

LOWELL VOLUNTARY REVISED DESEGREGATION
AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Prepared by:

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SECTION I

THE PROBLEM

I THE PROBLEM

Over the past several years, the Lowell Public Schools has experienced minority isolation due to a combination of factors:

- a. Influx of unanticipated minority students, the first language of most of whom is not English.
- b. The System was not prepared to house this rapid increase.
- c. The majority of these students required Bilingual education, which placed an inordinate strain on the system's limited capacity.
- d. Since 1982, there has been 12.7% increase in minority students from 18.9% in 1982 to 31.56% in 1986. (See Table I).

In attempting to address the increasing needs for Bilingual students, the Lowell Public Schools has taken the following action:

1. Renovated classroom space;
2. Rented the Moore Street School and paired it with the Cardinal O'Connell School;
3. Rented the Lowell Boys Club and Y.M.C.A.

However, these measures were inadequate because they did not solve our continuing problem of lack of adequate school space and of intensified minority isolation. Consequently, the District is faced with the problem in identifying adequate instructional space for the following students effective September, 1987.

NEED TO HOUSE FOR SEPTEMBER, 1987:

1. 6 New Bilingual Spanish classes K-6
 2 New Bilingual Laotian classes Grade 1
 8 New Bilingual Cambodian classes K-6
 16 (Total of Bilingual Classes) (342 Total Bilingual Students)
2. 1 Standard class at the Leblanc School, Grade 6
 2 Standard classes at the Molloy School, Grades 2 & 4
 2 Standard classes at the Pawtucket Memorial School Grades 1 & 2
 1 Standard class at the Bartlett School, Grade 2
 6 (Total of Standard classes) (150 Total Standard Students)

3. **NEW STUDENTS AND AVAILABLE SPACE.**

The problem of lack of space is also demonstrated by the fact that the system currently has only 357 available seats scattered throughout its 26 K-8 schools. If the system enrolls the same number of new students (Grades 1-8) in 1987-88 as it did in 1986-87, there may be a shortage of 976 seats in grades 1-8. (See Tables 2 and 3)

In sum, the District will need to accommodate at least 1,471 standard and bilingual students effective September, 1987.

SECTION II

THE REMEDY

II. REMEDY

The following measures have been designed to provide both an interim and Long-Term solution to the problems of increasing minority isolation and lack of available school space.

A. INTERIM MEASURES

In order to provide adequate space for September, 1987 the following actions must be taken immediately:

1. Pairing of the Riverside and Joseph Pyne Schools and the establishment of 8 bilingual classes in that district.

Joseph Pyne -- Grades K-3

Riverside -- Grades 4-6

2. Modular/Portables -- 8 in total to be located at:

Joseph Pyne (K-6) - 2

(4 classrooms to increase capacity for standard, special education bilingual)

Reilly (K-6) - 2

(Total of 4 classrooms to increase capacity for bilingual classes)

Molloy - 1

(2 classrooms to increase capacity for standard classes)

Pawtucket Memorial (K-6) -2

(4 classrooms - increase capacity for 2 standard and 2 bilingual)

¹ Leblanc (K-6) - 1

(2 classrooms to increase capacity for 1 standard and 1 bilingual)

On the basis of these measures, the District will increase its instructional capacity by 24 classrooms that will accommodate approximately 600 students for standard, bilingual and special education services.

3. Central Street School will be reallocated to house the offices of the bilingual department presently located at Lowell High School, thus freeing up two (2) classrooms for bilingual instruction in grades 9 - 12.

TIME LINE

SEPTEMBER 1987

1. Pairing of Joseph Pyne/Riverside,
2. Opening of Central Street School for Bilingual Offices.
3. Modules/Portables

B. LONG - TERM MEASURES:

Concurrent with the implementation of the above Interim Measures, the District will initiate a new Centralized Enrollment Policy that will maximize parental choice and effective school desegregation. This policy will also insure maximum efficiency in the future utilization of all school facilities. The proposed policy is an adaptation of the "Controlled Choice" method of assignment that has been successfully implemented in other Massachusetts School districts, e.g., Cambridge, Fall River. (See Attachments)

1. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

In order to reduce minority isolation and maximize student access to educational expectations at the K-8 level, Lowell Public Schools shall adopt a new student assignment policy that will not be dependent on the City's residential housing patterns and which will better accommodate the programmatic needs of its linguistic minority students. A review of possible student assignment techniques suggests that the District can best resolve the problem of minority isolation by expanding parent choice outside of their immediate neighborhoods. Such an assignment policy will enable all parents to select schools and programs they deem most appropriate for their children within the constraints of minority balance and space availability.

This policy will provide a self-correcting mechanism that will prevent re-isolation, thereby ensuring stability of assignments. The policy will also serve as an innovative planning tool that will facilitate the creation of new magnet or specialized schools and programs while stimulating the development of more instructionally effective and enhanced educational opportunities in all schools. As the permanent method of assignment, the Centralized Enrollment Policy will govern all student assignment decisions at the K-8 level, including; new admissions, intra-

district transfers, the mainstreaming of T.B.E. and special needs students into standard education classes, and the reassignment of students due to school closures, consolidations, expansions, grade-level reorganization and new construction. The key elements of the Centralized Assignment Policy will include:

- Consolidation of all existing attendance boundaries into 2 educational zones. (See Table 4). The zones have been designed to give minority and majority parents a range of school choices with each zone reflecting the existing racial and ethnic diversity of the Lowell Public Schools.
- All students currently enrolled in the District in grades K-8 will have the right to continue in their present schools so long as they are at appropriate grade levels and will not be subject to involuntary reassignment.
- All 1-8 students who will be new to the District in the 1987-88 school year, will undergo a centralized student registration process during which their parents will be given the opportunity to express preferences for the schools and programs they want their children to attend within their particular geographic attendance zone. Parents will be allowed to select as many schools as are available by their own rank of preference. While no student will be guaranteed their first choice school (although most will get their first choice), all students will be guaranteed stability of assignment once assigned.
- All final assignment decisions will be made by the District's Student Assignment Officer subject to the constraints of minority balance and space availability at grade-level. In the event of oversubscription of minority and/or majority students, the priority of assignment will be as follows:
 - a. Staying with older brothers and sisters (Sibling Preference)
 - b. Children who live closest to the school
 - c. Random lottery
- Mandatory Back-Up. In the event that a student's schools of choice cannot be accommodated, the student will be assigned to the school closest to their home that meets the desegregation-related provisions of the Policy.

- The above provisions will also apply to all students seeking to transfer into a different school and to all bilingual and special needs students who are being mainstreamed into regular education classes. Every effort will be made to allow these students to remain in their current schools, so long as their assignment does not violate the desegregation provision of the policy.

2. SCHOOL SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

This policy is designed to provide maximum choice for parents in selecting the schools their children will attend, within the constraints imposed by the available space, the requirements of minority balance and the special requirements of bilingual and special needs children. It provides stability of assignment for children and, at the same time, a mechanism for adjusting the minority balance of the schools, as needed, without unnecessary movement of students. It gives a priority in assignment to current residents of the city over later arrivals. All students that are new to the system and those who want a change in school (transfer) will be subject to the policy.

2.1 Procedures for Centralized Enrollment Policy:

Year One: 1987-88 School Year

a. Students currently in public schools:

The school to which a student is assigned as of June 1987 will become his/her "home school". Every effort will be made to allow the student to remain in the school until graduation. Each regular day student is guaranteed that he/she will not be moved for the purpose of minority balance unless requesting a voluntary transfer.

b. New and Transfer Students:

Students K-8, newly entering the school system and those requesting a transfer of school will be subject to the provisions of the student assignment policy. All such assignments will be made by the Student Assignment Officer.

2.2 Early and Continuous Student Assignments:

Year Two: 1988-89 School Year

There will be monthly registration periods for parents of preschool children and those children who will enter into the school system in September of the following school year. They will be required to register their children in one of two Parent Information Centers beginning in December and continuing through August of the year prior to initial student entrance. At the end of each monthly registration period, assignments will be made, with parents being given a period of time to indicate whether they will accept the assignment. Parents who receive assignments from January through March will be asked to reconfirm their intention of having their children attend the Lowell Public Schools in the fall. This will eliminate holding space for children from families whose plans have changed, and will facilitate the spring assignments.

2.3 Parent Organization and Outreach

Every effort will be made to ensure that all parents know about the early registration period and the procedures involved. An intensive parent outreach program will be held during the months of October and November. There will be announcements in the press and other media; notices through the schools to parents who may have younger children; announcements to all preschools and day care centers and to community centers and other organizations.

The parent Information Center(s), and all relevant staff will have the information parents will need in order to make informed decisions about schools. Parents will be encouraged to visit the schools that might interest them prior to registration, in order to make choices as to their preferences.

2.4 Criteria for Assignment: (As Amended)

The criteria for assigning students will be defined as follows:

a. Parental Preference: At the time of registration, or at the time a transfer is requested, a parent may select three or more schools, in order of preference as follows:

- For students residing in Zone 1 and the Lincoln School neighborhood, parents may choose schools in Zones 1, 3 and 4.
- For students residing in Zone 2 and the Cardinal O'Connell and Moody Schools neighborhoods, parents may choose schools in Zone 2, 3 and 4.

Students who move from one geographical zone to the other in the City may request to remain in the school they presently are attending prior to change of address provided that:

- The minority/non-minority balance of the school is not adversely affected
- The parent provides transportation to and from school; or, the child's transportation needs can be accommodated by existing school bus routes.

Parents/Legal Guardians may request a school of choice outside the Zone in which they reside based on their child care needs provided that:

- There is space available at the grade level at the school.
- The minority/non-minority balance of the school is not adversely affected.
- The parent provides transportation to and from the school.

Assignment decisions considering this request will be made after July 1 of each year in order to allow those kindergarten children living within attendance zones to have adequate opportunity for school choice.

Every effort will be made to accommodate the parent's preference, within the system of priorities established in this policy. If it is not possible, for any reason, to grant one of the parent's choices, and the parent has reason to be dissatisfied with the child's assignment, that parent may file an appeal under Section 2.9 "Assignment Appeals Process."

b. Space Available:

Space available in a particular school, program or grade will be defined according to the policy in effect as to class size and instructional capacity, so long as it does not disrupt existing classes.

c. Special Needs of the Student:

Students requiring a special education program will be assigned according to the *TEAM* evaluation process, regardless of other provisions of this policy.

Students requiring and *agreeing to a* bilingual program (TBE) will be assigned to such a program, regardless of other provisions of this policy. Students who no longer require a substantially separate special needs placement and those students who have completed their bilingual program (mainstreamed) will be considered "new" students and will be subject to the provisions of student assignment policy. (See B 1 Section 6).

d. Sibling Preference:

All Students whose parents make timely applications for a particular school and already have other children attending a school of choice will be given a priority of assignment to that school for their racial group.

e. Minority Balance:

Transfers and new assignments, except as noted previously, must meet the requirements of minority/non-minority balance. The goal is to achieve a minority/non-minority percentage within each school, program and grade that reflects, within ten percentage points, above or below, the minority/non-minority percentage of the zone as a whole. Accordingly, all new assignments and transfers effective in the next school year will be assigned on a minority/non-minority basis calculated for each of the zones plus or minus 10%; these percentages will be posted by June 1st prior to the new school year.

f. Place of Residence:

All other priorities being equal; the student, living *within the school neighborhood street directory as defined by the Lowell School Committee*, will have priority of assignment for his/her racial group.

g. Random Lottery:

In the event that, after considering all other priorities, there are still more student applications than available space, the *Office of the Student Assignment Officer* will conduct a random lottery in order to fill the available space.

h. Waiting List:

A parent whose child cannot, for any reason, be assigned to the school or program of his/her first choice may have the child's name place on a waiting list for the first suitable vacancy. Students on the waiting list will have priority, in case of an available vacancy, over new entrants to the school system. Waiting lists will be subject to criteria of the student assignment policy and will be updated monthly.

2.5 Magnet Schools and Programs:

Applications for existing magnet schools must meet the same criteria as other applications. The applications procedure is the same. However, the Arts and City Magnet Schools will remain city wide schools of choice, while the Rogers, Bartlett, Green, Greenhalge and Lincoln will become Zone magnets.

2.6 Dissemination of Information:

Information about the student assignment policy and about various schools and programs for which parents may apply will be circulated as widely as possible and on a timely basis. In addition to announcements in the press and other media, parents may seek assistance from the Parent Information Center(s), and they will be encouraged to visit schools and otherwise make informed decisions before they register their children in the Lowell Public Schools. Information will be provided in English, Spanish, Portuguese and other languages as needed.

2.7 Certification of Address:

All entering students, and current students upon request, must submit a properly documented certification of address form to the Student Assignment Officer. The Student Assignment Officer will be responsible for verifying addresses as necessary.

2.8 Transfers: (As Amended)

Students who move from one address to another within the city of Lowell will not be required to transfer to another school during that current school year. However, the parent of such a student may need to request a transfer due to transportation conflict.

Once a student has attended a school, a parent who is dissatisfied with the assignment may request a transfer. Only one transfer per year will be allowed; such a transfer must be requested in writing through the prescribed Parent Information Center process no later than October 20th of the school year or no later than 45 calendar days after the initial placement of the student in the school.

No transfer will be made that violates minority/non-minority balance or to a school or program in which there is not sufficient space. A parent whose request for a transfer is denied may file for an appeal under 2.9 Assignment Appeals Process.

2.9 Assignment Appeals Process: (As Amended)

A parent whose child has not been assigned to one of their first three preferences and who is dissatisfied with the assignment or transfer, after exhausting all of the options of the Student Assignment Policy or having grounds to believe the policy was not followed, may file an appeal to an independent Student Assignment Appeals Board. The Board will review each case referred to it and will make timely decisions on the disposition of the appeal. It will not violate the desegregation related provisions of the policy. A copy of the decision will be sent to the parent(s) and the Student Assignment Officer. Proceedings of the Appeals Board will be recorded by a secretary, and all records will be maintained accurately.

IMPLEMENTATION

The new Centralized Enrollment Policy will be implemented in two phases. Phase One will be implemented during the 1987-88 school year and will impact students in grades 1-8 in the Lowell Public Schools. Phase Two will be implemented in the 1988-89 school year and will impact all K-8 students newly enrolling in the district. Prior to the implementation of Phase One, the District will establish the Office of Implementation that will be responsible for the school selection and assignment process. This office will be staffed by a Director, a Student Assignment Officer and a City-Wide Parent/Community Coordinator. The Office of Implementation will be responsible for the overall implementation of this plan.

ATTACHMENT II

Considerations for Assessing Student Assignment Plans August 1982

The following "common Sense" considerations have served as the basis for evaluating student assignment plans in Cambridge, Holyoke, Worcester, and other Massachusetts cities, as well as elsewhere in the United States. Any plan represents a compromise among these and other considerations; it is unrealistic to expect that each concern will be satisfied fully. Experience suggests that a prior agreement to take all of the considerations seriously makes it much more likely that all of the concerned parties will find a common ground which all can accept and live with.

It would be entirely appropriate to give some of the considerations heavier weight than other--so long as there is general consensus--or to agree to additional considerations which are special to a particular situation. It is much better to do so before starting to discuss the specifics of any plan. The list below is not rank-ordered. Each item will be explained.

stability	effective desegregation
continuity	clarity
conditional choice	freedom from manipulation
fairness of burden and benefits	"benignity"
consistency	appropriate time-frame
protection of untypical programs	potential for implementation
parent and community support	safety and security
encouragement of initiative	comprehensiveness

STABILITY

A stable plan builds upon what has already been accomplished as far as possible, since any changes--especially in a system which has experienced many--has a cost to parents, students, teachers and administrators, along with possible benefits.

In particular, sweeping condemnations of the present reality should be avoided. It is more useful to try to identify the specific elements which are having undesired effects, and to test whether there are some very specific and limited remedies available. This of course does not apply to situations in which a court has found that official action has led to system-wide segregation--and has not been corrected.

Generally, stability in most elements of a plan will result in continuity of education for most students; assurance of future stability encourages parents and staff to work for specific improvements, with some confidence that they will not have the benefits snatched away by unpredictable change.

CONTINUITY

Parents, students, and teachers should have some assurance that they will not be subject to on-going change in the future, except as they seek such changes. Necessary changes - as a result of school closings, for example - should be projected well in advance and the impact lessened by phased implementation (see below under "appropriate time-frame").

CONDITIONAL CHOICE

We expect to be able to make choices in many areas of our lives, and we value the opportunity to choose schools and programs. Development of magnet schools and other "option for excellence" (in Chicago's phrase) around the country has shown that the exercise of choice can increase commitment to the schools and excitement about education, as well as further desegregation and respond to the human diversity of students.

There is no reason that choice has to be limited to "magnet schools", as the Cambridge desegregation plan demonstrates in an unusually consistent way. On the other hand, choice must be "conditional"; that is, it must operate within constraints which prevent elitism, manipulation, resegregation, or catering to the educational interests of influential groups of parents while others are ignored. The subject of appropriate constraints on voluntary transfer and magnet plans requires careful attention to prevent abuse. Magnet schools are like a "miracle drug" with powerful side effects unless used appropriately.

FAIRNESS OF BURDEN AND BENEFITS

A plan should ideally place an equal burden of movement, of use of less adequate facilities, and of inconvenience upon students of each racial group and from each neighborhood affected. Unfortunately, the distribution of student population and of the more adequate facilities often results in a greater burden being borne by minority students, and this may be compounded by a perception that their parents are less likely to object or to leave the public schools. Fairness must therefore be a constant concern of those developing and implementing a student assignment plan, and such decisions as school closings or the location of new facilities should be made

with the intention of remedying, so far as possible, the effect of unequal burdens. One of the strengths of Boston's Unified Facilities Plan (October 1979) was its attempt to redress some of the inequities caused by earlier decisions.

Benefits should also be distributed fairly, including the opportunity to attend a magnet school. The recently-approved Springfield (MA) high school desegregation plan includes provisions to improve the access to vocationally-relevant programs for female and minority students by upgrading opportunities for all and aggressive recruitment of under-represented groups of students.

CONSISTENCY

While a sound plan may encourage diversity in the interest of choice, school-level initiative, and responsiveness to student diversity, it will also be concerned for consistency in curriculum, grade structure, administrative practices, and expectation. It is important to assure that students who change school for any reason do not lose educational ground, and to facilitate evaluation and accountability. A "foolish consistency" or rigidity should not be insisted upon, but the consistency test should be applied to every element of a plan and only set aside for good reason and with adequate safeguards.

PROTECTION OF UNTYPICAL PROGRAMS

Programs of bilingual instruction, special education, "enrichment," remediation and so forth should be fitted very carefully into any student assignment plan. Any impact upon such programs should be as the result of a policy decision and not of "unanticipated consequences" of student assignments. While each program has its own purpose and requirements, there are two primary considerations which apply as untypical (or "atypical") programs are fitted in: assuring that the program is as separate as it needs to be to meet its educational objectives, and assuring that the program--and its students--are no more separate than is strictly necessary.

For example, a bilingual program requires a sufficient number of classes, students and teachers to provide continuity and support and students needing a bilingual program require assurance that their assignment to one will have priority over other considerations. Some school systems have tried to meet these objectives by housing only bilingual students in leased facilities. Such an approach denies students the right to be integrated with others in all ways consistent with their educational program, and

complicates and retards appropriate mainstreaming on a phased-in basis.

This is a too-brief discussion of a complex issue which has been the subject of considerable attention by those responsible for such programs; their help should be sought in assessing any student assignment plan affecting untypical programs.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Choice has already been identified as a factor leading to commitment and support, but other factors must be taken into account as well. If, for example, many parents do not receive any of their choices, alienation will result; this argues for careful recruitment strategies which do not appear to offer opportunities which in fact do not exist. Magnet strategies which result in all of the students in a school being drawn city-wide may make it harder for parent support to coalesce. Procedural safeguards against manipulation may give the schools an impersonal tone which prevents the kind of negotiation and compromise out of which a common vision can emerge. How to be responsive without being subject to inappropriate influence is a problem which will not go away; a sound plan will anticipate this problem by building in flexibility wherever it is consistent with the other considerations.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF INITIATIVE

Just as influence and choice are incentives on the part of parents (and older students), so the rewarding of initiative is an incentive for outstanding performance from administrators and teachers. "School based management" is a valuable support for student assignment plans which allow transfers through magnet schools or "controlled enrollment."

Voluntary transfers into your school or classroom are themselves rewarding and they may result in more tangible rewards, such as a school staying open, or having its budget and staff increased, or even (in some systems) increased pay for the principal. By the same token, however, principals and teachers are often unwilling to "give up" students to other schools, and a sound plan which includes voluntary transfers must include a recruitment strategy which does not meet convert resistance at the school level.

EFFECTIVE DESEGREGATION

A sound student assignment plan will show how desegregation will be achieved or maintained; a difficulty arises in quantifying the degree of

desegregation necessary. Under Massachusetts law, Pennsylvania regulations, and requirements of some other jurisdictions, a fixed percentage of minority students is set as the maximum permissible. More commonly, as in the Boston desegregation orders, a variable percentage is set, linked to the overall proportion of each racial group in the system or district. Such definitions are of course subject to change.

At a more fundamental level, it is of paramount importance that neither a student assignment plan nor the operation of voluntary transfers have the effect of increasing racial isolation. A more subtle point is that an assignment plan should not fail to reduce minority isolation - other things being equal - or effectively prevent the reduction of minority isolation. In other words, a plan should not commit new official acts which segregate minority students.

An effective desegregation plan will assure that most if not all (because of special considerations) schools meet whatever desegregation requirement is set, and will include provisions for a flexible response to changing students population which limit resegregation.

CLARITY

While flexibility, options, and incorporation of what is already working are all desirable in a student assignment plan, it is also important that it possess a significant measure of clarity and simplicity so that parents and teachers can understand it, interpret it, and feel that no "inside information" is necessary to deal with its provisions. While this is difficult to accomplish, it argues against a variety of special arrangements and provisions.

FREEDOM FROM MANIPULATION

Any students assignment plan will be undermined--both legally and in parental support--if it is commonly believed that those with connections or inside information can manipulate it to their benefit. While this is an issue more of the integrity of implementation than of planning as such, it argues for strong internal monitoring if not centralization of transfer approvals, and for examination of each proposed element of the plan from the point of view of its potential for manipulation.

"BENIGNITY"

The student assignment plan should be "benign" in the sense that it does not cause harm to any aspect of the educational program. A key to the

outstanding success of the Springfield (1974) and Holyoke (1981) desegregation plans was that in each case the superintendent was able to assure parents that education would benefit rather than suffer--and took care to deliver on that promise. A plan developed by an outside agency is much more likely (through simple ignorance) to run afoul of educational program, and this is especially true if school officials have no stake in making it a success. A sound plan will be worked through in every aspect with educational leaders to assure that it strengthens instruction and support for students and that problems are anticipated and dealt with in advance.

APPROPRIATE TIME-FRAME

Recent experience suggests some value in thinking of a student assignment plan as progressive, taking advantage of the fact that 25% or more of students are in a new school each year. Rather than reassign students, with some inevitable disruption of instruction and relationships, it may be possible to use the "natural " disruption of movement from elementary to middle school, for example, to achieve the same desegregation effect over a period of years. Cambridge has made this approach the key to its desegregation plan by offering every new student a variety of options and then assigning on a basis which supports desegregation.

It is fair to say that, in the past, the Massachusetts Board of Education has more than once rejected phased-in plans which seemed to offer undue delays or to place the greatest burden upon the youngest children. There are some problems with phasing, including administrative complexities, but it may be time to take a fresh look at how to use the natural turnover of students to achieve or stabilize desegregation, while assuring continuity to individual students.

Looking at assignments as a process over several years than as an event at one point in time is especially useful in connection with school closings, which can generally be anticipated for several years. Arguably, incoming classes should not be assigned to schools from which they will not be able to graduate.

POTENTIAL FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Obvious as it may seem, planners do not always take into account the capability of a school system to implement a particular plan, or the leadership and incentives which may be required to implement it effectively. A new magnet plan, for example, may depend upon development of a range of educational options only vaguely understood by those who will be

responsible for carrying them out, and convincing parents and students that they should select options which are outside of their previous expectations. It may assume that teachers and principals will encourage parents to send their children to other schools (see above), or that complex new transportation arrangements will be made and carried out successfully. Any plan should be tested against the capacity of the system, and should incorporate provisions to increase that capacity as appropriate.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

In the guidelines for development of racial balance plans which the Board of Education adopted nearly a decade ago, the safety of students was given a weight equal to all other factors combined. No plan can possibly succeed unless parents and students feel assured of personal safety and uninterrupted opportunities for learning. Unfortunately many urban schools--with or without desegregation--do not provide a safe learning environment; this is an administrative problem rather than a constraint upon desegregation, and requires vigorous action by school and city officials.

Safety is a planning consideration with regard to hazardous traffic or neighborhood conditions for students walking to school; this is where "bussing" can be a solution.

COMPREHENSIVENESS

In general, a student assignment plan which inconveniences all students somewhat will be preferable to a plan which inconveniences some a great deal and others not at all. In the Springfield and Holyoke plans mentioned above, all elementary students attend their "neighborhood school" for several years and another school for several years. This means that there is no advantage to living in one place rather than another, and that all students and parents share the same experience of participation. Such plans are generally very stable and--if based upon establishing primary and upper elementary schools--may permit improvements in instruction and staffing economies.

On the other hand, plans which involve all students for part of their school careers tend to require more transportation expense, and to disrupt schools which are already stably integrated for neighborhood or other reasons. Worcester--among other cities--has chosen a more "surgical" approach which moves a minimum of students consistent with desegregation objectives, and will require on-going adjustment. For a large system with a fairly small proportion on minority students, this was a reasonable choice.

SUMMARY

This brief review of considerations which may enter into the evaluation of student assignment plans is intended to show that there is nothing mysterious about desegregation planning; it is a matter of common sense applied to a sufficiently broad range of considerations.

The "perfect plan" has never yet been developed, and most plans, when carried out, reveal flaws which were not apparent in the planning stage. Good planning, taking into account a broad range of considerations, should identify most problems in advance, and involve conscious decision to accept weaknesses in one respect rather than in another.

A good plan, in the final analysis, is one which makes sense as a framework for the educational mission of the schools over the long term.

Since integration and equal access are components of this educational mission, a good plan will bring minority and non-minority students together in a variety of educational settings.

Since consistent and appropriate instruction are also components of the educational mission, a good plan will seek stability, continuity, and consistency of expectations and quality of instruction.

Since urban education is carried out in a constantly changing environment which makes constantly fresh demands, a good plan builds in flexibility, encourages initiative, and offers significant choices.

Since the schools function in a society which has limited opportunities for minority and female students, and indeed has convinced many to limit their own expectations, a good plan will work to broaden expectations and opportunities.

Attachment III

What is "centralized enrollment"?

Centralized enrollment is a way of assigning students to schools that takes a number of important considerations into account. For example, where does the child live? What school do the child's older brothers and sisters attend? What kind of educational program will best meet the child's needs? How can each school have a mix of students of different racial/ethnic groups?

How does it work?

Under centralized enrollment, the parents or guardians of every child newly registering in the Lowell Public Schools, or seeking a change of school for any reason, would be asked to indicate preferences from a list of schools at the appropriate grade level. The School Department would then assign the child based on considerations that have been approved by the School Committee, such as those listed above.

Does this do away with the "neighborhood school"?

Several thousand Lowell Students--20% of the enrollment in grades K-8 already attend school outside of the attendance zones for various reasons, including the choices of their parents. This proportion would increase somewhat under centralized enrollment, but most students would continue to attend a school within walking distance of their homes.

How would where you live be taken into account?

The system of assigning students would be so designed that students living within a quarter of a mile of each school would be guaranteed access to any space available, at any grade level.

We live further than that from my child's school. What about us?

Any child already attending a school from the zone established for that school by the School Committee would be guaranteed the right to remain there through the highest grade provided.

Will my preschooler be able to go there too?

Younger brothers and sisters would be guaranteed the right to attend school with their older siblings, grade levels and space permitting.

What happens if my child doesn't get any of the schools I select?

Experience in other cities is that ninety percent or more of children will get one of their first three choices. Some children do not, so it is the responsibility of the School Department to assure that every school provides a quality of education acceptable to any parent.

How will I get information about the different schools?

Parent Information is a very important aspect of centralized enrollment. The state will provide funding for a vigorous parent information effort, including outreach workers, printed information and open houses. The media will cooperate in assuring that parents have full and honest information.

How will this affect the stability of my child's schooling?

Centralized enrollment assure more stability for students, since they are guaranteed the right to continue in the same school unless their parents seek a different assignment.

What are the educational benefits of centralized enrollment?

Because centralized enrollment gives parents more choices, it provides an incentive to make every school educationally effective. It also permits the staff of a school to work with parents to define a distinctive approach to excellence, without having to please everyone. Several recent national reports have stressed the educational significance of each school having a clear mission. Within public education, parent choice makes this possible.

Aren't there other ways to desegregate schools?

Certainly. In Boston, for example, small geographic areas were assigned to different schools on an involuntary basis, in such a way that each school had a desegregated enrollment (at least on paper). After a dozen years of experience with this approach, however, many observers feel that a system of assignments like that being proposed for Lowell would be more effective, stable, and popular with parents.

How would centralized enrollment affect bilingual and special education?

Students would continue to be assigned to bilingual and special education classes on the basis of their need for that type of education. Mainstreamed special education students would receive supplemental services in the school to

which they were assigned. Substantially separate special education classes and bilingual classes would be located in appropriate school facilities; as a result of centralized enrollment and assignment, such classes would not be displaced by neighborhood population change.

What if I don't like the school my child is assigned to ?

Whether you selected the school your child was assigned to or not, you would have the opportunity to seek a different assignment under the school system's transfer policy. Only those transfers would be permitted that were consistent with the policy, of course. Primary considerations would be availability of space at the appropriate grade level, and impact of the transfer on racial balance.

How is centralized enrollment different from "magnet schools"?

Centralized enrollment gives every school the opportunity to develop distinctive programs and approaches to excellence, like a magnet school. It would, however, be more like Lowell's "district magnet schools" (such as the Rogers and Greenhalge) than like the city-wide magnet schools, since a large proportion of the enrollment of each school would be likely to come from nearby residential areas.

What does "pairing" mean for the schools affected?

Quite simply, that two school buildings serve a single population of students, with certain grades attending school in one facility and certain grades in the other.

Why are schools paired?

Pairing is a simple and fair way to achieve school desegregation and to provide equal educational opportunities, without breaking up classes or reassigning students on the basis of their address or their race.

What are the advantages of pairing?

There are definite educational advantages in enrolling more children at each grade level. This permits more variety and individual treatment. It also means, for example, that children who speak a language other than English will have more opportunities to be with children who speak English at home, in addition to taking part in a bilingual program. For children whose only language is English, it creates the possibility (with the right educational leadership and planning) of exposure to a second language and culture.

Are there any disadvantages?

There can be. Without strong leadership and planning, pairing can result in a loss of continuity between the primary and upper elementary grades. While pairing represents an opportunity to enrich education for all the children involved, that will not happen automatically. Staff time for planning and team-building are an important element of successful pairing.

Would any resources be available to help make a success of pairing?

Yes. The Massachusetts Department of Education would make funds available for staff planning and coordination, over the summer and during the coming year.

Has pairing been used successfully in other cities?

Certainly. In Springfield, for example, all elementary schools have been paired or "grouped" (with several primary schools to one upper elementary school) for twelve years. The educational results have been very positive, and Springfield is a desegregation success story. In Holyoke elementary schools were "grouped" five years ago, and instruction has improved significantly. Cambridge paired two schools seven years ago, and Lowell paired the Moore Street and Cardinal O'Connell schools last year.

Would pairing be permanent?

Not necessarily. Lowell's Long Range Plan will include recommendations for a uniform grade structure to apply after completion of a school construction and renovation program.



Office of Educational Equity

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Superintendent Henry Mroz
cc: Commissioner Raynolds, Bob Blumenthal, Joe McKeigue,
and George Tsapatsaris
FROM: Michael Alves and Charles Glenn *uq*
DATE: December 16, 1987
RE: Lowell Student Assignment Modification *ll*

We have reviewed your proposed change in the Lowell Student Assignment Policy as submitted to the Office of Educational Equity on October 29, 1987. The sole modification concerns establishing school specific feeder patterns for students matriculating from elementary to intermediate or junior high school grade levels. The purpose of this change is to provide stability of assignment and reduce the necessity of parents to undergo the process of having to reapply for their child's upper grade assignment.

We support this change, provided that the Student Assignment Officer continues to enforce the desegregative and administrative controls of the Lowell Desegregation Plan. In short, such assignment would be subject to both available space and actual desegregation impact.

Amendment #1



Pawtucket Public Schools
Pawtucket, Massachusetts 01852

George N. Tsapatsaris,
Project Director

89 Appleton Street
Tel 617 / ~~XXXXXX~~
~~XXXXXX~~ 937-7614

M E M O

To: Dr. Charles Glenn, Director
Bureau of Educational Equity

From: George N. Tsapatsaris, Project Director

Date: October 29, 1987

Subject: ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED FOR
SEPTEMBER, 1988

Dear Dr. Glenn:

In planning the registration for 1988 of pupils currently in the school system, and who will be completing their final grade in the particular school that they presently attend, I am requesting permission to implement the following procedures:

I

Schools in Zone I be sub-divided and grouped into school districts as follows:

District I - Zone I:

Green School (K-3) - - - → Bartlett School (K-8)

District II - Zone I:

Pawtucket Memorial (K-6) - - - → McAvinnue School (K-8)

District III - Zone I:

Pine Street School (K-3) - - - → Morey School (K-5)

Morey School (K-5)

Washington School (K-5) - - - → Daley School (6-8)

Lincoln School (K-5)

Molloy School (K-5)

II

Schools in Zone II be sub-divided and grouped into school districts as follows:

District I - Zone II:

Ames (k-2) - - - → Colburn (2-5) - - - → Rogers (K-8)

District II - Zone II:

Shaughnessy School (K-5) - - - → Butler School (6-8)
Moore Street (K-1) - - - → Cardinal O'Connell (2-5) - - - → Butler (6-8)

District III - Zone II:

Riverside (K-2) - - - → Jos. Pyne (3-6) - - - → Moody (7-8)
Leblanc (K-6) - - - → Moody (7-8)
Reilly (K-6) - - - → Moody (7-8)

District IV - Zone II:

Varnum School (K-4) - - - → Robinson (5-8)
Greenhalge School (K-4) - - - → Robinson (5-8)

Under this proposed plan, students already in attendance at the Green School (K-3) would automatically proceed (upon completion of grade 3) to the Bartlett School. (for example)

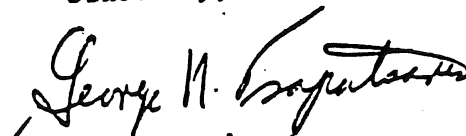
This procedure would cut down the number of times a student would need to be reassigned at the Parent Information Center. The only students who would be processed and assigned through the Parent Information Center would be:

1. New students to Lowell Public Schools, including new Kindergarten registrants.
2. Students that are mainstreamed out of the Bilingual program and the Spec. Ed. program.
3. Students who have moved out of their district and/or Zone.
4. Students requesting a transfer.

It should be clearly understood that we will at all times endeavor to meet the majority/minority percentage that the district is trying to attain at each school and within their respective zone.

Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Project Director

GNT/pr

cc: Michael Alves

P.S. This memo supersedes our previous memo of 10/5/87.



Office of Educational Equity
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169

April 14, 1989

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: George Tsapatsaris
FROM: Charles Glenn *CG*
RE: Modifications of Lowell Desegregation Plan

This is to confirm that the modifications outlined in your memoranda of May 2, 1988 to Michael Alves are consistent with the Lowell Desegregation Plan and acceptable to the Massachusetts Department of Education.

cc: Joseph McKeigue

Enclosures

Amendment #2



Lowell Public Schools
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

George N. Tsapatsaris
Project Director

89 Appleton Street
Tel. 937-7614

To: Michael Alves
Office of Educational Equity

From: George N. Tsapatsaris, Project Director

Date: May 2, 1988

Subject: AMENDMENT #2 TO THE VOLUNTARY DESEGREGATION PLAN
Further Clarification Pertaining to Transfers Within the
Lowell school System as a Result of Change of Address

Dear Mike:

During the present school year, the student assignment officer has had many requests by parents who had a change of address for the opportunity for their children to remain in a particular school that they have been attending which could not be accommodated due to the fact that they moved to a new zone.

In planning the registration for 1988/89, I would like to recommend adding the following to section 2.4, paragraph a. (Parental Preference), on page 8:

Students who move from one geographical zone to the other in the City may request to remain in the school they presently are attending prior to the change of address provided that:

1. the majority/minority balance of the school is not adversely affected.
2. The parent provides transportation to and from school; or, the child's transportation needs can be accommodated by existing school bus routes.

Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

George N. Tsapatsaris
Project Director

GNT/pr

cc: Dr. Charles Glenn



Office of Educational Equity

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183

May 1, 1989

M E M O R A N D U M

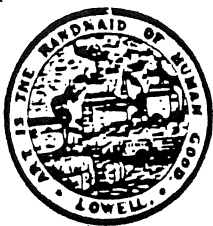
TO: George Tsapatsaris
FROM: Charles Glenn *CG*
RE: Modifications of Lowell Desegregation Plan

This is to confirm that the modifications outlined in your memorandum of May 13, 1988 to Michael Alves are consistent with the Lowell Desegregation Plan and acceptable to the Massachusetts Department of Education.

cc: Joseph McKeigue

Enclosure

Amendment #3



Lowell Public Schools
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

George N. Tsapatsaris
Project Director

89 Appleton Street
Tel. 937-7614

To: Michael Alves
Office of Educational Equity

From: George N. Tsapatsaris, Project Director

Date: May 13, 1988

Subject: AMENDMENT #3 TO THE VOLUNTARY DESEGREGATION PLAN
Further Clarification Pertaining to Bilingual and
Special Education Transfers Within the Lowell School
System as a result of Mainstreaming

Dear Mike:

During the present school year, the Student Assignment Officer has had many requests by parents whose children have been recommended for mainstreaming from either the Bilingual or the Special Education programs. The request by the parents has been for the opportunity for their children to remain in a particular school where they were receiving Bilingual or Special Ed services. In many cases the particular school was in a different zone from their residency.

In planning for registration for the 1988/89 school year, I would like to request adding the following to paragraph 6 on page 6 of the revised Desegregation Plan (6/11/87):

Students who are being recommended for mainstreaming from Bilingual and Special Education classes may request to remain in the school they presently are attending, regardless of Zone, providing that:

1. space is available;
2. the majority/minority balance of the school is not adversely affected;
3. the parent provides transportation to and from school; or, the child's transportation needs can be accommodated by existing school bus routes.

Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

George N. Tsapatsaris
Project Director

GNT/pr
cc: Dr. Charles Glenn



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

Tel: (508) 441-3718
Fax: (508) 441-3761

To: Dr. Charles Glenn, Office of Educational Equity

From: Peter S. Stamas, Acting Project Director

Date: June 28, 1991

In re: AMENDMENT #4 - LOWELL VOLUNTARY REVISED DESEGREGATION AND
EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN - CHILD CARE ISSUES AND SCHOOL
ASSIGNMENTS.

=====

Dear Dr. Glenn:

During the past four years, the Student Assignment Officer has had many requests for cross-Zone school assignments based on the child care needs of working parents.

Current assignment decisions, based on the guidelines of the Desegregation and Educational Improvement Plan, have children assigned to school in the Zone in which their parent/legal guardian resides. For the school year 1991-1992 we are seeking to amend Section 2.4, paragraph a. (Parents Preference), on page 8 by adding that part shown in bold print as follows:

a. Parental Preference:

At the time of registration, or at the time a transfer is requested, a parent may select three or more schools, in order of preference. These may include schools within their zone or the city-wide magnet schools.

Parents/legal guardians may request a school of choice outside of the Zone in which they reside based on their child care needs provided that:

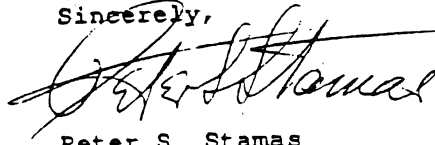
- There is space available at the grade level at the school.
- The minority/non-minority balance of the school is not adversely affected.
- The parent provides transportation to and from the school.

Assignment decisions considering this request will be made after July 1 of each year in order to allow those kindergarten children living within attendance zones to have adequate opportunity for school choice.

Every effort will be made to accommodate the parent's preference, within the system of priorities established in this policy. If it is not possible, for any reason, to grant one of the parent's choices, and the parent has reason to be dissatisfied with the child's assignment, that parent may file an appeal under Section 2.9 "Assignment Appeals Process."

Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter S. Stamas", written over a horizontal line.

Peter S. Stamas
Acting Project Director

PSS/jc

cc: George N. Tsapatsaris, Superintendent
Rosemary Leblanc, Student Assignment Officer



Office of Educational Equity

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Education

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183

April 4, 1992

Mr. Peter S. Stamas
636 Project Director
Lowell Public Schools
89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Dear Mr. Stamas:

We have reviewed your Amendment #1 "Assignment of Students Currently Enrolled for September 1992" document and we approve of your plans for next year. The opening of new buildings and additions should improve your facilities for students and staff during this school year and certainly for next September.

We are pleased that you continue to make the integration of students a primary concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doreen H. Wilkinson".

Doreen H. Wilkinson
Executive Director

DHW:ek

cc: Superintendent George N. Tsapatsaris
Paula T. Willis
Maureen M. Wark



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

Tel: (508) 441-3718

Fax: (508) 441-3761

To: Dr. Doreen Wilkinson
Office of Educational Equity
From: Peter S. Stamas, Project Director
Date: March 13, 1992

Subject: ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS CURRENTLY ENROLLED FOR SEPTEMBER, 1992
AMENDMENT #1 (Revision)

Dear Dr. Wilkinson:

In planning the registration for September 1992 of pupils currently in the school system, and who will be completing their final grade in the particular school that they presently attend, I am requesting permission to implement the following revision to the previously approved feeder pattern (see attached) as follows:

ZONE I

Green School (Grades K-3) : -----> Bartlett School (Grades K-8)

*Bailey School (Grades PreK-4))
Molloy School (Grades K-5))
Morey School (Grades K-5)) -----> Daley School (Grades 5-8)
Washington School (Grades K-4))

Brady School (Grades K-3) -----> Morey School (Grades K-5)

Pawt. Memorial School (Grades K-4) -----> *An Wang School (Grades 5-8)

*The Bailey School has replaced the Lincoln School;
The Wang School has replaced the McAvinnue School.

ZONE II

Card. O'Connell School (Grades K-4))
J. G. Pyne School (Grades K-4)) -----> Butler School (Grades 5-8)
Shaughnessy School (Grades PreK-4))

Greenhalge School (Grades K-4))
Varnum School (Grades K-4)) -----> Robinson School (Grades 5-8)

**Moody Elementary School (Grades K-4) -----> Rogers School (Grades K-8)

Leblanc School (Grades (K-4))
Reilly School (Grades K-4))----->**Sullivan School (Grades 5-8)

****The Sullivan School has replaced the Moody;
The Moody has replaced the Ames and Colburn Schools.**

For Example: under this revised plan, students already in attendance at the Green School (K-3) would automatically proceed (Upon completion of grade 3) to the Bartlett School.

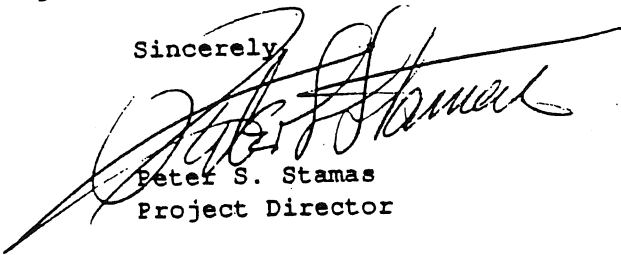
This procedure would cut down the number of times a student would need to be reassigned at the Parent Information Center. The only students who would be processed and assigned through the Parent Information would be:

1. New Students to Lowell Public Schools, including new Kindergarten registrants.
2. Students that are mainstreamed out of the Bilingual program and the Special Education Program.
3. Students who have moved out of their district and/or Zone.
4. Students requesting a transfer.

It should be clearly understood that we will at all times endeavor to meet the non-minority/minority percentage that the district is trying to attain at each school and within their respective Zone.

Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

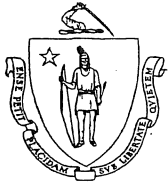


Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

PSS/jc

Attachment

cc: Paula Willis
Maureen Wark



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

Office of Educational Equity

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183

April 15, 1993

Mr. Peter S. Stamas
636 Project Director
Lowell Public Schools
89 Appleton Street
Lowell, MA 01852

Dear Mr. Stamas,

We approve the Second Revision of Amendment #1 of Lowell's Student Assignment Plan. We expect these revised assignments will be implemented for students enrolled as of September 1993.

Congratulations upon the completion of so much of your school construction program under your desegregation plan. We hope to be able to visit your new facilities soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Doreen H. Wilkinson".

Doreen H. Wilkinson
Executive Director

DHW:sf



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

Tel: (508) 441-3718
Fax: (508) 441-3761

To: Dr. Doreen Wilkinson
Office of Educational Equity
From: Peter S. Stamas, Project Director
Date: March 8, 1993
SUBJECT: SECOND REVISION OF AMENDMENT #1: REVISED ASSIGNMENTS OF
STUDENTS ENROLLED FOR SEPTEMBER, 1993

Dear Dr. Wilkinson:

As a consequence of the extensive school building construction and renovation program currently in place in the City of Lowell, we are once again making another adjustment in our previously approved feeder program pattern. As expected these adjustments will occur from time to time until the building program is completed (sometime around September 1994). We will, of course, keep you advised of any revision and seek your approval.

The second revision to Amendment #1 is as follows:

ZONE I

MURKLAND SCHOOL (Grades PreK-4))
(Made up of grades K-4 formerly)
assigned to the Green &)-----> BARTLETT SCHOOL
Bartlett Schools) (Grades 5-8)
MOLLOY SCHOOL (Grades K-4))

BAILEY SCHOOL (Grades PreK-4))
MOREY SCHOOL (Grades K-5)) -----> DALEY SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)
WASHINGTON SCHOOL (Grades K-4))

PAWT. MEMORIAL SCHOOL (Grades K-4)-----> AN WANG SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)

ZONE II

CARD. O'CONNELL SCHOOL (Grades K-4))
J. G. PYNE SCHOOL (Grades K-4))-----> BUTLER SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)
SHAUGHNESSY SCHOOL (Grades PreK-4))

GREENHALGE SCHOOL (Grades K-4))
MCAULIFFE SCHOOL (Grades PreK-4))-----> ROBINSON SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)
(Formerly the Varnum School)

LINCOLN SCHOOL (Grades PreK-4))
(Made up of grades PreK-4 formerly)
assigned to the Brady and Rogers) ----> ROGERS SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)
schools))
MOODY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Grades K-4))

LEBLANC SCHOOL (Grades (K-4))
REILLY SCHOOL (Grades K-4))-----> SULLIVAN SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)

PLEASE NOTE: As of September, 1993 the Brady School and the Varnum School will no longer be in service.

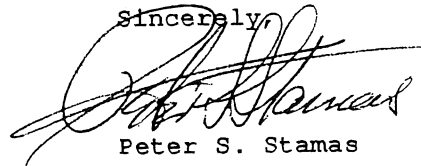
This procedure would cut down the number of times a student would need to be reassigned at the Parent Information Center. The only students who would be processed and assigned through the Parent Information would be:

1. New Students to Lowell Public Schools, including new Kindergarten registrants.
2. Students that are mainstreamed out of the Bilingual program and the Special Education Program.
3. Students who have moved out of their district and/or Zone.
4. Students requesting a transfer.

It should be clearly understood that we will at all times endeavor to meet the non-minority/minority percentage that the district is trying to attain at each school and within their respective Zone.

Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

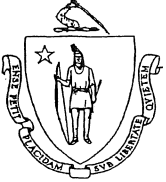


Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

PSS/jc

Attachment (First Revision to Amendment #1)

cc: Paula Willis
Maureen Wark



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

Office of Educational Equity

1385 Hancock Street, Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-5183

April 26, 1993

Mr. Peter S. Stamas
Chapter 636 Project Director
Lowell Public Schools
89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Dear Mr. Stamas:

Thank you for making the requested changes to your recent amendment #5. It now continues to encourage parental freedom of choice.

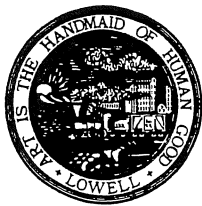
Your Amendment #5 to Lowell's Revised Voluntary Desegregation and Educational Improvement Plan which deals with transfers within the Lowell Public School System is acceptable to this office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doreen H. Wilkinson".

Doreen H. Wilkinson
Executive Director

DHW:ek



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

This version
was revised
after a telecon
w/ M. Wark
see the memo of
the same subject
dated April 23, 1993

Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

Tel: (508) 441-3718
Fax: (508) 441-3761

To: Dr. Doreen Wilkinson
Office of Educational Equity
From: Peter S. Stamas, Project Director
Date: April 14, 1993
SUBJECT: **AMENDMENT #5 TO LOWELL'S REVISED VOLUNTARY DESEGREGATION
AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN - Transfers within the
Lowell Public School System**

The numbers of students requesting multiple transfers within the same school year has risen steadily since the implementation of the desegregation plan. Parents who request these transfers have many reasons for so doing. Some request a change of school because they have moved to a different part of the city. Some request a transfer in order to have a child attend the same school as a sibling. Others request a transfer because they are dissatisfied with the school their child is attending for a variety of personal reasons. Some are quick to request a transfer if their child has been subjected to disciplinary action by a teacher or principal.

Parents requesting a transfer for their child because of personal reasons are currently allowed to do so at any time during the school year. Children have been placed in 2, 3, and sometimes 4 different schools during an academic year because of parental requests. This practice is not only educationally unsound, but is also psychologically, socially, and emotionally unsound for the children involved, and it is also disruptive to the learning processes of the children in the classrooms to which the student is newly assigned.

After reviewing the desegregation plan and its statement on transfers, we would like to propose the following change which received approval by the Lowell School Committee on March 24, 1993.

Amend Section 2.8 Transfers (page 11) by adding the sentence shown in bold print and underlined in the following:

2.8 Transfers:

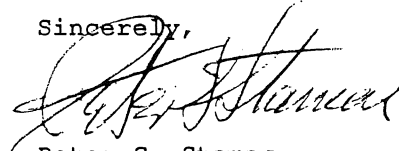
"Once a student has attended a school, a parent who is dissatisfied with the assignment may request a transfer. **Only one transfer per year will be allowed; such a transfer must be requested in writing through the prescribed Parent Information Center process no later than October 20th of the school year or no later than 45 calendar days after the initial placement of the student in the school year.**

NO transfer will be made that violates minority balance or to a school or program in which there is not sufficient space. A parent whose request for a transfer is denied may file for an appeal under 2.8 Assignment Appeal Process.

Students who move from one address to another within the city of Lowell will not be required to transfer to another school during that current school year. However, the parent of such a student may need to request a transfer due to transportation conflict."

Once again we would like to point out that the Appeal Process under section 2.8 is always open to a parent whose request for a child's placement or transfer has been denied.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter S. Stamas", written over a horizontal line.

Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

PSS/jc



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

Tel: (508) 441-3718
Fax: (508) 441-3761

To: Dr. Doreen Wilkinson
Office of Educational Equity
From: Peter S. Stamas, Project Director
Date: April 23, 1993
SUBJECT: AMENDMENT #5 TO LOWELL'S REVISED VOLUNTARY DESEGREGATION
AND EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN - Transfers within the
Lowell Public School System

After reviewing the desegregation plan and its statement on transfers, we would like to propose the following change which received approval by the Lowell School Committee on March 24, 1993.

Amend Section 2.8 Transfers (page 11) by adding the second sentence "only one transfer ... in the school year" as shown in the second paragraph of the following:

2.8 Transfers:

Students who move from one address to another within the city of Lowell will not be required to transfer to another school during that current school year. However, the parent of such a student may need to request a transfer due to transportation conflict.

Once a student has attended a school, a parent who is dissatisfied with the assignment may request a transfer. Only one transfer per year will be allowed; such a transfer must be requested in writing through the prescribed Parent Information Center process no later than October 20th of the school year or no later than 45 calendar days after the initial placement of the student in the school year.

NO transfer will be made that violates minority balance or to a school or program in which there is not sufficient space. A parent whose request for a transfer is denied may file for an appeal under ~~2.8~~ Assignment Appeal Process.


2.9

The Lowell Public Schools will do everything they can to keep a child in school and to encourage attendance in school everyday even to the extent of accommodating unusual circumstances of school-home location issues or matters of transportation.

Once again we would like to point out that the Appeal Process under section 2.8 is always open to a parent whose request for a child's placement or transfer has been denied.

Sincerely,

Peter S. Stamas
Project Director



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023 • (617) 388-3300

MEMORANDUM

TO: Commissioner Antonucci
FROM: *DHW*
Doreen H. Wilkinson
DATE: June 22, 1993
RE: Amendment to Lowell Desegregation Plan

LOWELL

The Board-approved student assignment plan in Lowell requires amendment to respond to the completion of school construction which was funded by the state under Lowell's Desegregation Plan. The proposed changes are outlined in the attached memorandum.

1. In Part One, to start in September 1993, the system adds a Zone 3 to their previous attendance zones, plus their citywide Magnet School Zone.
2. In Part Two, to start in September 1994, they will add an additional school to Zone 3.

These changes have been approved by the Lowell Public School Committee.

I recommend approval of this amendment as soon as possible so students and staff can be informed of the changes prior to the close of school on June 25, 1993. These amendments usually go to the Board for approval, but I understand that you have authority to take action on behalf of the Board between the June and September regular meetings. If you approve the amendment, I will notify the Superintendent immediately.

Please call me if you have any questions. Thank you.

DHW:ek

Attachment

oh
RWS
6/23/93



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

George N. Tsapatsaris
Superintendent

Tel: (508) 937-7647
Tel: (508) 937-7614
FAX: (508) 441-3761

To: Dr. Doreen Wilkinson
From: George N. Tsapatsaris, Superintendent
Date: June 14, 1993

**SUBJECT: THIRD REVISION TO AMENDMENT #1 --
A REVISED FOUR-ZONE STRUCTURE
(Part One and Part Two)**

We respectfully submit for your review and subsequent approval the final phase of our student assignment structure as it has been evolving around the school construction and renovation programs over the last 5 to 6 years as approved by the State Board of Education as Part of Lowell's Desegregation plan.

The extensive 131 million dollar school construction and renovation program for the Lowell Public Schools, which is an important part of the Revised Voluntary Desegregation and Educational Plan, is entering its final phase. As indicated previously, as this building program has proceeded it required adjustments in our central enrollment plan¹ for students. We have attached hereto a new, two-part, Four-Zone student assignment structure. The Lowell School Committee after studying this latest revision for several months voted at its meeting of May 26, 1993 to approve both Part One (for the school year 1993-94, starting September, 1993) and Part Two (Starting in September, 1994).

1. In Part One, 1993-94, (see Inclosure #1) we have added a Zone 3 to our previous enrollment structure by taking away the Rogers School and the Moody School from Zone 2 and the Lincoln School from Zone 1. The Molloy School will now feed the Bartlett School in Zone 1.
2. In Part Two, starting September, 1994, (see Inclosure #2) we will add to Zone 3 by taking the Cardinal O'Connell school away from Zone 2.
3. These changes will address two major concerns:
 - a. The resulting student assignment restructuring will increase the number of options from which parents can choose for their children which in turn facilitates the equitable and balanced distribution of minority status and non-minority status students by the Student Placement Officer.
 - * All of Zone 1 students will now also be able to choose schools in Zone 3 and in the Citywide Zone.
 - * All of Zone 2 students will now also be able to choose schools in Zone 3 and in the Citywide Zone.

¹ Inclosure #3 is a copy of the last previous revision to Amendment #1

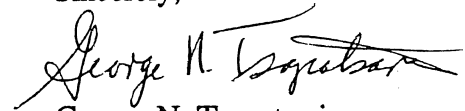
- * Children in the traditionally defined districts of the Rogers, Moody and O'Connell schools (Zone 3) will still retain the right to choose from among the Zone 2 schools.
- * Children in the traditionally defined district of the Lincoln School will still retain the right to choose from among the Zone 1 Schools.

Starting with September 1994, the McAvinnue School, the last of the newly constructed Schools, will be ready for occupancy. At that point in time, except for the Arts Magnet (K-8) and City Magnet (K-8) Schools, the School system will have completed its evolution to PreK-4, 5-8, and 9-12 alignment.

Of course, all city residents still maintain the option of selecting Citywide Zone schools as their choice.

It is our feeling that these revisions should serve our school system well in meeting Lowell's Revised Voluntary Desegregation and Educational Plan for several years into the future. Therefore we respectfully seek your approval of this revision.

Sincerely,



George N. Tsapatsaris
Superintendent

PSS/jc



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Henry J. Mroz Administration Office
89 Appleton Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

Peter S. Stamas
Project Director

Tel: (508) 441-3718
Fax: (508) 441-3761

To: Superintendent George N. Tsapatsaris
From: Peter S. Stamas, Project Director *PS Stamas*
Date: September 8, 1995

Re: **Motion by School Committeeman Timothy Golden: That the Superintendent report by the next meeting on the feasibility of implementing a school choice policy in which neighborhood residents receive preference in the enrollment of their children in their neighborhood school.**

Attached please find Section 2.4 (as amended) which was extracted from Lowell's Voluntary Desegregation and Curriculum Improvement Plan adopted in 1987.

As you will notice paragraph f. lists **Place of Residence** as a priority. I would propose that in applying this priority we use the following procedure.

After the priorities spelled out in paragraphs b, c, d, and e have been addressed, then priority "f" apply's. Those children who live in the traditionally defined neighborhood district of their respective school shall be given preference over all other children as it applies to the acceptance list, the sibling wait list, and the non-sibling wait list.

Presently with respect to paragraph "f" the "place of residence" qualification was based on the Zone in which the child lives. Under this proposed modification the "place of residence" qualification would be based on the neighborhood in which the child resides.

I believe that this revision addresses the concern for neighborhood preference while at the same time it remains in conformance with the Voluntary Desegregation Plan.

EFFECT OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE ACTION WHICH REALIGNS THE
SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD DEFINITION AND STREET DIRECTORY
AND WHICH REDEFINES THE STUDENT PLACEMENT CRITERION
(#2.4f) ENTITLED, "PLACE OF RESIDENCE" IN THE CENTRALIZED
ASSIGNMENT POLICY.

Upon approval by the Lowell School Committee on February 14, 1996, the following clarifications to the guidelines for the Centralized Assignment Policy take effect:

- The Lowell School Committee has realigned the street-directory definition for each of the elementary and middle schools in Lowell effective the School Year 1996-1997.

- The placement criterion (#2.4f of the Lowell Voluntary Revised Desegregation and Educational Plan - approved June 11, 1987) is further clarified so as to give priority in this category to those students who reside within the given school neighborhood as defined by the realigned street directory adopted by the Lowell School Committee on February 14, 1996.

- These modifications will take effect for the school year 1996-1997 and would apply to the following:

1. New Students to Lowell Public Schools, including new Kindergarten registrants.
2. Students that are mainstreamed out of the TBE program or the Special Education Program.
3. Students who change address and who move out of their previous school neighborhood and/or Zone.

- Students already assigned for the 1995-1996 school year or those already entered on waiting lists in 1995-1996 will be grandfathered.

As a result of these clarifications section 2.4 "Criteria for Assignment" of the Lowell Voluntary Revised Desegregation and Educational Improvement Plan will read as follows: (italicized section reflect the resulting clarifications)

2.4 Criteria for Assignment: (As Amended)

The criteria for assigning students will be defined as follows:

a. Parental Preference: At the time of registration, or at the time a transfer is requested, a parent may select three or more schools, in order of preference as follows:

- For students residing in Zone 1 and the Lincoln School neighborhood, parents may choose schools in Zones 1, 3 and 4.
- For students residing in Zone 2 and the Cardinal O'Connell and Moody Schools neighborhoods, parents may choose schools in Zone 2, 3 and 4.

Students who move from one geographical zone to the other in the City may request to remain in the school they presently are attending prior to change of address provided that:

- The minority/non-minority balance of the school is not adversely affected
- The parent provides transportation to and from school; or, the child's transportation needs can be accommodated by existing school bus routes.

Parents/Legal Guardians may request a school of choice outside the Zone in which they reside based on their child care needs provided that:

- There is space available at the grade level at the school.
- The minority/non-minority balance of the school is not adversely affected.
- The parent provides transportation to and from the school.

Assignment decisions considering this request will be made after July 1 of each year in order to allow those kindergarten children living within attendance zones to have adequate opportunity for school choice.

Every effort will be made to accommodate the parent's preference, within the system of priorities established in this policy. If it is not possible, for any reason, to grant one of the parent's choices, and the parent has reason to be dissatisfied with the child's assignment, that parent may file an appeal under Section 2.9 "Assignment Appeals Process."

b. Space Available:

Space available in a particular school, program or grade will be defined according to the policy in effect as to class size and instructional capacity, so long as it does not disrupt existing classes.

c. Special Needs of the Student:

Students requiring a special education program will be assigned according to the **TEAM** evaluation process, regardless of other provisions of this policy.

Students requiring and **agreeing to a** bilingual program (TBE) will be assigned to such a program, regardless of other provisions of this policy. Students who no longer require a substantially separate special needs placement and those students who have completed their bilingual program (mainstreamed) will be considered "new" students and will be subject to the provisions of student assignment policy. (See B 1 Section 6).

d. Sibling Preference:

All Students whose parents make timely applications for a particular school and already have other children attending that school of choice will be given a priority of assignment to that school for their racial group.

e. Minority Balance:

Transfers and new assignments, except as noted previously, must meet the requirements of minority/non-minority balance. The goal is to achieve a minority/non-minority percentage within each school, program and grade that reflects, within ten percentage points, above or below, the minority/non-minority percentage of the zone as a whole. Accordingly, all new assignments and transfers effective in the next school year will be assigned on a minority/non-minority basis calculated for each of the zones plus or minus 10%; these percentages will be posted by June 1st prior to the new school year.

f. Place of Residence:

All other priorities being equal; the student, living ***within the school neighborhood street directory as defined by the Lowell School Committee***, will have priority of assignment for his/her racial group.

g. Random Lottery:

In the event that, after considering all other priorities, there are still more student applications than available space, the ***Office of the Student Assignment Officer*** will conduct a random lottery in order to fill the available space.

h. Waiting List:

A parent whose child cannot, for any reason, be assigned to the school or program of his/her first choice may have the child's name place on a waiting list for the first suitable vacancy. Students on the waiting list will have priority, in case of an available vacancy, over new entrants to the school system. Waiting lists will be subject to criteria of the student assignment policy and will be updated monthly.

Sections 2.8 and 2.9 are presented below to give a broader picture of the student placement policies and procedures along with the clarified Section 2.4.

2.8 Transfers: (As Amended)

Students who move from one address to another within the city of Lowell will not be

required to transfer to another school during that current school year. However, the parent of such a student may need to request a transfer due to transportation conflict.

Once a student has attended a school, a parent who is dissatisfied with the assignment may request a transfer. Only one transfer per year will be allowed; such a transfer must be requested in writing through the prescribed Parent Information Center process no later than October 20th of the school year or no later than 45 calendar days after the initial placement of the student in the school.

No transfer will be made that violates minority/non-minority balance or to a school or program in which there is not sufficient space. A parent whose request for a transfer is denied may file for an appeal under 2.9 Assignment Appeals Process.

2.9 Assignment Appeals Process:

A parent whose child has not been assigned to one of their first three preferences and who is dissatisfied with the assignment or transfer, after exhausting all of the options of the Student Assignment Policy or having grounds to believe the policy was not followed, may file an appeal to an independent Student Assignment Appeals Board. The Board will review each case referred to it and will make timely decisions on the disposition of the appeal. It will not violate the desegregation related provisions of the policy. A copy of the decision will be sent to the parent(s) and the Student Assignment Officer. Proceedings of the Appeals Board will be recorded by a secretary, and all records will be maintained accurately.