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# Educational Leadership and Racism: A Narrative Inquiry into Second-Generation Segregation

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**Background/Context:** *In-school racial segregation, also called second-generation segregation, is a social dynamic that is manifest in different and complicated ways in schoolhouses across the United States. This study sought to investigate how building-level leadership facilitates or impedes the practice of racial equity in an urban high school, from teachers' and administrators' perspectives.*

**Purpose:** *The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate how educational leaders perceive and influence second-generation segregation in urban secondary schools.*

**Research Design:** *As the purpose of the study was to ascertain leaders' perspectives, we followed a dialogic methodological approach used in studies seeking to investigate similar perceptual phenomena. This methodology emphasizes both personal narrative and dialogue. This study took place in a single urban high school in the southeastern United States over the course of two academic years.*

**Conclusions/Recommendations:** *The study revealed that both formal and informal leadership influenced second-generation segregation in the school. The authors conclude with recommendations for improving future research focusing on the topic and with recommendations for improved practice.*

As a beginning teacher, I was given low-level classes. Kids that need remedial help. They were predominantly Black. As I gained years there, I started getting honors classes. They were overwhelmingly White. Right now, I have one Black child in my honors class, out of twenty-seven.

Teacher Peter Soderstrom, quoted in Studs Terkel's *Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel about the American Obsession* (1992, p. 192).

Twenty years ago, Studs Terkel documented a teacher's experience working in a school that systematically practiced within-school segregation, a practice also called second-generation segregation.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, soon after the momentous 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* decision, researchers noticed that the battle was hardly won—there were in fact at least two forms of segregation in American schools. First-generation segregation is generally associated with pre-*Brown versus Board* era American schooling (Kluger, 2004), and occurs at the school level.<sup>2</sup> Second-generation segregation occurs *within schools* and refers to “forms of racial segregation that are a result of school practices such as tracking, ability grouping, and the misplacement of students in special education classes” (Spring, 2006, p. 83). This often means that students of color are placed in remedial or special education courses, while White students represent a majority of those placed in honors courses (Patton, 1998; Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003; Valles, 1998; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002). Second-generation segregation is a form of institutional racism in American education (Brooks, 2012). Yet, it seems to be an issue that educational leaders should be able to address due to their agency and ability to influence certain social and cultural dynamics in schools (Jackson, 1988; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Walker & Dimmock, 2005). Specifically, we noted a broad gap in the literature around how these issues are explained by leaders in urban secondary schools, a type of school where the practice is prevalent (Brooks & Jean-Marie, 2007; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). Put simply, we did not find much research that documented school leaders' perspectives on second-generation segregation, and we designed a study to explore these perspectives.

The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate how educational leaders perceive and influence second-generation segregation in urban secondary schools. As these forms of segregation demand multiple perspectives and data sources to understand, we employed a qualitative methodology that emphasized narrative inquiry. The lead researcher collected two years of qualitative data in a representative urban high school in order to more fully understand second-generation

segregation *in situ*. The following section presents a literature review that begins by broadly discussing issues of race and education in the United States before discussing second-generation segregation in more detail. Subsequent sections include a brief discussion of research methodology and a report of key findings. The article concludes with a discussion of the importance of the research and suggestions for researchers and practitioners.

## RACISM AND EDUCATIONAL (MIS)LEADERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES

The purpose of this section is to explore concepts, trends and projections in education regarding race and educational leadership in an effort to understand how leaders can influence various forms of segregation. We primarily focused on two aspects of race, phenotype and cultural oppression. As Fluehr-Lobban (2006) noted:

race is now viewed as a social construction that is primarily recognized by physical appearance, or phenotype. In the United States this means that Americans are socialized first to identify a person's race by skin color, and second by hair form, by facial features such as shape of the nose and lips, and eye form, along with other physical features like height. (p. 1)

Race as phenotype has to do with being identified, or perhaps self-identifying, as a member of one of a few categories (e.g., African American, Caucasian, Asian, etc.). In U.S. schools, phenotype drives many ostensibly equity-related policy conversations and laws (Capper, 1993). It also has to do with the sorting and counting of students based on the way they look rather than their academic performance. Phenotype is at the heart of racial quotas and many "diversity" initiatives. Looking at race this way is important in that it allows a way for us to understand marginalization, access, and opportunity at a systemic level (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). In the hands of astute and ethical educational leaders such information can be key to leveraging resources toward greater systemic equity (Theoharis, 2009; Theoharis & Brooks, 2012). However, too many leaders are satisfied or complicit when school-level data consistently indicate achievement/opportunity gaps, over-referral of students of color in terms of discipline, and overrepresentation of students of color in low-performance curriculum tracks (Brooks, 2012; Larson & Murthadha, 2002; Larson & Ovando, 2001).

It is important to note that in any way we discuss race, it is "a human creation" (Hacker, 2003, p. 5). Moreover, this human creation is not neutral. As Brooks and Jean-Marie (2007) noted, race

1. is a culturally constructed phenomenon used by one group for the purpose of dominating and oppressing another group;
2. is a multi-layered and ever-changing phenomenon that has cultural meaning at international, national, societal, regional, state, and local levels; and
3. has particular historical and immediate meaning to individuals, to communities, and to the people who educate and are educated at every school site (p. 757).

Conceived in this manner, race is *used* as racism—a tool of oppression that one group (or individual) uses to dominate another culturally, psychologically, economically, politically, and socially (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006).

In schools, many researchers have documented various forms of racism, including: hidden curricula that advantage a White, middle-class culture and discriminates against others as inferior (Delpit, 1995); racist instructional pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1997); achievement/opportunity gaps borne of culturally insensitive assessment practices (Darling-Hammond, 1995); inequitable graduation rates and instances of dropout (Battin-Pearson & Newcomb, 2000); and many other powerful informal dynamics (Tatum, 1999, 2007). A 2004 NCES report shows a gap in terms of many educational outcomes: reading and mathematics achievement, advanced course taking in high school, performance on Advanced Placement examinations, and performance on college entrance examinations (Strizek, Pittsonberger, Riordan, Lyter, & Orlofsky, 2006). Moreover, the report provides compelling evidence that this is not only an achievement gap, but an education and opportunity gap as well. Findings include the following:

1. Black children have a much higher dropout rate than White students.
2. Black children are nearly half as likely as White students to use a computer at home.
3. Black girls have a much greater chance than White girls of being a teen mother.
4. Black students are half as likely as White students to finish high school.
5. Black students are twice as likely as White students to be retained, suspended, or expelled.

In addition to a disparity in the number of White and Black students, the racial breakdown of the teaching population is likewise profoundly

dominated by the majority race. The numbers shrink even further when we scrutinize the percentages of Black and White principals in the United States public schools. Interestingly, the number of Black school principals increases dramatically when we enter the core urban centers of the country, schools which also feature the highest concentrations of students of color (Alston, 1999; Brooks, 2012; Hacker, 2003).

## SECOND-GENERATION SEGREGATION

Second-generation segregation is a term used to explain how school segregation continues in a post-*Brown versus Board of Education* era, as systematic forms of segregation occurring *within* schools. It refers to “forms of racial segregation that are a result of school practices such as tracking, ability grouping, and the misplacement of students in special education classes” (Spring, 2006, p. 83). In U.S. public schools, this often means that students of color are placed in remedial or special education courses, while White students represent a majority of those placed in honors courses (Patton, 1998; Perry et al., 2003; Valles, 1998; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002). As an example, Singleton and Linton (2006) argue that Advanced Placement programs are often overt manifestations of this form of racism, which sends very clear messages to *all* students:

When White students enter an advanced placement classroom and see few if any students of color, they are unconsciously indoctrinated into White intellectual supremacy. These notions are typically unchallenged by educators, even as students of color learn about these classes, made up of mostly White students, and labeled as the “smart,” “honors,” “gifted,” “advanced,” “GATE,” or “best” class. Not seeing others who look like them in these classes, the students of color will see themselves as being incapable of performing at equally high levels and feel unwanted in such classes or unworthy of taking them. Furthermore, because these classes are often taught by the more seasoned and respected teachers—the teachers who express passion for their work—the students of color are essentially taught by the system that they are worth less than White students (pp. 43-44).

Put differently, in second-generation segregation programs, White students learn of their privilege and superiority through a hidden curriculum, while students of color learn an inverse lesson—they are inferior, academically and, perhaps, socially. And, since these tracks, programs, and labels tend to stay with students throughout their school days, the messages are reinforced over and over, from student to student, and from generation to generation (Patton, 1998).

## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SECOND-GENERATION SEGREGATION

While most second-generation research has focused on teachers and classrooms, very little of it has explored the perceptions and actions of school leaders, whether these are teacher leaders or administrators. This is a troubling omission, as such leaders often have the positional authority to influence the formal and informal structures that allow second-generation segregation to exist in schools (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Theoharis, 2009). For the purposes of this study, we focused on both formal and informal leaders, paying special attention to the ways that these leaders influence in-school segregation practices. In particular, educational leaders have the agency to influence such in-school dynamics as organizational structures, communication strategies, school culture, instructional assignments, professional development programming, finance issues, and allocation of other resources (Brown, 2005; Dantley & Tillman, 2005; Fullan, 2001; Gooden, 2005; Lomotey, 1995; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Schein, 1992; Tillman, 2002).

### METHODOLOGY

As the purpose of the study was to ascertain leaders' perspectives, we followed a dialogic methodological approach used in studies seeking to investigate similar perceptual phenomena (Shields, 2005; Shields, LaRocque, & Oberg, 2002; Shields & Edwards, 2005). This methodology emphasizes both personal narrative and dialogue. This study took place in a single urban high school in the southeastern United States over the course of two academic years (henceforth referred to as the pseudonymous DuBois High School). The site was selected primarily because the instructional and administrative staff was divided racially, in a phenotypic sense. The district employed 79 teachers at the school, one principal, three assistant principals, an academic dean, and a dozen educational specialists to serve approximately 1,300 children, grades 9–12. The student population is reported as 85% Black and 12% White (with 3% listed as "Other"). Yet the teaching staff is split into almost two halves: 37 White and 39 Black. Two teachers identified themselves as Hispanic and one teacher self-described as Arab.

### DATA COLLECTION

The lead author of this article collected all data included in the study. Data collection included 105 formal semi-structured interviews with 52 different teachers and administrators, each of which lasted between 45

minutes and two hours. The average length of an interview was approximately one hour and fifteen minutes. Interview questions focused initially on concepts related to educational leadership and second-generation segregation in the school from the participants' perspectives. Data were also generated via 452 hours of observation. Technical documents such as the school's School Improvement Plan, a regional accreditation report, discipline plans, meeting agendas, and memos were collected whenever available (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Nayak, 2006; Silverman, 2001).

#### NARRATIVE PRESENTATION OF DATA

In order to preserve participants' voice, we decided to present data in a narrative format (Chapman, 2007). This approach is consistent with critical race research, wherein researchers are concerned with misrepresenting participant perspectives by decontextualizing them (Shields, 2005; Shields, et al., 2002). Accordingly, we employ a first-person "I" as the lead author collected data for the study. Presentation of data begins with a description of the school and city from the educators' perspectives. This transitions into several themes, again explored and presented as related narratives.

#### MULHOLLAND FALLS AND DUBOIS HIGH SCHOOL: A CONTEXT TO STUDY RACISM AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Mulholland Falls, the city where this study takes place, is in the southeastern United States. There were approximately 250,000 people in the city limits. The racial makeup of the city at the time of the study was approximately 57% White, 38% African American, 1% Native American, 2% Asian, 1% Pacific Islander, and 1% from other races. Hispanic or Latino of any race was approximately 6% of the population and non-Hispanic Whites were 55% of the population.

The city saw tremendous growth over the past 30 years, and indeed, archival data show that the population nearly doubled during that time. Not coincidentally, this growth accompanied the swelling enrollment of the town's two large state universities, one of which had transformed itself from a women's-only teaching college into a Carnegie-classified research-intensive institution, and a historically Black university that developed and maintained an excellent academic reputation for nearly a century. "They are good schools," many DuBois educators explained. In fact, most educators at DuBois were trained at one of these two schools. Many proudly proclaimed their allegiance whenever the opportunity allowed, and they displayed banners in their classrooms and offices that announced their affiliation. However, educators explained that although



scholastic membership was one of the most overt dynamics that affected the town's social and cultural norms, it was only one manifestation of a more pervasive culture of division; as one teacher intimated, "we hang the banners and joke about it, but when you get right down to it, the cultural differences are much greater."

According to educators at DuBois High School, the town is a city sharply segregated along racial lines, with a distinction drawn between the so-called Black and White cultures of the town. Educators explained that social interaction in the community is almost exclusively race specific. As one assistant principal suggested, "It's really two completely different town-within-towns—very little interaction." Black and White educators alike could easily list Black and White neighborhoods, schools, restaurants, cultural events, holidays, prominent community members, and institutions. One White administrator noted, "That's the way it's always been in Mulholland Falls. The Black folks do their thing, and the White folks do something else. We go to different football games on Saturdays, and we eat at different restaurants. Of course, we mix to some degree, but I think that the sense of racial separation is much stronger than the sense of solidarity. It's a divided community, and it has been for a long time. Regardless of which group they claimed to be members of, educators were conscious of the way that race, more than any other characteristic, defined the social and cultural norms of the town's people.

According to educators, DuBois is a school with significant challenges exacerbated by racial dynamics. They serve a poverty-stricken area of the city, and their students have fared poorly on standardized examinations for several years. Many of DuBois's students read at an elementary school level and drop out of school before they finish. However, many others stay in despite low achievement. It is common among the school's general education population that a student might be 18 years old and in ninth grade, or as old as 22 if diagnosed with a learning disability. As educators explained, "a significant number of students have a bleak academic future," and as another long-serving teacher lamented, "many students end up in low-wage service jobs, into lives of crime, or in the welfare system." That being said, students and neighborhood families have a sense of pride, and they value the school's academic and athletic traditions, both of which are significant. Over the course of its history, the school has won state championships in nearly every sport, although the banners that hang from the rafters of the gymnasium are now quite faded; the glory years seem long ago.

Academically, DuBois High School is a paradox. Whereas the general education population is low-performing, the school housed an international baccalaureate (IB) program that sent students to elite universities

on full academic scholarships every year. At DuBois, the IB program is essentially a school within a school. The program has its own operating budget, and teachers in the program answer directly to the IB program coordinator rather than the school's administrators. Additionally, IB teachers have their own lounge, which is the only operational lounge in the school. Furthermore, IB teachers receive a stipend every time their students pass an IB examination, which can amount to several thousand dollars of extra money for teachers in the program. As a social phenomenon, the IB program is both a uniting and a dividing force. On one hand, the school would have certainly scored an F on the state's standardized testing system; however, administrators and non-IB teachers feel uncomfortable with the elitist dynamics that the program presents.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE AT DUBOIS HIGH SCHOOL

I've studied school reform and programming, but I had never been close to an International Baccalaureate (IB) program before I visited DuBois. I knew a bit about the basics of IB but that was it. The first time I walked into the school's main office, I picked up a flyer about the program and made a note to ask about it in upcoming interviews. As it happened, my interviewee that morning was Steven, a White assistant principal, who told me IB was "something like AP.<sup>3</sup> Basically, it's an honors program for smart kids." I didn't give it much more thought until the following afternoon when I interviewed a Black Language Arts teacher named Sidney Moncleur. He explained the program like this: "You ever heard of FUBU? It's a brand of clothes for kids. It stands for 'For Us, By Us' and the 'us' is Black folk. It's our own brand of clothes. That's how the IB program is, but in reverse—it's For *Them*, By *Them*—and I mean White folk. That program ain't never done a thing for Black kids."

Curious to learn more about IB and to try and ascertain how similar it was to AP, I sat on the couch and crossed my legs, set my laptop across them, and started poking around the Internet for more information. A quick glance through the IB website<sup>4</sup> left me with the impression that while it had a global focus, the program was indeed very much like many honors-type programs I had studied (Brooks, 2006a, 2006b; Brooks, Scribner, & Eferakorho, 2004). I was scheduled to observe a class in the IB program a few days later and I had an interview with the program coordinator in just a week, so I knew I would learn more in short order.

On the day I observed IB teacher Brenda Marsden's Theory of Knowledge course, which everyone called T.O.K., pairs of students were delivering presentations. I was a little put off when I found this out, because while I always enjoy and learn a great deal by viewing student work, I had hoped to watch a more naturalistic session, one that was "typical."

What I saw during that 50-minute period astounded me. The student presentations were extremely high-level—much more advanced than I asked of my graduate students at the university. They had chosen focus topics, such as poverty, and investigated them from multiple disciplinary perspectives. The poverty presentation included information from sociological, anthropological, and political science research and included an analysis and critique of various claims made in articles, books, census reports, and popular media, and claims made by local policymakers and politicians. The presentation also included a detailed look at poverty in the local community and suggestions for service learning projects the students could undertake to make a positive influence. Moreover, these were not idle suggestions; the students showed how they could create metrics to adjudge the effectiveness of each strategy, and announced that they would soon be choosing one of these options for their service learning project. The project would be designed over the following semester, implemented that summer, and evaluated over the following year. A presentation on sustainable agriculture followed poverty, while another was concerned with watershed conservation. A final presentation explored the issue of hunger. To say I was impressed by the quality of the work and the students' ability to speak about these topics as experts is an understatement—I was astonished by this display of intellectual talent and oratory skill. In fact, I was so taken aback I nearly forgot to write down an important detail that was immediately relevant to my study: of the eight students who presented, five were Black.

A few days later, I interviewed IB program coordinator, Natasha Frye. We met in her office suite, a weary cluster of small rooms tucked out of sight in the lower side of DuBois's eastern wing. While the walls and doors showed their age, the rooms themselves were impeccably clean and in strict order. Files and boxes labeled with various clear markings were stacked neatly in rows and the surfaces of counters, desks, and tables were clear, save for a few teachers who sipped coffee while grading papers. The space seemed serene compared to the hustle and bustle of DuBois's noisy hallways. "Nat" welcomed me, and after we exchanged pleasantries she asked me to sit in an empty chair near her desk. We turned to regard the computer, which showed an excerpt from the DuBois School Improvement Plan. She gave me a few minutes to read as she finished up a few things in preparation for our interview:

The International Baccalaureate Programme is a magnet offering opened in 1996, which draws academically motivated students from the entire school district. The students in IB represent multiple ethnic, economic, and racial backgrounds.

DuBois's 358 IB students make up approximately 27% of the total population of the school.

The curriculum for grades 9 and 10 consist of a pre-IB foundational structure designed to provide the student with sufficient academic, analytic, theoretical, and practical skill to perform at an international level. The 11th and 12th grade curriculum consists of comprehensive and rigorous formal curriculum sanctioned by the IB Curriculum and Assessment Centre in Cardiff, Wales. Each course of study concludes with an internationally standardized examination. The general objectives of the IB are to provide students with a balanced education, to facilitate geographic and cultural mobility, and to promote international understanding through a shared academic experience.

In order to receive the International Baccalaureate Diploma, students must complete the curriculum as prescribed by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). Course work for the junior and senior years requires instruction in English (Language A), a secondary language, experimental science, social studies, mathematics, and a sixth subject. Sixth subject offerings at DuBois include an additional language or science, art, psychology, and theatre. Students must score successfully on IB exams in all six of these subjects. A theory of knowledge course must be successfully completed as well. In addition, between 10th and 12th grades students must participate in at least 200 documented hours of extracurricular creativity, action, and service as well as write and present a supervised extended essay of at least 4,000 words.

When I finished and looked up at her, Nat was beaming, and proceeded to tell me some of the program's accomplishments.

"Just last year, we had three National Merit Finalists, five National Achievement Commendations, and 100% of our students gained admission to a college or university. We sent a kid to Harvard and another to Yale. Our 53 seniors earned a total of 54 scholarships and 88% of our students earned the IB Diploma—and that's quite a feat!" She had all these numbers memorized.

I scribbled in my notebook. "Very impressive," I replied, looking down rather than at her. She waited for me to stop writing and raise my eyes, then continued.

"What's more," Nat said, "you might be interested to know that we make the district about \$350,000 a year."

“Excuse me?” I asked, not disguising my curiosity or disbelief very well.

Nat explained. “We make whatever the FTE value is. For every IB test a kid passes, they bring an additional quarter of an FTE, which is around a thousand dollars. And, then, my seniors, if they get a diploma they bring in an additional, I believe, oh . . . 30%, of an FTE. So, every test we pass is worth several hundred dollars to us; the teachers get a small cut for each student who passes the exam in their area. It isn’t much, but it adds up and for some teachers it can mean a few thousand extra—that’s a lot for a teacher. You might say we have a built-in incentive pay program.”

I wanted to say something insightful, but “Wow,” was all that came out. Nat continued.

“Last year IB kids brought in \$350,000 to the district, and \$250,000 of that goes to this school, which is how we have stuff that other teachers and programs don’t. That money is *supposed* to *all* go back into the program.” I noticed that Nat stressed the words *supposed* and *all*.

“It’s supposed to go back? Do you mean that it doesn’t actually come back to the program?” I asked.

“Right, it doesn’t. Here’s how it works. The district takes about 33% off the top and gives us, well, they always give us \$250,000. Sometimes it’s a little more or less than 33%, but it’s not a big deal. That’s all legitimate. So, I supposedly have a budget of \$250,000 a year for the program. I run this office on about \$75,000. We buy all of our books from that fund. I get all the supplies for every IB teacher and anybody else who teaches my kids, since we can’t cover every single course ourselves. They get supplies and access to everything we have, which means their departments don’t have to do it. This is what the faculty doesn’t understand. We essentially take care of 27% of the kids at this school and a whole bunch of teachers without touching the school’s operating budget, other than whatever pays our salaries.”

“So the IB program is self-sustaining.” I responded.

“And then some. But there’s a problem.” Nat let out a sigh and rocked back in her chair.

“Oh,” I asked, “what problem? It sounds like a pretty good set up.”

Nat gave me a once-over, sizing me up as she decided how much to tell me. After a long pause, she deadpanned, “The problem is the principal.”

“How do you mean?”

“He takes our money and uses it for other things in line with his agenda that have nothing to do with IB. Dr. Ferguson actually announced at a meeting the other day that he has paid salaries out of IB and AP funds. That’s not permissible, and it might even be illegal. Those funds are only supposed to be used to support the IB program. I now know he paid John Cabrini’s salary one year, and he’s a guidance counselor

who has nothing to do with IB. Doc is ultimately responsible for how the money's used; he has an oversight role—but after his first year at DuBois he discovered a loophole. The school operating budget and the IB budget are kept separate. We're a magnet program, and in some ways our money works kind of like a grant. It's not included in the general operating budget. Technically, he is in charge of the IB budget because it is a school-level program, but there's no follow-through or accountability and he does what he pleases with it. They audit him for the school budget, but they don't audit ours." Nat's voice trailed off as she finished that last sentence and she turned toward her desk and shuffled some papers. She continued to speak over her shoulder. "It's a more modest budget, but he does it with the AP funds, too."

"Isn't there someone you can speak with about this at the district?" I asked.

"Theoretically, yes; practically, no. They won't do anything."

"Why not?" I wondered. "It seems to me that if there's evidence of that kind of misappropriation of funds then surely someone would—"

Nat interrupted me. "It's race, Jeff—no one will do anything because he's Black. They all know what he's doing but they won't do anything about it. He has accused people at the district of being racist in the past. They're terrified. He's a few years away from retirement and they think, oh, we'll just look the other way for a few years."

I wasn't sure how to respond to that, so I remained silent, scribbling away in my notepad.

Nat raised her voice, "Oh, its race! Race! Oh, my God, and I don't have a problem saying it even though there's no school-wide dialogue around it at all here. There should be, but it's like—"

This time I interrupted Nat. "It's the elephant in the schoolhouse."

"Huh?"

"Race is the elephant in the schoolhouse. A friend of mine, Joan Wynne (2003), wrote a chapter in a book where she made that argument. No one will talk about it, but it has tremendous influence on what happens in schools. You can't see, move, or listen around it but everyone acts as though the elephant, as if race, isn't really there."

"Bingo," exclaimed Nat. "Your friend described this school perfectly."

I fidgeted for a second, considering my next interview prompt. "Now, I hope you'll be okay with this question, but I have to ask one that might be uncomfortable related to race."

"Shoot," Nat exclaimed. "Now this is getting interesting. I doubt, though, that you'll make me uncomfortable. I was a civil rights activist in Mississippi in my younger years. I helped integrate a school system and got death threats for leading a committee that created a multicultural curriculum." There was a gleam in her hazel eyes again.

“Okay,” I responded. “Maybe it’s just me who’s uncomfortable. Anyway, do you think the IB program is one of those programs that perpetuate racism?”

Nat’s grin melted into a frown, “Jeff, I don’t really understand your question.”

I nervously stammered, “Well, in another interview someone told me that the IB program has never done anything for Black kids. You know, research suggests that in schools like this Black students, especially Black males, are referred into special education while the White students are in the honors and gifted programs like IB. It’s called second-generation segregation and it’s a form of institutional racism” By the end of my poor explanation, I broke into a sweat.

Visibly perturbed, Nat didn’t say anything. Instead, she swiveled back around in her chair and fished out a piece of paper. She handed it to me. “Look at this, Jeff—the IB program is 41% African-American students.” I took the paper and examined it. (See Figure 1.)

I was surprised to see these demographics, which were completely out of line with my assumptions and what other people had said. “This is really strange. I spoke to a teacher a few days ago who said that IB never did anything for Black kids. What could he have meant?”

Nat let out a sigh and asked me, “Didn’t you go to T.O.K. a few days ago—what did the students look like?”

“Well, I guess you’re right. A little less than half the students were Black,” I mumbled.

“Right, they were Black. And mind you, the ‘other’ in that table I just handed you also includes African students. Not African-American, but recent immigrants. And my teaching faculty is diverse too, for that matter: Harvey Crumpton, Molly Nuster, Wanda Simpson, Shawana Mayfield, Sara Rison, and Mary Marshall—all Black. Juana Gutierrez is Mexican.

Figure 1. International Baccalaureate Enrollment by Race and Gender

	9 <sup>th</sup>			10 <sup>th</sup>			11 <sup>th</sup>			12 <sup>th</sup>			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Caucasian	13	25	38	18	17	35	13	22	35	19	16	35	143 (40%)
African-American	16	43	59	17	13	30	10	23	33	7	18	25	147 (41%)
Asian	5	10	15	5	10	15	3	8	11	5	3	8	49 (14%)
Hispanic	3	0	3	0	1	1	1	3	4	0	0	0	8 (2%)
Other	4	3	7	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	11 (4%)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>358</b>



Alma Little is mixed, you know, mixed-race, or however you categorize it. Mr. Dawson, Michael Dawson, is Black. It wasn't intentional, but we actually mirror the IB population pretty well. Now guess what—that's about seven more Black teachers than any other IB program in the state, I can tell ya. I don't know this for sure, but I imagine we are one of the more diverse programs in the country, maybe in the world. Because, nationally, there are almost no Black people teaching in IB, and there are no Black kids in IB in most other programs. We go to IB conferences all the time and the most I've ever noted was that one school said they had 10%. Most of them are in the 2–4% range, and the people at Stilldon High, where the coordinator is a friend of mine, and she said she's never had a Black male get the diploma, *never*—and they are four years older than we are.

“So,” I asked. “Really, this IB program is something of an anomaly. Those kinds of numbers are extremely uncommon, as far as I know from the research on other honors-type programs.”

“Here's the best part,” whispered Nat, as she leaned a little closer. “Dr. Ferguson knows all of that. I shared those emails. I sent emails to every coordinator in the state and said give me feedback on your African American population. How many Black kids? How many girls? How many boys? Black girls do great in this program, but they don't have many anywhere. They have—well, we have always had 25–35% in our program. This year it's even a little bit higher.”

“Okay.” I nodded, listening intently.

Nat reached over and took a long sip of coffee, then continued. “And the White kids. If you're talking about skin color, they're White, but a lot of the White kids are Bulgarians and Danes and whatever else. We have 35 different countries represented in our program, but if you're going to only look just at race, if you're only going to look at people and ignore their ethnicity or culture, we're about even . . . White and Black. We're much more multicultural than we are racially diverse. I show all this to Dr. Ferguson and the entire school staff every year. I have seven, eight Black teachers in this program. I have Hispanic people teaching, you know. He doesn't care, and people keep saying we're a program for White kids. To Doc, it's a program for White kids taught by White teachers. End of story. Data be damned!” There was an air of finality about the way she ended that sentence, but after a moment her brow started to wrinkle. Something still wasn't sitting well with Nat.

“Well . . .” she began again. “It's about class, too. Dr. Ferguson is an elitist Black person. He's middle class, or upper middle class. He lives in one of those posh neighborhoods north of town where a lot of our more affluent students live. He drives a BMW. And what's more, he really looks



down his nose at the Black IB teachers. Somehow, he thinks of them as sell-outs.” She paused.

“That’s interesting,” I started, “have you ever heard of John Ogbu?”

“Oh, I certainly have,” said Nat.

“Well, I don’t know what you’ve read, but what you are talking about makes me think of some work he did with Signithia Fordham (see Fordham, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 1978) about Black kids acting White. The basic gist of it was that Black kids who are successful in school are ostracized by their peers and branded a sell-out, like you were saying.”

“Mm, hm,” she hummed.

I kept going. “Based on what you say, it makes me wonder if that isn’t how Dr. Ferguson sees the Black teachers in the IB program. Maybe he thinks they are selling out and acting White by teaching in a program that in his mind is for White people, even if most of the students in there are actually Black.”

“I think that’s probably correct. And the irony of it is that he does the same thing! He’s always talking about how this is a Black neighborhood school, and that because I’m not Black and don’t live in their neighborhood I can never understand the *real* DuBois students. He’s suggested to me on several occasions—and he even said it in a faculty meeting last Spring to the entire school—that White teachers don’t understand the Black kids and they never will. But *he* lives on the north side of town in a predominantly White neighborhood. I’ve never even heard of him setting foot in the neighborhoods he’s talking about. He doesn’t go to Fallson Ridge or Hepton Commons where the two biggest gangs in the school operate. I was there last week. I have former students who live there and keep me in the loop about what’s happening there. I know the IB kids’ parents who live there. It’s the height of hypocrisy for Doc to say that to me and get in a BMW for a drive to West Egg,”<sup>5</sup> Nat said. “Now, there’s another thing that puzzles me about his hatred for the IB program. We’re the only reason the school is still open.”

“What do you mean, Nat?”

With a wave of her hand, Nat produced another report. “Take a look at this.” (See Table 1.)

I studied the table for a moment. The numbers were so striking . . . so awful, that they hardly seemed real. “Let me get this straight,” I said. “Does this mean that only 26 or 27% of the general education students in the school pass the verbal and math portions of the state test?”

“That’s right,” she said. “And that 26% *includes* the AP program. The numbers for IB prevent the school from being shut down and reconstituted. According to the state’s policies, the school would have what they

**Table 1. Analysis of IB Performance on State Examination**

	<b>IB</b>	<b>Core</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Verbal Component</b>			
No. of Students	358	1093	1451
No. Passing	315	295	610
Passing Rate	88%	27%	42%
<b>Math Component</b>			
No. of Students	358	1093	1451
No. Passing	357	284	641
Passing Rate	99%	26%	44%

call a Triple F—failing three years in a row. All the teachers and administrators are let go in that situation, and the school would reopen from scratch with a new staff. That would happen to DuBois without IB. I was at the magnet meeting a few weeks ago, where we all share this stuff and everybody sees my data. The district superintendent was there, too. Another AP coordinator said to me, ‘Nat, tell me what they’re doing in the regular classes there. How the hell can you all have 99% passing rate in math and have a 44 for the school. How can that be true?’ I said, ‘I don’t know. I just run the IB classes. I don’t know how to tell you what’s going on. I have opinions. I have perceptions. For example, our attrition rate is really high. We lose about a third of our teachers every year here.’”

“Right,” I responded. “That’s unfortunately common at schools like DuBois.”

“Sure,” Nat acknowledged. “But to be honest, I *don’t* know what’s going on in a lot of those classes, largely because we never discuss any of the data the way we should. It gets buried, both inside the school and at the district level. The reason the district and Doc don’t want the data desegregated is quite clear, and if you notice, you never see it in the news like this when the state announces results. I mean when you look at the way they present it you say, ‘okay, 44% of the kids passed reading at DuBois,’ or whatever the number is.”

“Lies, damned lies, and statistics” I responded.

“What?” Said Nat, lost in thought.

“Something Disraeli once said” I offered. “Never mind. But I know what you mean about the ways people can mess around with data to give the message they want to give.”

“Right,” Nat said. I could tell she was beginning to tire of the interview. “If they’d spend that much time and energy addressing the problem, it would be fixed. But here’s the thing. I don’t really know why we are

treated the way we are treated. From my perspective, the IB program is a national, maybe even international model of diversity and excellence. We're damned good and our students score very high on the state's tests. We send kids off to college—many who wouldn't normally go to college—and we often send them on a free ride. We send kids to Harvard, to Yale, to Princeton. Black kids and White kids alike. I'm baffled and a little frustrated that the principal and some other teachers, too, view us as a bunch of Whitey Teachers educating our Whitey Kids. I've heard that exact phrase, by the way. It's complicated. I think it's mostly race, but it's all mixed up with issues of class, of economics, and of society as a whole. But the people who need an enlightened perspective simply don't have one. We ought to be having a school-wide dialogue about issues of race at DuBois, but I can't raise them because I'm White, and other people can't raise them because they're Black. That's the norm here—the battle lines are drawn by race and you'd better not engage the enemy or you lose by instigation. So here I am, with all this data that could open a meaningful conversation and debunk some of the racial mythology of the place, but no one is interested. These are hard facts I'm sharing with you that ought to inform what we do in this school, but it feels like all I do sometimes is provide filler for reports."

"Let's call it a day Nat," I suggested. "I'll get in touch with you to schedule a follow-up interview before too long if that's all right. Thanks for your time."

"All right," she mumbled, lost in thought. "It's nice to be able to talk about all this, but it also gets me steamed up."

A bell rings as I leave the IB office and suddenly students fill the hallway. It's as though the dike that held them back has burst. I step to the side and watch the stream of students pass by. They are all shades of brown and white . . . mostly brown. A familiar in-the-halls-of-high-school jocularly and banter fills the air and the space between students. They make plans to meet later on the fly. They tease each other about clothes and hairstyles. Someone drops a book, and curiously leaves it there. Some students sprint down the halls trying to avoid being tardy, or hurriedly get out to the parking lot, a major social hub of the school. Others lazily saunter toward their destinations, in no particular rush. Many students produce cell phones from their pockets and sneak illicit glances at text messages—cell phones are banned and confiscated if students are caught using them during the normal school day. Just as suddenly as they appeared, the throng of students thins and then dries to a trickle. A few stragglers dart down the hallway and disappear through rust-rimmed blue metal doors. I dig through my bag and find the schedule. I should be in Harvey Crompton's room.

Harvey is the only graduate of DuBois who teaches at the school. He is an award-winning IB mathematics instructor and has won accolades as an outstanding early-career teacher, and for his students' outstanding performance on IB examinations. We open the interview by discussing his background. When Harvey was in IB as a student, he was inspired to become a math teacher, and he started the work as a senior. His capstone service-learning project was to create a tutoring program staffed by IB students. The program served non-IB students, and in particular it ended up helping many of the school's football and basketball players. Each team was a perennial contender for the state championship in their sport, but was occasionally undone by academic ineligibility.

Harvey explained, "Basically, my best friend and I had to do something for our service project for IB, so what we did was to take IB students, including ourselves, and match them up with other students around DuBois to help them get tutoring. We tutored in everything from study and test-taking skills for the state exam to straight math, science, foreign language—any subject that they needed. None of us were experts, but all of us could help. We did one-on-one sessions, and coordinated it so we could match up tutors and students based on their strengths and weaknesses. Here's an example. Some of the first guys we helped were a couple of football players who needed to get a certain score to get a certain scholarship. And one of the kids just like could not stand math . . . hated math . . . wanted nothing to do with math. We were trying to help him, and it just would not stick. So what I decided to do was . . . go to the bank. And I got as much possible change and dollars and stuff and broke it down to him with money, and it stuck—it just clicked. And right then he was like, 'You took this and you made it so simple.' Right then I thought, 'this feels pretty good. I'm good at this.' That guy went on to get his \$200,000 scholarship to wherever he played . . . I can't even remember where it was. I saw him later and he was in this nice Escalade. He was really cool, and said 'Thank you for helping me.' I was like, 'Oh you're welcome. Can I get a kickback?' We both laughed about that. Of course I wasn't serious. But anyway, it reminded me that my mom would always say, 'to whom much is given, much is expected.' I'm blessed with some ability in math and I'm blessed to be able to teach. It just always felt natural for me to be a teacher. You know, just helping people succeed and getting letters and e-mails from former students, and them coming back to visit you. Wow. It's just the greatest reward. I know it sounds all cheesy, but it really is the greatest thing that I've experienced as a teacher. And as a teacher, the thing that's a real challenge for me is *school*, rather than *teaching*."

"How do you mean?" I puzzled.

“Well, I mean all the rules. Like, you have to dress this way and you have to do this and that.”

Pause. “Hmm. I didn’t think DuBois had a dress code for teachers.”

“I guess we don’t, but there are . . . I guess, some unwritten rules,” Harvey laughed.

“Rules?”

“Sure. Like, Doc has this ‘rule’ [Harvey made little quotation marks in the air] that male teachers should wear a coat and tie to work.” I looked Harvey over from head-to-toe: jeans, checkerboard skater-style shoes, and a red baggy sweater.

“What happened to that rule?” I asked. We both laughed.

“Well, Doc gave me a speech about how Black men in a Black school need to be role models. We need to show kids that we clean up good and that you don’t have to dress like a gangsta to be successful.” Harvey had an ear-to-ear grin on his face.

“So, I guess you don’t agree?”

Harvey started, “Nah, man . . . not really. I mean, I get it to a certain extent. There’s something to that stuff. In a way, he’s right, but my example . . . what I think I have to contribute . . . is my mind and my work habits, not the way I dress. I actually think one of the cool things about being a teacher is that you don’t have to wear a tie.”

“How about the issue of being a role model for Black students?” I asked.

Harvey paused. Then began, “Again, there’s something to it, but the way Doc talks about being Black bothers me. We don’t have the same ideas about that.”

“About race?”

“Yes, about race.” Harvey continued. “Dr. Ferguson actually told me one time that I should stop teaching IB because it’s never done anything for Black kids. He told *me* that—*me*. I’m Black! When he said that I told him that the IB program *in his school* changed my life and that I loved it, but he told me I shouldn’t forget about ‘my’ community. What he meant was that the general education kids were my community because I was Black and I wasn’t ‘keeping it real’ [quotation marks with fingers again] because I was teaching IB. He said that to me one of the first days I was here. Stupid? Insensitive? I don’t know, but I’m sure he knew I graduated IB.”

“Right,” I said. “Maybe he wouldn’t have said that if he had known.”

“Nah . . .” Harvey drawled. “I told him. He just doesn’t get it. To Doc, the program is for White kids. That assumption has been around from before he got here and I guess it will be around after. I don’t get it, because something like 50% of the teachers and students in the program are actually Black.”

“41%,” I corrected.

“Whatever,” Harvey went on. “The points is that IB made me who I am and it has helped a lot of kids I know, Black, White and everything else. I resent someone suggesting I’m not connected to my community, because I am. Every Black person in this town is—it’s totally Black and White.”

“Segregated?” I asked.

“Segregated. Sure,” Harvey agreed. “But here’s another thing. IB is pretty diverse, but I wouldn’t say Doc’s argument is totally whack.”

“What do you mean?”

Harvey then offered an intriguing insight. “Look at the demographics of the school. IB doesn’t mirror the overall population and it doesn’t mirror the demographics of the city. So, while IB is diverse . . . *for IB* . . . the kids in the program don’t really look like the rest of the school population, so there is something to the idea that it’s a program that serves people besides the normal population of the school.”

“Hmm. That’s interesting,” I scribbled a note to check this out later. When I was writing that note, I noticed another question in the margins of my note pad. “Harvey, another thing I wonder about is this. Anthropologists say that you can essentially talk about race in two ways. The first way is phenotype. That just means the way people look, counting up people by the color of their skin. That’s how we know that 41% of the IB program is Black.”

“Okay . . . ,” Harvey responded, wondering where I was going.

Excited, I blasted through my thought, speaking very quickly. “But the other way is recognizing that race is a socio-cultural construct one race invents to oppress another race. Do you think part of Doc’s problem with IB is that even though the program is diverse in terms of phenotype, the fact that the program’s population isn’t like the school or neighborhood’s population, he sees it as a tool that advances one race at the expense of another? Could he see the IB program as an instrument of oppression?”

“Whoa, Jeff!” Harvey laughed. “You just went all ivory tower on me! What are you talking about?”

Trying to slow down the wheels in my head, I took a deep breath and tried again. “I guess what I mean is similar to what you said. There might be something to Doc’s suggestion—and other people’s suggestion—that the IB program is a White person’s program based on the fact that it doesn’t serve the normal population of the school. Even though it’s diverse for an IB program, it is much more White than the school.”

“And the city,” Harvey added.

“Right. I guess what I’m trying to understand is the socio-cultural significance of the program. Does it offer possibility and services to Black students that they wouldn’t otherwise have or is it something that promotes White people to an inordinate degree?”

**Table 2. Demographics**

	White	Black	Other
City	48	44	8
District	34	55	9
DuBois	12	85	3
IB Program	40	41	19

Harvey’s answer was simple. “It’s both, Jeff. There are no simple answers to complicated problems. You can take that from a math teacher.”

We spoke about some other things and I thanked Harvey for his time. Late at night and back at home, I pored over demographic census data and some reports from the school’s statistical profile. I wrote out a table in my notes. (See Table 2.)

Staring at the numbers and comparing them made the issues clear, but didn’t cause any brilliant insights to emerge. Was the IB program “for Whites, by Whites” as Sidney had told me? Yes and no both seemed to be the answer. Was the program offering opportunities to Black students who might not otherwise have them, as Nat told me and Harvey proved—or full of Black and White students and teachers who were acting White? Again, yes and no both seemed plausible. Could it be that Doc was on to something in that the program was more White than the school and therefore guilty of some form of institutional racism? I could see it from either side. As I closed my notebook for the evening, I was sure of only one thing. Harvey was right: there are no simple answers to complicated questions.

## DISCUSSION

Second-generation segregation, as a form of institutional racism, occurred *within* Dubois High School, although its manifestation was that of a Black school leader suppressing a program he believed was benefiting only Whites. Although this IB program enrolled more Blacks than other comparative schools, Dr. Ferguson refused to acknowledge the statistics of Black enrollment and Black achievement. Consequently, Dr. Ferguson contributed to second-generation segregation by insisting that only White students are in honors courses (Patton, 1998; Perry et al., 2003; Valles, 1998; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002) even when data suggested this was not the case. Dr. Ferguson upheld Spring’s (2006) claim that schools practice tracking, ability grouping, and marginalizing students based on race and acted according to this belief. He did not see the Black students enrolled in the IB program. But, he did see the majority of Black students coming from the poor neighborhood, although he did not live

in the poor neighborhood. Essentially, Dr. Ferguson chose to categorize groups of students and teachers based on phenotypic assumptions (Fluehr-Lobban, 2006). He allowed his prejudice to influence his decisions by misappropriating IB funds. He held different expectations for White and Black teachers, and failed to recognize teachers who were of more diverse backgrounds. Dr. Ferguson's leadership choices marginalized White students and teachers in the IB program, refused to acknowledge Black access to the program, and the opportunities IB provided teachers and students alike (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). Dr. Ferguson enabled second-generation segregation at DuBois High.

School leaders influence the social and cultural dynamics of schools (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Walker & Dimmock, 2005). School principals have agency (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) and can positively affect educational change and increase equity (Theoharis, 2009). Yet, Dr. Ferguson's perpetuation of second-generation racism increased student marginalization, challenged access to the IB program, and limited opportunities rather than promoting greater equity (Theoharis, 2009). Dr. Ferguson overlooked data that disagreed with his belief system, refusing to acknowledge Black achievement in what he wrongly perceived to be a White-only program. He used race for racism (Brooks, 2012).

On the other hand, the narratives of other leaders in the school suggested that it is possible to positively influence second-generation segregation, even from a position with relatively low formal authority. Natasha Frye, the IB program coordinator, was able to build one of the most diverse IB programs in the country, even though her efforts were in part undermined by the principal's unethical behavior. Through aggressive recruiting and positive support for students of color, Ms. Frye was able to help increase achievement and accomplishments for students. Likewise, mathematics teacher Harvey Crompton altered the academic structures of the school by creating a tutoring program and by increasing the expectations and support for students. It is clear that leaders, formal and informal, can have a tremendous influence on second-generation segregation in schools—both positively and negatively.

## CONCLUSION

Leaders have an important role to play in shaping, and then ultimately abolishing or enabling second-generation practices in schools. The key lessons from this study lie in the cautionary and inspiring stories of success and failure at DuBois High School. This is neither encouraging nor discouraging, but is instead a dynamic in need of further investigation. It is important that subsequent studies more fully investigate the role of personal and collective histories in schools. It will also be important to



understand what factors facilitate or impede the establishment and sustenance of second-generation segregation programs so they can be altered or better understood. In reflecting on the study from a methodological perspective, the research underscored the importance of both individual narratives and dialogue in understanding leaders' perspectives on second-generation segregation.

### Notes

1. This article is part of a larger research study published as Brooks, J. S. (2012). *Black school, White school: Racism and educational (mis)leadership*. New York: Teachers College Press.

2. While some may feel this form of segregation is a thing of the past, Orfield (1999) and several subsequent scholars have argued that school systems across the country have resegregated over time. This important moral, social and policy dynamic is taken up by other scholars writing in this special issue, notably Diem, Frankenberg, and Horsford.

3. Advanced Placement (AP) is a program sponsored by the College Board that affords students the opportunity to explore topics beyond a traditional high school curriculum and, in some cases, earn college credit.

4. <http://www.ibo.org/>

5. Reference to a privileged neighborhood in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*.

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