more feasible than ever.

Model 2: The Equity Model Map (Non-contiguous Catchment Boundaries)

We recommend that ICPE-MC advocate for redrawing elementary catchment zones using a method similar to the one we employed to create the Equity Model. Non-contiguous catchment boundaries result in more racial and socioeconomic parity across MCCSC schools. As we discuss above, our Equity Model provides a heuristic that MCCSC may leverage in future efforts to redraw catchment boundaries; moving forward, MCCSC access to student-level data will enable the school board to construct catchment boundaries using more precise data on students, their demographic data, and their precise residential locations. As our interviews and current MCCSC maps reveal, Black and Hispanic and low-income children are highly concentrated in particular geographic areas, necessitating the adoption of non-contiguous catchment boundaries to achieve desired racial and socioeconomic balance across elementary schools. The Equity Model achieves this goal.



See note on p. iv about data limitations affecting the maps.

ICPE-MC will need to communicate clearly to the community that the first priority of these maps is access to an equitable educational experience for all, followed by neighborhood schools where possible. We suggest a targeted outreach approach in the neighborhoods and areas of town that the new catchment boundaries affect most; in particular, the Equity Model impacts central Bloomington, where we propose merging several small slices into other catchments. The political feasibility of this map depends on obtaining buy-in from these families. Some interviewees noted an association between oddly-shaped catchment zones and greater inequity, due to the history of gerrymandering in this community. ICPE-MC may counter this perception with research-based messaging that highlights how irregular catchments can foster inclusion. Showcasing maps similar to those that we display in this report--which depict meaningful improvements in the distribution of students by race and socioeconomic status across elementary schools--is key to demonstrating why non-contiguous catchment zones may be necessary for achieving desired levels of equity. The Equity Model map may result in minor increases in fuel costs due to some additional busing; MCCSC should explore alternative busing options to contain these costs. Most of the proposed changes to existing catchment boundaries are concentrated in central Bloomington, where multiple bus routes already run, so MCCSC

should be able to implement new busing routes without incurring significant costs. Moreover, the Equity Model map does not increase transportation times significantly for most students.

Overall Political Feasibility Analysis

Is redrawing catchments politically feasible?

YES. As our report shows, the technical process of drawing more equitable catchments is relatively simple and straightforward; by coordinating with the Indiana Department of Education, MCCSC should be able to draw maps using student-level data and available electronic routing systems for student transportation. Redrawing catchment boundaries is also the most effective method that MCCSC can employ to achieve more equitable schools. Our interviews revealed that many community leaders and school board members are open to the idea of redrawing school catchments because stakeholders overwhelmingly recognize the magnitude of disparities across schools. Further, recent tragic events including ongoing police killings of Black Americans have prompted widespread community conversations regarding racial and socioeconomic equity. The current political environment may present a crucial opportunity for engaging community members in discussions on racial and socioeconomic disparities, as well as for addressing existing inequities with a sense of urgency.

The biggest hurdle to redrawing school catchments is gaining widespread community support. Our interviews indicate that ICPE-MC may face significant community pushback due to common misconceptions about redrawing boundaries, as well as negative perceptions of particular schools and neighborhoods. Many families may feel invested in their current school and may perceive a change in assigned boundaries as a loss. Our research shows that many of the perceived effects of redrawing catchments, including losses in property value, are minor and temporary. Anecdotal evidence from interviews indicated that property values may not have changed following the 2005 MCCSC realignment. Further, while stakeholders characterized the 2005 process of redrawing catchments as difficult, they noted a lack of negative impacts following adoption of the new catchments. Interviewees also mentioned that many families grew to love their newly-assigned school communities. In the next section, we outline action steps that ICPE-MC may employ to gain public support for redrawing school catchments.

Next Steps and Recommendations for ICPE-MC

The data we gathered through stakeholder interviews, academic research, and quantitative analysis enable us to make several recommendations to ICPE-MC that support a successful approach to redrawing school catchments. Broadly, these recommendations align with Fernandez and Rainey's *Managing Successful Organizational Change in the Public Sector*. We



recommend that ICPE-MC consult this resource, which outlines eight factors for how best to approach organizational change for maximum effectiveness²¹.

In the sections that follow, we discuss:

- How to build support for redrawing catchments
- Setting priorities
- Recommendations for managing the process of redrawing catchments
- Monitoring equity post-implementation
- Additional opportunities for increasing equity within MCCSC

I. Moving forward and building support

A. Start with the big picture

Telling the public that redrawing catchments is the solution to educational equity without first asking for its opinions will only create more resistance. While some interviewees stressed the urgency of addressing racial and socioeconomic equity in schools, a majority of interviewees advocated for starting the process with a deliberate conversation focused on the importance of equity more broadly. ICPE-MC should help frame the problem of educational equity by sharing information regarding existing disparities, and then brokering community conversations that cultivate a shared value system upon which to build the foundation for future discussions on redrawing the catchments.

B. Build a coalition of support

We recommend that ICPE-MC engage a broad coalition of community stakeholders who support similar goals. Many of the stakeholders we interviewed expressed an interest in participating in a process to redraw catchments. Several stakeholders even suggested that their organizations could support ICPE-MC by providing resources to MCCSC to conduct research or outreach, and by educating and mobilizing the community. ICPE-MC should seek to engage a coalition of supporters that is diverse and that represents the populations that redrawing would most impact. These supporters should include community groups, students, and families; further, ICPE-MC should seek to engage families who may not be able to participate fully in their children's schools due to work or other constraints. The current momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement may facilitate further opportunities for broad community engagement in conversations regarding equity and may prompt a sense of urgency in dismantling inequitable systems such as the current catchment boundaries. ICPE-MC should seize upon this momentum, engage a broad coalition of support from community members and organizations, and involve families throughout the redrawing process.

²¹ Fernandez & Rainey, 2006.



Similarly, ICPE-MC should advocate for the MCCSC School Board to involve the public in the process of redrawing catchments. ICPE-MC should build community support before approaching MCCSC, to ensure momentum at the outset of the redrawing process. Interviewees suggested that ICPE-MC and the school board should convene focus groups, canvas Monroe County neighborhoods, and distribute surveys to gather community feedback. The redrawing process should be a transparent and collaborative effort between the school board and the community. We recommend engaging parents from diverse socioeconomic and racial backgrounds and making every effort to reach the full range of communities served by MCCSC schools. Without those efforts, the process will reflect the preferences of community members who do not necessarily represent the full spectrum of MCCSC families. ICPE-MC should advocate for the school board to engage in community outreach to families who have not engaged previously in redrawing conversations. We also suggest engaging in a variety of community outreach methods to ensure the inclusion of a broader cross-section of community voices in the process.

C. Invest time in additional interviews and engagement

Given the interview limitations we faced, we recommend that ICPE-MC complete additional interviews among a broader group of community stakeholders. Appendix B contains our interview template, which ICPE-MC may adapt for these interviews. In particular, ICPE-MC should seek to obtain feedback from those whom these changes will most impact underrepresented groups, families and students; and other community groups and entities (see the Key Stakeholders section above for a list of suggested contacts). ICPE-MC should prioritize hearing from groups and individuals whose input increases representation, and from organizations and leaders who might be natural allies. Because the school board ultimately will decide whether to adopt proposed changes to catchment boundaries, ICPE-MC should make additional efforts to engage school board members, and to understand and address any concerns they may have. ICPE-MC also should interview MCCSC administrators, teachers, and staff, including the superintendent, principals, teachers, and support staff.

Conducting additional community interviews and outreach also gives ICPE-MC the opportunity to continue to build a broad coalition of support for this proposal, particularly among families and students.

D. Utilize data and create public-facing documents to counter common opposition

We recommend that ICPE-MC produce and distribute public-facing resources to provide information and dispel misconceptions about redrawing school catchments. To help facilitate this process, Appendix B contains a communications guide that addresses common concerns regarding redrawing catchments, as well as a fact sheet on the Equity Model. By anticipating



potential key areas of pushback, ICPE-MC can develop a counter-message communications strategy using evidence-based materials. ICPE-MC should take advantage of the wealth of publicly available quantitative data and gather additional qualitative data from stakeholder interviews. Outreach should aim to guide the public toward evidence-based solutions for achieving educational equity, as well as to dispel common misconceptions using both quantitative and qualitative information. For example, our interviews indicated that MCCSC residents may react emotionally to changes in catchment boundaries. ICPE-MC could work with MCCSC to gather stories from students and teachers about their school experiences and use these stories as part of a public campaign to counter negative perceptions of elementary schools based on school ratings. ICPE-MC also may rely on emotional appeals to community members focused on the need for all children to have access to equitable and inclusive schools.

Example: Property value concerns

Our research and interviews identified a major concern among stakeholders: the impact of redrawing catchments on property values. One concern is that redrawing catchments might shift a home's attendance boundary to a school with a lower accountability-based performance rating, thereby adversely impacting property values. Another concern is that changes in school demographics stemming from redrawing catchments may reduce school accountability-based performance ratings, thereby reducing nearby property values.

ICPE-MC should reassure the community that redrawing catchments will not affect property values in the long term and will not automatically lower school rankings. The best available empirical evidence shows that even large and sudden changes in school performance rankings exhibit only temporary impacts on local property values, of a maximum of 10%.²² Further, property values rapidly rebound to their previous levels within a year following the rating change.²³ Thus, impacts on property values are negligible.

E. Consider our maps a starting point for discussion

We believe our proposed Equity Model map provides an innovative solution for increasing equity in Monroe County through redrawing catchments using non-contiguous boundaries. MCCSC will be able to improve upon this approach by using more accurate student-level data to create equitable catchment boundaries. Our proposal provides a framework for this process, and ICPE-MC should use this report as a starting point for its discussions with MCCSC and the broader Monroe County community.

²² Figlio, 2004

²³ Kane et al., 2005



II. Prioritize Racial and Socioeconomic Equity

As we discuss above, multiple interviewees suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic and the national conversation on racial justice present opportunities to pursue considerable changes to the school catchments. The community may be more willing to participate in the process, and the school board likely faces greater pressure to prioritize issues of racial and socioeconomic equity in its decision making.

ICPE-MC should prioritize racial and socioeconomic equity in designing new catchments. We recommend that ICPE-MC propose a catchment boundary model that balances the distribution of low-income and minority students across elementary schools, while preserving community schools when possible. ICPE-MC and MCCSC also need to ensure that any redistribution of students across school catchment boundaries does not exacerbate disadvantage among low-income and minority students. For example, ICPE-MC should work with MCCSC to ensure all schools are able to provide students with consistent access to resources, such as before- and after-school care, summer activities, and weekend lunches, so that students do not lose important auxiliary services if their catchment boundaries change. Doing so addresses the concern that low-income students would receive lower levels of support if attending more socioeconomically integrated schools.

Some interviewees also recommended that MCCSC hire a demographer to study how the Monroe County population will change over time, so that new catchment boundaries account for population migration and demographic shifts moving forward. Considering these shifts now may enable MCCSC to adopt new catchment boundaries that will sustain equity further into the future.

III. Redraw catchments using an informed process

ICPE-MC should emphasize to MCCSC and the broader community that the proposed Equity Model provides a heuristic for how MCCSC can reconceptualize elementary catchment boundaries. MCCSC should, however, employ student-level data to generate more accurate maps. ICPE-MC and MCCSC should leverage data on student residential addresses that indicate where students live in relation to their schools.

ICPE-MC and MCCSC also should consider implementation challenges. With access to Department of Transportation data, the school board can consider alternative busing options. These options may include tiered busing, which refers to a system in which students attending different school levels (elementary, middle, high) ride the same bus. Alternative busing arrangements may mitigate potential increases in fuel expenditures and student travel time as a result of the new catchments. ICPE-MC and MCCSC also should consider how new catchments will impact children who walk to school.

Another implementation challenge relates to the phasing-in of new catchment boundaries. ICPE-MC and MCCSC should consider carefully whether to apply the new catchment



boundaries to all students immediately upon implementation, or to implement the new catchments in phases. Options for phased implementation can include applying the new boundaries to newly enrolled students only, as well as granting exceptions to allow siblings to attend the same elementary school.

IV. Monitor and evaluate post-implementation

Following MCCSC adoption of new catchment boundaries, ICPE-MC should continue to monitor the effects of new catchments on MCCSC students and families. The school board and ICPE-MC should engage in a collaborative process to evaluate the impacts of the change in boundaries and gauge the need for additional intervention.

A. Support programs for those in new schools, particularly at-risk students

Drawing new catchment boundaries will leave some students feeling displaced following reassignment to a new school. ICPE-MC should advocate for support structures to serve these students. MCCSC should ensure that students receive the same level of services following a school transition.

B. Institutionalize and normalize ongoing reassessment of school boundaries to maintain equity

MCCSC has rarely redrawn its catchment boundaries. Following adoption of new elementary school catchments, ICPE-MC should advocate for MCCSC policy changes mandating regular re-evaluation of the catchment boundaries. Further, MCCSC should implement a streamlined process that enables the school board to make routine adjustments to catchment boundaries on an ongoing basis. This practice will enable catchment boundaries to evolve as housing and growth patterns within the community change and ensure that elementary schools continue to serve equitable shares of low-income and minority students. Institutionalizing change--by codifying these changes in school corporation policies--and normalizing the practice of redrawing catchments more frequently can help MCCSC minimize impacts on students resulting from school reassignment. These practices also may enable MCCSC to avoid the wide-scale public pushback that often accompanies large and infrequent changes to school boundaries.

Moreover, any school catchment changes that MCCSC adopts will not maintain racial and socioeconomic equity indefinitely, due to inevitable demographic change. We recommend that ICPE-MC encourage MCCSC to adopt a best practice from the Portland School District, which involves:

“[a] rolling five-year strategy to bring together programs, demographics, and facilities. That is, districts should conduct computer mapping of school zones and



students every year, integrated with proven five-year enrollment projections by grade and school. These data should be combined with data related to building renovation needs and capacities. Additional data that may inform enrollment projections include birth rates and cohort survival projections, local transportation and land use plans, and zoning policies.”²⁴

V. Consider additional opportunities to increase equity

Throughout the interview process, we received many suggestions regarding additional opportunities to increase educational equity in MCCSC. ICPE-MC can build public support and work with the school board to implement these options, in addition to redrawing catchment zones. Including options beyond new catchments could help overcome entrenched opposition and reinvigorate a community conversation that considers equity in public education more broadly. ICPE-MC should advocate for consistently higher teacher quality, as well as equalizing the services offered across schools, so that families do not associate new catchment boundaries with the loss of excellent teachers or valuable services. Schools can partner with community organizations to integrate resources and services into the schools, thereby providing holistic, comprehensive support to students and their families. These supports can include out-of-school programs, trauma-informed care, and student leadership activities, in addition to auxiliary social services. The school board also can shift the messaging and branding around its schools to counter negative perceptions of schools serving high shares of low-income or minority students. Branding techniques may include publicizing the unique programs that schools offer.

Interviewees also suggested that MCCSC consider implementing other practices to improve equity, such as multiage classrooms and school pairings. Other ideas included creating a fourth middle school and increasing access to schools through alternative mechanisms such as school choice, controlled choice, or magnet school programs. Many interviewees expressed concern that these choice options have the potential to exacerbate inequities in the absence of a viable transportation option. Several participants expressed concerns that the physical locations of elementary schools within MCCSC do not align with Monroe County’s population distributions and suggested careful planning to avoid compounding this problem in the future. Stakeholders also suggested pooling and redistributing PTO funds across schools to reduce inequities arising from differences in PTO fundraising capacity.

Finally, ICPE-MC and MCCSC do not bear full responsibility for addressing all inequities within Monroe County public schools. Improving equity in MCCSC requires a multi-sector approach. For example, ICPE-MC should consider exploring the role of city and county zoning ordinances in educational equity. These zoning ordinances control land use and development, including the location and availability of multi-family housing. Because MCCSC zoning ordinances

²⁴ Hanover Research, 2015



concentrate the availability of multi-family housing in particular neighborhoods, the catchments circumscribing those neighborhoods tend to serve disproportionately high shares of low-income students. Though housing policy is beyond the scope of this report, interviewees broadly supported accompanying changes in housing policy, and recognized that schools are not entirely responsible for the residential inequities that our existing school catchments replicate.

Conclusion

This report evaluates the prospect of redrawing school catchment boundaries as a means to increase educational equity in the Monroe County Community School Corporation. We have presented the benefits of equitable schools and demonstrated that MCCSC elementary schools are not racially or socioeconomically equitable. We then discussed potential mechanisms for improving educational equity, including the option of redrawing school catchment boundaries.

We then provided an extensive summary of stakeholder input sourced through interviews on the prospects of redrawing catchments. Stakeholders discussed key factors related to racial and socioeconomic equity in Monroe County, the 2005 process of redrawing catchments, major arguments for and against changing school boundaries, issues related to housing availability, school transportation considerations, alternative opportunities for increasing equity, and overall recommendations for how the process of redrawing should unfold. We then calculated current equity measures of exposure and unevenness in MCCSC schools and employed innovative GIS techniques to construct new catchment boundaries that would improve upon these measures. We constructed two alternative catchment boundary maps: one that retained the contiguous shapes of existing MCCSC catchments, and one that constructed catchments from non-contiguous neighborhoods. While the first model did not meaningfully improve the equity outcomes, the second Equity Model substantially reduced racial and socioeconomic disparities across elementary schools. We also included a political feasibility analysis of the proposed maps and of redrawing school boundaries more broadly. We ended the report with important recommendations for implementing these suggestions.

This report makes the case that redrawing school catchments in MCCSC is necessary, desirable, and feasible. Other proposed mechanisms for redistributing students across schools are unlikely to result in substantial equity gains. Although the technical process of redrawing catchments is straightforward, the political process is complex. ICPE-MC will need to engage in significant public outreach alongside other community allies to educate and engage the community throughout the process, and to generate buy-in. Our recommendations constitute a comprehensive plan that ICPE-MC can implement to move forward with redrawing catchments, from preparation to implementation to evaluation. We believe that ICPE-MC will be able to advocate for meaningful improvements in educational equity among MCCSC schools by following this plan.



Finally, no silver bullet exists for ensuring that all students have access to high-quality public schools that are equitable, inclusive, and affirming, and that meet the varied needs of their students. Redrawing catchment boundaries within MCCSC is a necessary and yet insufficient step toward achieving this ideal. Continual movement toward this ideal requires an enduring commitment to reflecting on the myriad ways our public education system reinforces inequality, combined with evidence-based policymaking to dismantle the systems and practices that perpetuate it.



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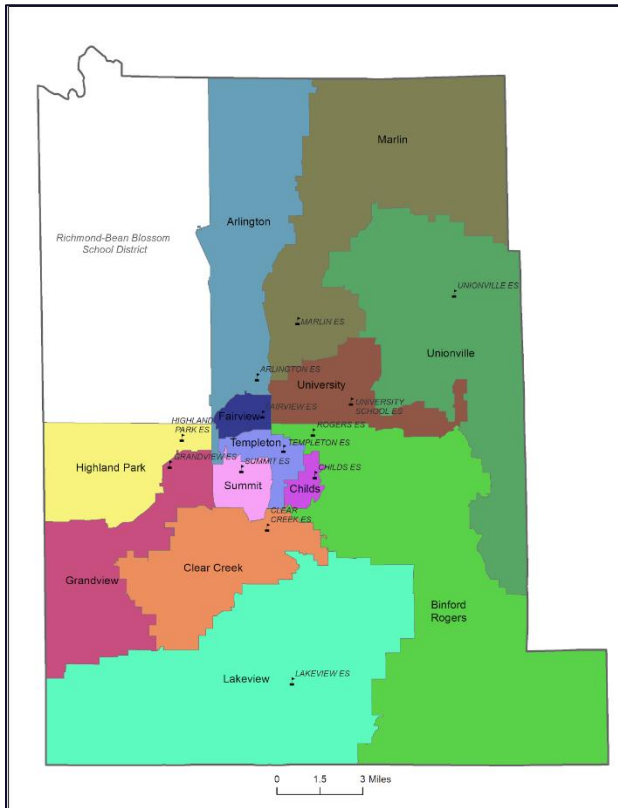
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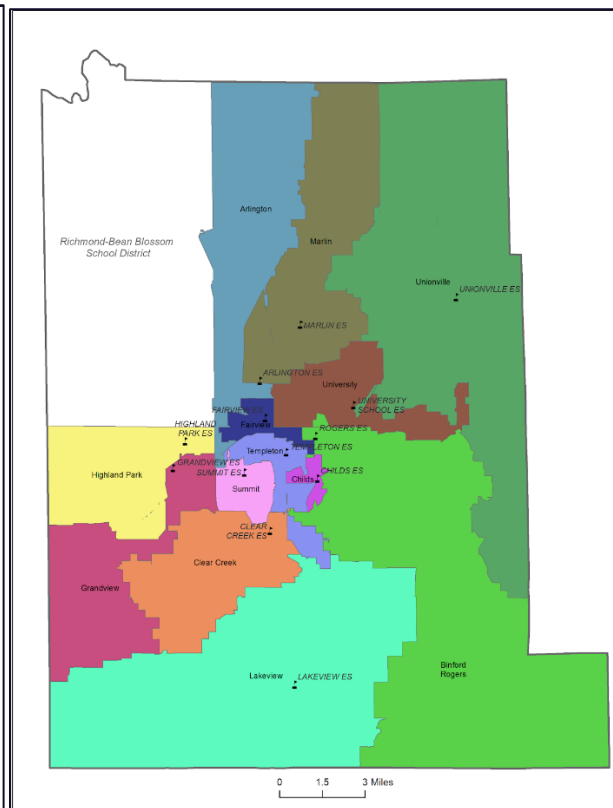
Appendices

Appendix A

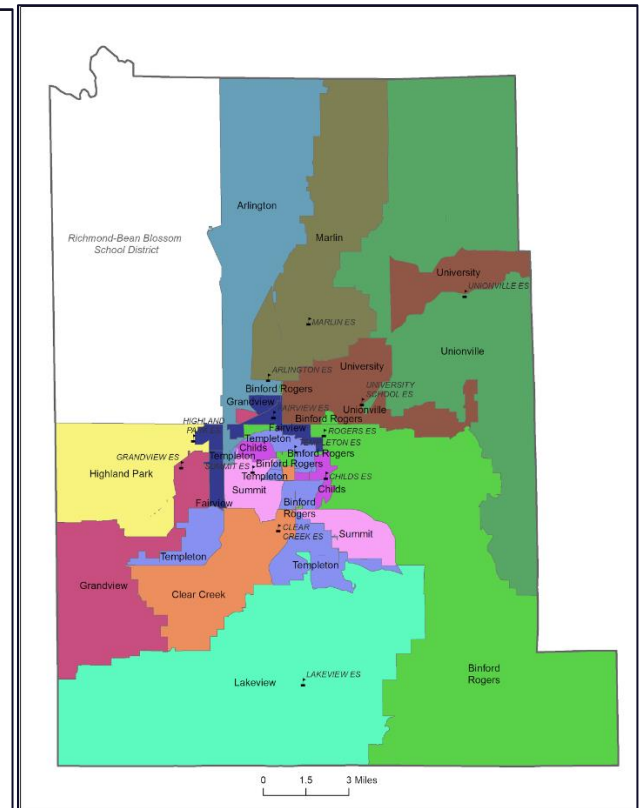
Catchment Zone Maps



Current



Contiguous

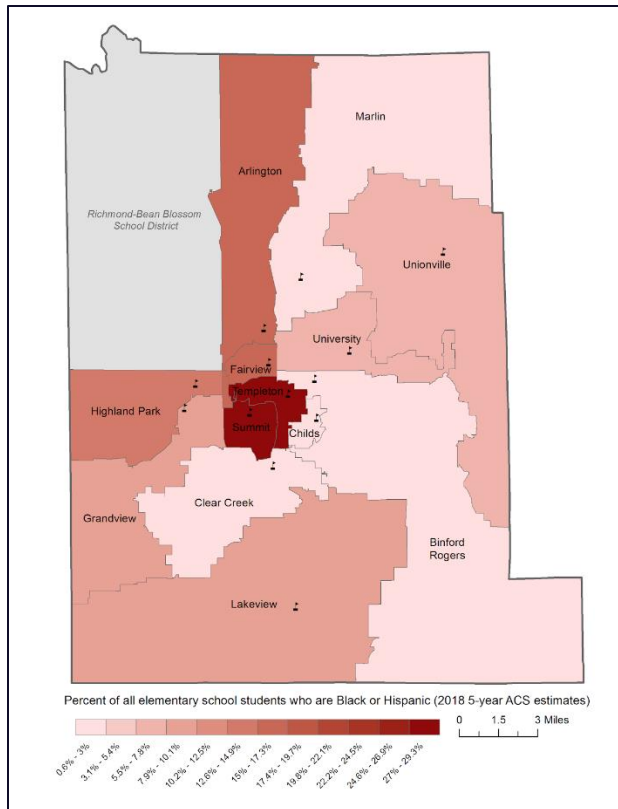


Equity Model

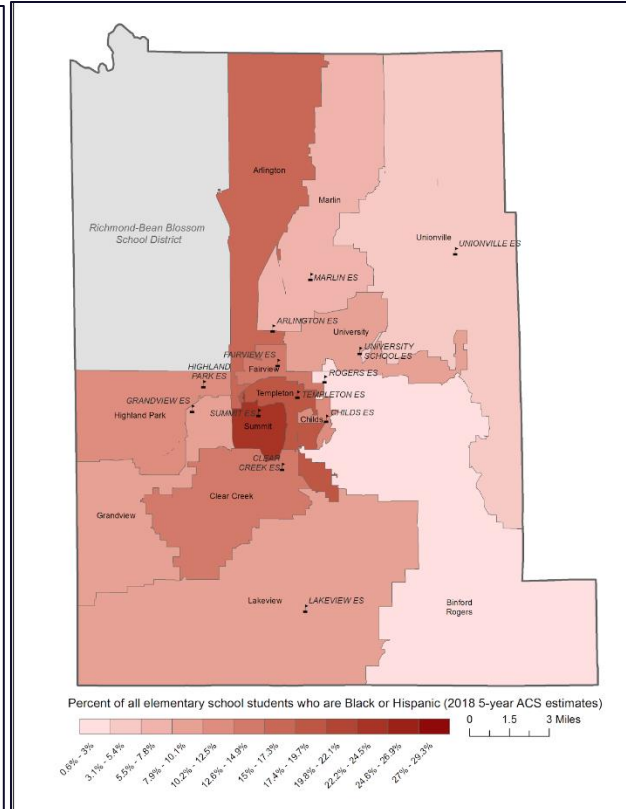
Note: Because of limitations in the data available to the capstone team, the team's proposed new maps do not reflect accurately the poverty rates at the different schools, and therefore should not be perceived as a starting point for actual boundary proposals, but rather as indicative of a strategy for redrawing boundaries. The capstone team emphasized that MCCSC, should it embark on redistricting, would have access to all the relevant street-by-street student data.



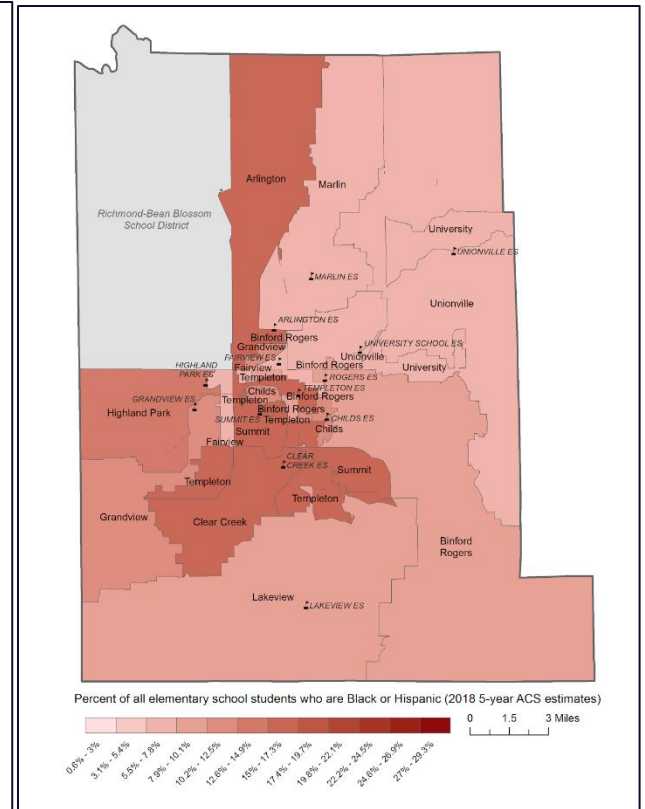
Black & Hispanic Students



Current



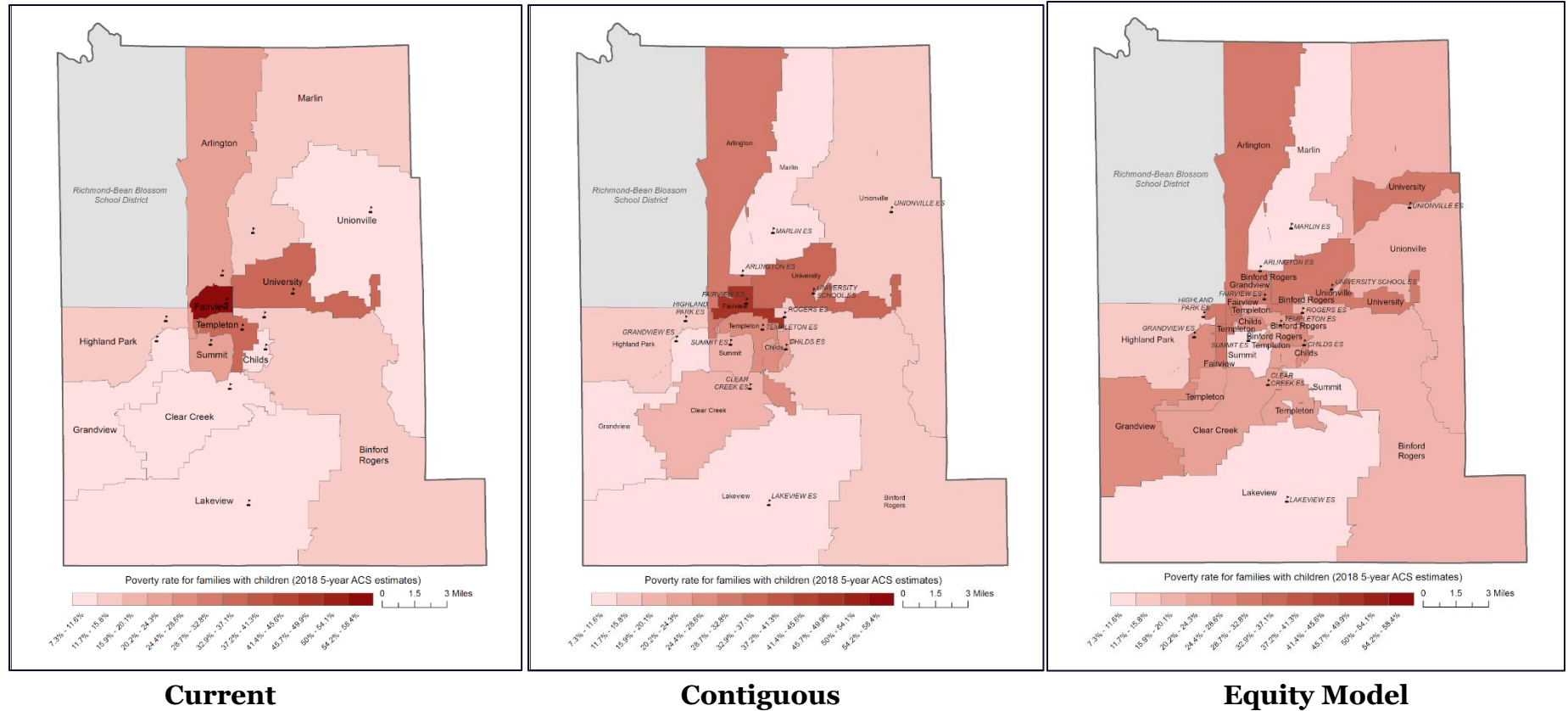
Contiguous



Equity Model

Note: Because of limitations in the data available to the capstone team, the team's proposed new maps do not reflect accurately the poverty rates at the different schools, and therefore should not be perceived as a starting point for actual boundary proposals, but rather as indicative of a strategy for redrawing boundaries. The capstone team emphasized that MCCSC, should it embark on redistricting, would have access to all the relevant street-by-street student data.

Low-Income Students



Note: Because of limitations in the data available to the capstone team, the team's proposed new maps do not reflect accurately the poverty rates at the different schools, and therefore should not be perceived as a starting point for actual boundary proposals, but rather as indicative of a strategy for redrawing boundaries. The capstone team emphasized that MCCSC, should it embark on redistricting, would have access to all the relevant street-by-street student data.

Current MCCSC Inequity Measures

School Type	Measure	Value
Exposure to Low-Income Students		
Elementary	District level Black & Hispanic student exposure to low-income students	0.46
	District level white student exposure to low-income students	0.38
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.08
Elementary	District level low-income student exposure to low-income students	0.49
	District level non-low-income student exposure to low-income students	0.33
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.16
Middle	District level Black & Hispanic student exposure to low-income students	0.36
	District level white student exposure to low-income students	0.35
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.01
Middle	District level low-income student exposure to low-income students	0.36
	District level non-low-income student exposure to low-income students	0.34
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.02
High School	District level Black & Hispanic student exposure to low-income students	0.30
	District level white student exposure to low-income students	0.28
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.02
High School	District level low-income student exposure to low-income students	0.29
	District level non-low-income student exposure to low-income students	0.28
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.01
Exposure to Black and Hispanic Students		
Elementary	District level Black and Hispanic student exposure to Black and Hispanic students	0.16
	District level white student exposure to Black and Hispanic students	0.11
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.05
Middle	District level Black and Hispanic student exposure to Black and Hispanic students	0.13
	District level white student exposure to Black and Hispanic students	0.12
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.01
High School	District level Black and Hispanic student exposure to Black and Hispanic students	0.11
	District level white student exposure to Black and Hispanic students	0.11
	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.00

Data source: Indiana Department of Education 2019-2020 School Year Enrollment

Equity Model Unevenness Measures

School Type	Measure	Value
Exposure to Low-Income Students		
Elementary	District level Black & Hispanic student exposure to low-income students	0.21
Elementary	District level white student exposure to low-income students	0.20
Elementary	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.01
Elementary	District level low-income student exposure to low-income students	0.23
Elementary	District level non-low-income student exposure to low-income students	0.20
Elementary	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.03
Exposure to Black and Hispanic Students		
Elementary	District level Black and Hispanic student exposure to Black and Hispanic students	0.12
Elementary	District level white student exposure to Black and Hispanic students	0.11
Elementary	Unevenness (difference) in Exposure Levels	0.01

Data source: 2018 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

Greatest Driving Distances

Current Zones		
School	Greatest Distance in Miles	
Binford Rogers Elementary School	19.6	
Lakeview Elementary School	12.1	
Arlington Heights Elementary School	14.2	
Childs Elementary School	2.3	
Clear Creek Elementary School	6.7	
Fairview Elementary School	1.9	
Grandview Elementary School	9.6	
Highland Park Elementary School	5.2	
Marlin Elementary School	14.4	
Summit Elementary School	3.3	
Templeton Elementary School	2.6	
Unionville Elementary School	16.4	
University Elementary School	5.7	
Average	8.8	
Revised Contiguous Zones		
School	Greatest Distance in Miles	Variance from Current Zones
Binford Rogers Elementary School	19.6	0
Lakeview Elementary School	12.1	0
Arlington Heights Elementary School	14.2	0
Childs Elementary School	2.2	-0.1
Clear Creek Elementary School	6.7	0
Fairview Elementary School	2.7	0.8
Grandview Elementary School	9.6	0
Highland Park Elementary School	5.2	0
Marlin Elementary School	10.5	-3.9
Summit Elementary School	3.4	0.1
Templeton Elementary School	3.1	0.5
Unionville Elementary School	16.4	0
University Elementary School	5.7	0
Average	8.6	-0.2
Equity Model		
School	Greatest Distance in Miles	Variance from Current Zones
Binford Rogers Elementary School	19.6	0
Lakeview Elementary School	12.1	0
Arlington Heights Elementary School	14.2	0
Childs Elementary School	2.2	-0.1
Clear Creek Elementary School	6.7	0
Fairview Elementary School	4.6	2.7
Grandview Elementary School	9.6	0
Highland Park Elementary School	5.5	0.3
Marlin Elementary School	10.5	-3.9
Summit Elementary School	7.4	4.1
Templeton Elementary School	6.1	3.5
Unionville Elementary School	16.4	0
University Elementary School	5.7	0
Average	9.3	0.5

Data Source: Google Maps



School Profiles

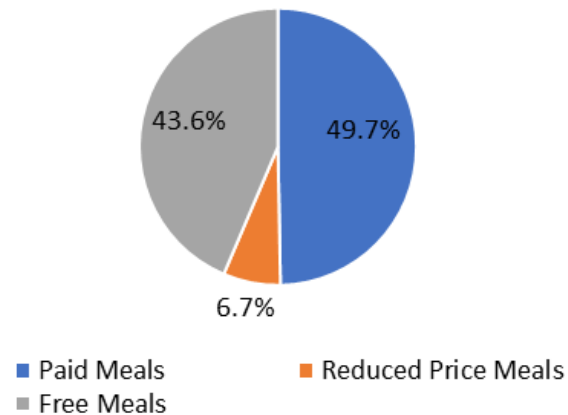
MCCSC School Profile

Arlington Heights Elementary School

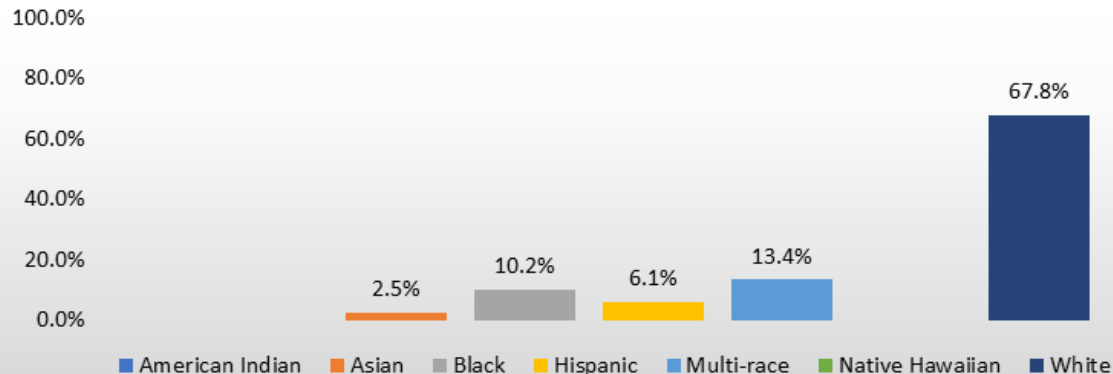
State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	314
Attendance Rate	96%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 10,761.95



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	13	4.1%
Number of Special Education	73	23.3%
Total	86	27.4%

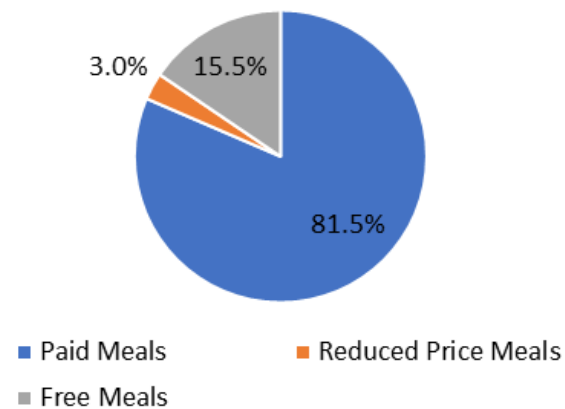
MCCSC School Profile

Binford-Rogers Elementary School

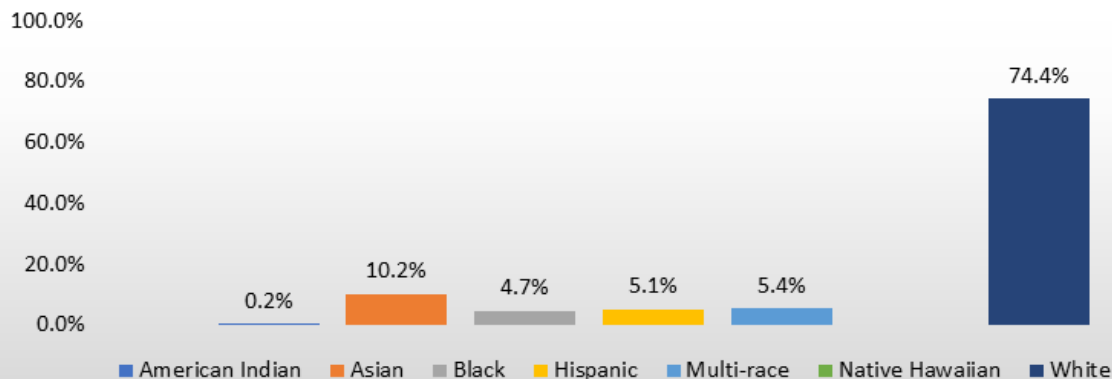
State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	902
Attendance Rate	96%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 8,985.82



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	89	9.9%
Number of Special Education	105	11.6%
Total	194	21.5%

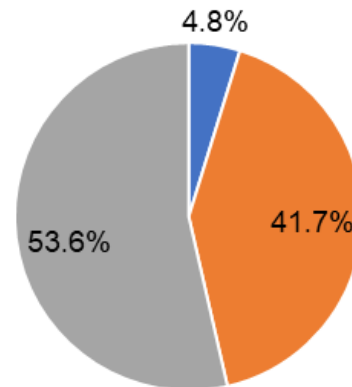
MCCSC School Profile

Clear Creek Elementary School

State / Federal Accountability Rating	C / Approaches Expectations
Total Enrollment	420
Attendance Rate	96%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 10,273.72

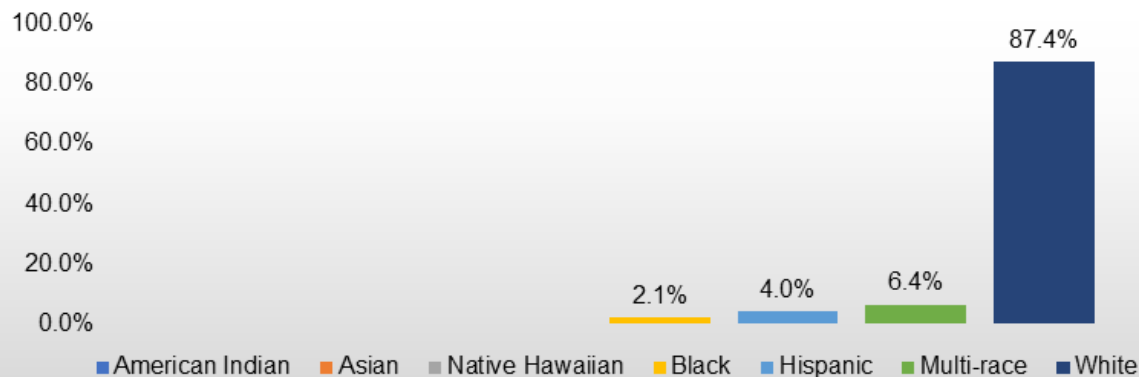


Enrollment by Meal Category



■ Reduced Price Meals ■ Free Meals ■ Paid Meals

Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

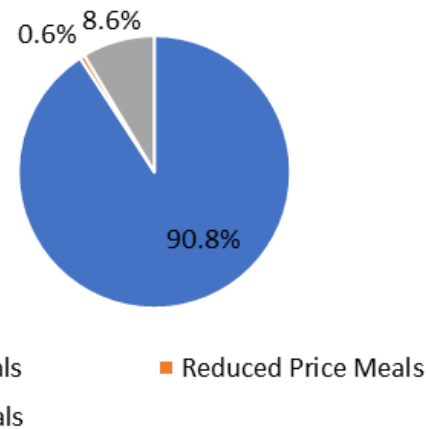
English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	1	0.2%
Number of Special Education	79	18.8%
Total	80	19.0%

MCCSC School Profile

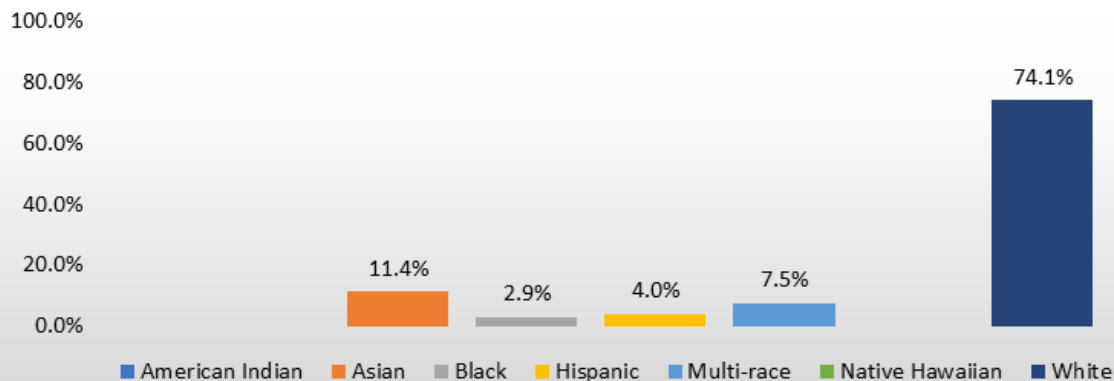
Childs Elementary School

State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Exceeds Expectations
Total Enrollment	544
Attendance Rate	97%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 8,325.13

Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	9	1.7%
Number of Special Education	73	13.4%
Total	82	15.1%

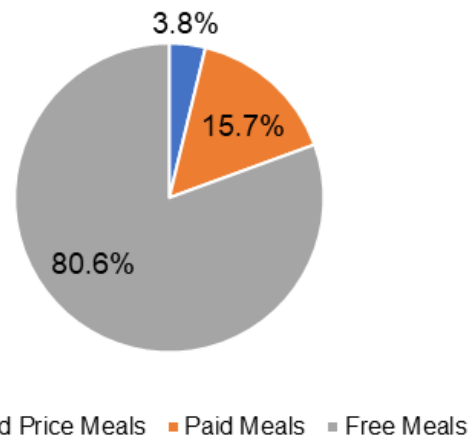
MCCSC School Profile

Fairview Elementary School

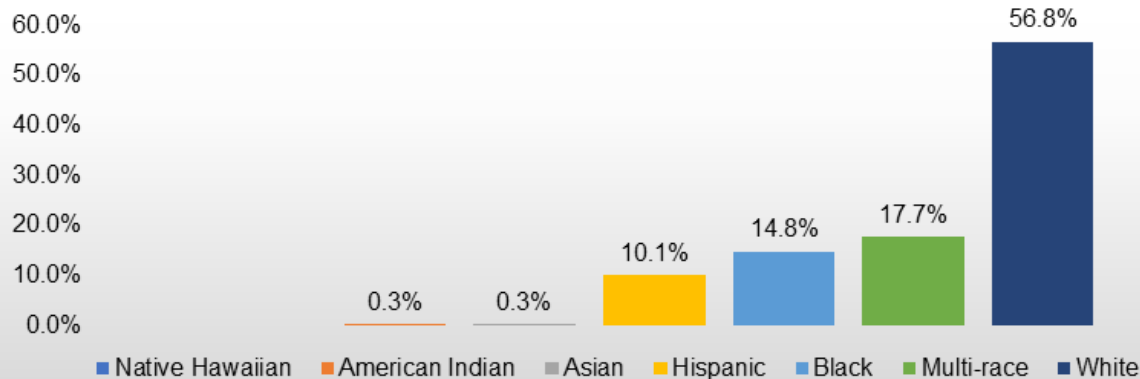
State / Federal Accountability Rating	C / Approaches Expectations
Total Enrollment	345
Attendance Rate	95%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 13,321.53



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	21	6.1%
Number of Special Education	86	24.9%
Total	107	31.0%

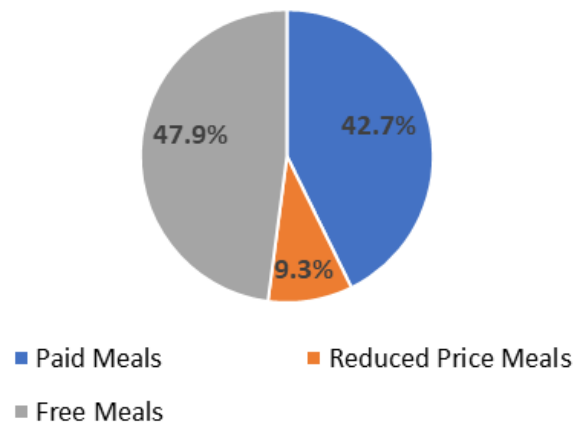
MCCSC School Profile

Grandview Elementary School

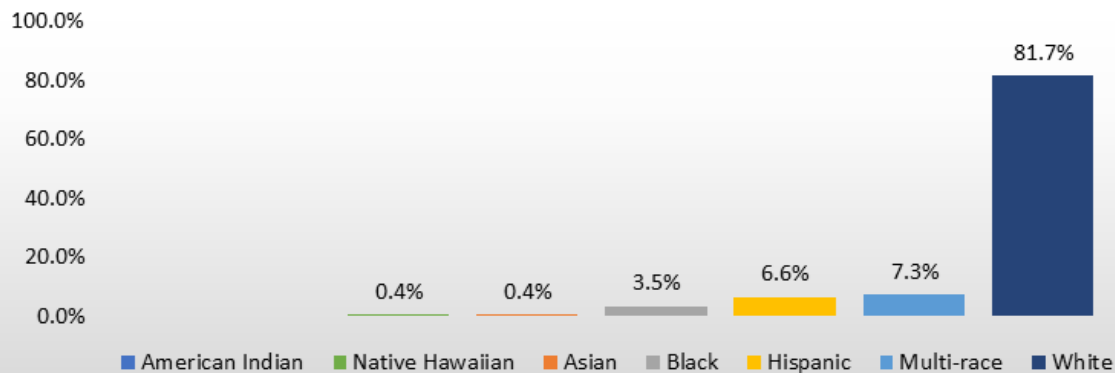
State / Federal Accountability Rating	C / Approaches Expectations
Total Enrollment	482
Attendance Rate	95%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 10,394.34



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	11	2.3%
Number of Special Education	118	24.5%
Total	129	26.8%

MCCSC School Profile

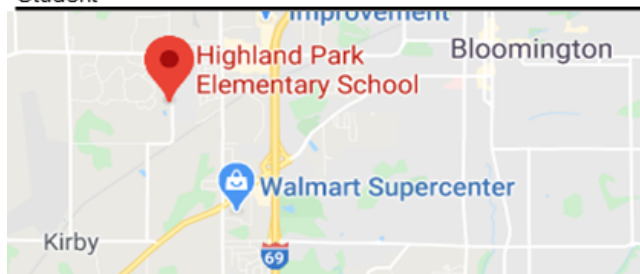
Highland Park Elementary School

State / Federal Accountability Rating
C / Meets Expectations

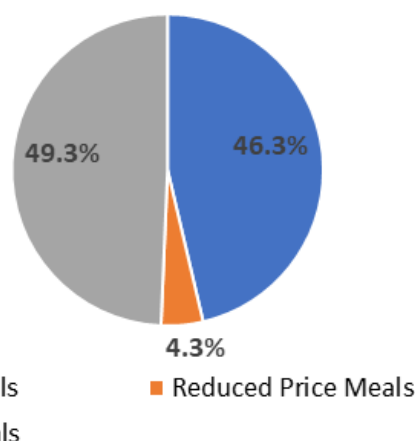
Total Enrollment 369

Attendance Rate 96%

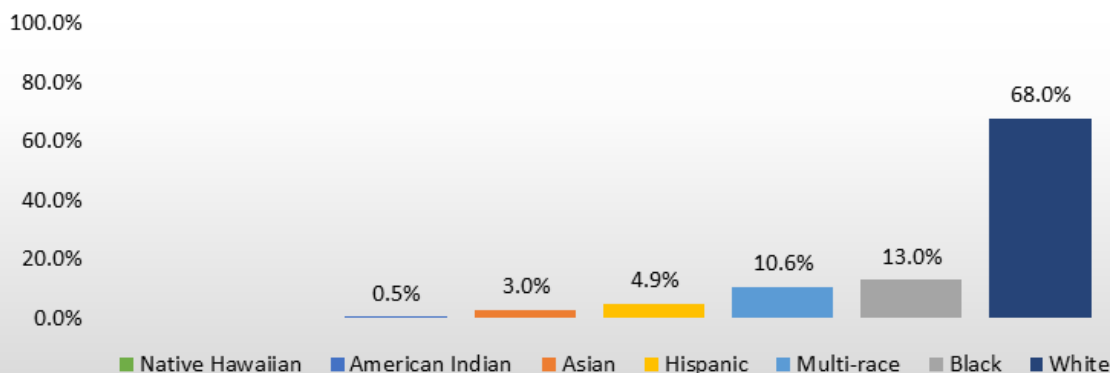
Amount of School Funding per Student \$ 11,433.32



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	15	4.1%
Number of Special Education	98	26.6%
Total	113	30.7%

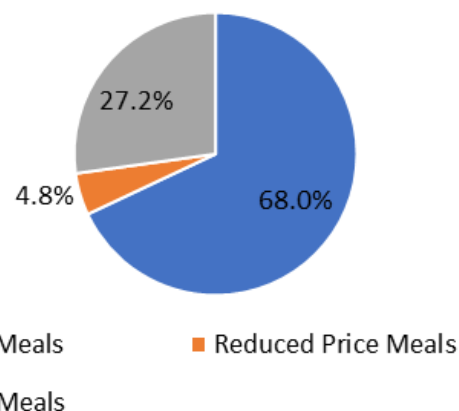
MCCSC School Profile

Lakeview Elementary School

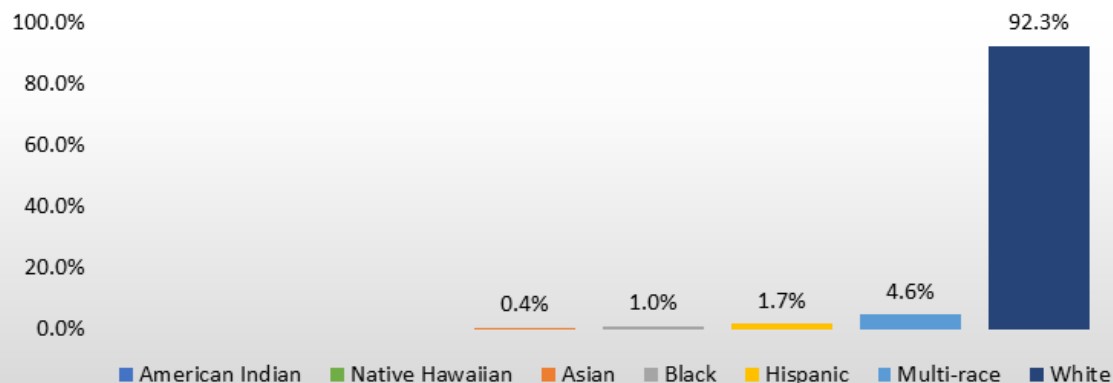
State / Federal Accountability Rating	B / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	478
Attendance Rate	96%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 8,412.21



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	1	0.2%
Number of Special Education	65	13.6%
Total	66	13.8%

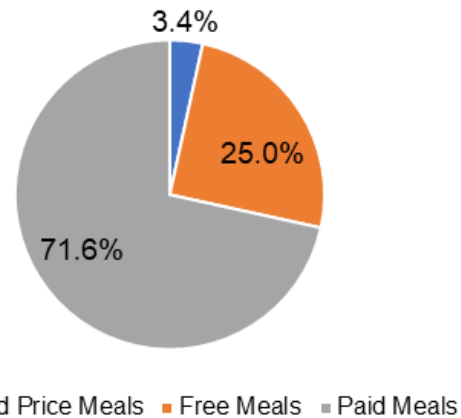
MCCSC School Profile

Marlin Elementary School

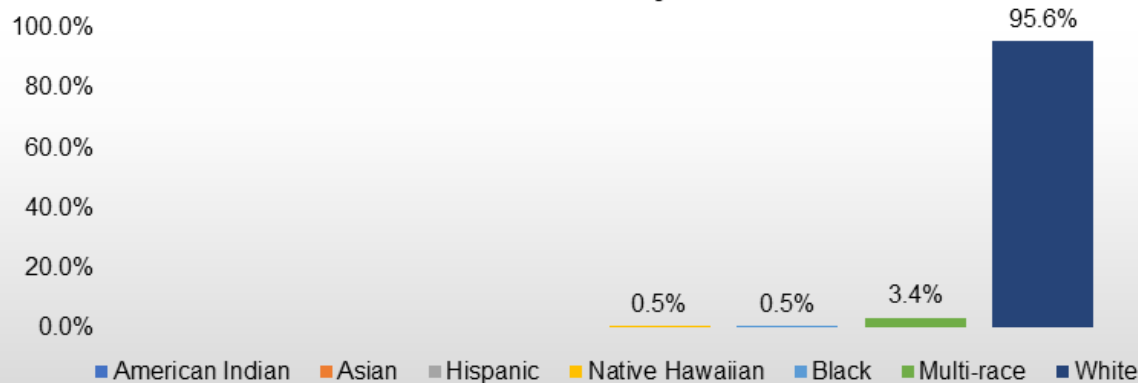
State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	204
Attendance Rate	96%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 11,088.60



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	0	0.0%
Number of Special Education	19	9.3%
Total	19	9.3%

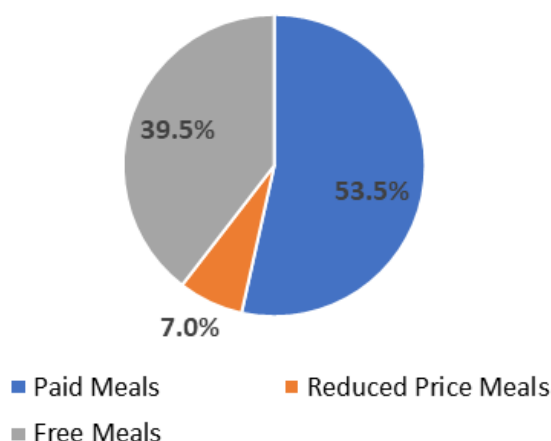
MCCSC School Profile

Summit Elementary School

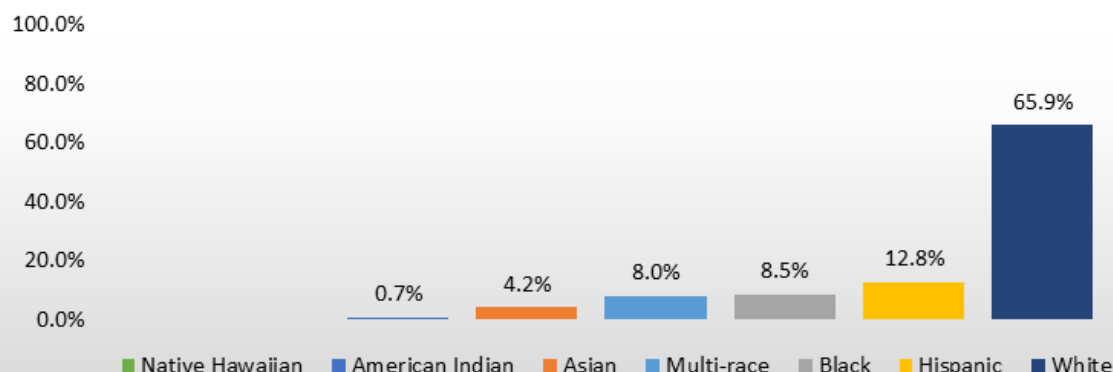
State / Federal Accountability Rating	B / Approaches Expectations
Total Enrollment	602
Attendance Rate	96%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 10,021.68



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	40	6.6%
Number of Special Education	116	19.3%
Total	156	25.9%

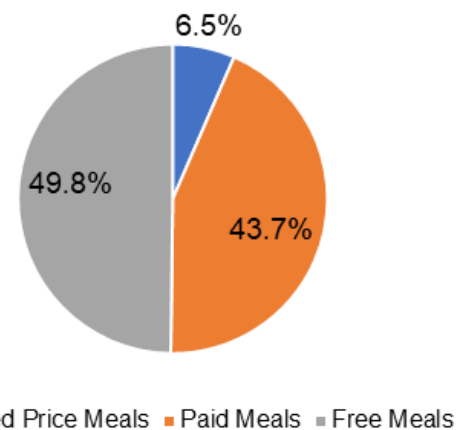
MCCSC School Profile

Templeton Elementary School

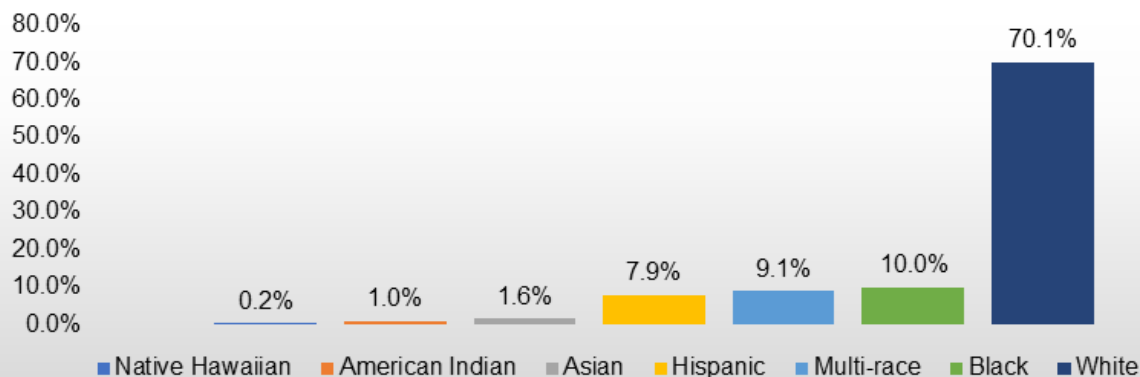
State / Federal Accountability Rating	C / Approaches Expectations
Total Enrollment	492
Attendance Rate	95%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 10,496.83



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	20	4.1%
Number of Special Education	113	23.0%
Total	133	27.1%

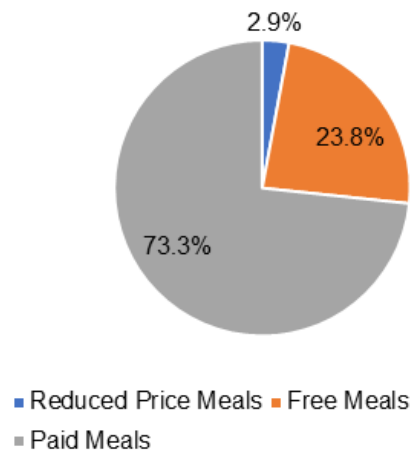
MCCSC School Profile

Unionville Elementary School

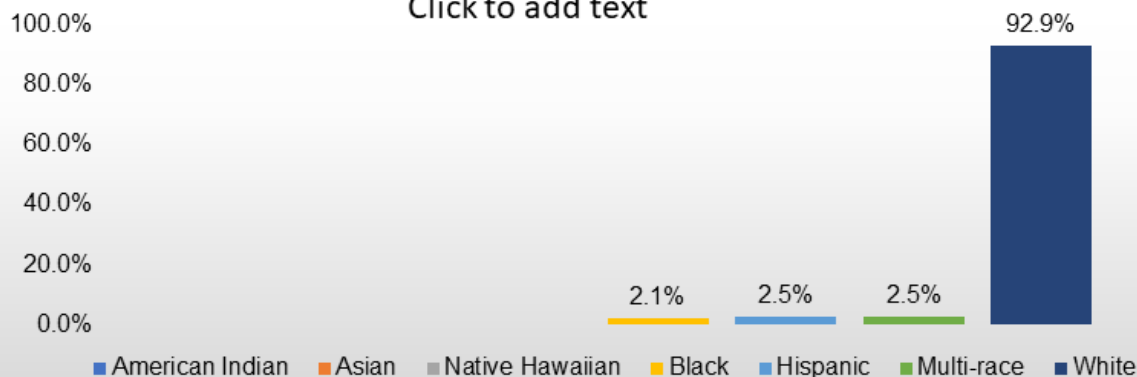
State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	240
Attendance Rate	97%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 9,913.66



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race
Click to add text



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	0	0.0%
Number of Special Education	31	12.9%
Total	31	12.9%

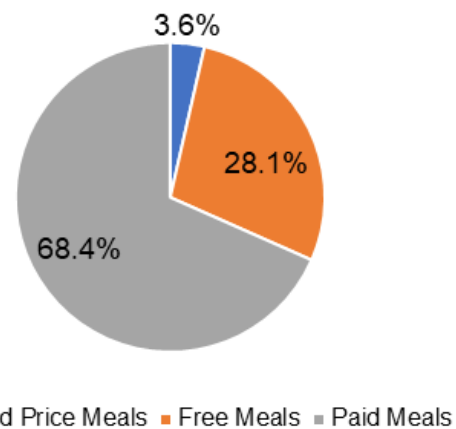
MCCSC School Profile

University Elementary School

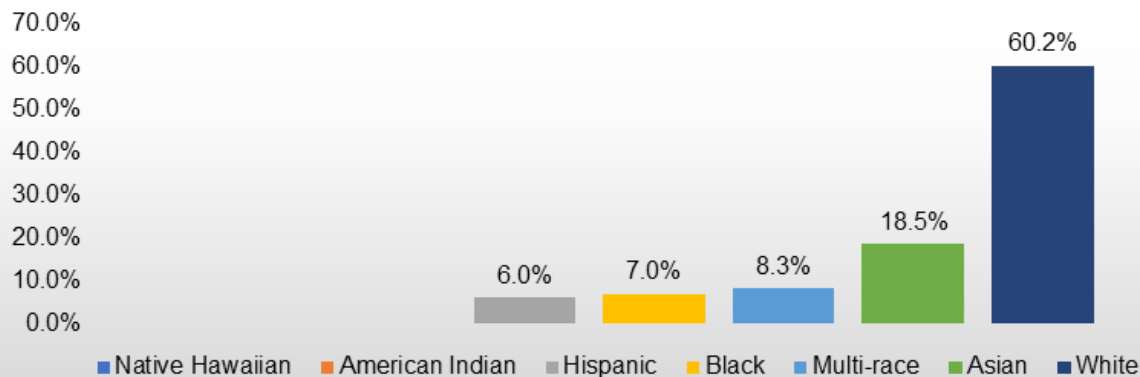
State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	588
Attendance Rate	97%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 9,089.05



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	73	12.4%
Number of Special Education	66	11.2%
Total	139	23.6%

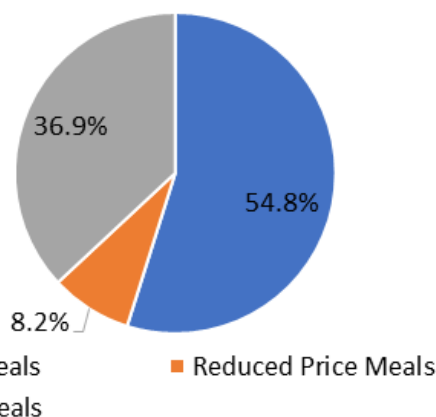
MCCSC School Profile

Lora L Batchelor Middle School

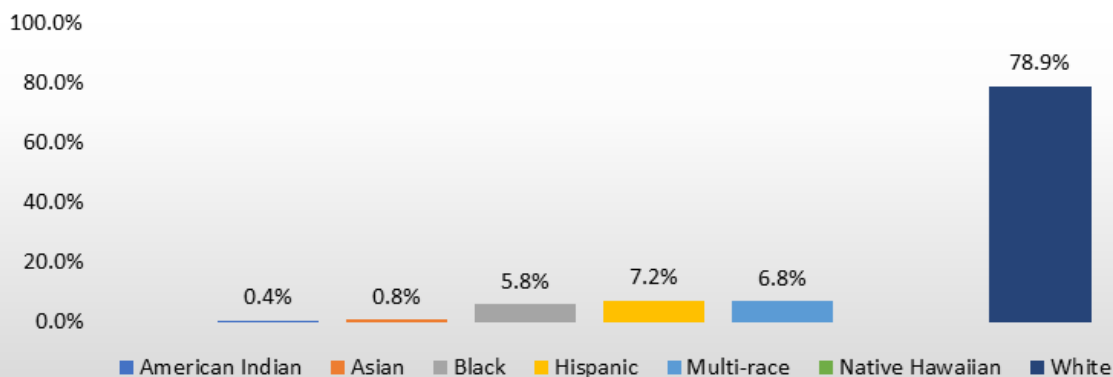
State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	498
Attendance Rate	95%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 11,578.92



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	3	0.6%
Number of Special Education	95	19.1%
Total	98	19.7%

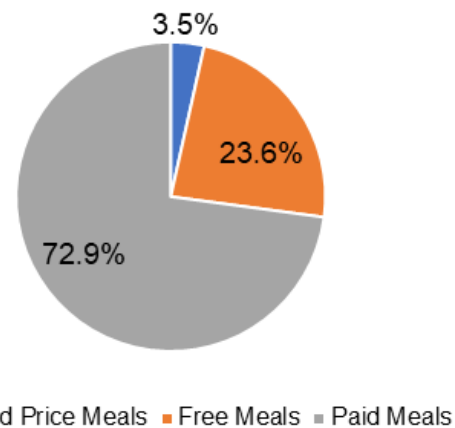
MCCSC School Profile

Jackson Creek Middle School

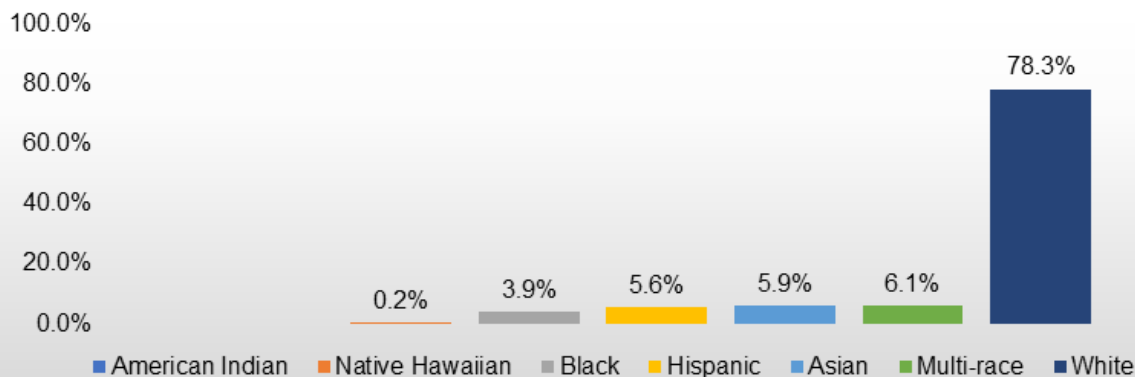
State / Federal Accountability Rating	D / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	660
Attendance Rate	96%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 9,483.77



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	18	2.7%
Number of Special Education	105	15.9%
Total	123	18.6%

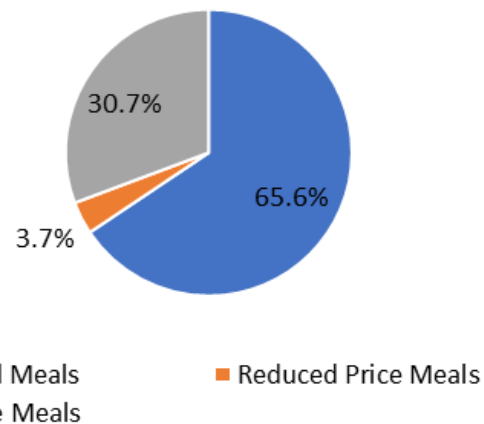
MCCSC School Profile

Tri-North Middle School

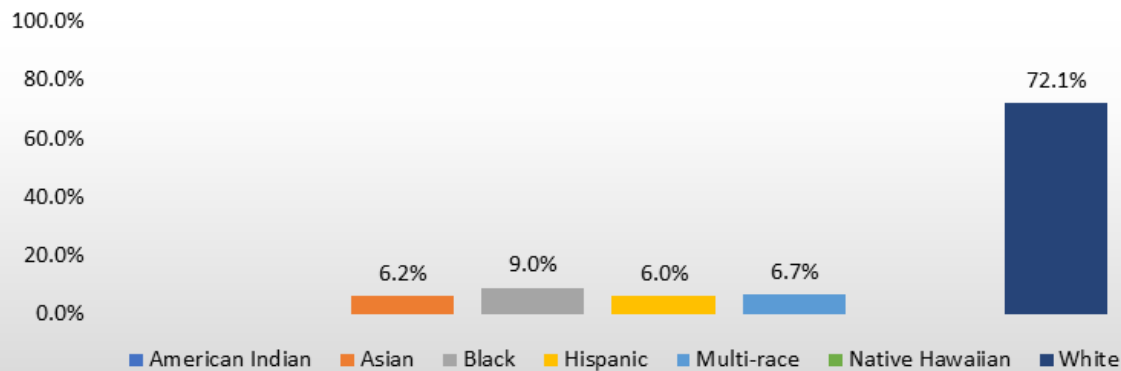
State / Federal Accountability Rating	B / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	567
Attendance Rate	96%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 9,192.51



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

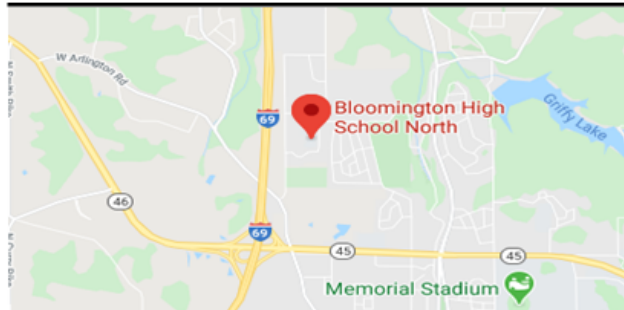
Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	24	4.2%
Number of Special Education	82	14.5%
Total	106	18.7%

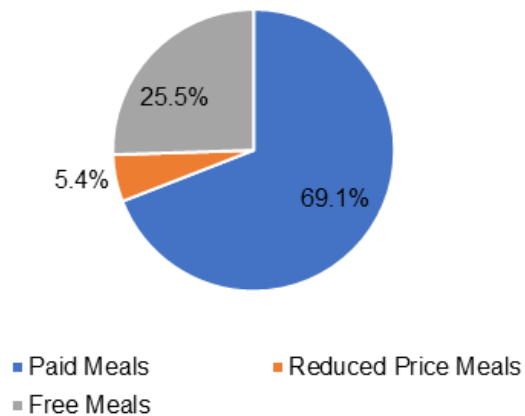
MCCSC School Profile

Bloomington High School North

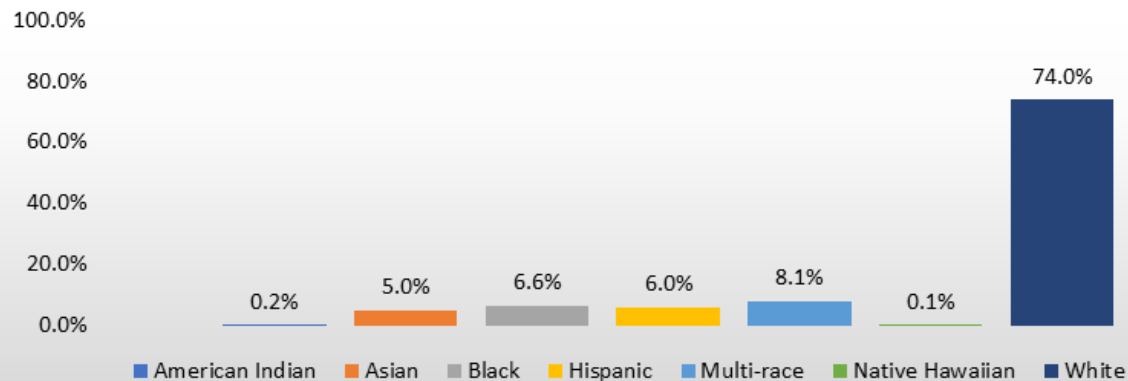
State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Meets Expectations
Total Enrollment	1575
Attendance Rate	94%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 9,419.87



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	40	2.5%
Number of Special Education	234	14.9%
Total	274	17.4%

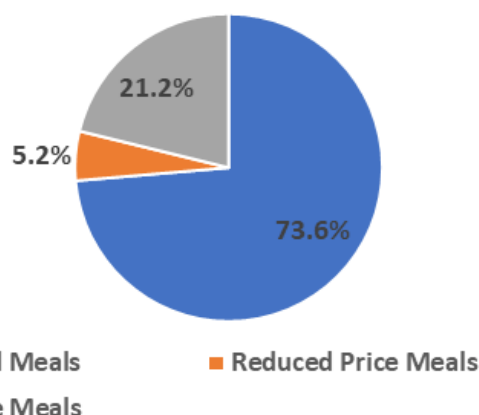
MCCSC School Profile

Bloomington High School South

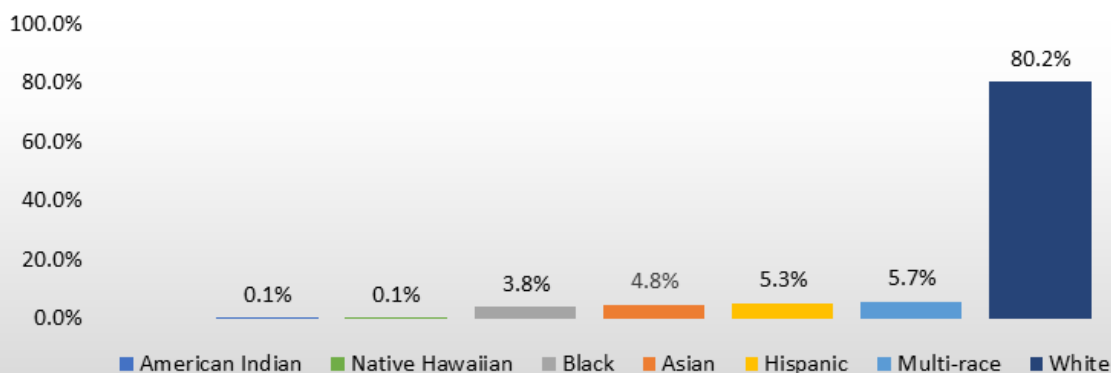
State / Federal Accountability Rating	A / Exceeds Expectations
Total Enrollment	1,696
Attendance Rate	95%
Amount of School Funding per Student	\$ 10,020.02



Enrollment by Meal Category



Enrollment by Race



Enrollment by Sex



IDOE Enrollment Data 2019-2020

Enrollment in ESL and Special Education

English Language Learners and Special Education Students	Number of Students	Percentage
Number of English Language Learners	33	2.0%
Number of Special Education	204	12.0%
Total	237	14.0%

Appendix B

Addressing Feasibility Concerns: A Communication Guide to Respond to Common Opposition Arguments

Q1: The Equity Model map is better, but the schools are still not completely equitable. Why should we engage in this change process if it won't completely solve the issue of educational equity?

The Equity Model results in significant improvements in educational equity along racial and socioeconomic lines. We also have made a concerted effort to keep communities together, to preserve the idea of neighborhood schools where possible, and to ensure that school commutes are not overly long and complex. Redrawing catchments with completely equalized shares of Black and Hispanic and low-income students across schools would result in fewer students attending community schools, and longer and more complex transportation options. We cannot solve educational equity through redrawing catchments alone, because school disparities reflect the fundamental disparities in our communities. We believe that this is the best model for increasing equity in Monroe County schools, and that MCCSC should additionally pursue mechanisms for further increasing educational equity. MCCSC will need to adopt a continuous improvement model to ensure that it consistently reevaluates its efforts to improve equity, and part of that effort should include regular adjustment of catchment boundaries. We may not ever achieve full educational equity due to changing demographics and shifting populations, but we can commit to reevaluating and engaging in the necessary processes to improve balance in MCCSC schools.

Q2: What about neighborhood schools?

We have drawn the new catchments to preserve access to neighborhood schools wherever possible. Due to the placement of schools across the county, not everyone has access to a neighborhood school. As interviewees pointed out, it is already impossible for all students to attend their closest school because of facility capacity constraints that limit enrollment. Drawing catchments that enable all students to attend the school closest to their residence would result in many severely overcrowded schools, and many relatively empty schools. Thus, even if MCCSC draws contiguous catchments, many students do not have access to a nearby, neighborhood school. While we respect that those community members with access to a neighborhood school feel very strongly about retaining that sense of community, current infrastructure limitations and a lack of residential integration mean that neighborhood schools create stark racial and socioeconomic inequalities. Due to the concentration of racial minorities and low-income families in specific neighborhoods in Monroe County, catchments that prioritize close proximity to schools will yield inequitably distributed school populations.

One article²⁵ exploring the issue of how school boundaries can either reduce or perpetuate racial inequity in schools calls for community members to “challenge the imaginary fences” that we have all built in our minds, and which divide one community arbitrarily from another:

“[People] clearly [have] a map in their head of which neighborhood blocks belong in a group together, and which ones don't. It might be based on who they know, where they spend time, or what they've heard about other areas. In short, they have formed a geospatial bias based on their experiences. But it's important for us to understand how much this country's racist history has shaped these maps that we've internalized...

This means America's long history of socially engineering where people live has not only segregated neighborhoods and schools; it's also created maps in our heads that tell us what is familiar, what is not, what is scary, what is safe. And ultimately, we make small decisions based on these emotions that accrue into segregated neighborhoods and segregated schools.” (paras. 79, 83-84).

Q3: Do new catchments mean longer student bus rides?

The Equity Model map of school catchments does not result in significantly longer bus rides for students. The average student commute will increase by only 6%, from 8.8 miles to 9.3 miles. The longest distance traveled by students in the district remains the same. The school corporation has access to VersaTrans, an electronic routing system, and will be able to easily modify existing bus routes, making this change highly feasible. MCCSC also may explore other options for busing, for example by revisiting the current tiering system to identify additional efficiencies. MCCSC has different options available to “tier” buses; for example, elementary, middle, and high school students can all ride the same buses together, or the school corporation can stagger school start times so that middle and high school students ride buses to school at one time, and buses complete an additional route to pick up elementary school children at a different time. MCCSC may consider alternative tiering options to identify the most efficient routing of buses, including staggering or combining student pick-ups and drop offs.

Q4: Will changes in the school catchments affect property values?

In the long term, no. Studies show that residents who experience a change in the ranking of their zoned school may experience a temporary change in property values; however, these studies indicate that property values return to their previous levels within one year.

²⁵ Chang, 2018



Q5: What about the specific resources or programs that students have access to at their current school?

The purpose of redrawing school catchments is to increase educational equity for all students in Monroe County. We have suggested engaging in a broad dialogue that identifies all the ways in which schools are not currently equitable, to ensure that students have access to the same resources no matter where they go to school. In addition, schools must provide certain resources and programs to students regardless of their school. Existing mechanisms to transfer schools will likely remain in place, and MCCSC can evaluate the prospect of “grandfathering” some current students into their current schools, while applying the new catchment boundaries to all new students.

Q6: Will redrawing catchments cause some families to “flee” to charter schools?

The goal of redrawing catchments is to increase educational equity, which produces many benefits for students. Research shows that pursuing racial and socioeconomic balance is worthwhile, and a compelling reason for families to stay in public schools. The reality is that charter schools have enrollment capacities just like public schools, so public schools are unlikely to experience a significant impact from an immediate flight of families to charter schools. Despite the public perceptions of some schools, our interviews show that even families at the lowest ranked schools love their school. New catchment boundaries will integrate families into a new, wonderful, public school community.



Interview Base Template

Pre-interview Script:

- Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed for this project. My name is _____, and I am a graduate student at Indiana University, in the O'Neill School of Public & Environmental Affairs. I am part of a class conducting a summer capstone project exploring methods to achieve greater equity within Monroe County schools. We are exploring viable options to accomplish this goal, including redrawing school catchment boundaries.
- This interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. As this is part of a class project, I would like your permission to record this interview, and want to let you know that we may use your responses as part of our final report. You can opt to have your quotes included or have your quotes anonymized. Do I have your permission to record this interview?

Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about your current position with XYZ organization.

Today I'd like to talk with you about educational equity in schools in Monroe County.

Baseline Questions

1. What does equity in education mean to you?
2. What does racial and/or socioeconomic equity in education mean to you?
3. In the context of racial and socioeconomic equity, what would equitable Monroe County schools look like to you?
4. Do you feel like MCCSC has achieved racial equity?
5. Do you feel like MCCSC has achieved socioeconomic equity?
6. How equitable are schools right now, especially if we compare two different schools in Monroe County?
7. Should Monroe County aim to make schools more racially and socioeconomically equitable?
8. If no, why not?
9. How can Monroe County Public Schools achieve more equity across schools?
10. There is much discussion around the idea of redrawing school catchment zones in Monroe County. What are your thoughts on this issue?
 - a. Potential probing question: In your view, what are the greatest needs that MCCSC should address when redrawing school catchment zones?
11. What are potential barriers, challenges, or concerns associated with rezoning schools?
12. What are some viable solutions to overcome these problems and overcome possible community resistance?
13. What benefits do you envision from redrawing school catchment boundaries?
14. Do you think Monroe County should pursue redrawing school catchments?
15. If no, why not?
16. Some communities have expressed resistance to redrawing school catchments out of a fear that changing boundaries may affect their property values. What are your thoughts on this aspect of redrawing?

17. Think about the stakeholders you most frequently work with. What strategies do you suggest to get them on board with redrawing school catchments?
18. Who are the other key stakeholders involved in or affected by this issue? Are there specific groups or organizations that should be included in the school catchment redrawing process?
19. Beyond school enrollment, what factors would you like to see balanced between schools in MCCSC?
20. In an effort to (balance/integrate/desegregate) schools, what factors should be prioritized when redrawing school boundaries?
21. How can we make this process more inclusive?
22. *Insert topic specific questions below depending on interviewee*

Wrap-Up Questions

1. Are there any other alternatives you would suggest for increasing equity across schools in Monroe County? What are those alternatives?
2. What unanswered questions do you have about how changing school catchment zones may impact your community?
3. Are there any additional factors important to the school redrawing discussion that we haven't yet discussed?
4. Who else would you recommend that we talk to for this project?

Close out Script:

Thank you so much for your participation today. I really appreciate your willingness to discuss the important issue of achieving greater equity in Monroe County Schools. If we have any follow up questions, would it be ok to contact you again in the future?

Topic Specific Questions:

2005 Rezoning

1. Walk us through the 2005 redrawing effort. In particular, what were the community's biggest concerns?
2. What sorts of obstacles did you face, and how did you address them?
3. Fifteen years later, how would you rate the success of the 2005 redrawing? In what ways was it successful?
4. What was your biggest takeaway or lesson learned from the 2005 redrawing process?
5. What factors were prioritized in the 2005 redrawing decisions?
6. Who were the most vocal/involved stakeholder groups during the 2005 redrawing process, or during any previous redrawing conversations?
7. Which stakeholders were not part of previous conversations on school redrawing that should be included in future efforts?
8. Has the issue of redrawing school boundaries been revisited since 2005?
 - a. If yes, was any headway made, or what stopped progress from being made?
9. What suggestions or recommendations do you have for future school redrawing efforts?

How the Redrawing Process Works

1. Walk us through the steps that would be involved in actually changing the school catchment boundaries of MCCSC.



- a. What points in the process do you foresee as being the most difficult, or facing the most resistance?
2. What does the deliberative process for making a redrawing plan look like? How does the school board evaluate different proposals and community feedback?
3. How can we make the redrawing process more inclusive? Are there any groups that may not get involved that should? How can we best involve a variety of voices?
4. How do we approach the idea of school redrawing in a way that is sustainable? How can we make school boundary decisions now with an eye toward ensuring racial and SES parity across schools in the long term? (*anticipating future population changes*)
5. What are the best ways to reach a wide variety of stakeholders on the issue of school rezoning? (i.e., communication methods such as public forums, media coverage, blogs, social media, email, phone, mailers, etc.)
6. How should a task force or work group be formed, and who should be represented in that group to develop the parameters and proposals for school rezoning?
7. Is there a need for middle school and high school rezoning, or just elementary?
8. What are common criticisms of the idea of school rezoning, and how can these be effectively addressed?
9. How would you respond to stakeholders who don't want to lose their school community, or their neighborhood schools?
10. How would you respond to stakeholders who do not want rezoning or are opposed to the idea of greater school integration?
11. In considering rezoning proposals, which would you prefer?
 - a. A plan that would create nearly-equal levels of integration across all schools, but may disrupt neighborhood schools or require more busing; or
 - b. A plan that would moderately increase integration in each school while attempting to preserve school communities and limit long-distance busing?
12. How quickly should MCCSC move forward with rezoning?
 - a. What factors would allow rezoning to take place more quickly? What pieces need to fall into place to proceed forward with rezoning? (*e.g., Superintendent, board, key stakeholder buy-in, etc.*)
13. With respect to (*XYZ stakeholder groups previously mentioned in interview*), what role do you see these groups and individuals playing in the rezoning process?
14. Considering MCCSC is in the process of identifying a new superintendent, tell me about how the new superintendent will affect the rezoning process?

MCCSC

1. Does MCCSC have any type of strategic plan that incorporates the idea of school boundary rezoning to address racial or SES inequity?
2. Are there any planned projects in MCCSC that would affect the school rezoning calculation? (*For example, new schools, school expansions, aging facilities, etc.*)
3. Can you describe the current MCCSC Board's attitude towards school catchment rezoning?
 - a. How would you describe other school administrators' attitudes toward school rezoning? (*e.g., superintendent, principals, teachers, school staff*)
 - b. How would you describe parents' attitudes towards school rezoning?
4. What strategies can MCCSC adopt to overcome the preconceived notions that the public has about certain schools?
5. We watched a recording of the MCCSC fireside chat about redrawing school catchment zones, held this past November. What prompted MCCSC to hold that event?

- a. Did the event prompt any conversations within the Board of Trustees, top district officials? Were there any major takeaways the Board of Trustees or school officials gleaned from the event?
- b. Do you think MCCSC will organize similar events in the future?

Alternatives to Rezoning

1. What do you think about (XYZ) alternative to rezoning school catchments?
 - a. *Possible Alternatives:* Magnet schools, charter schools, student transfers, controlled choice, affirmative action, busing, school pairings/grade breakdowns between schools, multiage classrooms, etc.
2. One school district implemented an affirmative action plan with a certain number of seats for low-income students reserved at higher SES schools. What are your thoughts on this approach as opposed to redrawing the catchment zones?

Realtors/Chamber of Commerce/Housing Commission/Community Organizations

1. Are any areas of Monroe County experiencing growth and development, or have planned projects, which may increase the number of school-age children living in that area?
2. How could redrawing school catchment zones affect the community members that you work with?
3. What factors should the school district keep in mind if they move forward with school rezoning?
4. Would your organization participate in the process of redrawing school boundaries? How might you participate?

Housing

1. I understand that you *(have a role related to housing)*. Tell me about how the issues of school rezoning and housing intersect?
2. When planning to rezone school boundaries, what considerations need to be made with respect to housing? *(availability and location of public housing? Homeless/unstably-housed students?)*
3. Some communities have expressed resistance to rezoning school catchments out of a fear that changing boundaries may affect their property values. What are your thoughts on this aspect of rezoning?

Transportation/Busing

1. Redrawing school boundary zones means making changes to the existing busing system in order to continue to provide transportation to affected students.
 - a. Who is involved in the process of changing the school bus system?
 - b. What considerations should be made with respect to the cost of transportation?
 - c. How long is too long for a student to be on the bus?
 - d. What guidelines rule the school busing system? *(operating times, distance traveled, kids per bus, length of ride-time, etc.)*
 - e. Are there any alternative transportation options that schools might consider?

Interview Rubric

Interviewee Name: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Interviewer(s): _____

☐ Recorded / Not Recorded

☐ Can Quote / Anonymize quotes / Review quotes / No quotes

☐	Racial Equity	
☐	SES Equity	
☐	Pro rezoning	Against rezoning
☐	Benefits of rezoning	Challenges to rezoning
☐	Terminology used <i>Balance Integration Desegregation Equity Diversity</i> <i>Rezoning Redistricting Catchments Boundaries Attendance Districts</i>	
☐	Transportation / Busing issues	
☐	Property values / Housing Prices / Housing Choices / Housing Location	

☐	2005 rezoning efforts
☐	Alternatives: School Choice / Charter Schools / Vouchers / Transfers / Controlled Choice
☐	High achieving schools / Underachieving schools / School Performance
☐	School Resources / Specialized Programs / Services (ELL, Special Education, Etc.)
☐	Specific Schools <i>Elementary:</i> Arlington Heights Binford Childs ClearCreek Fairview Grandview Highland Park Lakeview Marlin Rogers Summit Templeton Unionville University <i>Middle:</i> Batchelor Jackson Creek Tri-North <i>High:</i> B. North B. South Academy of Sci. & Entre. B. Grad. School Hoosier Hills
☐	Key Stakeholders / Others to talk to
☐	Other Factors to consider / Recommendations

MCCSC Fireside Update & Overview Notes

Fireside Update & Overview

A Historical Perspective of the Redistricting in the Corporation An Overview of the Children We Serve in MCCSC November 20, 2019

Question 1: What information did you hear this evening that stood out or surprised you?

- Socioeconomic diversity was the last point; it should be the top priority because we know that students in diverse classes have better outcomes than students in homogeneous class
 - Socio-economic diversity should always be appropriate
 - Did not hear anything about Title 1 schools, that would be helpful to have some discussion on that
 - Interesting to see stats on percent of students who stay in the district, a wide range among schools, would like to have an interpretation of that. (seems that students in higher poverty schools move more...is that true?) what does that mean?
 - Want to know stats on students who move in/out of schools in the district (how many come in and then move to another in district school). Which schools are experiencing transience?
 - Are the mobility numbers the same as the dropout rates?
 - Was hoping to hear the capacity at each school, which have room/no room? Is there forecasting as to growth in schools?
 - Title 1 data sometimes is misleading, additional staff in the numbers affects the ratio)
 - Percent of students receiving f/r lunch is surprising, but there was not enough disaggregated data in terms of looking at different schools what are differences in socio-eco factors at different schools and in some of the data that was presented. Same? Different?
 - To get a better picture what does the mobility have to do with test scores...how does the data interact ...? look at the data side by side.
 - IDOE has a transfer report of students who go to different schools.... FYI)
 - The impact of students transferring was a surprise, that can change the perception of "neighborhood school"
 - Surprised that it was floated as an opportunity when transportation is an impediment.
 - Would like to see how people who are transferring are affecting the schools that they are going to. Relationship b/w socio-eco factors affecting what we are trying to do in schools.
 - Are students transferring out and causing more economic disparity?
 - One thing that did not come up was student performance, how would redistricting have an impact on student performance—what role does student performance have on redistricting?
- Is there a consideration of the distance of home to school in redistricting, in some cases families are so far that if they need to get to school they must take public transportation....is the burden on the family considered in redistricting?

Question 2: What are your hopes and dreams for our school community related to redistricting?

- Schools with a diverse student body...SES, Cultural
- Balance poverty level
- Equitable
- Value walking to school
- Cohort of students moving together through schools
- Equitable space being used in each school. Maintain appropriate class size.
- Ensure that programming is offered at all schools.
- Equitable resources and facilities for all schools.
- Educating parents regarding redistricting effort.
- What are best practices around redistricting?
- Whatever is developed, it doesn't complicate the situation further.
- More equitable distribution of student needs.
- What is the diversity within lower level classes and higher-level classes.
- We don't want to inadvertently create a system that encourage more charters.
- Do we have identities in each elementary school?
- Clear reason why we are redistricting.
- Working conditions look different in our schools.
- Resources have to go to where the need is, and space needs to be available to meet the needs.

Question 3: What factors should MCCSC take into consideration as they explore the topic of redistricting?

- Disparities regarding free/reduced lunch populations at each school
- The relationship between high poverty schools and low-test scores, and school grades that are based on these test scores and relate to possible school closure/take over
- Also, the relationship between high poverty schools and low-test scores and how it reflects on teacher evaluations
- How the voucher system would affect the attempts to redistrict with more equity
- Be cognizant of the goals: keeping neighborhoods together and not creating high poverty schools; hard to do both, need to prioritize one or the other
- What about transportation and budget, how this affects the decisions, and potentially conflicts with other goals
- How have other communities handled this and what's the outcome, how successful are the changes, and which of these communities has the voucher system/school choice
- Identify other community barriers, being aware of various barriers that might occur if students are attending schools outside their neighborhood
- Looking ahead to future housing development and plans
- The City of Bloomington and MCCSC working together to discuss locations of affordable housing opportunities
- Interview parents and get their feedback on what is important to them
- Consider different programs and different opportunities at the different schools and how would this be taken into consideration

- If families choose specific schools based on the program opportunities (artful learning, language immersion, etc.), making sure transportation is not a barrier
- Number of students at the different elementary schools and class sizes at different schools
- Goal to be as transparent as possible in communication in the process, including using a variety of modes of communication
- Considering Bloomington's housing policies and goals and desegregate our neighborhoods, advocate for changes in housing policies to help desegregate the neighborhoods
- Goal of providing opportunities to assure stability for students to remain in the same school, even if the family moves
- Explore partnerships with community agencies (Boys and Girls club) to assist with before care and transportation
- Identify who is not currently in this process and discussion and needs to be at the table, create a process to make this happen

Question 4: What concerns exist within our community regarding redistricting?

- The pockets of poverty we have in MCCSC (particularly elementary). Have and have not
- Differences between schools and their climate. Opportunities, support, specials teachers who do not have to travel from school to school tend to be in schools with higher family income levels.
- Real differences in PTO \$ brought in, playground equipment. Parent resources are varied from school to school. There are large inequities.
- Topic of redistricting is now not just about numbers, but how can we redistribute the resources better so that we can service our kids with diverse needs. (primarily elementary)
- There isn't an even amount of community-based/Bridges/identified preschool/Headstart classrooms across the corporation.
- We need to look specifically at each school with regards to teacher retention and mobility, special ed classes, free and reduced lunch, high ability, transfer requests, social workers, title I, ELL, full and part-time positions, administrators, positions paid by PTO, behavioral specialists, school psychologist, aides, paraprofessionals, parent volunteers. All of these items and more by school not just by district.
- How redistricting can affect housing prices in neighborhoods. How it also introduces new higher income people; thus, disrupting housing prices (i.e. make it less accessible for people with lower incomes). Concern regarding property value.
- Unified Development Ordinances. That the needs and concerns of the School Corporation need to be at the table where neighborhood and housing decisions are being made.
- Concern of perception that goes along with redistricting. (school to school and neighborhood to neighborhood).
- Everyone loves their own school. This needs to be considered.

- Want to make sure we have a cohesive plan to communicate/educate with families and the community.
- Need to try to bring all stakeholders to the table so that their voices are heard. Especially the underrepresented. Send people out to neighborhoods to talk with families. Take the conversations to them. Provide childcare and food.
- A concern is that some school district lines were drawn in order to ensure A+ schools remain. We are economically segregated.

Question 5: What suggestions do you have for MCCSC as it relates to redistricting?

- Spread mobility out so it is more even across the schools
- Consider transiency across schools
- Make the data easily accessible (quantitative, qualitative data, searchable, making it available-mobile)
- Look at socio-economic, parent education, multiple years of free lunch, racial make up
- District should use tools that exist (gender, class, and racial equity lens)
- Use research that exists to design programs and processes
- Look at outcomes (zoning, housing) Why do we have certain outcomes now and what do we need to do to get the right people in the room to make changes
- Desired purpose of previous decisions- positive and negative
- Look at policies that are appropriated on the ground (keeping neighborhoods together and what that results in)
- Intention vs. impact
- Funding- provide federal, state, local, parent- share information- be more transparent
- Broaden the conversation beyond the school board- city needs to be involved in the conversation (housing authority, etc.)
- Follow up with families that have been homeless what are the outcomes for those students after they are housed
- Consider taking different socioeconomic neighborhoods and mix students (k-2, or 3-6 building)
- Bring the relevant data to the conversation such as SES/Free and Reduced-Price Lunch, Racial composition for each building (school improvement plan data)
- Deeper data that separates English as a New Language vs. Multilingual
- Don't temper a decision about equity based on a fear of students going to charter schools
- District needs to set the tone and be a leader in the equity conversation and look at existing practices
- Schools in our communities have stigmas attached to our schools so the corporation needs to examine this in the conversation

Facebook Comments:

What factors should MCCSC take into consideration as they explore the topic of redistricting? 6 of the district's elementary schools are title I and they are all on the west side. Should we be concerned that there is such a

socioeconomic divide in our elementary schools? Should we balance our schools out based on socioeconomics?

Table # 2: What are your hopes and dreams for our school community related to redistricting? - That our district avoids allowing a school be seen as a "Failing" school according to the state due to standardized test scores. Our district needs to be more responsible to school communities that have NO control over how their kids perform on standardized tests as those tests tend to only indicate one's socioeconomic status (or that your school drilled you to perform well on the test). Either they stand up to the legislators and force change in the statehouse or they protect school communities by balancing them better socioeconomically. I fear the legislators will not budge on this.

Notecard Comments:

- Since the breakdown of demographics for each school is available, why not share it tonight? It is so relevant to the conversation.
- Does the average free and reduced lunch student @ Childs have a better chance at passing ISTEP than an average free and reduce lunch student at Summit? Does the average Free and Reduced Lunch student @ Summit have a better chance of passing ISTEP than an average Free and Reduced Lunch student @ Fairview? In 2019, Yes! The track stays the same. The % of students that pass track very strongly with the % of economically disadvantaged students.

Parking Lot Comments: None

Equity Model Fact Sheet

See following page.



The Equity Model Map: *What is it, and why should Monroe County Community School Corporation adopt it?*



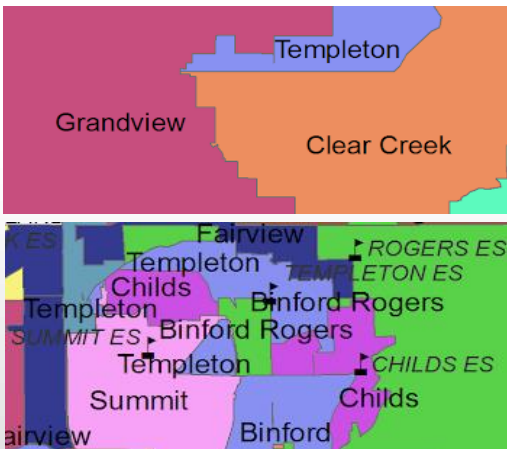
The Equity Model Map **improves racial and socioeconomic equity across MCCSC elementary schools** by using non-contiguous school catchment boundaries.

What does equity in public schools look like?

Equity means that all students have **access to a fair and just educational experience**, regardless of family background characteristics like race or socioeconomic status.



What are non-contiguous school catchment boundaries?

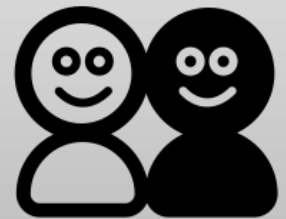


Catchment boundaries are the attendance areas for each school.

- Currently, MCCSC catchment boundaries consist of single, unbroken shapes. Those shapes reproduce the disparities in our communities.
- Non-contiguous boundaries consist of **several distinct, disconnected shapes**. These shapes produce more equitable schools by serving students from multiple neighborhoods.

Why do we need to change school catchment boundaries?

- Affluent, white elementary school students overwhelmingly attend different elementary schools than their low-income, non-white peers.
- The current school boundaries **perpetuate inequitable access** to educational resources and opportunities for non-white and low-income students.



How do we create more equitable public schools?

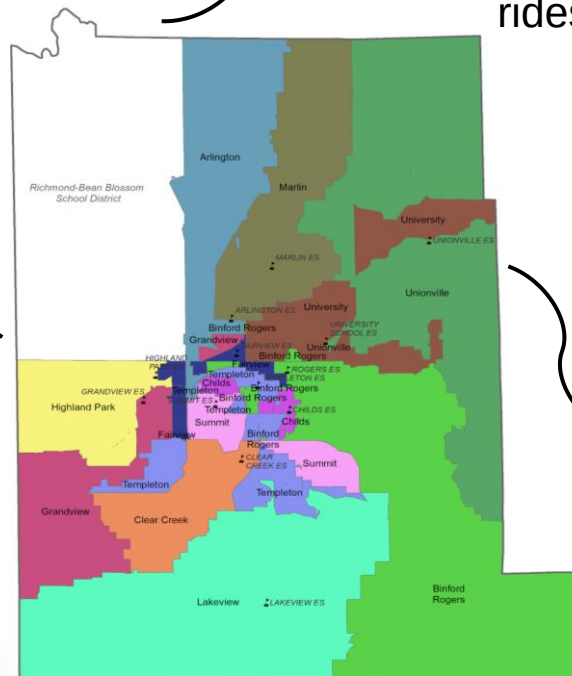
- The simplest, most efficient way is for the MCCSC School Board to **redraw the current catchment boundaries**, re-sorting students in a way that achieves educational equity.

This new catchment boundary map **provides all students in MCCSC with access to an equitable education.**

The new map retains neighborhood schools where possible.



Students will not have significantly longer bus rides.



The impact of changing school catchments on property values is small and short-term.



What are the Next Steps?

Do you value equity in MCCSC schools? Make your voice heard!

What are your concerns or questions? ICPE-MC wants to hear from community members, family members, and students, and needs allies to help spread the word.



Advocate for MCCSC to adopt this model.

Show MCCSC that the community values this approach. MCCSC can utilize their data to produce more accurate maps that prioritize equity, based on this model.



Support broad education reforms in the name of equity.

Ask MCCSC to adopt policies that evaluate equity in our schools on a regular basis, and give students an equitable experience regardless of their individual background or resources.