

Governance

Long Island: How Did We Get Here?

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Community/Leaders political code words
Segregated housing on Long Island
Antiracist practices & Support
school quality on Long Island
School Segregation
Consequences of Segregation
Issues affecting communities
Long Islander
Discriminatory practices
Memorable quotes
Taxes/Money
Benefits of Diversity
consolidation
Perceptions
challenges
Issues within schools
Community Development
Segregated Communities
LI History/Early Settlers
Community Attitudes on Education
Not in my backyard (NIMBYism)
Political Power/Influence
Reflective Questions/comments
Long Island Stereotypes about the education system on Long Island

Research Questions

- What are the biggest challenges facing housing/neighborhoods on Long Island today?
- What are the biggest challenges facing schools on Long Island today?
- What are the major historical events on Long Island that got us to where we are today with housing and schools?





Research Design & Methodology

- **QUALITATIVE STUDY**
- **6 PARTICIPANTS**
- **45-90 MINUTE ZOOM INTERVIEWS**

GOVERNANCE- DEFINED AS STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES ON LONG ISLAND WHICH IMPACT SCHOOLS AND NEIGHBORHOODS ON LONG ISLAND

THEMES

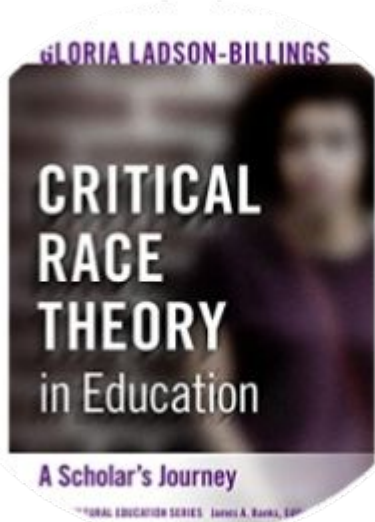
- **WHY BOUNDARIES MATTER FOR SCHOOLS**
- **LONG ISLAND SEGREGATION**
- **SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION**
- **SCHOOL FUNDING AND PROPERTY TAXES**

Framework

Critical Race Theory

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995)


- Racism is normal and systemically embedded
- The Voices of communities of color are legitimate
- The Dominant group only concedes when it benefits them
- Notion of colorblindness and neutrality must be challenged



Colonization history on Long Island and how it contributed to the racism and segregation:

“The White settlers that came here apparently were somewhat kinder to the Native people that were already here than in some other places. But still thought of themselves as very superior. You know Europeans have an extremely developed culture, they were as far as I can tell from history, not likely to perceive what was developed in other cultures. They were likely to only perceive what seemed kind of developed toward the European way”

“Although Long Island, New York had abolished slavery by 1827, that still means it was around here for 200 years and even after that, some of the attitudes I’ve come across in the historical things show a level of racism that just didn’t perceive how dreadful it was for Black people and Native groups and other people of color...that they lived their lives in less comfortable conditions didn’t seem to register with white people” - Participant H



Historical Events

1947 - Levitt & Sons (development of Levittown) - The developers of Levittown prohibited people of color from moving in through contract clauses, a common practice at the time.

Restrictive racial covenants were recommended by the Federal Housing Administration to create homogeneous communities.

1948 - Landmark case: Shelley vs. Kramer struck down racially restrictive housing covenants but William Levitt kept them allowing only White to purchase homes in Levittown, Long Island.

“Because of the historical significance of things like the Levittown houses and other things that have allowed me to understand that the segregation which exists on Long Island is not singular, nor is it mistaken, that it was part of a process that became consistent and then adopted by a large segment of the population on Long Island. It's very debilitating, to be in a community that is so monolithic, and not have those experiences and it's a real shock to those students when they get out into the real world.”

“If we don't educate ourselves, and we're not willing to be educated, we stay in that circle. And we're just like, we're a hamster on a spinning wheel over and over again.”
-Participant L

Turning Points

Princeton Plan (1948) - Attempted to eliminate the use of geographic neighborhood lines to assign students to schools and instead put all same-age kids together in one building

1954 - Brown vs. Board of Education - a landmark 1954 Supreme Court case in which the justices ruled unanimously that racial segregation of children in public schools was unconstitutional

1961 - NYS Education Commissioner James Allen Jr. ordered superintendents of school districts across the state to complete a “racial census of elementary schools”

1963 - Princeton Plan was proposed in Malverne, NY by James Allen Jr: School rezoning for integration barred by court in 1964. Decision was overturned 6 months later by the appellate court

1965 - NYS School District Reorganization stopped; Litigation forced to balance Malverne public schools based on race – some white parents opted to send their kids to private school



Malverne, Long Island

Malverne became the first city in New York with a state-designed integration plan (1966), and a test case for what could be done more widely. But white parents, furious with the commissioner's plan, quickly formed a group called the Taxpayers and Parents Association. They wanted their school district to remain the way it was—racially imbalanced—and quickly sued to block the plan from taking effect.

Harris, Adam (September 29, 2020). The New York town that tried to top Desegregation. The Atlantic.



Theme 1: Why Boundaries Matter for Schools

- Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argued the cause of poverty in conjunction with the conditions of their schools and schooling is institutional and structural racism. There is massive systemic inequality of outcomes based on racially biased decisions.
- Policies associated with school funding, resource distribution and tracking leave students from diverse cultural backgrounds with fewer and lower-quality books, curriculum materials, laboratories, and computers; larger class sizes; less qualified and experienced teachers; and less access to high-quality curriculum.

“The description I would like to give would be isolated and woke. The isolation because we are on an island that oftentimes finds itself and its communities isolating one from the other, being a part of one of the most segregated suburban areas in the United States. We become isolated, both economically and geographically communities from the other” - Participant L

Theme 2: Long Island Segregation

ERASE Racism (2015), found the following:

With the release of the 2010 Census data although Long Island has become more racially diverse it continues to be one of the most segregated regions in the country, ranking tenth in terms of the highest levels of segregation between blacks and whites (p. 2).

The Long Island Community Foundation (2014) “The Fiscal Policy Institute indicated that nine of the eleven New York State school districts with the largest proportion of black and Hispanic students are on Long Island: all nine are high poverty, high need districts, have the highest percentage of English Language Learners, and are among the lowest performing districts in the region” (p.1).



“I’m usually the only Black person in the room. Most of the organizations that I’m on on the Island- there’re maybe like one or two Black people and they’re making comments- it’s about me, right? Or even- so not even so much race, right? Immigration status is a big thing because they will have a full conversation about people who come to this country and then I say “A-a-ahem! I’m sorry, I came when I was seven,” and they say “No, no, not like you, Dr. Sam, the other people.” And I say “Those are- that’s me.” I came to America when they didn’t even have a gate at the airport- we literally had to walk outside and walk to the plane and walk-up steps- like that’s a real thing”-

Participant D


Theme 3: School Consolidation

The Long Island region of New York is divided into two counties, Nassau County and Suffolk County. Long Island has 124 school districts, Nassau County has 56, and Suffolk Country has 68.

Thompson (2014) found that school consolidation will offers many benefits to Long Island in finances, instruction, demographics, and enrollment.

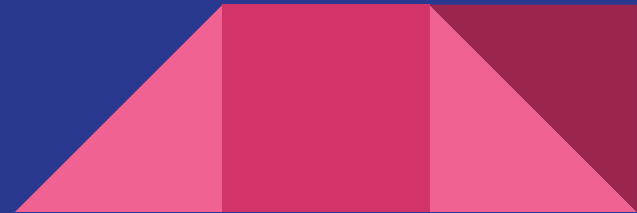
According to the ERASE Racism (2010) report, alternatives to 124 school districts include reducing the number of school districts, which will lead to more ethnically diverse and economically equitable schools.

The creation of magnet schools, school choice, and family preferences are possible alternatives to district consolidation (ERASE Racism, 2010; Torres & Weissbourd, 2020).



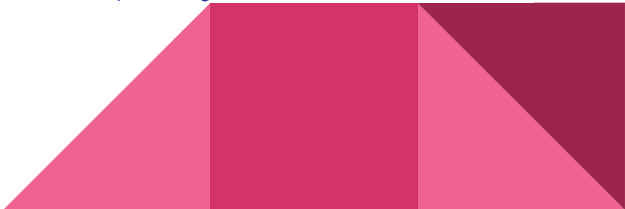
“Districts are not going to consolidate because they don't want those kids in with my kids. It's a very, very segregated area. And it also accounts for the fact that you'll see some of the largest hate crimes and other instances going on in certain parts of Long Island, I would say mostly in Suffolk County, where you have large numbers of bullying from kids, but also intolerance from adults” - Participant R

“I would love it. I am 100% in favor of it. I think that it will be fought tooth and nail and I think it will be fought by- not just people who don't want to racially integrate, but by teachers unions and by all the people who don't want- they don't want to lose their jobs, right? And they don't wanna move around and they don't wanna you know, they don't wanna be uncomfortable ... Like I- I understand where some of that hesitation come from- comes from, and some of it is systemic racism and some of it is economic, just, you know, people looking out for themselves, but I think there would be nothing better on Long Island than not having 124 school districts. It would really be such a form of both social, and economic, and racial justice.” - Participant A




Theme 4: School Funding and Property Taxes

Intellectual property is an additional example of property according to CRT.


- Curriculum represents a form of intellectual property.
 - The tying of property values and taxes to how much funding a school receives results in students in higher priced and higher taxed neighborhoods being exposed to better curriculum offerings, including a wider array of electives and AP courses (Faryon & Crowe, 2011).
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“One of the things I just as I'm thinking about this is the battle between money and racism” - Participant A


“When you consolidate them, one has a higher tax rate one has a lower tax rate. When they consolidate, somebody is going to do better and somebody is going to do worse. The same thing if we tried to change this, the formula for how to local property taxes, unless a court comes in” - Participant R



Is it all bad news?

- Long Island is an area with racially segregated neighborhoods.
 - Community members of color are treated unfairly when it comes to resources, access to transportation hubs, and education opportunities.
 - Many communities of color see increases in cancer clusters due to dangerous environmental dumping.
 - Race is a topic that is ignored by many communities on Long Island and many communities are okay with neighborhood and school racial segregation. Equality on various levels is increasingly discussed at numerous societal levels; however, no clear solutions are foreseen.
 - Long Island was developed with discriminatory principles and this continues to have a very significant impact on our economic development and on our sustainability, regionally.
 - Long Island is not only segregated by race and socioeconomic difference but is also politically divided.
 - Being a Long Islander carries with it a sense of pride, from the town you purchase your home and your child's school district.
 - Schools and housing are interconnected, property taxes are drivers of this relationship. De-facto segregation has historically impacted Long Island communities and schools.
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Growth...

- A few school districts on Long Island have begun efforts to de-track by removing honors class
 - Decisions such as de-tracking must be approved by school boards since school districts are local on Long Island
 - The board must support superintendents and their vision, at times this can be an issue because boards tend to be political
 - As for politics, legislators and superintendents need to be real leaders and stand up for what they feel is right for the students of Long Island and not be intimidated by vocal community members against diversity, equity and inclusion
 - LILM a registered hate group backed many candidates for school board seats and more LILM backed candidates lost than won
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“I think that you really have to break the system, I mean, to make, to make that happen because I think that who we put up for office and...you know, I think that (pause) our Democrats on Long Island are very cautious and, you know, again, it’s this “I don’t want-“ you know I think that they’re afraid to piss off racists and soft racists and, you know, I think that we would have to really remake the Democratic party and make it be more- make it a system where progressives could even have a shot of not only getting elected, but even just being put up to run, because I think that it gets squashed, you know, in the screening process, or, you know, they put up who they know and deals are made behind closed doors and- that’s true in both parties, but I think if the change is going to come from somewhere, it’s going to most likely be the Democratic Party, but that needs reform in itself.”-Participant A

