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Closing Schools is Like “Taking Away Part of My Body”: The Impact of Gentrification on Neighborhood, Public Schools in Inner Northeast Portland

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Closing schools is like “taking away part of my body”: the impact of gentrification on neighborhood, public schools in inner Northeast Portland

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To think that we can revitalize and change the collective perception of North Alberta Street, North Mississippi Avenue and Unthank Park – all of which surround the Jefferson [High School] community, with many white visitors, patrons and supporters – and not give the only high school that sits in the middle of the community the same chance to come back would be about as racist as it gets.

Hopson, 2010

- 1 Not all spaces within gentrifying communities follow the same development trajectory. If they did, neighborhoods would be completely transformed, their populations categorically replaced and displacement absolute. Instead, gentrified neighborhoods are characterized by their uneven geographies (Wyly, 1999). It is not unusual to see a boarded-up building next to an upscale boutique or an auto repair shop down the street from luxury loft apartments. Yet most of the gentrification literature focuses on neighborhood spaces that have already been visibly transformed or on contested areas

slated for redevelopment. By only examining the social and spatial processes that play out in these redeveloped areas, we neglect to take into account how the gentrification process reshapes the spaces in a neighborhood that remain underdeveloped, thus ignoring the voices and experiences of the longtime resident community who often inhabit them (Slater, 2006, Watt, 2008).

- 2 This study focuses on a set of spaces that retain the character of the pre-gentrification community—the local, public schools in the gentrifying inner Northeast neighborhood in the U.S. city of Portland, Oregon. Over the past twenty five years, the neighborhood has seen a surge in real estate values, a rash of new businesses, and population shifts, but its schools have paradoxically lost students and resources, resulting in school closures, reconfigurations and consolidation. When parents, students, and teachers talk about their schools, they characterize them as sites of disinvestment that have been redlined by the school district (Parker, 2005, Thomas 2010). In inner Northeast Portland, as in countless revitalized communities, the local, neighborhood schools remain largely populated by longtime resident families as gentry parents opt to send their children elsewhere, often to schools located outside of the neighborhood. As a result, schools in the area look much like they used to, only with fewer students. This study explores the role that gentrification played in the disinvestment of inner Northeast Portland’s neighborhood public schools. Why haven’t these schools followed the same logic as the neighborhoods around them?

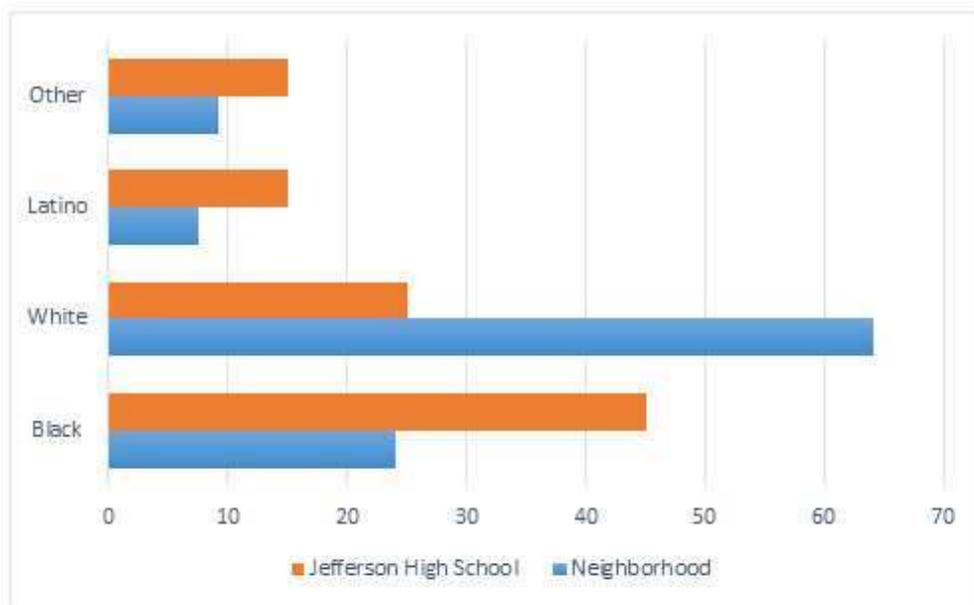
Gentrification and schools

- 3 Schools initially received little attention in the gentrification literature. Early research found that young, childless adults led the first-wave of gentrification in many neighborhoods, causing LeGates and Hartman (1986) to conclude that the poor reputations of inner city schools would prompt initial gentrifiers to leave the city once they began having children. However in 2001, Butler and Robson discovered that a local elementary school had become the social hub for gentry families in a community in the advanced stages of redevelopment.
- 4 Inspired by the HOPE VI program’s redevelopment of U.S. public housing projects into mixed-income communities, many of which included new schools, an offshoot of the literature examined how schools contribute to revitalization. Pauline Lipman (with Haines, 2007, 2008, 2011) has written extensively about Chicago’s Renaissance 2010 plan which called for the closure and redevelopment of a large number of the city’s schools mainly in low-income, African-American communities. Lipman sees the development of new, mixed-income schools as part of a larger overall process of gentrification. Joseph and Feldman (2009) take a less critical view of the mixed-income schools strategy, but nevertheless conclude that although the establishment of a high performing mixed-income school may initially benefit low-income children, over the long-term, it could end-up displacing them as more middle class families are drawn to a neighborhood to enroll in its school.
- 5 While these studies look at the role schools play in gentrification, a parallel body of work examines the consumption side of the argument by focusing on the educational choices gentry parents make. Schools in gentrifying neighborhoods are often characterized as dangerous, problematic places where “nobody sends their kids.” (Martin, 2008,

Billingham & McDonough Kinelberg, 2013, p. 99). Gentry parents use a number of strategies to game school choice systems to find whiter, more middle-class educational settings for their children usually located outside of their neighborhood. DeSena (2006) identifies the methods used by gentry parents in Brooklyn to enroll their children in other neighborhood schools, gifted and talented, language immersion or alternative programs. In some revitalized communities, a particular neighborhood school, often one which houses a special program, becomes a destination school for the gentry. Jennifer Burns Stillman (2012) examined how groups of gentry parents in New York City “tip-in” to select neighborhood schools. She describes a process much like gentrification itself where “innovators” enroll their children in a neighborhood school then reach-out to recruit a critical mass of gentry parents. Stillman argues that the presence of gentry families will benefit longtime resident students; however, a study of the Chicago Public School system found that lower-income children attending schools in revitalized neighborhoods experienced virtually no rise in academic achievement rates (Keels, Burdick-Will and Keene, 2013).

- 6 In this vein of literature, gentry parents are portrayed as strong advocates for their children’s education spending time volunteering, fundraising and organizing other parents within their schools (DeSena, 2006, Stillman, 2012, Billingham & McDonough Kinelberg, 2013). These parents shape schools to reflect their own tastes and preferences thus making the school desirable to other gentry and in the process, displacing lower-income neighborhood children (Butler, Hammet and Ramsden, 2013). While these studies acknowledge how non-gentry families are threatened with displacement when the gentry enroll in their schools, there has been almost no examination of the educational experiences of longtime residents in gentrifying neighborhoods, especially in schools where gentry parents have opted-out.
- 7 So, how does gentrification impact neighborhood schools that remain populated by longtime resident families? Inner Northeast Portland, a gentrifying community in a midsized U.S. city, was predominately African American and lower-income in the 1990s, but now, the neighborhood has become majority white and middle class, yet its high school and many of its elementary schools continue to serve a high poverty, non-white population (Figure 1). By tracing the demographic, curricular and institutional shifts that occurred within the neighborhood’s schools during the gentrification era (from the mid-1990s-present) and comparing these to the changes that happened within the district as a whole, we can begin to unravel the role that neighborhood revitalization played in shaping these institutions.

Figure 1. Jefferson High School population compared to neighborhood population, 2016.



City of Portland Bureau of Planning Services, Mixed Use Zones Project, 2014 <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/508062>), PPS Enrollment Summary, 2016

- 8 This study grew out of my own lived experiences as a parent of two children who attend inner Northeast neighborhood schools. Even before my daughter’s first day of kindergarten, we were introduced to the chronic instability in our local schools, when it was announced that school she was assigned to attend would close. Over the years, we experienced more proposed and actual closures, grade reconfigurations, mergers, cuts to programming, unstable leadership and severe underinvestment, which led me to get involved with other parents, students and teachers who were fighting for educational equity. The “ruptures” (Smith, 1990, p. 632) that occur when everyday experiences contradict the promises in the social contract are valid starting points for scholarly inquiry (Smith, 1987). A “politically engaged educational ethnography” seeks to contextualize the deep, insider knowledge gained from activist engagement with school communities within the broader socio-spatial forces and policy environments that affect them (Lipman, 2009, p. 216). Peck and Tickell (2002) argue that in order to understand how neoliberal forces reshape spatial and social relations, we must investigate extra-local processes and forms of resistances.
- 9 I began collecting data for this project in 2010, when Portland Public Schools launched its High School Redesign. Data collection involved participant observation and note taking at public meetings and rallies. I had been attending board meetings and protests since 2005 and relied upon district transcripts of public testimony to recall those earlier events. I used newspaper articles, archival records of school board meetings, board policy reports, demographic and achievement data to reconstruct the history of school changes within the neighborhood and district, as well as to trace board policy shifts and the rationale behind those decisions. This data was supplemented with years of informal observation and conversation with parents, teachers, students, alumni and community members in hallways, at school events, protests, meetings, and in the neighborhood.

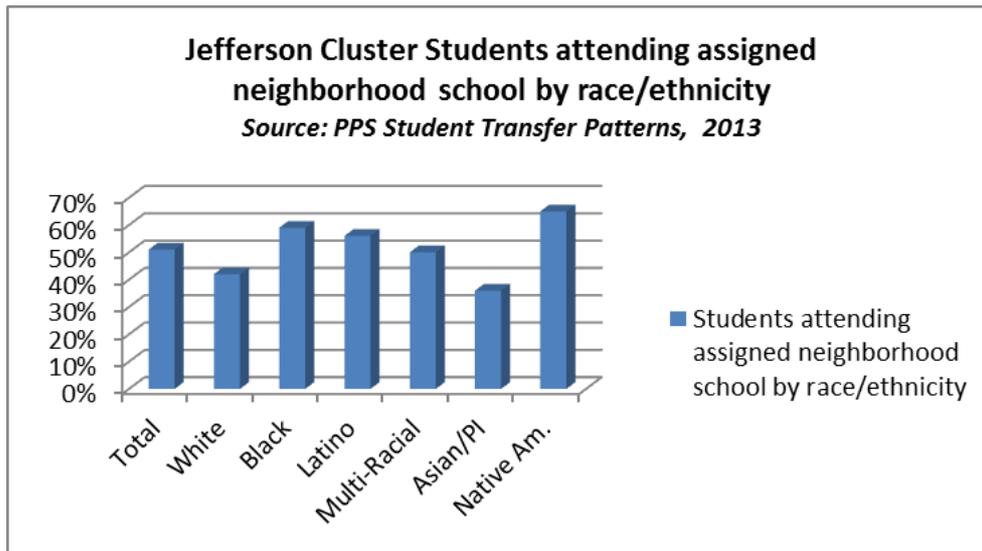
- 10 Although my children suffered from the instability and disinvestment in their schools, our everyday experiences with Portland Public Schools differed dramatically from many of our friends and neighbors, because we are white. Race plays a central role in shaping institutions within the United States (Bell, 1992). U.S. urban regions are characterized by racial residential segregation, and educational institutions, which are connected to place, are deeply racialized (Massey and Denton, 1993, Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Portland is a predominantly white city, and until gentrification took hold, it was a highly segregated city with 85% of the black population living in inner Northeast Portland up through the 1980s (Committee to Support the Black United Front, 1982). The story of the schools in the community is also a story of race relations within the city. Therefore, I used a critical race theory perspective when collecting and analyzing data. Critical race theory focuses on the underlying role that race plays in shaping educational institutions, as well as neighborhoods, and seeks to give primacy to the voices of students and families of color (Savas, 2014).

Portland Public Schools

- 11 Public schools have played a pivotal role in shaping the racial and class composition of U.S. neighborhoods (Lassiter, 2012). When making decisions about where to purchase a home, families consider the bundle of goods associated with its location including transportation, job opportunities, amenities and schools. In the post-World War II era, the establishment of separate, independent school districts helped fuel suburbanization and reinforce racial segregation (Dougherty, 2012). By the end of the twentieth century, inner city neighborhoods began to draw middle and upper class families, in part because gentrification and school choice policies had decoupled the link between schools and real estate.
- 12 School choice programs allow students to enroll in any institution within a district, rather than limiting students to an assigned, neighborhood school. In Portland, school choice policies were initially established to promote desegregation. School choice was instituted in the early 1980s after black residents staged boycotts protesting the district’s one-way busing program that scattered black students throughout the city in order to comply with federal mandates to integrate schools. In Portland Public Schools, students are still assigned to schools based upon their address, but the School Choice program allows families to transfer out of their assigned school to other neighborhood schools, focus-option (magnet programs), or charter schools.
- 13 While the district has become more racially diverse over the past decade, schools remain highly segregated. At King K-8 School in inner Northeast Portland, 72% of students are African-American or Latino, while less than 5% of the student body are at Alameda Elementary, a school located in a wealthy enclave less than two miles away (PPS Enrollment Summaries, 2015). District-wide, 46.5% of students are enrolled in the Free and Reduced lunch program, which is considered a proxy measure for poverty. Schools range from having 90% of students on the free and reduced lunch program to just 3%.
- 14 The district is divided-up into eight clusters—the attendance zones for neighborhood high schools. The Jefferson cluster, which encompasses the historically black neighborhoods of inner Northeast Portland, is the fourth most populous cluster in the district (Population Research Center, 2016). While the number of school-aged children

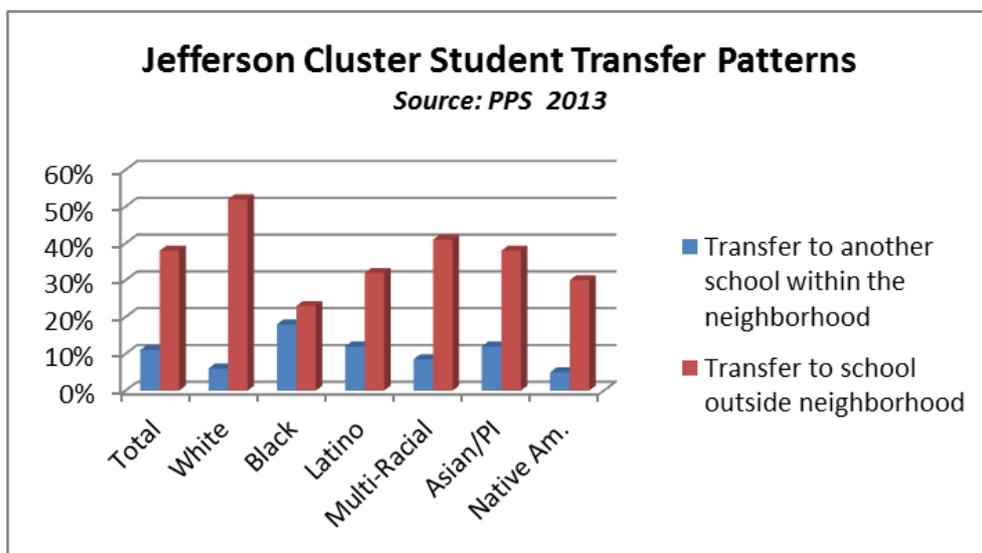
living in the neighborhood declined by 10% since 2000, the cluster's school populations declined by 41% during the same time period (PPS Enrollment Summaries 2000, 2015). Although 5,651 students live in the Jefferson neighborhood, currently only 42% of these students attend their assigned schools (Figure 2). Capture rates within neighborhood schools fall far below the 68% district-wide average with Jefferson High School capturing only 25% of potential students.

Figure 2. Jefferson Cluster Students attending assigned neighborhood school by race/ethnicity.



- 15 Neighborhood school attendees in school choice districts are often assumed to be unaware of or uninterested in their children's educational options (DeSena, 2006). This assumption ignores the fact that longtime resident families do use the school choice system; they just don't use it to transfer to schools outside of their communities (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Jefferson Cluster Student Transfer Patterns.

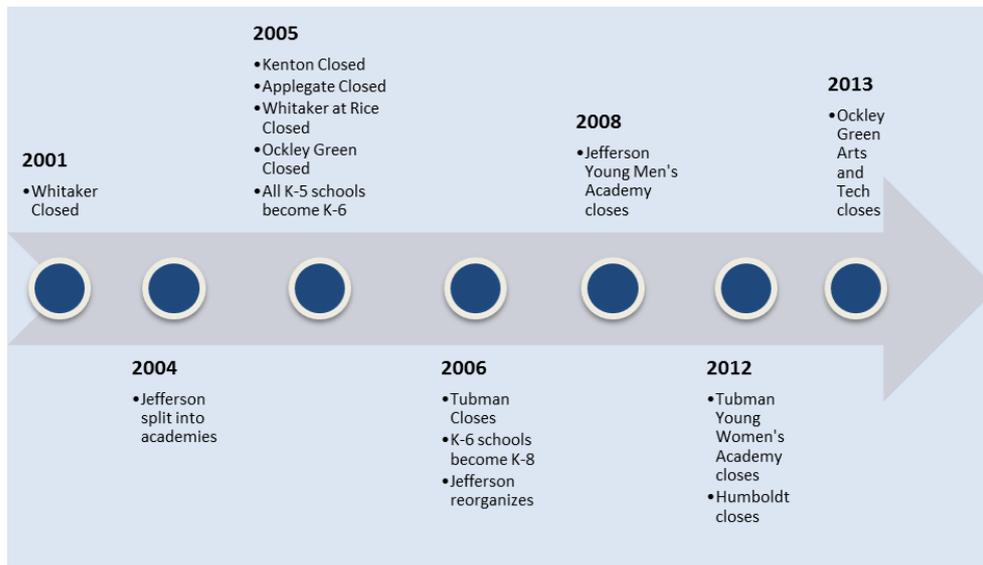


- 16 In the Jefferson cluster, 44% of black students who access the transfer system do so to attend a different school within their neighborhood (Student Transfer Patterns, 2013). In addition, a significant number of African-American students whose families have been displaced from inner Northeast Portland work within or around the transfer system to ensure their children a place in Jefferson cluster schools. One Jefferson cluster principal dubbed this practice the “Underground Railroad” (SACET meeting, 2013). Neighborhood schools appeal to parents for a number of reasons including location, ease of transportation, access to programs like free breakfast, after school care and enrichments, and/or a personal history/connection with the school. The racial makeup of the school also matters. Jefferson High School is the only majority black high school in the entire state of Oregon and enrolling in the school can be a source of cultural connection and pride.

How gentrification underdeveloped inner Northeast schools

- 17 In 1990, voters in Oregon approved a ballot Measure 5, which limited the amount of property tax that could be used for schools (Meehan, 1993). At that time, “students associated Jefferson High School with the glamorous image of Fame, a movie and television series about a performing arts high school” (Graves, 1990). The high school offered a nationally recognized pre-professional dance program and had an acting ensemble that toured the region (Blythe, 1998). Its literary journal won accolades, and its media program produced in-school news segments in a well-equipped professional television studio (Graves, 1990). The school attracted students from across the city. However, by the mid-1990s, Portland Public Schools had lost more than \$30 million of funding due to Measure 5, even as enrollments increased (Hernandez and Graves, 1997). Jefferson was forced to choose between continuing to fund arts programs or reducing an already thinly stretched academic and support staff. By the year 2000, the school’s arts programming was just a shadow of what it had been a decade earlier.
- 18 In 2001, the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act created new challenges for inner Northeast Portland schools. The NCLB Act mandated standardized testing in all public schools and placed strict sanctions on low-income schools receiving federal funding (Dee and Jacob, 2010). If a school did not demonstrate “adequate yearly progress” in raising test scores, it would be labelled a failing school and required to institute a series of increasingly drastic reforms. In 2004, Jefferson High School was labeled failing under the NCLB Act. To avoid sanctions, the school was restructured into two smaller in-school academies (Board Resolution, 3019). Being labelled a failing school, resulted in a nearly 25% drop in Jefferson’s enrollment in just two years (Portland Public Schools Enrollment Summary, 2007).
- 19 The 2001 passage of NCLB Act and ongoing budgetary problems ushered in a decade long period of school closures and consolidations. Nearly every school in inner Northeast Portland was slated for closure at some point, including Jefferson High School, although community members were able to successfully save some institutions (Figure 4). In addition to school closures, the area endured a dizzying array of grade reconfigurations and programmatic changes (Appendix I). From 1998-2013, almost half of the district’s school closures occurred within the Jefferson cluster.

Figure 4. School Closure Timeline in the Jefferson Cluster 2001-2013.



SOURCE: PPS BOARD MEETING MINUTES 2001-2013

- 20 School choice policies, which were initially instituted to help desegregate schools, have instead enabled gentrification and re-segregation, by allowing parents to opt-out of sending their children to neighborhood schools at a time when neighborhoods were becoming more integrated (SACET, 2014). In inner Northeast Portland, school choice contributed to steep enrollment declines and led to a disconnect between the racial and socioeconomic makeup of the schools and the neighborhood they serve. As one teacher noted:

In a neighborhood where 72% of the population is white, 90% of my students this year are of color. Despite the increasing affluence of my neighborhood, most of my students are living in poverty. Where are all the white kids? Apparently, they have transferred elsewhere, like so many others who live in the cluster (Thiel, 2013).

- 21 In Portland, school choice policies “made it safe for young families to buy a house wherever they could afford one, then shop for the right school when they were ready” (Neilson, 2007). By not compelling gentry families to attend their assigned schools, the district promoted gentrification by lowering the opportunity costs for white, middle class families who were willing to live in a diverse neighborhood, but were wary about sending their children to a low-income, multicultural school. The district accommodated these families’ concerns by supplying them a free alternative to having to pay for private school tuition.
- 22 Shopping for schools and navigating the transfer process became a rite of passage for many gentry families with young children. When it came time to think about schools, most gentry parents never even considered sending their children to local, public schools. Despite the challenges facing Jefferson cluster schools, some were actually thriving. Having been identified as a potential prospect for reconstitution in the late 1990s, Vernon School was making great strides by 2005 with over 90% of students meeting or exceeding state achievement rates in reading and math (Hutchins, 2005). Yet, neighborhood families were still choosing to opt-out of the school. In the mid-2000s, only 43% of students living in the area attended the school (PPS Capture Rates, 2007-08). One

educator commented that the biggest challenge the school faced was “getting the community to take a look at us” (Hutchins, 2005). Meanwhile, the longtime residents who had strong connections and loyalty to the school were being priced out of the neighborhood leading to a 29% drop in enrollment over a five year period (PP Enrollment Summaries, 2005).

- 23 The disconnect between longtime resident and gentry families’ school choices were starkly evident prompting a longtime resident mother to comment at a school closure hearing, “You keep talking about *the* community. This isn’t about *the* community. It’s about *our* community. Why don’t you put more money into *our* schools?” (Jefferson Enrollment Balancing Meeting, 2013). In other words, the district was basing its decisions to close or consolidate schools upon the large numbers of gentry parents who were absent from these spaces, rather than listening to the needs of those who were present. The failure of district policymakers to recognize and address this disconnect resulted in decisions that favored and facilitated gentry families’ choices at the expense of longtime resident students. While neighborhood schools were closing, the district was opening new focus-option and language immersion programs outside the attendance area that catered to gentry families’ educational tastes. There are now more than five times as many focus-option programs in the district than there were in 1998 when gentrification was first visible in inner Northeast Portland (PPS Enrollment Summaries, 2012).
- 24 As a result of newcomers opting-out and longtime residents being displaced, inner Northeast neighborhood schools experienced enrollment declines and low capture rates. District policymakers, faced with tough budgetary decisions and harsh federal mandates, used low capture rates and declining enrollments to justify pulling resources out of inner Northeast Portland schools. Since the district allocates resources based upon enrollment, schools with fewer students got fewer resources resulting in larger class sizes and less programming. This dearth of programming resulted in additional enrollment declines as parents began to search for schools with more robust offerings. School choice policies, frequent closures and persistent disinvestment created separate and unequal educational experiences for gentry and longtime residents. While some longtime resident families chose to utilize school choice options, many others stayed in their neighborhood schools because they valued their convenience, programming and cultural makeup. By disinvesting in inner Northeast schools, the district elevated the choices of white middle class families, while dismissing the preferences of lower income African American students and parents.

Erasure and invisibility – inevitable outcomes of disinvestment?

- 25 In 2013, at a hearing on a proposal to close and consolidate the remaining K-8 schools in inner Northeast Portland, one mother warned, “If you keep shifting our kids around, they are going to become invisible” (Enrollment Balancing Meeting Woodlawn K-8, 2013). The threat of the disappearance of black students from neighborhood schools recalls a painful chapter in the community’s history:

There’s no other community in Portland who had children who were mandatorily bused... no other children had to get on a bus and go miles away to another school. And not only bused, but they were scattered (Loving, 2010).

- 26 The mandatory busing of black students out of inner Northeast Portland was the district’s desegregation program up until the early 1980s when the community organized a boycott of schools to force the board to rewrite its policies (Johnson and Williams, 2010).
- 27 Due to this painful history, many neighborhood residents have deep ties to cluster schools and feel a sense of ownership over them, despite the repeated disinvestments they have suffered from the district. Community members support their schools, showing-up for sporting events, parent/teacher conferences, concerts, and annual talent shows in large numbers. After losing churches, bars, restaurants and other businesses to gentrification, schools have become some of the last remaining places in the neighborhood where longtime residents can gather. As one student passionately claimed, “by taking away Jeff,” you would be “taking away part of my body” (High School Redesign meeting, 2010).
- 28 Yet, one vote of the school board could erase decades of grassroots mobilization and investment in a neighborhood school. In a school choice environment, individual buildings are forced to market themselves to prospective parents. Ockley Green Middle School was shut down in 2005 and transitioned into a K-8 Arts and Technology focus option program in 2006 (PPS Board Meeting Minutes). The school board resolution that created the K-8 magnet program at Ockley noted the 48% capture rate at the school and stated that increasing the capture rate “was important for the education of children in this neighborhood.” (PPS Assignment Resolution 3263, 2005). By remaking it into an arts program for younger children, the board hoped the school would appeal to gentry families; however, in the final year of the grant period, capture rates had declined by four points, so no replacement funding for the program was secured (School Capture Rates, 2008). After the three year federal grant ran out, Ockley was forced to fire its arts teachers (Anderson, 2013). The 44% of neighborhood children enrolled in Ockley Green, for years afterward, attended an arts magnet with no art program.
- 29 Vernon School was successfully able to remake itself, yet reshaping the school did not result in improved outcomes or visibility for longtime resident students. In 2006, Vernon School won a grant to begin the long process of training teachers and making curricular changes needed to become an International Baccalaureate (IB) program, with the expressed hopes that IB accreditation would improve capture rates (Anderson, 2006). The dramatic achievement gains the school made in the early 2000s were not enough to “for people to realize that it’s actually a good place to send their kids;” its identity had to change. Between 2014 and 2015, Vernon’s capture rate increased by 3.7 points, one of the sharpest upticks in the district (Capture Rates, 2015). The shift in programming alone didn’t account for all of that change. As small numbers of gentry parents began enrolling at Vernon, they set out to recruit other families. Gentry parents organized an auction, distributed “I love Vernon” yard signs, and one parent even donned the suit of the school’s mascot at community events becoming “Vern the Owl.” These actions all helped make the school more palatable to gentry parents.
- 30 Stillman (2013) noted that small numbers of gentry parents who initially enrolled in neighborhood schools dominated the parent organizations and played an outsized role in reshaping these schools to respond to their children’s needs. Prior to the adoption of the IB model, Vernon School had dramatically raised achievement levels for longtime resident students using a reading program called Success for All. The IB model may have helped to improve capture rates at the school, but the achievement gains the school had

made with its longtime resident population were not sustained with the new curriculum, and large racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps now exist at the school (SBA Results Vernon, 2015).

- 31 As revitalization swept through inner Northeast neighborhoods, the subsequent disinvestment in local, public schools rendered longtime resident students invisible. School choice policies created enrollment gaps that essentially redlined longtime resident students into an increasingly smaller, ever-changing, chronically underfunded subset of schools. By shuttering buildings and revamping programs, the district erased generations of memories attached to these schools, and investment in the area’s remaining institutions was not prioritized on the district level. The board only seemed interested in making investments that could help market schools to gentry families who were opting-out. As schools were reshaped, the needs and desires of gentry families eclipsed those of longtime resident students, rendering them invisible within their own schools.

Reinvestment doesn’t have to result in erasure

- 32 In 2010, the district launched a high school redesign process aimed at consolidating its secondary schools. With a 23% capture rate and the lowest enrollment of any of the district’s high schools, the common wisdom was that Jefferson High School would close (Capture Rates, 2009). Editorialists and parents from other high schools openly advocated for the school’s closure:

[K]ids need a school with an identity rooted in Portland’s future, not the past. They deserve a multicultural Jefferson that serves as the vibrant center of a diverse community, not as a black Alamo in a gentrifying neighborhood. [...] if adults in Portland truly want to save Jefferson, they must redefine it... [...] Jefferson can’t maximize its enrollment without changing its identity (Neilson, 2006).

- 33 However, longtime residents would not allow Jefferson’s identity to be so easily erased. The school has vocal and active alumni base, and many notable black Portlanders graduated from it. Even among African-American families who send their kids to other high schools, Jefferson is seen as a source of cultural pride and connection. So when Jefferson appeared on the board’s agenda, community members responded in force, threatening to sit-in and shut down the board’s proceedings. As a result of sustained community pressure, the school was taken off the closure list, and the community gained influence and input over the board’s redesign of school programming.
- 34 Although Jefferson did not remain a comprehensive high school like longtime residents had wanted, the board’s decision to convert the school into a Middle College program did benefit its longtime resident student population, in part because community activists successfully negotiated for proven programming and investments to support low-income and African-American students in the redesigned school. The new Jefferson Middle College program allows students to attend classes at neighboring Portland Community College for free and provides substantial support to students through the local nonprofit, Self-Enhancement Inc. (SEI). SEI was founded by a Jefferson alumnus, and the organization has a long track record of successfully mentoring longtime resident youth in inner Northeast schools, by providing an array of support services to students and their families both in and outside of school (SEI, 2016).
- 35 By renaming the school, Jefferson Middle College Program, board members hoped it would connote academic rigor and appeal to the educational tastes of gentry families;

however, the partnership with SEI guaranteed that the needs of longtime resident students would not be subsumed if gentry families began to flock to the school. When the redesign began, nearly half of all Jefferson students failed to graduate on time. By 2016, graduation rates soared to 80%, with 81% of African American students, 79% of low-income students and 98% of students who received SEI support graduating on time. (Hopson, 2016, Frazier, 2016). These rates surpassed both state and district graduation rates, and unlike many schools in the district, African American and low-income - students' graduation rates were on par with school averages.

- 36 Since the redesign, neighborhood capture rates haven't increased significantly at Jefferson, but more white middle class students from around the city appear to be enrolling in the school. Neighborhood students get priority enrollment, but Jefferson also accepts students from around the district. This policy not only allows white, middle-class students access to the program, it also enables longtime resident youth who have been displaced from the neighborhood to attend the school. And many do often commuting long distances on public transit.
- 37 On its own, the passionate support longtime residents feel for Jefferson would not have been adequate enough to preserve the school's place in the community. The resources and support SEI provides ensures that Jefferson will continue to be an anchor in the lives of longtime residents. The organization invests nearly \$1 million annually into the school, half of which comes from the district (Anderson, 2013). These resources do not just serve longtime resident youth. Any student who attends Jefferson is eligible for SEI services; however, by tailoring their program to meet the needs of longtime resident students, SEI safeguards these students from becoming sublimated in the redesigned school. If the school's demographics change significantly over time, longtime resident students won't be made invisible. The Jefferson Middle College program is a rare example of revitalization that doesn't mean disinvestment and displacement for longtime residents, instead the redesign benefits *all* of the community.

Conclusions

- 38 Prior to gentrification, Jefferson boasted the second lowest dropout rate of any school in the city, and most students benefitted from the high-quality, professionally taught arts programming the school offered (Graves, 1990). Ironically, the more the neighborhood developed, the more underdeveloped its schools became. While Measure 5 and the NCLB Act created the context for educational disinvestment in inner Northeast Portland schools, gentrification and school choice policies worked hand in hand to produce unequal educational opportunities for longtime residents and their gentry neighbors. The displacement of longtime residents and the ability and willingness of gentry families to opt-out of local schools brought about a situation where longtime resident youth became invisible, and gentry children became hyper-visible to district decision-makers leading to the redlining of neighborhood schools, making them vulnerable to closure and wholesale redesign. Longtime residents were aware of these inequities and actively worked to intervene on behalf of their children and schools. The legacy of that activism is embodied in the Jefferson Middle College program, which provides an example of how if given adequate resources and input, longtime residents can shape the revitalization process so that it works for all.

- 39 In the underdeveloped spaces of this redeveloping community, gentrification has meant disinvestment and accelerated decline. The longtime resident families who inhabited these spaces experienced growing instability and invisibility within their neighborhoods. More research needs to be done on other community spaces that continue to be occupied by longtime residents to see if gentrification systematically results in disinvestment and decline. By exploring how the revitalization process plays out in the underdeveloped spaces of a community, we can amplify the voices and experiences of longtime residents and make them visible in their neighborhoods once again.
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APPENDIXES

Changes to Jefferson Cluster Schools 1997-2013

Source: PPS Board Meeting Minutes 1998-2013

1997	Humboldt Elementary reconstituted
1998	Jefferson High School reconstituted
2001	Whitaker Middle School closed
2003	Students from Meek School merge with Vernon Elementary after Meek closed
2004	Jefferson High School reorganized with two upper and lower grade academies
2005	Kenton Elementary closed Applegate Elementary closed Whitaker at Rice School closed Ockley Green Middle School closed Applegate students merge into Woodlawn Elementary Kenton students merge into Chief Joseph Elementary Whitaker Rice and Ockley Green students merge into Tubman Middle School Ockley Green becomes K-8 Arts and Technology Focus Option School Jefferson cluster elementary schools expand to include 6 th grade students
2006	Tubman Middle School closed Jefferson cluster elementary schools became K-8 grade Jefferson High School reorganized into Young Women and Young Men's 7-12 th grade academies and a 9-12 th grade program with two academies within it
2008	Young Men's Academy closed
2010	Jefferson High School reorganized into Jefferson Middle College Focus Option Program
2012	Young Women's Academy closed Humboldt Elementary closed Humboldt students merge into Boise-Eliot K-8
2013	Ockley Green Arts and Technology Focus Option closed Ockley Green K-8 and Chief Joseph K-5 consolidated into dual campus K-8 program
2016	Ockley Green becomes a middle school Beach, Chief Joseph and Woodlawn become K-5 elementary schools, 6-8 grade students move to Ockley Green

ABSTRACTS

This “politically engaged educational ethnography” explores the role that gentrification played in the disinvestment of inner Northeast Portland neighborhood schools (Lipman, 2009, 216). Inner Northeast Portland, Oregon, USA, a predominately African American neighborhood, began gentrifying in the mid-1990s. As investment flooded into the neighborhood, its schools paradoxically declined, losing students and resources. As longtime resident families were displaced from gentrification pressures, newer white, middle-class residents utilized the school choice program to opt-out of sending their kids to the neighborhood schools. Facing declining community support, inner Northeast schools were targeted for closure or redesign. Despite these challenges, the longtime resident community was able to successfully resist some of the district's attempts to shutter or remake schools, and Jefferson High School now stands as a rare example of how redevelopment can benefit all residents if the needs of longtime residents are put first.

Cette « ethnographie de l'enseignement politiquement engagée » explore le rôle joué par la gentrification dans le désinvestissement des écoles de quartier du centre du N.-E. de Portland (Lipman, 2009, p. 216). Dans cet espace à prédominance afro-américaine la gentrification a débuté au milieu des années 1990. Alors que les investissements y coulaient à flot, ses écoles ont paradoxalement vu décroître leurs nombres d'étudiants et de ressources. Suite aux pressions de la gentrification, les familles implantées de longue date ont été déplacées, et les nouveaux

résidents blancs issus de la classe moyenne ont utilisé le programme de choix scolaire pour refuser d'envoyer leurs enfants dans les écoles de quartier. Confrontées à une réduction des subventions communautaires, les écoles du centre-ville étaient vouées à la réorganisation sinon la fermeture. Malgré ces défis, les résidents originels ont su résister avec succès à quelques-unes des tentatives du district visant à fermer ou reconstruire ces écoles, et la Jefferson High School représente à présent un exemple rare de redéploiement profitable à tous les habitants pour autant que les besoins des résidents d'origine restent prioritaires.

INDEX

Mots-clés: gentrification, écoles, désinvestissement, race, invisibilité, Portland, Oregon, USA

Keywords: gentrification, schools, disinvestment, race, invisibility, Portland, Oregon, USA

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