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A REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE
REVISED BOSTON "CONTROLLED CHOICE" PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

In September 1992, consultants Charles Willie and Michael Alves prepared an interim report of their assessment of the Boston "Controlled Choice" Student Assignment Plan adopted by the previous School Committee and implemented beginning in 1989. The interim report was a response to the current School Committee's concerns that the student assignment plan, as implemented by the Department of Implementation, was generally not "user-friendly," separated some siblings by assigning them to different schools when parents preferred that all of their children attend the same school, gave Fall school assignment notices during the summer when schools were not in session to several thousand students, unnecessarily denied early admissions of several hundred students to their first-choice schools, mandatorily assigned too many students, maintained waiting lists for only first-choice schools and cleared students from the waiting list in a way that was confusing to school patrons, and fractionated the assignment process into a protracted and complex set of "rounds" that were difficult to comprehend. The School Committee was also concerned that the student assignment plan was not being used as a vehicle to drive school improvement in the least chosen schools as promised by the 1989 plan.

Our analysis found that most of the above concerns were due to certain modifications which were made in the plan after it was approved by the School Committee in 1989. In our opinion, the most serious deficiencies were directly attributable to the use of a so-called "random number" method of determining the order in which students would

be assigned and the adoption of a "three-round" assignment process which was implemented over a seven-month period from February through July for the 1990-1991, 1991-1992, and 1992-1993 school years.

We also found that the plan had become unnecessarily confusing and cumbersome due to the annual re-application requirement of approximately 40,000 students who were already enrolled in the system's non-transition grades and who did not require or desire a new school assignment. Despite these deficiencies, the plan worked to accommodate a relatively high proportion of choice and was clearly superior to the court-ordered plan which enabled only twenty or thirty percent of the students to attend magnet schools of choice.

The interim report suggested a number of changes that would streamline the school choice and assignment process and make the plan more "user-friendly" and educationally beneficial to all students for the 1993-1994 school year. These changes included:

- the elimination of the three "assignment-rounds" and the introduction of a revised timeline that would assign students beginning in February and end in April and would involve only those students who will require or desire a new school assignment in the 1993-1994 school year;
- the elimination of the "random number" driven assignment method in favor of an approach that would more genuinely honor the "rank-ordered" school preferences of parents and students within racial fairness guidelines;
- a more flexible use of established racial fairness guidelines in order to maximize first- and second-school choice assignments for students who applied during the initial assignment period;
- the requirement that parents and students select at least two schools of choice by their own rank-ordered preference as a way to increase school choice and decrease the number of mandatory assignments;

- guarantee sibling assignments in the same school if their parents so choose;
- allow bilingual and special education students to be mainstreamed into regular education classes in their current school of assignment if their parents so choose;
- provide increased opportunities for students to choose and be assigned to schools near their home;
- maintain a unified waiting list for all students who do not receive their first or second choice schools and permit students who are mandatorily assigned to be on a waiting list for their top three choice schools;
- require schools to conduct orientation sessions for newly assigned students prior to the end of the current school year to enhance the recruitment process and stabilize future school enrollments;
- promote student body diversity and educational enhancement by continuing to assign students according to racial-fairness guidelines and to encourage the replication of successful schools and programs that attract students from all racial groups;
- use the relative attractive quality of schools and their programs for desegregated student populations as one of several indicators of school effectiveness and to focus attention and assistance on schools that are least chosen by students from all racial populations.

The School Committee endorsed these proposed changes which were recommended by the consultants after numerous meetings with the Superintendent, staff of the Boston Public Schools, school patrons, and community groups. At the request of the School Committee and the Superintendent, the consultants worked with the Department of Implementation to develop operational guidelines to implement a revised "Controlled Choice" Student Assignment Plan for the 1993-1994 school year. The proposed modifications and operational guidelines were formally adopted by the Boston School Committee on November 23, 1993 and subsequently approved by the State Board of Education on December 12, 1993.

Since the adoption of the revised plan, the consultants have continued to work with the staff of the Boston Public Schools to fine tune the operational guidelines and to implement a Revised "Controlled Choice" Student Assignment Plan that accomplishes the goals mentioned above.

This report documents and analyzes the results of the 1993-1994 school choice and assignment process for nearly 7,500 regular education students who were assigned during the recent "initial assignment period" for entering Grades 1, 6, and 9 in the systems elementary schools, middle schools, and non-exam high schools. A separate report will be provided in April on late entry-grade applications, kindergarten assignments, advanced work classes, school transfers, and other aspects of the revised plan.

The report finds that 96 percent of the entry-grade students were assigned to a school of choice, including 85 percent who were assigned to their first-choice school and 94 percent who were assigned to either their first- or second-choice schools. The report also finds that only 4 percent received a mandatory assignment and that over 90 percent of the walk-zone applicants were assigned to their first-choice school and that there is no significant difference between the proportion of students who will walk and students who will be transported to their schools of choice.

The report also identifies 27 schools that were "over" chosen by all three racial groups and seven schools that were unable to attract a racially diverse student population.

In light of these and other findings, the report makes several short-term recommendations to further improve and fine tune the assignment process over the coming months. We also intend to make several recommendations that could have long-term implications for the Boston Public Schools at a later date after we have had an opportunity to further analyze some of the findings concerning high schools, school improvement efforts in the "under" chosen schools, school-site orientation sessions for newly assigned students, and the feasibility of realigning some zone boundaries in order to provide a more equitable distribution of elementary and middle school space in certain zones.

REVISED "CONTROLLED CHOICE" ASSIGNMENT PLAN
Initial Application and Assignment Period
1993-1994 School Year

New Timetable and Application Process

The Revised "Controlled Choice" Assignment Plan established a new timetable for those students requiring or desiring a new school assignment for the 1993-94 school year. Under this new timetable, students enrolled in grades K2, 5 and 8 and seeking admission to Grades 1, 6, and 9 received their school-choice application forms on January 4, 1993 and were required to return the applications with at least two school choices by January 15, 1993. Students who submitted timely and complete applications during this "initial" application period were assigned during the week of February 8, 1993.

Students who did not return timely applications and did not have guaranteed assignments for grades 1, 6, and 9 were considered as "late" applicants and will receive their assignments during the week of April 5. For other students requiring or seeking a new school assignment, the revised plan has an application deadline of March 19 for students applying for admission to Kindergarten 1 & 2 classes, and a March 12 deadline was set for students currently enrolled in non-transition grades who wish to enroll into a different school for the 1993-1994 school year. All students mentioned will be assigned by April 26. Late applicants and others new to the Boston Public Schools will be assigned on a rolling basis through the opening of the new school year.

Before the January application period, students currently enrolled in Grades K2, 5, and 8 received pre-printed school-choice application

forms and a cover letter from Superintendent Lois Harrison-Jones describing the key points of the new application and assignment process and encouraging parents to visit schools, a two-page fact sheet of the revised assignment plan prepared by the Citywide Education Coalition, and a four-page question and answer fact sheet developed by the Department of Implementation. In addition to these outreach activities, staff from each of the four Parent Information Centers coordinated outreach and information activities within their zones.

Staff of the zone Parent Information Centers reported few parental complaints about the new timeline. However, PICs received numerous complaints over an alternative transportation form that was sent to students in transition and non-transition grades. PICs also reported that the pre-printed application which was sent to approximately 11,000 transition grade students did not indicate that parents were required to make at least two choices. Consequently, a number of parents who had to be contacted and advised to amend their child's application.

Despite these unfortunate happenings, Table 1 indicates that 85 percent of the transition-grade students eligible for new regular education assignments submitted timely and complete applications, including 91 percent of the students enrolled in K2, 81 percent of the students enrolled in grade 5, and 85 percent of the students enrolled in grade 8.

Assignable Capacities

Assignable capacities, which represent the number of entry-grade students that could be enrolled in a particular school, were established by the Department of Implementation for each zone at grades 1, 6, and 9.

Overall, the Department of Implementation reserved 9,937 seats for entry grade regular education students, including 1,185 middle school seats and 1,644 elementary school seats in the East Zone, 852 middle school seats and 1,035 elementary seats in the West Zone, 852 middle school seats and 1,227 elementary seats in the North Zone, and 3,141 seats in the system's 12 non-examination high schools. Analysis of the student assignment data indicates that about 75 percent of the system's entry-grade assignable capacity is now filled as a result of the initial assignment period.

However, while it appears that the system allocated sufficient space for its entry-grade students, the West Zone is currently assigned at 90 percent capacity in Grades 1 and 6, and the East Zone at 90 percent capacity in Grade 1, but at only 60 percent capacity in Grade 6. The non-examination high schools are assigned at only 64 percent of capacity in grade 9.

Racial Fairness Guidelines

In accordance with the revised "Controlled Choice" plan's racial fairness guidelines, the consultants and the Department of Implementation established zone-specific "ideal" racial percentages for Grades 1, 6, and 9. These proportions were based on an average between the number of white, black, and other regular education students actually enrolled in grades K2, 5, and 8 as of January 29, 1993 and the number of white, black, and other students who actually submitted timely and complete applications during the January application period. The following "ideal" racial percentages were established for each zone and entry-grade:

FIGURE 1

IDEAL RACIAL PERCENTAGES

Zone & Grade	White	Black	Other
<u>East Zone:</u>			
Grade 1	28%	61%	11%
Grade 6	18%	65%	17%
<u>North Zone:</u>			
Grade 1	33%	37%	30%
Grade 6	24%	39%	37%
<u>West Zone:</u>			
Grade 1	30%	50%	20%
Grade 6	19%	55%	26%
<u>High School Zone:</u>			
Grade 9	15%	56%	29%

According to the plan's racial fairness guidelines, the proportion of seats assigned to a racial group may vary as much as plus or minus ten percentage points above or below the "ideal" racial percentage for the group that over or under chooses a school.

Any racial group that exceeds its "ideal" proportion in a school by 10 percentage points is capped and additional students in such a group cannot be assigned to that school during that assignment period. If a school is over chosen by two racial groups and under chosen by one group, the over chosen groups share the extra seats on a ratio basis. And, when a school is over chosen by all three groups, each group is assigned seats at its "ideal" proportion. The revised plan authorized the Department of Implementation to use these flexible racial parameters during the initial assignment period.

Under the previous plan, students were assigned during Round 1 according to the "ideal" racial percentages only. During Round 2, racial percentages could vary plus or minus five percentage points, and then another five percentage points during Round 3. A key change in the revised plan is that the permissible variation of plus ten percentage points for a group that over chooses a school may be accommodated at the beginning of the assignment process.

New Entry-Grade Students

According to a Department of Implementation computer printout entitled "All Students By Assignment" and dated February 23, 1993, students assigned to Grades 1, 6, and 9 during the January assignment period totaled 10,484. Of these students, 708 were 8th grade students who sought for an invitation to the system's three examination high schools; 232 were invited to Grade 6 Advanced Work Classes; 443 were assigned to special education classes; 1,619 were assigned to bilingual education classes; and one regular education student was "hand" assigned to a school. The remaining 7,481 students were "regular" education

students who were assigned in accordance with the operational guidelines of the revised "Controlled Choice" assignment plan and are the subject of this report. The racial characteristics of these entry-grade students are as follows: 1,799 (or 24 percent) white, 3,765 (or 50 percent) African-American, and 1,917 (or 26 percent) Asian, Hispanic or "other" racial/ethnic groups.

All Entry Grade Students Assigned by Choice

Two goals of the revised "Controlled Choice" assignment plan was to increase the number of students assigned to their first- or second-choice schools and to make these assignments as early as possible. Analysis of the February 23, 1993 assignment data indicates that 7,175 (or 96 percent) of all regular education students seeking admission to grades 1, 6, or 9 were assigned to a school of choice, including 90 percent of the white students, 98 percent of African-American students, and 98 percent of Asian, Hispanic or "other" students.

As shown in Table 2 of this report, 85 percent of these entry-grade students were assigned to their first-choice school, including 81 percent of whites, 85 percent of African-Americans, and 85 percent of the other racial groups. These data indicate equity among racial groups in terms of first-choice assignments. The requirement this year that parents and students choose at least two schools appears to have contributed to an increased number of students assigned to a top choice school since 94 percent of all entry grade students received their first or second choice; this was the experience of 88 percent of the white students, 93 percent of African-American students, and 97 percent of Asian, Hispanic and "other" students.

All Mandatory Assignments

The revised "Controlled Choice" plan required that students who did not receive a school of choice should be mandatorily assigned during the initial assignment period in February. Under the previous plan, students who did not receive a school of choice were mandatorily assigned after the end of Round 3 in late Spring or Summer. Some families had made alternative plans for school because of the lateness of the assignments in years gone by.

In light of the very high proportion of entry-grade students who received a school of choice, relatively few students were mandatorily assigned during the February 1993, initial assignment period. As shown in Table 2 and Figure 2, only 306 or 4 percent of the students who applied for seats in Grades 1, 6, or 9 were mandatorily assigned, including 176 (or 10 percent) whites, 95 (or 3 percent) of the African-Americans, and 35 (or 2 percent) Asians, Hispanic and "other" students.

The number of students mandatorily assigned to date by the revised plan is about 750 students less than the number of entry-grade students mandatorily assigned at the end of Round 3 during the 1992-1993 school year. And, while the number of mandatory assignments may increase when "late" applications are processed and assigned in early April 1993, the final number of such assignments probably will be less than the 1992-1993 figure. This year students who receive mandatory assignments will be placed on a unified waiting list for their top three school-choices. Moreover, after Spring orientation sessions, these and other students will be allowed to seek admission to any school that has available space for one's racial group.

New Grade 1 Assignments

As indicated in Table 3, 3,476 regular education students currently enrolled in K2 were assigned to Grade 1, of which 990 (or 28 percent) are white, 1,795 (or 52 percent) are African-American, and 691 (or 20 percent) are students of other racial groups.

Our analysis shows that 3,069 (or 88 percent) of these future first graders received their first-choice school, including 80 percent of the white students, 91 percent of African-American students, and 93 percent of Asian, Hispanic and "other" students. This is a significant accomplishment and represents the highest accommodation rate of early first-choice assignments for an entry-grade since "Controlled Choice" was adopted in 1989 as shown in Figure 3.

Overall, a total of 3,284 (or 95 percent) of the students were assigned to a school of choice including 86 percent of whites, 97 percent of African Americans, and an astounding 99 percent of Asian, Hispanic and "other" students. While a large number of students were assigned to their first- or second-choice schools, the proportion of white students who did not receive a school of choice was higher than the proportions for other populations; 136 (or 14 percent) of the white students were mandatorily assigned compared to 47 (or 3 percent) of African-Americans and only 9 (or 3 percent) of Asians, Hispanics and "other"; as shown in Table 3. As discussed later in this report, the larger proportion of white first-graders mandatorily assigned appears to be a function of parents from all three racial groups "over" choosing schools in certain areas of the city and not due to the requirements of the plan. To date, Grade 1 students have been mandatorily assigned to only 32 of the system's 76 elementary schools. Elementary schools which

have received 10 or more mandatorily assigned students are: the Holland, Marshall, Taylor, Fifield, and Dever in the East Zone; the Warren-Prescott in North Zone; and the Fuller, Kennedy, Ellis, and Agassiz in the West Zone.

New Grade 6 Assignments

As shown in Table 4, 2,172 regular education students were assigned to Grade 6 during the initial assignment period. Of these newly assigned middle school students, 450 (or 21 percent) are white, 1,084 (or 50 percent) are African-American, and 638 (or 29 percent) are Asian, Hispanic and "other" students.

Overall, 96 percent of the applicants for Grade 6 seats were assigned to a school of choice, including 95 percent of whites, 97 percent of African-Americans, and 96 percent of Asian, Hispanic and "other" students. An equitable distribution of students by race received first-choice schools, with whites receiving 88 percent of their first-choice schools, African-Americans 85 percent, and Asian, Hispanic and "other" students 84 percent. Moreover, only 84 (or 4 percent) of the Grade 6 applicants received mandatory assignments, including 24 (or 5 percent) of whites, 36 (or 3 percent) of African Americans and 24 (or 4 percent) of Asian, Hispanic and "other" 6th graders.

Because of the high proportion of Grade 6 students who were assigned to a school of choice, 17 of the system's 22 middle schools received less than 2 mandatorily assigned students each and 13 schools were without any students who were mandatorily assigned. The small number of Grade 6 students mandatorily assigned were assigned to only four middle schools--Cleveland, Dearborn, Mary Curley, and Lewis.

New Grade 9 Assignments

Table 5 indicates that a total of 1,833 students were assigned to the system's 12 non-examination high schools. Of these newly assigned 9th grade students, 359 (or 20 percent) are white, 886 (or 48 percent) are African-American, and 588 (or 32 percent) are Asian, Hispanic and "other." Overall, 98 percent of these Grade 9 students were assigned to a school of choice, including 96 percent of whites, 99 percent of African Americans, and 99.7 percent of Asian, Hispanic and "other" students. This rate of assignment to a school of choice for Grade 9 was the highest for any of the three entry-grades. Nevertheless, the Grade 9 assignment rate for first choice schools was only 79 percent, the lowest among the entry grades, including 77 percent for whites, 81 percent for African-Americans, and 76 percent for Asians, Hispanics and "others." Moreover, Grade 9 assignments showed the most variation with 17 per cent of applicants receiving their second-choice schools and only 2 percent of the students receiving a mandatory assignment. Despite these variations, a significantly higher proportion of 9th grade applicants were assigned to their first- and second-choice schools than was originally estimated (Figure 4).

It appears that the fluctuation in the assignment rates for rank-ordered schools of choice at the high school level is due to the fact that nearly 50 percent of the 9th grade first choice applications were made for only two high schools. These schools were Snowden with 556 first choices and West Roxbury which received 346.

Because only 30 Grade 9 students were mandatorily assigned, seven high schools received no mandatorily assigned students. To date, a small number of Grade 9 students have been mandatorily assigned to five high schools: Hyde Park, Burke, Dorchester, English, and South Boston.

Late Applications

We estimate that approximately 1,400 (or 15 percent) of regular education students currently enrolled in the Boston Public Schools are expected to submit late applications for Grades 1, 6 and 9.

As shown in Table 1, the late applicants for the available regular education seats should include at least 352 Grade 1 applicants, 563 Grade 6 applicants, and 419 Grade 9 applicants. By race, it appears that about 10 percent of the whites and about 23 percent of the African-Americans currently enrolled in grades K2, 5, and 8 may file late applications. Due to the fact that a sizable number of bilingual students were mainstreamed into regular education classes during the initial assignment period, it is difficult to estimate the number of bilingual students that will be seeking regular education seats during the late application period.

Waiting List

Analysis of the student assignment data indicates that a total of 1,115 (or 15 percent) of the 7,481 regular education students who were assigned under the revised plan will be placed on the waiting list for one or more of their top choice schools, including 337 whites, 495 African-Americans, and 293 Asian, Hispanic and "other" students.

Under the revised plan's new waiting list guidelines, the 306 entry-grade students who received a mandatory assignment will be placed on the waiting list for their first, second, and third choice schools. The remaining 809 entry-grade students will all be put on the waiting

list for their first-choice school. In addition, 179 of these students who did not receive either their first- or second-choice schools will be placed on the waiting list for their top two choice schools.

In accordance with the new guidelines, waiting lists have been established by zone, grade, race, and the plan's rank-ordered priorities of assignment for siblings, mainstreaming bilingual and special needs students, walk zone students, and non-walk zone students, respectively. A computer-generated random number will determine a student's position within each zone's priority waiting list. Waiting lists will be maintained and cleared until the end of the second marking period for the 1993-1994 school year. Separate waiting lists will be maintained for each assignment period and no students will be moved from the waiting list ahead of other students from their racial group who were placed on an earlier waiting list.

ASSIGNMENT PRIORITIES

Sibling Assignments

According to the Department of Implementation's "School Choice" computer printout dated February 4, 1993, 576 siblings submitted applications for their first-choice schools. Under the revised plan, these students were to be assigned ahead of all other applicants and they were to be given a priority of assignment within the system's contracted limitation on the number of students who could be enrolled in regular education classes.

Analysis of the assignment data shows that 466 of the siblings who applied during the initial assignment period were assigned to their first-choice school and 10 siblings were not assigned to their first-choice school. Of the small number of siblings who were not assigned to their first-choice school, 6 applied to the Hernandez whose seats were already filled by students who had a guaranteed seat.

Mainstreamed Bilingual and Special Education Students

The second priority of assignment was given to students currently enrolled in bilingual and special education classes who are expected to be mainstreamed into regular education classes for the 1993-1994 school year. This change was made in the plan in order to allow these students to remain in their current schools of enrollment when they were ready to be fully integrated into regular education classes.

While we do not know the exact number of students who were assigned under this priority, Table 1 clearly indicates that more Hispanic and Asian students were assigned to regular education classes than expected.

Walk Zone Assignments

Under the revised plan, a third priority of assignment was given to students who resided within walking distance of all their rank-ordered schools of choice. Under the previous plan, the so-called "walk zone" preference was given only during Round 1, when the number of students who could be assigned from each racial group was based solely on the "ideal" racial percentages, and it was limited to only first-choice assignments.

According to the Department of Implementation's February 4 "School Choice" computer printout, a total of 1,608 regular education students who did not have a guaranteed assignment to their present school for the 1993-1994 school year selected their walk zone school as their first choice. These students included 485 K2 students applying to Grade 1, 714 Grade 5 students applying to Grade 6, and 409 Grade 8 students applying to Grade 9. Overall, 1,459 (or 91 percent) of these walk zone applicants were assigned to their first-choice school, and 149 (or 9 percent) were not assigned to their walk zone school. The proportion of students who were first-choice assigned to their walk zone school (91 percent) was three percentage points higher than the proportion of first-choice assignments (88 percent) that was achieved for all 7,481 entry grade students who were assigned during the initial assignment period.

However, while an extremely high proportion of walk-zone applicants were assigned to their walk zone school, the data also indicates that only about 40 percent of the entry grade students who did not have guaranteed seats and who applied during the initial assignment period selected their walk zone school as their first choice, including about 40 percent of Grade 1 students and 35 percent of the Grade 6 students. When the guaranteed assigned students are factored into the overall assignment data, Table 6 shows that 1,629 (or 47 percent) of the Grade 1 students have been assigned to their walk zone school, including 544 (or 55 percent) of the whites, 754 or (42 percent) of the African-Americans and 331 or (48 percent) of the Asian and Hispanic students. A slightly smaller percentage of Grade 6 students are walking to their assigned schools due the fact that there are fewer Middle Schools in comparison to elementary schools.

Analysis of the student assignment data strongly suggests that while a higher proportion of students are choosing to attend schools outside of their walk zone, a very high proportion of Grade 1 regular education students in the Boston Public Schools will either be walking or riding in a bus to their first- and second-choice schools. As shown in Table 7, 1,590 (or 98 percent) of the Grade 1 students assigned during the initial assignment period to their walk-zone school have been assigned to their either their first- or second-choice schools and 1,847 (or 88 percent) of the students who will be transported to their Grade 1 school have been assigned to their first-or second-choice schools. And, at Grade 6, Table 6 indicates that 94 percent of both the walkers and students who will be bused have been assigned to their first- and second-choice schools. Moreover, as a result of accommodating such a high proportion of choice, only 171 or 5 percent of these entry-grade students have been mandatorily assigned and transported under the revised "Controlled Choice" plan.

SCHOOLS THAT WERE "OVER" OR "UNDER" CHOSEN
BY ALL THREE RACIAL GROUPS

The 1989 and the revised "Controlled Choice" student assignment plans promote desegregated, quality education in the Boston Public School. This analysis is of schools that attract a multicultural student body and schools that do not. Schools that attract more students at or above the "ideal" racial proportions for the three racial categories--white, black and Hispanic, Asian or "other"--are classified as "over" chosen schools that are truly desegregated and that offer an attractive educational program. These schools, apparently, are doing the right thing and should be replicated. Schools are classified as "under" chosen, if the proportion of students who chose them as first- or second-choice schools is less than the "ideal" proportion of seats reserved for each of the three racial categories.

Our interim report submitted to the School Committee September, 1992 identified 14 "over" schools by all three groups and 14 "under" chosen schools by all three racial groups. That analysis was based on the number of school patrons who selected these schools as their "first choice" schools of enrollment. These schools were identified by the number of students who did or did not choose them as their first choice.

In this report, we designate schools as "over" chosen or "under" chosen on the basis of first- and second-choices combined. Using student's first- and second choices is a more accurate and stable indicator of the educational effectiveness of a school. This analysis is based on the "School Choice" computer printout that was prepared by the Department of Implementation,

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In this report, we designate schools as "over" chosen or "under" chosen on the basis of first- and second-choices combined. Using student's first- and second choices is a more accurate and stable indicator of the educational effectiveness of a school. This analysis is based on the "School Choice" computer printout that was prepared by the Department of Implementation, February 4, 1993 following the close of the "initial" application period. The printout indicates the number

of first and second choices by students for the entry grades of each school by white, black, and other students. The report also indicates the number of entry-grade seats allocated to white, black, and other students; based on the "ideal" racial percentages computed for each zone and school. Our analysis determine whether a school received enough first and second choices to fill its allocated seats for each of the three racial groups.

Based on this analysis, we identified 27 schools (3 high schools, 9 middle schools, and 15 elementary schools) that were "over" chosen by all three racial groups. These schools are:

High Schools Grade 9	Middle Schools Grade 6	Elementary Schools Grade 1
Snowden	Lewenberg	Condon
West Roxbury	McCormack	Kenney
Boston High School	Edison	Grew
	Taft	Murphy
	McKay	O'Hearn
	Irving	F. Roosevelt
	R.G. Shaw	Russell
	Timilty	Hamilton
	Hernandez	N. Zone ELC
		Lyon
		Bates
		Beethoven
		Hernandez
		Mozart
		Ohrenberger

Our analysis of the first and second choice data also shows that seven schools (2 high schools, 3 middle schools, and 2 elementary schools) were "under" chosen by all three racial groups. These schools are:

High Schools Grade 9	Middle Schools Grade 6	Elementary Schools Grade 1
Dorchester Hyde Park	Cleveland Edwards Wheatley	E. Greenwood Fuller

When we identified schools that were "over" and "under" chosen schools by all three racial groups in our interim report, a number of school staff, parents and the media claimed that the location of a school was the primary determinant for "first choice" preferences.

We did not accept that assertion then, and we reject it now even more strongly. A review of the geographic location of both the "over" and "under" chosen schools identified above clearly shows that parents from all racial groups are selecting schools on the basis of quality desegregated education in a variety of Boston neighborhoods, including South Boston, Dorchester, Roxbury, West Roxbury, East Boston, Roslindale, Hyde Park, Allston-Brighton, and Back Bay. We also found schools that were under "chosen" by all racial groups in some of the same neighborhoods. For example, both "over" chosen and "under" chosen school are located in Roxbury and Dorchester.

In our opinion, the real determining factor that explains why different racial groups in the city are choosing to go to some of the same schools is that these particular schools provide quality desegregated education for all students. This analysis clearly

demonstrates that quality education and desegregation are linked and that the revised "Controlled Choice" plan has facilitated this linkage.

This analysis also indicates that the educational effectiveness of a school is a more important factor in the decision of many students regarding which school to attend in a choice plan than is the location of a school. Finally, this analysis indicates that Boston now has more desegregated "over" chosen than segregated "under" chosen schools. The seven "under" chosen schools is a manageable number that can and should be upgraded. If such schools were upgraded each year, eventually all schools within the system would become effective schools of choice that attract multicultural student bodies.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data in this report and their analysis, we make the following conclusions:

1. The Revised "Controlled Choice" Student Assignment Plan for the Boston Public Schools is working very well and has achieved the goals of the School Committee by providing early notification of school assignments, granting an extremely high proportion of first-choice school assignments, facilitating same school attendance by siblings, substantially reducing the number of mandatory assignments, offering the opportunity to walk to schools to more students, and operating an assignment process that is more understandable and less confusing.
2. The revised plan also continues to promote desegregation in the Boston Public Schools and establishes a linkage between effective education and multicultural education by identifying "over" chosen and "under" chosen schools that do and do not attract students of all racial populations.
3. The revised plan reveals that "over" chosen and "under" chosen schools by all racial populations co-exist in the same area of the city and that the quality of education offered by a school can transcend the perceived negative effects of location.
4. The revised plan indicates that there is a constituency for "walk to" schools in Boston, but that is is not the prevailing constituency and that, when offered the opportunity to walk or ride to desegregated schools, most students choose to ride to schools that, according to their perceptions, are better quality schools.

5. Finally, we conclude that if this plan is institutionalized, that it will facilitate desegregation in Boston to such an extent that it will become the most desegregated large urban school system in the nation, that school improvements that are targeted on least chosen schools annually will upgrade the whole system in less than a decade, and that an improved, desegregated school system will enroll an increasing proportion of students of all racial, ethnic and socioeconomic status groups.

In light of some of the findings in this report, we are making several "short term" recommendations that we believe will enhance and further streamline the assignment process over the coming months. We also intend to make several recommendations at a later date that may have more significant long-term implications for the assignment plan and the Boston Public Schools after we have had an opportunity to further study some of the key issues identified in our report.

- The Department of Implementation should assign the "late" applicants as soon as possible following the end of the late application period. We now feel that April 5 may be too long for these parents and students to wait for an assignment.
- The Transportation Director should begin reviewing the early assignment data in order to determine the feasibility of consolidating bus routes in the 1993-1994 school year.
- We urge the Superintendent to begin the process of having school administrators contact and recruit the students that have been newly assigned to their schools. Schools should be encouraged to begin their recruitment process

as soon as possible, and each zone should develop a plan to show how the new student orientation sessions will be implemented in each zone.

In light of the apparent success of the assignment process in attracting a diverse student population into entry grade schools, we believe that the Boston Public Schools have a real opportunity to now get these parents and students to actually enroll in the Fall. If the Boston Public Schools are able to retain ~~the~~^{their} newly assigned first-grade students, the proportion of white first grade students could increase by five or even ten percentage points in the 1993-1994 school year.

APPENDIX