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It Takes a City: The Process and Politics of Urban School Restructuring

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By

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B.A., University of Akron, 1994
M.Ed., Georgia State University, 2002

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An abstract of
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Abstract

It Takes a City: The Process and Politics of Urban School Restructuring

By Tirza Wilbon White

This historic case study reveals the process, goals, and motivations of stakeholders who were involved in the restructuring of a K-5 urban elementary school. Although extensive literature exists on school restructuring and on the influence of context in school reform efforts, the literature omits voices belonging to those individuals who shape restructuring reform agendas and goals during the process: educators, non-school stakeholders, and community members. Moreover, no studies illuminate embedded motivations for restructuring and the role that race, class, and power assumes in those efforts. Oral histories, in-depth interviews, narratives analysis, and focus groups were used to illustrate the process from the perspectives of multiple stakeholders. Urban regime theory (URT) and critical race theory (CRT) framed the study's results and revealed the counter-narratives that challenged key assumptions located in mainstream literature. Findings show that (1) school restructuring occurred within the context of a simultaneous investment in neighborhood revitalization; (2) a myriad of external, non-school stakeholders with varied primary goals initiated and invested in restructuring because they viewed a high-achieving school as critically important yet secondary, a tool needed to supported their primary motivations; (3) restructuring resulted in dramatic increases in student achievement for low-income, African American children, increases that were subsequently sustained over a ten-year period; (4) committed, school-level educators were disinvested in the political process of change and therefore found their future trajectory at the will of district-level school administrators; and (5) many of the problems attributed to the education of African American children and families were not the result of poverty as a deficit of individuals but rather were the result of a legacy of social policy neglect. This study is instructive because it can inform those concerned with the education of children in urban settings about the mechanisms, motivations, and broad understanding that were required to turnaround a failing school prior to the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. This study is also theoretically significant because it gives voice to the perspectives of stakeholders of color and adds to the growing literature on race-conscious education policy.

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Acknowledgments

The first time I sat through a class at Emory, I felt sheer panic by the quality of people and the strength of work around me. The thought of conducting original research and of writing a dissertation that would meet professional standards was enough to make me question my own capabilities. In a subsequent class, as if reading my mind, Dr. Vanessa Siddle Walker, my qualitative research methods professor, said to our class, "You are not here by accident. We did not fall asleep during our review of your applications. We were not tired through the process. And we did not simply select you last – any of you – just to get it over with. You are all here purposefully and after great consideration." Therefore, the fact that I am now on the other side of the daunting process of earning a Ph.D. is due in large part to the encouragement and support of many wonderful people.

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Chapter I: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Since the 1965 passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), a general consensus in urban education is that schools are affected by poverty and as institutions, they are in need of improvement (Anyon, 1997, 2005; Henig, Hula, Orr, & Pedescleaux, 1999; Orr, 1999; Shirley, 1997; Stone, 1989; Stone, Henig, Jones, & Pierannunzi, 2001; Stone, Orr, & Worgs, 2006; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). These beliefs have resulted in numerous reforms directed at all levels of PK-12 public education, including early childhood education, curriculum and assessment, preparation and professional growth for teachers, school organization and leadership, technology, and parental and community involvement (Darling-Hammond, 2004). When each attempt has failed, new reforms are undertaken with increasing intensity and heightened levels of accountability, with the most sweeping and comprehensive school reform legislation in the history of American schooling initiated in 2001. Titled the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), its official aims are to improve the education for children traditionally left behind in America's schools, in particular linguistic and racial minorities, students with disabilities, and children living in poverty (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

One of the methods of reform incorporated into NCLB is school restructuring (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). This policy dramatically reorganizes a school's governance structures. A federal sanction under NCLB, school restructuring is provided as the last stage in school improvement and is leveraged against schools that have failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for five or more consecutive years (Scott, 2008). NCLB identifies five implementation options for underperforming schools: (1) entering into a contract with an outside organization that will operate the school; (2)

reopening as a charter school; (3) turning the school over to the state; (4) reconstitution, i.e., replacing all or most of the staff who are relevant to the failure to make AYP; and (5) school restructuring, i.e., replacing the staff and leadership, revising the curriculum, and/or altering the governance and decision-making structures (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Though restructuring policy implementation varies by state and district, it typically extends option four under NCLB – school reconstitution – the act of removing existing teachers and administrators and replacing them with new teachers and administrators who are believed to be more capable in raising student achievement (Boyd, 2000; Rice & Croninger, 2005; Rice & Malen, 2003). School restructuring may be directed at an entire district or at select schools within a district. In certain cases, schools are reconstituted and reopened under different names (Mintrop, 2000). In all cases, however, restructuring follows when the problems in a school are believed to be so entrenched or so extreme that none of the intervention strategies, including redesigns of a school's programs and instructional practices and/or changes in administrators, produce the necessary improvement. Therefore, restructuring is advanced as both a consequence of the underperformance of schools and as a remedy for their failure.

Though the concept of restructuring predates NCLB, it has become an increasingly popular method of reform for stakeholders who have developed an intolerance for schools with a history of low student achievement as measured by their performance on state tests. In the 2005/2006 school year alone, the number of schools facing restructuring rose 44% (Feller, 2006). A sharper increase in the number of schools facing restructuring occurred in the 2006/2007 school year: 1,000 of California's 9,500

schools were candidates; in New York State, 77 schools qualified; in Florida, 441 schools were identified, and in Baltimore, Maryland alone, 49 schools were targets for restructuring (Schemo, 2007). In 2008, the Center on Educational Policy reported that 7% of schools serving high concentrations of students with social and economic needs (Title I schools) were in the restructuring phase, a 56% increase from the previous year (p. 7). Further, in 2009 *Education Week* reported that 17.9% of schools in the United States were identified under NCLB standards and terminology as "in need of improvement" (Hoff, p. 15). Nearly a quarter of those schools were concentrated in urban areas and were in year five, the final stage of failure to make AYP, when schools are eligible for restructuring (Hoff, 2009).

Despite the dramatic increases in the number of restructuring-eligible schools, restructuring remains an underexamined high-stakes accountability reform initiative (Malen, Croninger, Muncey, & Redmond-Jones, 2002; Rice & Malen, 2003). In fact, Rice and Malen (2010) indicate that empirical studies on reconstitution "are limited in scope and uneven in quality. The evidence to date suggests that school reconstitution is, at best, a risky strategy" (p. 4). Rice and Malen (2010) posit that the intended benefits are not well documented in the literature and that the actual effects may harm rather than help struggling schools.

The literature indicates that reconstituting or restructuring a failed school successfully requires overcoming a legacy of failure. Proponents believe that the threat of restructuring can help motivate improvement throughout the system, particularly in low-performing or probationary schools. As one Maryland principal explains, the threat of restructuring at his school was "an opportunity for leveraging change and [using] the

accountability issue in a positive way to motivate teachers and to give us an excuse to do things differently . . . to empower us" (as quoted in Mintrop, 2000, p. 243). These supporters point to improvement in probationary schools as evidence of the motivating impact of restructuring.

Critics of restructuring argue that failure to improve the performance of teachers and students may persist after restructuring because the act of replacing the faculty in a troubled school often does not translate into positive change (Hess, 2003; Rice & Croninger, 2005; Rice & Malen, 2003; Rice & Malen, 2010). By the time restructuring becomes necessary, they argue, patterns of failure, including low expectations, poor community relations, deteriorating physical structures, and general demoralization have often become entrenched among staff and also among parents, community members, and students.

To date, no conclusive data exist that demonstrates that the threat of reconstitution is an effective motivator for change. Anecdotal findings from exploratory empirical studies indicate that the overall impact of reconstitution may be either positive or negative depending upon the circumstances (Hess, 2003; Mintrop, 2000; Rice & Malen, 2003). Research on motivation spurred by reconstitution (Mintrop, 2000), as well as interviews with teachers and other stakeholders (Malen et al., 2002; Rice & Malen, 2003), suggests that it may be particularly important to establish processes and solutions deemed legitimate by stakeholders during the process. Involving the stakeholders in the process, which findings of these empirical studies suggest (Malen et al., 2002; Mintrop, 2000; Rice & Malen, 2003), may be one way of establishing that legitimacy. However, empirical work that intimately examines both the process of restructuring and the role

and contribution of stakeholders in the restructuring process is absent from the literature. Such empirical data are crucial to advance an understanding of the ability of school restructuring to redefine the educational opportunities and structures in urban schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the process of school restructuring from the perspective of political, school, and community stakeholders who invested in the restructuring reform of Fowler Elementary, a K-5 chronically underperforming urban elementary school located in the center of a distressed public housing community. An additional aim was to investigate motivations in the realm of context – those of race, class, and power – and their influence on the restructuring process. It is noteworthy that within three years, restructuring resulted in dramatic increases in student achievement for low-income, African American children. Moreover, these increases were sustained over the next 10 years.

Prior to its restructuring, Fowler maintained a predominately African American, low-income student population. Each year nearly 100% of students qualified for the free/reduced lunch program and fewer than one third demonstrated proficiency on state mandated tests. Three years after restructuring, over 90% of students met or exceeded proficiency benchmarks, percentages that have held steady. This study examines the process and contexts of school restructuring in this setting. The following questions guided my inquiry:

1. What historical, political, and social factors created the conditions for restructuring?

2. What were political, school, and community stakeholders' goals and activities prior to restructuring?
3. What was the relationship between political, community, and school goals during restructuring?
4. What were the roles of race, class, and power in the convergence and divergence of goals and motivations prior to restructuring?

Unlike existing research on school restructuring, the goal of this historic case study was not to extend the extant literature by offering an additional analysis of the merits, weaknesses, and outcomes of restructuring. Instead, the outcome of sustained, increased student achievement motivated my desire to examine the process and motivations for change in this setting. Thus, this study expands the body of literature on restructuring reform by illuminating the process and contextual factors prior to and during the conceptualization and implementation.

Significance of the Study

In a national context characterized by performance-based standards, high-stakes accountability, and an increase in the use of conservative reforms and ideologies (Apple, 2007; Apple & Pedroni, 2005; Buras & Apple, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2004), an examination of the process and contexts of successful restructuring is a critical means by which to influence educational leadership and policy. First, because a major provision of NCLB allows for restructuring schools that fail to make significant improvements in student achievement, findings are instructive for educators and stakeholders who embark upon restructuring and for policymakers and researchers who continue to question and address the implications of restructuring. Second, because urban schools are populated

most often by children of color, English as a second language learners, and children from low-income homes and, therefore, are the target of restructuring efforts, understanding the extent to which restructuring is influenced by race and class has important implications for restructuring policies. Finally, this work is useful to educators and policymakers because the varied and competing narratives on the process of restructuring from the perspective of multiple stakeholders in a historic case study may help illuminate restructuring processes that subsequently produce dramatic, sustained, school-wide increases in student achievement.

Theoretical Frameworks

Developing a holistic understanding of the components of restructured schools involves examining multiple perspectives. A variety of influential national studies (Boyer, 1983; Calwelti, 1994; Goodlad, 1984; Lieberman, 1991; Powell, Farrar & Cohen, 1985; Sizer, 1984) and reports (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2005; Center on Educational Policy, 2008; Rhim, Kowal, Hassel & Hassel, 2007; Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, 1995; Walberg, 2007) laid the groundwork for the types of changes needed to develop alternatives to traditional paradigms for organizing schools. Thoughtful analysts from organizational theory (Clark & Melroy, 1989; Weick & McDaniel, 1989), political science (Elmore, Peterson, & McCarthy, 1996; Hawley, 1988), critical theory (Bell, 1980; Crenshaw, 1995; DeCuir, & Dixson, 2004 ; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano, 1997), and history (Tyack & Cuban, 1997; Wong & Rothman, 2008) have contributed to our understanding of the aspects of schooling most likely to undergo major alternations during school reform.

Using multiple lenses to understand the phenomenon of restructuring schools enhances the portrait we see and the conclusions we are able to draw. At one level, the use of multiple perspectives helps ensure that contextual aspects are included in the analysis. At a second level, they ensure that subtle differences and contrasts are faithfully captured. Finally, multiple lenses help make explicit the tensions likely to be overlooked when only one perspective is employed. Therefore, in examining the process of school restructuring and its contexts in this historic case study, urban regime theory (URT) and critical race theory (CRT) served as interpretive lenses. These theoretical orientations were used for two purposes: (1) to filter the events from the perspectives of different participants involved and (2) to test the capacity of each theory to explain restructuring phenomena.

Urban Regime Theory

URT is most often the means by which political science scholars study governance in a city. "Governance" is defined as the productive exercise of power, or "the power to," resulting from the normative and actual arrangements, i.e., the regime, between public and private spheres in a democratic community (Stoker, 1995; Stone, 1989, 2005). "Urban regimes" consist of "the informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together to make and carry out governing decisions" (Stone, 1989, p. 179).

Urban regime theory describes a division of labor between the state and the free market in which ownership of productive assets rests largely in the hands of the private sector while the machinery of government is subject to popular control. Thus, urban regime theory is concerned with the interface between the public and private sectors and

the exercise of power in governance; its emphasis is on the interdependence and two-way relationship between governmental and non-governmental actors (Imbroscio, 1998b; Stoker, 1995; Stone, 1989, 1993, 1998b; 2005). Because its emphasis is on these actors, attention is directed away from power as a means of social control and toward an understanding of power expressed through social production, and achieved through a focus on coordination and cooperation between the members of a coalition (Stone, 2005).

Urban regime theory currently dominates the study of governance and of civic cooperation and collaboration in local politics in urban settings (Imbroscio, 1998a). Essentially, alliances of political and economic elites, or urban governing coalitions, actively bridge the division between the state and economy and the needs of each through negotiation and cooperation. Both of these aspects are crucial in developmental policymaking. Stone (1998c) has observed that

> ... urban regimes mediate between policy challenges from the larger world ... and local policy actions. At the same time, another important process is taking place, and this has to do with the shaping of the regime. Thus, two questions form the core of regime analysis. One has to do with the impact of urban regimes, that is, regimes as mediating factors between policy challenge and policy response. The other has to do with regimes themselves – how they are formed, reinforced, modified, and, on occasion, displaced. (p. 252)

Stone, whose work represents the most advanced application of regime analysis (Stoker, 1995) and who is considered urban regime theory's most influential theorist (Imbroscio, 1998b), argues that an analysis of urban regimes is centered on four tenets: (1) the agenda, (2) the governing coalition, (3) the resources that are brought to bear, and

(4) the schemes and modes of cooperation among stakeholders (Stone, 1998c). Thus, regime analysis is dependent upon an understanding of how power to create and implement policy is achieved through the interplay of these four tenets.

One of the criticisms of urban regime theory is that it deals only with elites and their relations to one another and not to the larger context of mass relations (Stoker, 1995; Stoker & Mossberger, 1994). This criticism is especially important because it provides parameters for regime theory. Urban regime analysis does not lend itself to mass opinion (Stone, 2005). As Stoker observed, "For actors to be effective regime partners two characteristics seem especially appropriate: possession of strategic knowledge of social transactions and a capacity to act on that knowledge; and second, control of resources that make one an attractive coalition partner." (1995, p. 60). Thus, regime analysis is limited to those members who are involved in particular policy processes at a given time based on the value they bring to the effort.

Scholars seeking to use urban regime theory cannot infer, however, that urban regimes consist of a fixed body of actors who take on an ever-changing agenda. Instead, URT examines who needs to be mobilized at any given point to take on a problem effectively (Stoker, 1995; Stone, 2005). In sum, the emphasis of urban regime analysis is on understanding how: (1) the interplay between the four previously mentioned characteristics of regimes and (2) the two-way relationship between the actors, both governmental and non-governmental, who represent the public and private sectors and who may change at given times during the course of policy processes. Such an understanding of urban regime theory and its emphasis creates the framework necessary

to capture political and organizational structures and shifting, constructed social relations between members of a coalition.

Urban regime theory was appropriate for my analysis of the process of conceptualizing and implementing a reform policy such as school restructuring. Inherent in the implementation of restructuring was an understanding of how (1) governmental and non-governmental actors formulated and set their agendas; (2) coalitions were established and evolved; (3) coalition members navigated and satisfied their competing individual interests and agendas; and (4) resources were brought to bear or were absent or redirected from reform efforts.

Understanding successful policy processes and implementation required developing an awareness for how regimes function and how their arrangements were worked out through the dynamics of coalition building. In an age of increasing public-private partnerships in school reform (Orr, 1999; Shirley, 1997; Stone, 1998b), understanding how public and private interests merged in order to achieve a capacity to implement policy agendas is critical. Thus, URT was appropriate for my study of school restructuring because regime analysis focuses on organizational, political, and social structures of coalitions and coalition building, and is the mechanism that mediates the relationship between political and social processes between elites and non-elites and between and within public and private sectors.

Although URT supported my analysis of elite stakeholders' positionality in restructuring, it failed to explain the responses of teachers and community members. Critical race theory (CRT) provided a useful alternative. CRT facilitated the examination

of school and community stakeholder perspectives and how their ideological dispositions contributed to their conceptualization of and contribution to restructuring.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory emerged in legal studies in the 1970s as a means to uncover the elusive force of race and its influence on educational inequity (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995); the embedded patterns of exclusion; and the often taken for granted aspects of White privilege, race, and racism (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Though CRT originated within the field of law as an extension of critical theory and in response to the United States' law and policy's declension from civil rights in the 1970s and 1980s (Crenshaw, 1995), its theoretical and practical tenets can be transferred to other disciplines, most notably education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn, Yosso, Solorzano, & Parker, 2002; Solorzano, 1997).

Solorzano (1997) defines CRT as "a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalization of People of Color" (p. 6). As a framework deployed in research, critical race theorists seek to add complexity to stories of success whose implicit tenets are based on the belief that policymakers are single-mindedly pursuing educational equity and maximum educational performance or that efforts are pursued within notions of merit, neutrality, and objectivity, i.e., without the conscious or unconscious influence of race.

In their efforts to contextualize educational experiences of people of color, critical race theorists call for the legitimation of counter-narratives that reveal the experiences of "The Other" and the influence of race in educational policies. Specifically, CRT calls for

the use of narratives, stories, and chronicles as effective and necessary methods of challenging the status quo and subverting the prevailing mindset of the dominate group (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Parker & Lynn, 2002).

Drawing from the analysis and the work of scholars who have engaged CRT, I identified four tenets that guided my examination: (1) counter-storytelling (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Matsuda, 1995), (2) permanence of racism (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), (3) interest convergence (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and (4) Whiteness as property (Harris, 1995).

Counter-storytelling. The use of storytelling, or "counter-storytelling" (Ladson-Billings, 1998), allows researchers outside of the dominate culture to permeate "the bundle of presuppositions, received wisdoms, and shared understandings against a background of which legal and political discourse takes place" (Delgado, 2000, p. 61). Delgado argues that counter-storytelling is means and method of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes. Furthermore and specific to education, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) suggest that counter-narratives can be found in various forms, including personal stories and narratives, other people's stories and narratives, and composite stories and narratives.

The permanence of racism. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that the prevalence of race and racism "can be easily documented in statistical and demographic data" (p. 48). Race can also be identified in differences between White children and children of color in drop-out rates, achievement trends, and suspension and expulsion rates. Furthermore, Bell (1980) argues that normative critiques of race and racism capture "a description of how the world *ought* to be" (p. 523). In contrast, positivist

analyses explore "how the world *is*" (p. 523). The latter approach reveals influences on the permanence of race in American education (Bell, 1992). Though subordination does not seem readily apparent in legal documents and policies, using principles of history, precedent in policy, and documented disparities in education within the context of economic and racial lines allows for the dissection of how the world is, as it is experienced, rather than on how it should be (Bell, 1980).

Interest convergence. Bell (1980) posits that "the interest of Blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of Whites. He further notes that laws and policies, "standing alone," will not authorize a remedy providing effective racial equality for Blacks where the remedy sought threatens the superior societal status of middle and upper class Whites" (p. 523). It follows then that reform policies may not actually be pursued according to notions of merit or determined by the character of equalizing opportunity. Reform remedies may instead be the manifestations of unspoken, subversive, and/or subconscious conclusions that the reform pursuits will secure, advance, or at least not undermine educational interests deemed important by Whites.

Whiteness as property. Another tenet of CRT is the concept of Whiteness as property. Whiteness can be constructed as property and applied to race because of its historical origins. Historically, property rights in the United States have been rooted in racial domination; the ownership of property, a legal right most often reserved for Whites, played a critical role in establishing and maintaining racial and economic subordination (Harris, 1995). CRT scholar Harris (1995) argues that, due to the historical intersection of race and property in the United States, Whiteness can be considered a

property interest. However, according to Harris, "Whiteness is not simply and solely a legally recognized property interest. It is simultaneously an aspect of self-identity and of personhood" that holds value in ways in which property does. For example, Harris argues that "because Whites could not be enslaved or held as slaves, the racial line between White and Black was extremely critical; it became a line of protection and demarcation . . . it determined the allocation of the benefits and burdens " (p. 279).

Whiteness as property functions on three levels: the right of possession, the right to use, and the right to disposition. In addition, the right to transfer, the right of use and enjoyment, and the right of exclusion are essential attributes associated with property rights. Furthermore, Harris suggests that Whiteness and Whiteness as property have "blinded society to the systems of domination that work against so many by retaining an unvarying focus on the vestiges of systemic racialized privilege which subordinates those perceived as a particularized few – the Others" (p. 290).

Similarly, Ladson-Billings (1998) and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) suggest that in utilizing a CRT perspective to analyze Whiteness as property in terms of educational inequity, the curriculum has been a tool for uplift of Whites and for the marginalization of children of color. Thus, a curriculum becomes a privilege enjoyed almost exclusively by White students. The exclusion of the contributions of people of color as well as formal mechanisms of tracking, honors, and/or gifted programs and advanced placement courses represent the many ways that schools have essentially demarked the opportunity structures of White and Black children.

These four tenets of CRT – counter-storytelling, the permanence of race, interest convergence, Whiteness as property – accommodated my analysis of restructuring

reforms in its ability to uncover the conscious and subconscious role of race in stakeholders' actions related to restructuring. CRT provided a lens through which to view the process of restructuring and the roles of stakeholders in a way that illuminated how race and racism influenced school reform efforts.

The Nexus of Urban Regime and Critical Race Theories

Employing urban regime and critical race theories as frameworks allowed me to analyze stakeholders' roles and ideologies in the process of restructuring. Urban regime theory focuses on elites, power, and resources while critical race theory emphasizes the convergence of interests and the permanence of race in policy enactment (See Appendix A and Appendix B for an overview of the tenets of URT and CRT).

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to assist readers with the content of this study:

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): The No Child Left Behind Act requires that each state set goals that call for continuous and substantial improvement of each public school district and public school with the ultimate outcome that all students meet the state's standards for proficiency in language arts and mathematics by the year 2014. Beginning in 2002, each state was to establish a timeline that would ensure that all students in each subgroup would meet or exceed the state's proficiency level of achievement on the state-determined assessment by the school year 2013-2014. AYP documents the percentage of students in each school who scored at or above the "meets" or "proficient" levels on the state test. These state-specific benchmarks are not

necessarily measures of growth in student learning or achievement; they only indicate the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the state-identified targets.

Conservative education: Conservative education is a traditional approach to education that values individual accomplishment and that supports the privatization of schools, a limited role of government in education (Apple, 2007), and the standardization of knowledge (Buras & Apple, 2008). Conservative educational reforms include restructuring (Rice & Malen, 2003), vouchers (Scott, 2005), school choice (Scott, 2005), and charter schools (Scott, 2005).

Counter-storytelling: Counter-storytelling is writing that aims to illustrate the lived experiences of people of color in an effort to challenge the validity of accepted premises or myths, in particular, those held by the majority (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001).

Implementation: Traditional conceptualizations of the policy cycle often isolate implementation as a component of the larger cycle, of which problem definition, agenda setting, policy formation and legitimation, implementation, and evaluation are a part (deLeon, 1999). Efforts to isolate and define one piece within the cycle oversimplify the usual process of multiple, interacting components that influence the others, and underscores the recursive nature of policy enactment (Sabatier, 1999). Because features of the policy cycle overlap and inform each other, implementation, when used in this study, captures agenda setting, problem definition, and policy formation but does not include policy evaluation.

Reconstitution: Reconstitution commonly involves several components: (1) identifying schools that significantly underperform on a set of measures defined by the state or district; (2) vacating or granting the authority to vacate all staff and/or

administrative positions and appointing a new principal or administrative team; (3) rehiring a proportion of incumbent teachers and filling the rest of the positions with new staff (Doherty & Abernathy, 1998); and, on occasion, (4) renaming the school (Mintrop, 2000).

Restructuring: Restructuring encompasses the tenets of reconstitution; however, it is extended to include changes in the governance structures of the school that alter the school's governance and decision-making authority and capacity (e.g. changing the length of the school day or year, revising the curriculum, changing class structures, and hiring and firing teachers) in an effort to produce dramatic improvement in student achievement (Rice & Croninger, 2005).

The restructuring of Fowler Elementary School transcends the more common definition of restructuring. Not only were the school staff and curriculum replaced, the school renamed, and the governance structure retooled, but the physical structure was demolished, moved to a different location in the community, and rebuilt. Therefore, for purposes of this study, restructuring is the process of hiring a new faculty and staff, revising the curriculum, and rebuilding, relocating, and renaming the school.

Urban: Organizations often differ in how they use the term urban. For instance, the U.S. Census Bureau defines urban as a territory or area that has "core blocks" that are densely populated with at least 1,000 persons per square mile (http://www.census.gov/geo/www/ua/ua_2k.html). The Census Bureau's definition of urban is limited for the purposes of this study because it does not capture the characteristics of schools within urban areas. Thus, while urban areas tend to share the characteristics identified by the Census Bureau, their definition needs to be expanded.

When used within this study, "urban" is broadened in a way to encompass the central city of a metropolitan area where 75% or more families reside, where children attend schools within this metropolitan area, where student poverty rates are concentrated and minority student populations are highest, and where educational resources are scarce when compared to more affluent areas (National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

Summary

Although milder reform interventions such as school reconstitution have been tried to turn around failing schools, empirical examples of the process of the more intrusive reform, restructuring, are nonexistent. Further, much is known about the prevalence of negative outcomes of reconstitution and restructuring, but far less clear is the process of moving ineffective school from failure to success using restructuring. This historic case study describes stakeholders' perspectives on the process of restructuring, on the contexts that weighed on and influenced restructuring reform prior to the passage of NCLB legislation, and on how the policy was adopted and implemented.

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

The purpose of this literature review was to explore research studies that provide information about school restructuring. An additional aim of this review was to illuminate racial, social, and political contexts that influence restructuring. In the following section, I detail the search criteria used to locate the empirical studies included in and excluded from this review. I also explain the rationale for these decisions.

Empirical work was initially located by conducting searches in GALILEO's library databases, including J-Stor, ProQuest, Academic Search Premier, Annual Reviews, and EBSCOHost. Because the focus of this study is the reform of an urban elementary school and because a search using the phrase "urban school reform" yielded too many sources, I narrowed the search by adding "systemic" to the search criteria. In addition to the key words "urban systemic school reform" and "urban elementary reform," I searched for literature using the terms "school restructuring," "school reconstitution," "turnaround schools," "comprehensive school reform," and "externally imposed reform." Finally, literature on civic capacity and school reform was narrowed by bundling the terms "race, civic capacity, and urban school reform." After I identified studies for review, I consulted the bibliographies of those bodies of work and located additional empirical scholarship.

This review is approached from a broad to narrow perspective. That is, it begins broadly with a synthesis of the literature on trends in systemic school reform. This overview is important because the history of such reforms since the publication of the 1983's *A Nation at Risk* report illustrates patterns that have led to the current focus on school restructuring. Next, the review narrows to a focus on empirical literature that

captures elements of school reconstitution. This section of the review details existing empirical work on school reconstitution, specifically situating reconstitution within the larger context of systemic school reform efforts. Because extant empirical literature on reconstitution is scarce, all empirical work located is included in this review: four articles and one book chapter. The review then explores the literature on school restructuring. I conclude with an overview of empirical studies that have examined the influence of race, class, and power when coupled with civic capacity in school reform in an effort to elucidate the contexts that weigh on restructuring policy. Explored is the intersection of race, class, power, civic capacity, and school reform through five studies conducted by political scientists. Finally, I reveal the missing perspective of combined stakeholder voices on the process of restructuring.

Systemic Urban School Reform

In its examination of the literature on systemic urban school reform, this review is limited to seven comprehensive literature reviews of scholars who have synthesized reform efforts (Cibulka, 2003; Clune, 1993a; Elmore, 1990; Hess, 1998; Kirst, 1990; Lusi, 1997; O'Day & Smith, 1991). These seven reviews were selected because each review details the characteristics of trends in school reform instead of describing and critiquing specific reforms within each trend. In line with this selection criteria, literature on school reform related specifically to teachers, curricula, technology, students, or any other specific feature of schools and education was excluded. Instead, the literature included is holistic, capturing overall themes or "waves" (Hess, 1998) that have characterized systemic school reform efforts since 1983.

This review of literature on systemic reform begins in 1983, after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (1983), because this report, commissioned by the federal Department of Education, warned that "the educational foundations of our society [were being] eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity" (p. 5) and thus helped put education reform at the top of the national agenda (Gordon, 2003; Hess, 1998; Wong, Guthrie, & Harris, 2004).

Standardization, also referred to as "the excellence movement," was the first wave of school reform. Scholars debate the beginning and ending dates of the waves of reform activity (Boyd, 2000); however, most agree that the first wave began in 1983 with The National Commission on Excellence in Education's *A Nation at Risk* and concluded in the mid to late 1980s (Boyd, 2000; Elmore, 1990; Hess, 1998). Similarly, scholars are nearly unanimous in the characterization of the first wave as a top-down approach (Cibulka, 2003; Elmore, 1990; Hess, 1998). Standardization was initiated by the one of the most important findings in *A Nation at Risk* (Cibulka, 2003, Hess, 1998): school curricula lacked a central purpose and failed to unify all subjects of the curriculum (Gordon, 2003). The aim of standardization was to ensure that all students, regardless of race, class, or attendance in a suburban or urban school, were receiving the same content.

During the first wave of reform, these goals were advanced by state legislatures and state departments of education who became more proactive in the school reform process, initially by issuing new edicts regarding graduation requirements and instituting new testing standards (Cibulka, 2003; Hess, 1998; Kirst, 1990). Thus, the first wave of reform was achieved primarily through legislation mandating the establishment and implementation of learning objectives measured through standardized testing.

Cibulka (2003) posited that the new emphasis on testing and graduation requirements replaced earlier reform strategies that focused on equity. Legislated standardization manifested itself in a frustration at the local level as teachers argued that the mandates were evidence of distrust in their skills and abilities and as student performance on tests decreased while the achievement gap increased (Hess, 1998; Kirst, 1990). Indeed, the emergence of state testing programs and the standards movement aggravated performance problems for urban school systems (Cibulka, 2003). An inability to achieve satisfactory increases in achievement (Clune, 1993b) ushered in the second wave of reform (Cibulka, 2003; Hess, 1998; O'Day & Smith, 1991).

The second wave of reform began in the mid- to late 1980s and ran through the early 1990s. O'Day and Smith (1991) argued that this wave is the phase in which the label "systemic reform" surfaced in educational policy, even though districts and states had engaged in it during the First Wave without applying the label. The second wave was commonly considered a bottom-up approach. Decentralization, restructuring, and site-based decision-making were its defining traits (Cibulka, 2003; Hess, 1998; O'Day & Smith, 1991). Although graduation requirements and mandatory testing remained a focus during the second wave, schools were provided with more autonomy in determining how to meet these requirements. Further, schools were urged to reform to meet expectations by changing the way they organized themselves for the purpose of improving teaching and learning (Clune, 1993a).

Systemic reform during the second wave suggests that educational reform policies were integrated around a set of clear and definable outcomes and that they usually involved empowering educators and leaders at the local level to make independent

decisions in order to succeed in reaching mandated guidelines (O'Day & Smith, 1991). Integral components of the second wave include the promotion of ambitious outcomes for students, alignment of local level policy to federally stated goals, and restructuring local and state governance systems to support improved achievement (Clune, 1993b; Hess, 1998).

In response to policymakers' observations that neither of the top-down mandates of the first wave nor the bottom-up restructuring approach of the second wave resulted in widespread improvements in teaching and learning, reformers in the 1990s argued for a blend of top-down and bottom-up influence on school reform models. This argument initiated the third wave of reform activity. The third wave was premised on the assumption that the first two waves failed because American education needed to be restructured at the school district level but guided by policies from the state and federal level (Hess, 1998).

In contrast to O'Day and Smith's (1991) assertion that systemic school reform emerged as a label in the second wave, Hess contends that reforms in the early 1990s, the beginning of the third wave, were interwoven with the advent of research that called for "systemic school reform" (Hess, 1998). In this wave, district leaders tried to alter teaching practices by decentralizing power within school districts. Susan Follett Lusi's (1997) view of systemic reform is aligned with O'Day and Smith. She maintains that features of systemic reform were present in both the second and third waves, but that they differed. Lusi argues that first

> systemic school reform strives to reform the education system as a system; it works for coherence across the system's component policies, something that the

> piecemeal reforms of the past did not achieve. Second, systemic school reform explicitly strives to support school-site efforts at redesigning teaching and learning with the goal that all students will learn ambitious content knowledge and higher-order skills (O'Day & Smith, 199). It is insufficient to promulgate mandates such as increased graduation requirements from the "top" of the education system (the federal or state). The "bottom" of the system (schools and districts) must be supported and activated to transform teaching and learning. (p. 6)

Proponents for this third wave of systemic reform believed that their vision combined the best of both the "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches of the first two waves because the federal government and state departments of education started to function to support the transformation of teaching and learning in local schools as opposed to offering rigid practices that dictate the transformation. Improvement was intended to be accomplished through federally mandated outcomes that local schools and districts provide in establishing their own benchmarks (Clune, 1993a).

Nested within this third wave is NCLB legislation. The key assumption of NCLB as a model of systemic reform is that high stakes testing, linked closely to national standards, will create an accountability that will reform education and improvement processes, processes that until now have achieved only modest gains (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Education is a state responsibility, and therefore national standards and testing, federally mandated by NCLB, are controversial because opponents fear that the federal government will gain control over and abuse the potential levers for defining what is accepted as official knowledge (Apple, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2004). In addition,

scholars argue the high stakes accountability components of NCLB, which are coupled with sanctions for failure to meet determined performance benchmarks, have the potential to diminish morale in schools that are already weakened communities (Darling-Hammond, 2004).

One of the high-stakes accountability policies of NCLB is school reconstitution. Reconstitution becomes an option for states to use to reform schools when they continue after they fail to meet AYP for five consecutive years (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Proponents believe that the threat of reconstitution can help motivate improvement throughout the system, particularly in low-performing or probationary schools and point to improvement in probationary schools as evidence of the motivating impact of reconstitution (Hess, 2003). Other observers consider the threat of reconstitution a faulty strategy that blames teachers for school failure while doing little to solve the underlying problems that contribute to low performance. By this account, school reconstitution has the potential to diminish morale in schools that are already weakened communities (Rice & Malen, 2003). Additional views on reconstitution policy may be best understood by considering a synthesis of existing research.

School Reconstitution

Discourse on the history of reconstitution policy suggests it originated in San Francisco in the early 1980s as the San Francisco Unified School District sought to set in motion a process whereby desegregation by race would occur. An additional intent was to address persistently failing schools primarily serving underprivileged student populations. Such schools would be closed and reopened with newly composed faculties and more decidedly ambitious academic missions (Mintrop, 2000).

Since the 1980s, reconstitution policy has evolved from a desegregation policy enacted in San Francisco to a policy that addresses urban schools with large proportions of students scoring significantly below performance standards (Mintrop, 2000; Rice & Croninger, 2005; Rice & Malen, 2003). Despite its increased use across districts and states since in the 1980s, and in spite of the increased use of reconstitution since the passage of NCLB, no published empirical work on reconstitution was located prior to 2000. In total, four articles (Hess, 2003; Malen et al., 2002; Rice & Malen, 2003; Rice & Croninger) and one book chapter (Mintrop, 2000) inform this review.

The first empirical study conducted on reconstitution is reported in a chapter within a book (Mintrop, 2000) and explores how reconstitution policies affect teachers' motivation to increase their performance in order to raise student achievement. Two empirical articles on reconstitution explore the outcomes of reconstitution, specifically the impact of the policy on students and their achievement and on teachers and their professionalism and commitment to students and education (Hess, 2003; Rice & Malen, 2003).

Mintrop (2000) tested his hypothesis that reconstitution is most effective as a sanction by examining the results of reconstitution policy for teachers in three unidentified U.S. school jurisdictions. His analysis presented findings from the first year of a three-year study that did not seek to provide final answers. Instead, he cautioned readers to process findings in an open-ended manner that would provide leads to other lines of inquiry.

One of Mintrop's findings determined that in one jurisdiction, reconstitution as an accountability measure for teacher performance could not be determined because the time

span in which the policy had been in effect was too short to draw conclusions. In the second jurisdiction, reconstitution appeared to motivate the faculty and staff to devise and implement school improvement plans. While improvement plans were being created between the principal and a core of teachers, Mintrop noted that regular school operations slowed, causing disciplinary problems. Students roamed halls during class periods, teacher morale was low, and dissension reached the administrative team. Mintrop also noted that vice principals expressed frustration with their principal's lack of skill as a disciplinarian. As a result, Mintrop concluded, at the end of the first year of observation, that a vast number of teachers left the school. Most were experienced, veteran teachers, science teachers with special credentials in their field, and teachers highly involved with students. Teachers stated among their reasons for leaving to be inept administration, lack of student discipline, and better career options elsewhere. The threat of reconstitution was mentioned by teachers as a reason to leave but was not among the reasons mentioned frequently.

In the second year of data collection, a new principal was hired. She was not given a choice about her assignment, but she was permitted to assemble her own administrative team funded out of a separate reconstitution budget. This principal immediately dealt with discipline problems and then moved to create staff development days for school improvement that would instill standards for student success. By the middle of the year, the staff seemed confident in their leaders and reported that reconstitution was not a threat.

Data and observations from the third school included in the three-year study had not started, but Mintrop offered preliminary conclusions based on the two sites observed.

He tentatively stated that reconstitution seemed to trigger in teachers a willingness to increase their performance initially, most notably in schools that are newly identified as reconstitution-eligible. He observed, however, that this increase in motivation was not due to the threat of sanctions. Rather, increased motivation was related to their sense of commitment to their students and to their profession.

Another preliminary finding suggested that the success of reconstitution in motivating teachers hinges on the skill of schools' administrative teams. Administrators who understood how to facilitate change, who channeled external demands, and who empowered teachers experienced more success at improving motivation and student performance. Mintrop (2000) also observed that an expectation of success seems to be a key factor in motivating teachers. His final conclusion was that reconstitution policy was weak because it was tied only loosely to the provision of additional assistance in improving and because the policy reinforced a hierarchical management that alienated outspoken and highly-involved teachers.

Mintrop's internal examination of how reconstitution impacted schools provides critical information about how teachers and administrators respond to reconstitution as a sanction. A limitation of using Mintrop's study is that, because he was reporting on a research study in progress, he could not offer final conclusions. The findings were preliminary in nature, and his analysis and the implications of his work cannot be weighed too heavily.

Like Mintrop, Hess (2003) approached reconstitution as a sanction used by the Chicago Public Schools. He detailed the changes that were implemented in seven inner-city high schools in Chicago. His analysis covered the changes in the seven high schools

reconstituted after failing to reach performance objectives while on probation. At seven high schools, four of the principals were replaced. In two others, newly hired principals were allowed to hold their positions. In the last school, a principal described as "politically well-connected" was permitted to stay, but a new assistant principal was hired with nearly co-equal power.

Similarly, the percentage of staff replaced differed significantly, varying from 20% in one school to 60% in the school with the most turnover in the initial phase of firing and rehiring. Another large round of staff replacements occurred after the first year of reconstitution. Hess (2003) contended that restaffing the schools proved challenging as teachers were reluctant to transfer to reconstituted schools for fear the schools would eventually be closed and the staff fired. Hess also noted that student enrollment declined significantly in six of the seven reconstituted schools between 1997 and 2000, cumulatively totaling 17.1%. The range of the decline was from 10.8% in one school to 23.5% in the school with the greatest decrease during the first year that enrollment dropped. Facilitating this decline was a policy that schools were required to purge students who missed 20 or more days. One school increased its enrollment. Also, the percentage of special education students increased in reconstituted schools, a pattern that emerged across all schools in the district, but a pattern that was more pronounced in the seven reconstituted schools. Hess contended that reconstitution in Chicago differed from actions under the title of reconstitution in a number of districts across the United States. Similarly, reconstituted schools were not automatically restructured. Instead, changes were made only after the newly reconstituted staff was hired and their input in changes was obtained.

The structural changes that occurred after the new staff was hired included increasing personal attention provide to students, implementing advisories among both students and staff, and maintaining higher academic standards (Hess, 2003). Graduation requirements were raised by requiring that all students carry a full academic load through graduation. Ethnographers from Northwestern University, under contract with the Chicago Public Schools, found little improvement in the quality of teaching in reconstituted schools. However, despite ethnographers' conclusions about the quality of teaching, student achievement in the seven reconstituted high schools increased dramatically, with the most significant increase occurring among 9th and 10th graders. Conversely, gains made in schools that were not reconstituted were modest in comparison.

A major shortcoming of Hess's (2003) research is that it neglects to provide percentages that illustrate clearly the differences in student achievement between reconstituted schools and schools that had not been reconstituted. He noted that in the aggregate, the median percentile rose to the 28th percentile in reading and the 27th in mathematics after reconstitution compared to students' scores in 1996 prior to reconstitution; however, he does not provide students' 1996 pre-reconstitution mathematics percentages. Similarly, he noted that in 1996 students scored in the 11th percentile nationally in reading, but again he offered no information about students' reading percentile prior to the school's reconstitution. An additional shortcoming in Hess's work is that in the article's entirety, only one source is cited. This citation occurs when Hess directly quotes the goals of restructuring from the *Chicago Public Schools Design for High Schools* document. Although Hess incorporated charts that detail

changes in enrollment patterns and passing rates at reconstituted schools, readers cannot ascertain the credibility of the statistics he used to make determinations about increases in student achievement.

Finally, Hess's most powerful conclusion was that overall reconstitution did not prove to be a successful school improvement strategy. As a result, policymakers in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) decided to forgo further reconstitutions. He neglected to describe, however, his reason for drawing this conclusion and only stated that significant improvements in student achievement did not occur as hoped. Although he outlined how student achievement improved in reconstituted schools, Hess's analysis lacked an explanation of the goals and benchmarks for improvement of student achievement. Without these data, readers cannot fully understand why reconstitution was deemed a failure. Thus, while Hess made a valuable contribution to the literature in examining and detailing instances of success for certain reconstituted schools in Chicago, his work failed to allow the research community to evaluate critically the success of the efforts because of missing data and source material.

In contrast to Hess, who examined the relationship between reconstitution and academic achievement, and Mintrop, who examined the effect of reconstitution on teacher motivation, the data and findings from the following three articles were derived from one large-scale study of reconstitution in Maryland. Using an interdisciplinary research team to gather exploratory case study data, Malen, Croninger, Muncey, and Redmond-Jones (2002), Rice and Malen (2003), and Rice and Croninger (2005), described outcomes for students and faculty when schools are reconstituted. Each explored the link between reconstitution policy and successful outcomes when outcomes

are defined as enhancing human capital for teachers and students (Malen et al., 2002; Rice & Malen, 2003) and generating and reallocating resources post-reconstitution (Rice & Croninger, 2005). Although the connection among the three articles as one large study is never linked or stated explicitly, the content of each publication explained that the data informing the articles was obtained from three schools, two elementary schools and one middle school, all located within a large metropolitan district where the reconstitution initiative targeted six schools (Malen et al., 2002; Rice & Malen, 2003; Rice & Croninger, 2005).

Two years of qualitative case study data informed the researchers' findings, and in each article the authors made explicit their study methodology. In three of the six schools examined closely, all experienced firing of the entire faculty, and all faculty were required to reapply for their positions and to formally re-interview. Unlike Mintrop and Hess' studies, the researchers in these studies noted that displaced personnel were guaranteed positions within the district, and all newly hired personnel were asked to make a three-year commitment to the school and to attend special staff development meetings prior to the opening of the school and during the first year of operation. To advance the success of the reconstitution efforts, the superintendent pledged support to the schools in the form of hiring master teachers and instructional aides, increased resources and teaching equipment, and professional development opportunities (Rice & Croninger, 2005; Rice & Malen, 2003).

In their examination, the team evaluated both the quality of teachers who were affected as determined by the changes in the levels of experience among teachers in the newly reconstituted schools, and the number of positions gained or lost. They found that 75%

of teachers hired during the first year of reconstitution were first-year teachers, many of whom lacked their initial state certification. This infusion of inexperienced teachers was not a one-time occurrence. Despite the district's efforts to ensure high quality teachers and stability in the teaching staff by requesting a three-year commitment, Rice and Malen (2003) found that many teachers continued to leave after the first or second year, resulting in teacher turnover rates that equaled those of schools not reconstituted. In one school, where the principal succeeded in hiring a pool of veteran teachers, the majority of the faculty still had fewer than three years of teaching experience (Malen et al., 2002). At another school, approximately two-thirds of the faculty were first-year teachers. This finding is consistent with Mintrop's conclusion that teachers and principals who were hired in reconstituted schools were often less experienced than their predecessors.

The social costs incurred with teacher turnover included dismantling professional networks and other avenues of support in hopes that more productive networks would be established. Reconstituted staffs struggled to reestablish these support networks, and the instability of the staff and appointment of new administrators complicated this task. Malen et al. note that when teachers left, strong networks of trust and collaboration were difficult to establish because of the transitory nature of the faculty. All factors combined made it difficult to establish a vision for the schools and to develop a collaborative and mutually supportive collegial relationship among the faculty. This difficulty decreased the social support teachers rely on for success in the classroom.

Whereas social costs were evident as reform was implemented, the psychological costs of reconstitution were found to be more intense when the reform was announced. Teachers reported feeling "shocked," "insulted," and "angered" (Rice & Malen, 2003, p.

654) because the reform was unanticipated and viewed as an assault on teacher competence and commitment. These emotions intensified as teachers witnessed caustic media coverage, which reinforced the punitive nature of the reform. In some instances, students taunted their teachers, and public humiliation caused teachers to question their self-worth and desire to continue to teach. Further, the researchers found that the district did not act in ways to counter the disappointment, and teachers reported feeling discounted and forgotten about by administrators as administrators invested in supporting the reconstitution efforts.

Malen et al. and Rice and Malen found that reconstitution efforts may materialize in ways that harm reconstitution reforms and concluded that significant human costs were unanticipated and underestimated by policymakers but were highly consequential for the fate of the reform. Although case study designs do not warrant firm generalizations, this study does cast doubt on the ability of reconstitution efforts to achieve intended objectives. To support their conclusion, Rice and Malen (2003) pointed to reconstitution efforts that have occurred in Cleveland, Chicago, Denver, and Washington, D.C. to acknowledge that although some reconstitution efforts have been studied, "even in settings with relatively extensive experience with this approach to reform, data regarding its effects are rare. In short, we know little about either the history or viability of this reform. Our understanding . . . is limited both conceptually and empirically" (p. 636).

Rice and Croninger (2005) expanded the findings on reconstitution offered by Malen et al. (2002) and Rice and Malen (2003) by creating a framework built on notions of "capital." Drawing on the literature on organizational change and applying the studies to school reform, their framework consists of five sources of capital needed to support

reconstitution: financial, social, human, cultural, and informational capital. Informational capital consists of the practice of "investing in the acquisition of expert knowledge and the effectiveness of communication channels through which . . . can also enhance an organization's capacity to change and more effectively provide services" (p. 77). By applying these aspects of capital to reconstitution, Rice and Croninger aimed to examine the degree to which reconstitution in three schools generated additional resources for change, reallocated existing resources, or actually depleted school capacity to support ambitious school reforms.

Their findings are situated within a framework on capital; however, their findings are similar to Rice and Malen's, perhaps because the data and methods of analyses were the same in all three studies. Of the five identified sources of capital, cultural capital was the only area in which reconstitution was beneficial. Increased racial and ethnic diversity and successful realignment of the racial and ethnic composition of teaching staff to reflect the student body was an outcome of reconstitution. Because faculty motivation and collegial trust and collaboration decreased, however, Rice and Croninger concluded that social capital was compromised. Similarly, human capital was also sacrificed in reconstituted schools; the numbers of teachers decreased and teachers on staff frequently had fewer years of experience than teachers on staff before reconstitution. Financially, less than half the monies allocated to support reconstitution were directed toward the school. Finally, informational resources proved inadequate. Facilitators of reform sent to the schools from the district-level were eliminated in the second year after reconstitution and professional development lessened over time and was not systematically supported.

The larger study that informed these articles was very well executed. The research methodology was sound, and the researchers' findings well-written. The intent of the study was explained, and in each article, analysis of findings was grounded in a theoretical framework and supported by current reviews of the literature. Additional strengths lie in the use of multiple forms of data, including documents, observations, and multiple interviews with a variety of education stakeholders involved in reconstitution. Member checks and triangulation of data were utilized, which established the consistency of information that supported each finding. Last, an appendix listed the number of times each participant was interviewed. In total, the research team conducted 431 interviews with 292 stakeholders.

A review of this research reveals important information about reconstitution policy from both internal and external perspectives. Regarding teachers, researchers found that the cost of reconstitution weighed heavily, often resulting in disenfranchisement and worse, teachers leaving to avoid the pressure and/or the risk of being fired. Although the studies showed that student achievement increased incrementally, researchers concluded that those gains did not outweigh the other costs that students experience nor do academic gains outweigh the cost for teachers and administrators. The researchers of these three studies all concluded that reconstitution policy was not an effective school reform initiative for the underperforming schools they studied.

School Restructuring

Because school restructuring is a reform concept that entails multiple definitions and conceptualizations – from decentralized decision-making to curricular reform to

longer school days and years – the literature on restructuring is extensive. School restructuring can be defined to encompass many if not all aspects of school organization and student learning. To be sure, my review revealed that many researchers recognize this possibility and proceed with studies of how restructuring affects isolated facets of schools. Although studies exist that cover the scope of restructuring efforts in particular states or regions of the United States, I was able to locate only one study of restructuring that was broadly conceived to represent a significant number of states in the United States using both qualitative and quantitative data, conducted by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER).

In this portion of my review, I provide an overarching presentation of a singular large-scale study conducted by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER). I omitted studies focused only on specific tenets of restructuring or only on elementary or high schools. Similarly, I omitted research conducted by foundations. Finally, I excluded unpublished dissertations and policy briefs. In sum, I focus on the single large scale study conducted by WCER, which captures several components and tenets of restructuring in varied school settings throughout several school districts in the United States.

An ERIC search revealed 23 to 44 publications per year from 1984 to 1987 when I used the term "school restructuring." Interest in restructuring surged after 1987. ERIC lists 105 publications on school restructuring for 1988, 190 for 1989, 410 for 1990, 512 for 1991, and 602 for 1992. Further, my review of studies indicate that as interest in restructuring spread, the concept took on increasingly more connotations, which may explain the variations in empirical work based upon how authors utilize and define

reconstitution and restructuring. Newmann (1993a) observed that the ambiguity of the concept of "restructuring" partly explains why it served as an attractive rallying point for reform. Various reformers could argue for the urgency of restructuring while undertaking concretely different – and perhaps contradictory – initiatives, all captured under the umbrella of restructuring. As support for restructuring gathered, the range of views about which aspects of school organization should be changed ranged widely (Newmann, 1993b).

Furthermore, there was talk of restructuring not only elementary, middle, and high schools, but also the field of teacher preparation (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 1989; Holmes Group, 1986), the relationship between schools and other social support agencies (Wehlage, 1989), relations between schools and parents (Chubb & Moe, 1992; Hess, 1992; Shanker, 1990), and indeed, the entire educational system (Cohen, 1990; Elmore, 1990; National Governor's Association, 1986). In sum, the sheer scope of post *A Nation at Risk* reform approaches attracted attention from all sections of the policy arena, including policymakers, foundations, funding agencies, professional education associations, university researchers, and policy researchers.

In this environment, from 1990 through 1995, researchers at the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (CORS), housed within the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER), embarked upon a five-year study of restructuring. The Center's findings were drawn largely from four studies: the School Restructuring Study, the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, the Study of Chicago School Reform, and the Longitudinal Study of School Restructuring.

The School Restructuring Study (SRS) included 24 substantially restructured public schools, evenly divided among elementary, middle, and high schools, located in 16 states and 22 districts, mostly in urban settings. Enrollment varied with an average of 777 students; 21% African American; 22% Hispanic; 37% receiving free or reduced lunch. From 1991 through 1994 each school was studied intensively for one year during two weeks of on-site research. Narrative reports were supplemented by surveys of students and staff, conventional tests of student achievement, and scoring of student achievement on two teacher-assigned assessments according to standards of authentic performance. Researchers also made intensive examination of mathematics and social studies instruction in 130 classrooms, with complete data on over 2,000 students. This study allowed intensive study of authentic pedagogy and student performance in a carefully selected group of schools that had made progress in restructuring.

The National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) included a nationally representative sample of over 10,000 students, followed from grade 8 (1988) through grade 12 (1992) in approximately 800 high schools nationwide. The schools included public, Catholic, and independent schools and represented a wide range of school enrollment, geographic settings, school social composition, as well as various levels of restructuring activity. Student test data in mathematics, science, reading and history for grades 8, 10, and 12 were drawn from items from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Researchers also studied survey data from the teachers and students, and the school principal's report on curriculum, instruction, school climate. Complementing the more intensive study of school restructuring in the SRS, this study permitted examination of factors that influenced student learning on conventional

achievement tests over four years of high school in a large representative national sample of secondary schools and students.

The Study of Chicago School Reform included survey data from 8,000 teachers and principals in 400 elementary and 40 high schools from 1990 to 1994. Surveys reported on instruction, school climate, organizational features, professional activities, relations with parents, and reform activities. The study also included three-year case studies of 12 elementary schools, including six schools actively involved in restructuring. Case study schools represented the full range of elementary schools in Chicago, which varied substantially in social composition, although most had a majority of poor and minority children. The study, focusing on local school politics and school organizational change, offered both in-depth case analysis and extensive quantitative information on the nation's most ambitious effort in school decentralization.

Finally, the Longitudinal Study of School Restructuring included four-year case studies of eight schools that had embarked on different forms of restructuring in four communities. Representing a variety of school social composition and enrollment, the schools included two urban elementary schools, two urban middle schools, two urban high schools, and a rural middle school and high school. From 1991 through 1994, researchers spent approximately 15 days per year observing and interviewing stakeholders in each school, studying teachers' work, interacting in groups, participating in decision-making, and observing how learning is organized in classrooms. The study offered in-depth analysis of how professional community, politics, and organizational learning evolved in a diverse set of restructured schools.

In the aggregate, the scope and findings were exceptional for how they delved deeply into multiple dimensions of school organization in a single study of restructuring. Particularly germane to my study of restructuring, however, was the SRS. Underlying the expansive design and methodology of the SRS was a unique conception of school restructuring that merits discussion in its own right.

The SRS began from the premise that changes in school organizational structures are the essence of restructuring, further stipulating that organizational structures consist of "the roles, rules and relationships (legal, political, economic, social) that influence how people work and interact in an organization" (Newmann, 1993a). To paraphrase, organizational structures are the patterned behaviors of organizational members in tandem with members' goals, values, beliefs, technical knowledge, and knowledge about social interaction (i.e., conscious and tacit knowledge about producing and sustaining purposeful interaction in organizational settings). It is such goals, values, beliefs, and forms of technical and interactional knowledge that actors use to produce and reproduce patterned relationships, roles, and social rules, in and through interaction.

The SRS definition of structure emphasized that organizational structures are products of human interaction and that deep understanding of structural change requires close study of the factors that both constrain and enable people's ability to perceive new patterns of interaction. Yet, the SRS definition of organizational structure, however valid, potentially included too much to address in a single study. An important step taken by SRS researchers to narrow the focus of their work was to stipulate that they were not interested in school restructuring as an end itself. Rather, their focus was on the extent and means by which restructuring led to equitable increases in a certain desirable end of

schooling – improved student learning or namely what the authors call "authentic achievement."

At the heart of the Wisconsin Center's efforts was an examination of the impact of several school restructuring initiatives on student learning in pursuit of one general area of concern: the ways school restructuring encouraged or impeded achievement by changing the internal dynamics of school organizations. Researchers collected data on multiple types of restructuring efforts including decentralization, shared decision making, schools within schools, flexible scheduling with longer classes, teacher teaming, common academic curriculum required for all students, reduction of tracking and ability grouping, external standards for school accountability, and new forms of assessment, such as portfolios. This study allowed intensive study of authentic pedagogy and student performance in a carefully selected group of schools that had made significant progress in restructuring.

SRS researchers reduced their findings to a focus on successfully restructured schools and concluded that school restructuring could improve student learning; however, no simple approach or magic bullet existed for successful school restructuring. For a restructuring effort to work, they argued, it must be clearly focused on four key factors: (1) student learning, (2) authentic pedagogy, (3) school organizational capacity, and (4) external support. The study conceptualized these four factors as a "circle of support" (Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 1995, p. 83) in which student learning is at the center, followed by authentic pedagogy as the next ring of support, organizational capacity as the next ring, and concluding with external support as the final element of a successfully restructured school. The following section elaborates on each factor.

Student Learning

Researchers found that in successfully restructured schools, the planning, implementation, and evaluation of new approaches must focus on how practice and innovation enhance the intellectual quality of student learning. In successfully restructured schools, teachers agreed on a vision of high quality intellectual work, and they communicated clear goals for high quality learning to students and parents. The core activities of the school – including curriculum development, instruction, assessment, scheduling, staff development, hiring, and student advising – supported the overarching vision of student learning.

In response to their findings, researchers coined a phrase that captured their particular vision of high quality student learning, "authentic student achievement." This vision had three parts. First was "construction of knowledge" where students learned to organize, interpret, and analyze information instead of merely reproducing specific aspects of knowledge from a textbook or classroom lecture. They learned to apply knowledge, not just collect facts. Second was "disciplined inquiry." Using established knowledge in science, mathematics, history or literature, students developed in-depth understanding of content. They expressed that understanding in an "elaborate" way (p. 136), such as writing an essay or engaging in a substantial discussion of the topic, instead of merely checking boxes or filling in the blanks on a test. The third part of the vision was "value beyond school" where students produced work, or solved problems, that had meaning in the real world. Students' accomplishments in school had value beyond merely proving that they did well in school. The researchers concluded that when schools restructured around this kind of vision, students' learning increased.

Authentic Pedagogy

The Center's researchers found that a vision for high quality student learning was necessary but not sufficient for successful restructuring. They argued that teachers must bring the vision to life in their classrooms through pedagogy, the combination of instructional techniques and assessment tools.

Center researchers developed a set of specific teaching standards that measured the extent to which students were challenged to think, to develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, real-world problems. These standards were called "authentic pedagogy." The researchers showed that students who received more authentic pedagogy learned more. Moreover, authentic pedagogy boosted achievement for students of all social backgrounds; students benefitted equally from more authentic pedagogy; and findings were constant across race, gender, and family income variables (Wisconsin Center for Education Research, 1995). This finding was especially crucial because it held true whether student achievement was measured by standards of authentic achievement generated by the research team or as measured by teacher-generated assessments, by state-generated assessments, and/or by conventional tests and national measures, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Organizational Capacity

To promote learning of high intellectual quality, researchers found that a school must build the capacity of its staff to work well as a unit. Their findings revealed that the most successful schools were those that used restructuring to help them function as "professional communities." Within those communities, teachers and administrators found ways to channel staff and student efforts toward a clear, commonly shared purpose

for student learning. In addition, such communities created opportunities for teachers to collaborate and help each other. Teachers in successfully restructured schools took collective and individual responsibility for student learning, and they partnered for constantly improving their teaching practices. Furthermore, schools with strong professional communities were better able to offer authentic pedagogy and were more effective in promoting student achievement.

Building professional community required a great deal more than simply putting new organizational structures in place. In fact, introducing new structures and practices in a school often had the opposite effect by diverting attention from the quality of student learning and toward adapting to imposed curriculum and new policies and procedures.

The researchers found, however, that certain structural changes, when combined with professional skills, leadership, and trust, substantially strengthened professional community. They posited that the following conditions can help schools develop the type of professional community needed to promote learning of high intellectual quality: shared governance that increases teachers' influence over school policy and practice; interdependent work structures, such as teaching teams, which encourage collaboration; staff development that enhances technical skills consistent with the school's mission; deregulation that provides autonomy for schools to pursue a vision of high intellectual standards; small school size, which increases opportunities for communication and trust; and parental involvement in a broad range of school affairs.

The most promising examples of strong organizational capacity were found in schools that began with a well-defined mission. These schools also had the authority to hire staff consistent with the mission, and to identify effective leaders who could keep the

school on track. Interestingly, researchers found that, of the large sample of schools under study, these were schools of choice or schools with special status that freed them from conventional constraints. The researchers found no examples where structural changes alone had transformed conventional schools into strong professional communities that met the Center's standards for high quality learning.

External Support

Schools are nested in a complex environment of expectations, regulations, and stimuli from external sources, including districts, state, and federal agencies. They are also held accountable for curricular mandates and parental and citizen concerns. Schools also need critical financial, technical, and political support from these external sources. Researchers found that in successfully restructured schools, external agencies helped schools to focus on student learning and enhanced organizational capacity through three strategies: (1) setting standards for learning of high intellectual quality; (2) providing sustained, school-wide staff development; and (3) using deregulation to increase school autonomy. The researchers also found that sometimes external influences pull schools in different directions, impose unreasonable regulations, and instigate rapid shifts in policy and leadership, all of which functioned to undermine organizational capacity.

The primary objective of the SRS was to show how restructuring affects opportunities for school staff to enact organizational and instructional practices supportive of authentic student achievement. Understandably, SRS researchers endeavored foremost to clarify the organizational contexts of schools and to link the content of teachers' interaction around instruction to qualitative aspects of student classroom experience and learning. To that end, much of the report was focused on

internal agents – school-level and district-level personnel, students, and administrators – and their roles in restructuring schools for authentic student learning. Though one chapter in a book resulting from the SRS main report (Wehlage, Osthoff, & Porter, 1996) was devoted to external influences on SRS schools, many issues in that domain were not addressed. Adding to that aspect of restructuring reform is an important contribution of the present study.

Summary of Reconstitution and Restructuring

The research on reconstitution and restructuring was helpful in framing the proposed study; however, the reviewed literature did not explore the process of school reconstitution or restructuring nor did it fully elaborate on the role of external agents and contexts on reform efforts. Similarly, though reconstitution and restructuring are race-conscious policies because of their overwhelming enactment in urban schools, the influence of race and class, of stakeholders of color, and of the functionality of civic capacity during the reform is a critical element missing in the literature. A review of the literature on race and civic engagement provides important insights.

Race and Civic Engagement in School Reform

I found only three sources that combined explicitly (1) the influence of civic capacity in urban settings (2) the role of race in reform, and (3) the intersections of those contexts in education. These were located using the aforementioned search criteria. These sources are three books: *The Color of School Reform* (Henig, Hula, Orr, & Pedescleaux, 1999), *Black Social Capital* (Orr, 1999), and *Building Civic Capacity* (Stone, Henig, Jones, & Pierannunzi, 2001), all completed by political science researchers. Similarly, all three works draw from data gathered during the most

comprehensive study of the politics of school reform. Research teams were assembled in 11 cities – Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Detroit, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, San Francisco, and Washington, DC – and each team studied the politics of reforming education that were unique in their assigned city's leadership and political contexts.

Stone et al.'s (2001) *Building Civic Capacity: The Politics of Reforming Urban Schools* provides a comprehensive explanation and analysis of those efforts. Henig et al.'s (1999) work, *The Color of School Reform: Race, Politics, and the Challenge of Urban Education*, is distinct in its emphasis on comparing the politics of reform in Black-led cities – Atlanta, Baltimore, Detroit, and Washington, DC to reforms in the seven other cities. Specifically, he explored locations "where control of the local levers of formal governmental authority in each of these cities [were] in Black hands, but in each case the key external actors [were] White" (p. 25). Orr's (1999) *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore, 1986-1998* differs from Stone and Henig's work in that Orr's analysis concentrated on explicating the influence of race, civic capacity, and educational reform only in Baltimore. The common theme across these books, however, is that the cities examined have tried to overcome systemic failures in student achievement by engaging civic capacity toward school reform within the conflicts and difficulties of race.

Led by principal investigator Clarence Stone, the foremost expert on urban regime theory (Imbroscio, 1998b; Stoker, 1995), the study of civic capacity in urban school systems characterized urban education as a "highly reverberating" subsystem (Stone et al., 2001, p. 48). In his interpretation, urban schools are subjected to the effects of

multiple actors with competing agendas. Findings revealed that urban schools, perhaps because they are continually open to challenges and to new sets of demands, possess only modest internal capacities to absorb and direct change. The authors portray urban schools as unstable, highly permeable environments that move from one desperate search for a quick fix to another. From this vantage point, the major problem with urban schools, they argue, is not so much a weak commitment to change or a lack of dedication to social justice as it is the absence of a broad, patient, focused coalition of actors who achieve consensus on reform goals and pursue them through a continual stream of stable, capacity-enhancing activities.

The researchers further argued that urban schools were characterized by frequent reshuffling of mobilized stakeholders, multiple and strongly felt competing value and belief systems, ambiguous boundaries, and deeply held stakes by educators (the professional providers of education) and parents (the consumers). Moreover, although educators, parents, and local public officials are relatively constant actors in the decision arena, other actors – the media, courts, businesses, religious organizations, and federal and state governments – ebb and flow in their involvement. Logically then, the prospects for establishing a new equilibrium at any given time was problematic because changes and/or reforms were not educationally oriented. The authors of all three books concluded, and insisted, that the ability of cities to reform education rested in their skill toward gathering and garnering civic capacity.

Findings allowed for a distinct division of the 11 cities into three categories: (1) Black– led cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Detroit, and Washington, DC; (2) mechanically – governed cities: Boston, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis; and (3) sunbelt cities – Denver,

Houston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. After reviewing race, population, income, education, cities versus suburbs, and the fiscal contexts, the researchers concluded that urban centers were at a disadvantage in their ability to facilitate civic capacity, primarily because urban schools competed with other urban problems for attention, which made urban education reform particularly challenging.

The authors focused their analysis of civic capacity and reform by making race central. To illustrate, they inquired into the fate of urban education in cities with Black-led governance structures, i.e., Black mayors, school superintendents, and school boards. Focusing on Atlanta, Baltimore, Detroit, and Washington, D.C., they found that contrary to expectations, the ascendancy of Black leadership did not improve schools. Data that informed the findings were a combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with "general influentials" (city council members, business leaders, and community advocates) who played leadership roles in the educational arena" (Stone, 2001, p. 14-15). To follow up on survey data and "to access what happens when minorities finally hurdle across the barrier of formal power" (p. 13), they questioned the benefits, consequences, progress, or lack of progress Black leadership had in cities where minorities were in power.

The researchers found that the average Black citizen shared the expectation that putting Blacks in positions of political authority would lead to policies and practices beneficial to Black neighborhoods, schools, and families. Rather than that outcome, however, class and racial tensions asserted themselves. White corporate leaders, external to reform efforts, were sponsors of the efforts, but their undertakings were frequently viewed as hostile attempts to regain control of urban districts in which Black educators

had gained power after decades of state-supported and sponsored segregation. In addition, Henig (1999) asserts that Black educators – teachers, principals, and superintendents – viewed themselves as professionals, superior to the uneducated and disenfranchised urban poor, and that this class schism worked against the mobilization of civic capacity and the academic achievement of urban youth. Thus, they argued that race as a Black-Black or a Black-White issue is not irrelevant in school reform. On the contrary, considerations of race saturated all discussions of school reform and often impeded the formation of inter- and intra-group cooperation.

Orr (1999), one of the four authors of *The Color of School Reform* who simultaneously wrote a single authored book on Baltimore, focused the insights further in *Black Social Capital*. Orr's focus on Baltimore was premised on the belief that social scientists should seek to expand the number of observations within a single case study" (p. 3). In so doing, he expanded the data used by Stone and Henig to include extensive interviews with 31 Baltimore respondents and at least one interview each with 54 education specialists, defined as "persons especially knowledgeable about the implementation of school-system policies and programs." Orr's interviews were conducted over a three year period, from 1993 through 1996.

Orr (1999) concluded that, despite more than a decade of effort, school reform and improved student achievement remained elusive: Baltimore's schools consistently performed far worse than Maryland's other schools on the Maryland School Performance Program's tests of student achievement. In 1996, over 20% of the city's schools were designated "reconstitution-eligible" by state officials. In 1997, frustrated by the slow pace of reforms and improvement, the Maryland legislature approved measures

increasing the role of state officials in the operations of Baltimore City Public Schools, and in 1998, Mayor Kurt Schmoke admitted the school was still plagued by serious problems.

Though his data were expanded and focused exclusively on Baltimore, like Henig, Orr concluded that the Black community, like any other ethnic community, was marked by class divisions that undermined social capital and civic engagement. When resources were scarce in urban schools and centers, exit options existed and were exercised by professionals seeking to move their homes out of urban centers and their children out of urban schools. The result was that outcomes in urban schools were ambiguous: Black educators tended to close ranks, reassert their understanding of educational expertise, and exclude community-based groups from influencing educational policies. On the other hand, when threatened by White-dominated philanthropies, business entities, or state legislatures, Black social capital was regularly mobilized to prevent new reform initiatives advanced by Whites.

Although there were exceptions to these developments, Orr (1999) argued that in the end, even Kurt Schmoke, the enterprising "education" mayor, placed school reform behind other urban priorities, shifting his attention instead toward downtown redevelopment. In this regard, Orr contended that Black educators acted similarly to White educators and to educators in any setting who wanted to assert their authority in situations of educational turbulence. Identifying and overcoming the divisions between Blacks and Whites and between professionals and community stakeholders remained a formidable challenge for school reformers in Baltimore.

Stone et al.'s (2001) *Building Civic Capacity* and Henig's (1999) *The Color of School Reform* are of particular relevance to school reconstitution and restructuring efforts in Atlanta because of the attention paid in their work to Atlanta as a site of educational reform and to the influence of race and civic capacity in the city. Stone found that in 1993, a decade after the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, Atlanta's public schools were performing "at an abysmal level" (p. 13). In fact, test scores were lower than many of Georgia's rural counties. Moreover, the longer students remained in Atlanta's public schools, the worse they performed on state-mandated tests. Drop-out rates were estimated at 30%, and even with per pupil expenditures higher in Atlanta than most of its surrounding suburbs, enrollment in Atlanta's urban schools had decreased from 119,000 in 1975 to 60,000 in 1993, indicating that the exit option was exercised by professionals with the means to relocate.

Stone et al. (2001) argued that "Atlanta failed to draw key sectors of the community together around an agenda of educational improvement" (p. 57), in part because Atlanta's elected school board "was scandal-ridden and rife with conflict . . . sharply split along racial lines" and primarily concerned with "who was in charge of what – contracts, jobs, and school employee compensation packages" (p. 14). Further, Henig argues that Atlanta exemplified the scarcity of people either seeking to enlist elites to come together on issues of educational reform or to overcome distrust among the masses. Despite Atlanta's history of biracial governance around urban redevelopment, Stone's earlier work that studied Atlanta, *Regime Politics* (1989), asserted that "Atlanta's education arena provides a striking example of weak civic capacity" (p. 72).

This study was aimed at documenting and exploring the untold story or "counter-story" (Delgado, 2000) of the process and contexts of school restructuring as uniquely experienced by the stakeholders involved. The reviewed literature on reform, race, and civic capacity, provides illustrative examples of actions undertaken to affect change in schools while highlighting the role of race and the positions of Black stakeholders in reform. However, the literature neither intimately elucidates Black-Black or Black-White civic relationships during reform efforts nor does it provide a close examination that answers "why" or "how" reformers engage and operate in urban settings around agendas for school reform. The voices of stakeholders in conceptualizing their roles in reform and their motivations for reform are missing, even within educational research concerning issues of race and reform, areas of discourse where voices of color prove valuable. This omission limits both our ability to frame problems from multiple perspectives and to produce viable strategies that improve urban schools.

Chapter III: Methodology

Research Design

Qualitative research assumes that people actively interpret the world around them (Merriam, 1998). The choice of qualitative research for this study was based on the assumption that stakeholders' beliefs around education, urban settings, race, and class played an important role in the choices and decisions made during restructuring reform. According to Merriam, "qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities – that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring" (p.17). Consequently, I selected qualitative methodology to obtain the rich description and narratives and the orientations that emerge when individuals reflect on and explore their decisions and actions.

Case study methodology is especially appropriate when prior theoretical propositions guide data collection and analysis and when researchers wish to describe contextual conditions (Yin, 1994). Urban regime and critical race theorists have identified a clear set of tenets that guide each theory as well as circumstances under which the tenets are believed to be true. As such, for a study of restructuring reform that occurred in the 1990s and that was influenced by contexts that predate restructuring, a historical case study using oral histories was selected as the best method for exploring restructuring and for extending the tenets of the frameworks that supported my analysis. To present and discuss findings, this study uses narrative and narrative analysis, following the traditions of critical race theory (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Narrative methodology results in a chronologically told story, with a focus

on how elements are sequenced. Common to the focus is the exploration of factual, cultural, moral, and ethical ambiguities (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Further, critical race theorists argue that narrative analysis provides rich data by subverting the "master narratives" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) that are told from a legacy of racial and class privilege. Analysis of rich, narrative data enables researchers to invoke "counter-story" (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 1998), or the stories of experiences not often told.

Using oral history interviews collected from participants, I triangulated data gathered from participant recollections and documents and reconstructed the collected narratives into a whole, which revealed the nuances of reconstitution more fully (Merriam, 2002; Mischler, 1991). Because this study aimed to uncover the process of restructuring and the roles of race, class, and power in those efforts, narrative analysis and its functions was the most appropriate methodology to capture the process and contexts through the lived voices of participants.

The Setting

Prior to its restructuring in 1998, Fowler Elementary School was physically located in the center of a severely distressed, low-income neighborhood, Techwood-Clark Howell Homes (Techwood), where nearly all of the residents were receiving services from the city's housing authority (Boston, 2004). "Severely distressed" includes all that the label implies: aging, dilapidated buildings, inadequate maintenance of properties, the wear and tear of generations of families with young children, and high levels of crime among the residents (Boston, 2005; Popkin et al. , 2004). Of the many communities managed by the housing authority, this neighborhood was among the worst, receiving a

score of 49 out of 100 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in their 1995-1996 program evaluation (Executive Summary Audit Report, 1997).

In addition to the substandard living environment of Techwood, the surrounding business community was economically depressed. Vacant business buildings lined the streets, and the neighborhood lacked nearby health care facilities and libraries. The depressed economic and social vitality of the community precipitated crime and disorder, including high levels of drug trafficking and increased rates of incarceration among residents, even as crime dropped elsewhere in the 1990s (Conklin, 2003).

A HUD Study completed in 1995 revealed that 98% of the people who lived in this setting the community were African American and women. Moreover, single mothers occupied most of the units, and poor health was a common condition. Nearly three-quarters of residents surveyed reported major problems with drug trafficking and drug sales in their community (Popkin, et al. , 2004). Two-thirds of survey respondents reported that shootings and violence were also problems, and half of respondents stated that they did not feel safe outside their buildings (Fosburg, et al. , 1996).

These conditions were considered by HUD "not simply a matter of deteriorating physical conditions; it [was] more importantly one of a deteriorating severely distressed population in need of services and immediate attention" (as quoted in Popkin, et al. , 2004, p. 8). Because of these conditions, the media, public officials, local policymakers, and officials at HUD concluded that the residents were living in despair and generally needed high levels of social and supportive services (Popkin, et al. , 2004).

Additionally, the school's declining well-being reflected the ecology of the neighborhood itself. During the 1994/95 school year, prior to restructuring, 98% of the

students were African American, and 95% of students qualified for the free and/or reduced lunch program provided for children from low-income households. In the 1995/96 school year, the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch rose to 100%. Student absenteeism and disciplinary referrals exceeded that of most other elementary schools in the district. Teacher turnover was high, and the most scrutinized measure of school success, student scores on state achievement tests, were among the lowest of the district's 66 elementary schools (Boston, 2004). Although discrepancies in test scores exist between the state's Department of Education and the school district, the school districts' reports indicated that in 1994/95 only 13% of students were able to score at or above national norms on the reading portion of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and 33% were at national norms in mathematics (Public Schools testing data as quoted in Boston, 2004).

In an attempt to improve student performance, restructuring reform was enacted. In addition to a revised curriculum and replacement of teachers and administrators, the school building was demolished, rebuilt in an area on the perimeter of the neighborhood, and renamed. When the school opened in 1998 as Centennial Place Elementary School, 99% of the students were African American, and 94% qualified for the free or reduced lunch subsidy. With a student population nearly identical to that which attended the school prior to its restructuring, within two years, in the 1999/2000 school year, 51% of the students were at or above national norms in reading, and 63% were at or above norms in mathematics (Boston, 2004). Further, Adequate Yearly Progress reports for the 2009/10 school year reveal that the composition of the school was 91% African American, and 59% were identified as economically disadvantaged. Thus, the racial

composition has changed little and the socioeconomic composition has decreased substantially but remains high.

These statistics reveal that restructuring Fowler Elementary to Centennial Place Elementary produced positive academic changes for students. The aforementioned statistics suggest that although the current student body is still predominately African American and the majority are from low-income households, students are performing at levels that are more congruent with schools that are more racially and/or socioeconomically integrated. Further, recent research also shows that students are outperforming students with similar characteristics who attend other urban schools in the school's district (Boston, 2004).

Increased student performance was realized, continued to hold steady or increase, and more, it reflected sustainability, contradicting much of what school reform literature has said to date about the often unmet goals of school restructuring and the academic success of low-income, African American students who attend schools in urban centers (Hess, 2003; Rice & Malen, 2003). As such, an investigation into the process and contexts of Fowler's restructuring stands to demystify how restructuring occurred. Such knowledge may assist educators, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders as they seek to understand and navigate critical aspects of school restructuring.

Data Sources

To investigate the process and contexts of restructuring, I conducted oral history interviews and focus group interviews with three categories of participants: school-level, non-school, and community members who participated in restructuring. In addition, I analyzed a rich document base gathered independently and from participants. Below is a

description of how access was gained, of participants and documents used to inform this study, and of methods of data analysis.

Access

In the early stages of participant selection and data collection, I contacted stakeholders by email. Once I received a response, I shared my background knowledge of the Fowler's reform as I learned of it through the popular press. This knowledge provided credibility and verified the depth of my interest. In conversations with stakeholders, I satisfied elite informants' curiosity about my trustworthiness as an individual and my suitability by providing details about my professional background and experience and by remaining receptive to participants' suggestions for the study. Levels of trust and rapport were established in the community through acts of reciprocity in their homes and through attendance at community events. My background as a former high school teacher provided a kinship with school participants that aided in their willingness to participate.

After initial relationships and rapport were established, methods of access used to obtain the data that inform this study include endorsements from key informants and phasing my entry into the worlds of participants through prolonged engagement. In the following section, I describe how access was gained in the beginning stages of data collection.

Initial contact was made in the spring of 2006 when I contacted Dr. Norman Johnson whose name appeared in a popular press article on Fowler's reform. He was identified in the article as the person whose conceptualization of what was needed in the school shaped the educational goals pursued. I contacted him by email; in his response

he agreed to speak with me at a restaurant near the school. After our initial meeting, he invited me to meet him three days later in his home, located in the revitalized community. While speaking to him in his living room, I asked casual questions about him, his professional background, and his decision to move into the community. I learned that he had been a professor of organizational management and sociology at Carnegie Mellon University and had moved to Georgia in 1988 to serve as the assistant to the president at Georgia Tech. Eventually, he was elected president of the Atlanta Public Schools board in the 1990s, during the time of restructuring. He became a resident of the community after reform was complete. As such, he was intimately connected to persons who comprised each category of stakeholders I needed to inform this study. After he trusted my background, experience, disposition, and interest, he supported my study by encouraging me to use his name to reach out to a few stakeholders. As his trust in me evolved over time, he used his relationships for my benefit. In the case of several political and high ranking executives, he reached out on my behalf and facilitated my initial access for interviews.

For instance, a week after our second meeting, Dr. Johnson invited me to tour of the grounds where the school and revitalized neighborhood now stand. He then showed me where the former school stood. While walking the site together, he offered explanations of what existed before and what stands now, and his perspective on why geographical changes were needed. During the tour I took pictures of the site and asked additional questions. Because he was a key stakeholder and was entrenched in the reform efforts, he had extensive knowledge of participants who could inform my inquiry. He provided a list of names, suggested with whom I should begin, and encouraged me to

reach out to a select few individuals who he identified from the list. One point of contact was the existing principal of the school, Dr. Cynthia Kuhlman, who he advised was retiring at the end of the 2006-2007 school year. I contacted her immediately and in a brief telephone conversation, I explained the purpose of my study and that Dr. Johnson shared that her contribution to my understanding of school restructuring would be invaluable. She agreed to meet with me at the end of the academic year.

When I met with Dr. Kuhlman in her office at Centennial Place, I listened to her abbreviated account of why restructuring was needed. However, I did not record our initial meeting. Instead, our meeting was conversational. I used it to introduce myself and to create an opportunity to interview her in the future. At that meeting, she gave me the names of three teachers who taught in Fowler Elementary and who were rehired under her leadership to work in the newly restructured school.

Through a series of similar opportunities over time, my access to a network of people involved in Fowler's reform grew. I was invited to fundraisers at the school and in the community. I was invited to attend meetings with elite stakeholders and, eventually, to present preliminary findings of my study on elite stakeholder involvement. Through prolonged contact, trust and confidence developed and resulted in more candid interviews as well as in the sharing of stakeholders' privately held documents. Increased access aided the in-depth account provided in this study.

Participants

To bound the study further, participant stakeholders were purposefully selected based on their direct involvement in Fowler's restructuring. To identify participants initially, newspaper articles and oral histories provided by the Housing Authority of the

City of Atlanta (AHA) were used. Additional participants were selected and contacted based on referrals provided by participants who were interviewed. To respect the contribution and investment of participants, all persons mentioned by stakeholders were contacted, and initial conversations were held to determine if their role in restructuring offered an important contribution to the process and to this study. Identifying stakeholders who were involved in restructuring and obtaining consent for their involvement in this study led to the creation of three categories of participants: school stakeholders; elite, non-school stakeholders; and community stakeholders. Participants were selected across three categories because each offered a different role in restructuring processes and therefore provided different perspectives on the process and on contextual influences.

School-level stakeholders included teachers and school-level administrators. Community stakeholders are represented by parents of children at Fowler, residents of Techwood, leaders of churches, and community leaders of grassroots organizations. Elite, non-school stakeholders include district-level administrators because they are not at the school-level. Non-school stakeholders also include school board members, business executives and leaders, housing policymakers, real estate developers, and university officials.

In-depth oral history interviews with participants provided the primary data used to answer the research questions in this study, and the majority of findings were taken from data collected through 66 interviews with participants conducted from February 2007 through May 2011. Elite, non-school stakeholders asked that I use their real names, and community stakeholders consented to the use of their real names. With the exception

of the principal, Gwen Mayfield, educators asked that I use pseudonyms to protect their identify and report of events. (For a list of participants by name and category, see Appendix C).

Once participants were identified, a letter was sent to each person of interest, explaining my dissertation and formally inviting their participation (Appendix D). Though IRB did not require the use of consent forms because the nature of my study is historical, included with the letter sent to each participant was the informed consent for their review and signature prior to individual interviews (Appendix E). Copies of both consent forms were brought to initial interview meetings so that participants could sign the form that applied to their position on my use of real names or pseudonyms. Focus groups were conducted years after individual interviews and therefore, they occurred after a rapport was established with participants. Each participant was an adult who consented to participate in each focus group, and as before, IRB did not require the use of consent forms because of the use of historical methodology. Of the participants who were contacted, only one declined to participate, the president of Georgia Tech, the nearby university. I later discovered that he declined because of a terminal health diagnosis. Instead of his participation, he directed me to his papers in the Georgia Tech archives.

Semi-structured interview protocols were developed (Appendix F) according to my review of related literature, the research questions guiding the study, and in line with Rubin and Rubin's (1995) interviewing methodology. Rubin and Rubin suggest limiting the number of main topics to maintain focus and obtain greater depth while allowing for follow-up questions. At least one interview was conducted with each participant. Key

informants were interviewed at least twice. All interviews were conducted in person over sessions that ranged from one hour to two and a half hours in length. Consent forms were collected when I met participants for the initial interview at a location of their choosing, which included professional offices and conference rooms, restaurants, school classrooms, administrative offices in schools, and participant's living rooms and kitchens. The first interview was used to establish a rapport with participants by explaining my interest in restructuring and further expanding on my goals for the study. During initial interviews, I collected information about participants' background and their role in and contribution to restructuring. Second interviews were used to obtain greater depth and details about the process and included questions about race, class, and power in restructuring efforts. Time between interviews gave me an opportunity to conduct a preliminary analysis of findings; to verify, refute, and triangulate those findings against the document base; and to generate follow-up questions. Time also provided interviewees an opportunity to reflect on our first interview and to recall experiences not discussed in the initial interview.

Because my study relied heavily on personal narrative, initial interviews were open-ended. The open-ended nature of the questions and of follow-up questions allowed for differences in perspectives to emerge. Questions that guided follow-up interviews were based on my preliminary analysis across interviews as well as a focused analysis of the transcript of first interviews. Therefore, second interviews, though similar in focus, differed in the questions asked according to each participant. All interviews were recorded on digital audiotape and chronicled on a clearly marked computer file.

Focus Group Interviews

Once my relationships with participants were established through interviews, I conducted focus groups with each category of stakeholders. Three focus groups, one for each category, were held in June 2009. I used focus groups to determine if additional insights would be revealed through group dynamics and conversation as well as to determine if stakeholders' individual accounts would withstand the dynamics and scrutiny that group interaction and discussion provides (Krueger & Casey, 2000).

Five school stakeholders; four elite, non-school stakeholders; and five community stakeholders participated (Appendix G). I served as a moderator during conversation, asking questions and guiding the discussion but allowing it to evolve naturally. Locations were suggested by participants, and each focus group was held in a different location. Footage was captured using a video recorder, and each conversation was transcribed. Video data from focus groups are held in my home office, and transcripts of each session are stored on a clearly marked electronic file. Focus groups provided a forum for spontaneous recall of the process and for corroboration of the roles of stakeholders and the influence of context on the process.

Documents

Documents that inform this study include archival documents from the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), Emory University, the Atlanta History Center, and the Housing Authority of the City of Atlanta (AHA). Atlanta Public Schools (APS) student demographics reports were gathered online and include student enrollment, race, and test score data. Additional documents include minutes from meetings held within and across participant categories, APS school board minutes, resident association meeting minutes, planning reports for the restructured Fowler and its neighborhood, site

blueprints, census data, timelines on school restructuring and neighborhood revitalization, published and unpublished research reports, newspaper articles, video footage, photographs, memoirs, resumes, biographical sketches, published interviews, formal and informal personal communications between and within stakeholders and stakeholder categories, meeting and planning agendas, press releases, applications for demolition, speeches, congressional testimony, and financial records. When acquired in advance, these artifacts allowed me to better prepare for interviews and to shape questions asked of participants.

In addition, participants from all three categories provided documents that informed the findings of this study, including emails, data preserved on floppy disks and CDs, memos, and contemporaneous notes. Additional documents related to the school only were obtained through a written request to the Atlanta Public Schools and through my eventual visit to the APS administrative offices. Finally, over the course of the study, participants emailed documents to me or called me to indicate that they had documents for me to pick up that would be germane to the study's results.

Data Analysis

The most challenging part of this research was working through my collected data and managing my anxiety regarding data analysis. Just as I was deeply committed to gathering and collecting accurate accounts of stakeholders' narratives and documents that would enhance my findings, I became consumed and overwhelmed with responsibility for making meaning of the data and properly reconstructing emergent narratives (Glesne, 2005). Throughout the data collection process, I organized systematically; yet analysis of findings did not lend itself readily to such a straightforward, systematic process.

When interviews and focus groups were complete, a transcription service transcribed each digitally recorded interview and focus group. To ensure accuracy, I proofread transcripts by listening to the recording and reading the transcript simultaneously and correcting any mistakes in the transcript. To ensure reliability and validity, several participants were provided with a copy of the transcript. Phone calls were made to other participants to ensure the accuracy of their self-report of events and relationships. Known as member checking (Maxwell, 2004), this practice allowed participants to give feedback and clarify their words and meaning.

I began data analysis by using my review of the literature to create preliminary categories of findings. I developed additional or similar categories using my research questions. As Glesne explained, "data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds" (p. 130). My ability to capture analytic thoughts as they occurred was assisted by studying and reflecting on the data as they were being collected (Glesne, 2005). I followed Marshall and Rossman's (2006) six phases of analytic procedures, which include organizing the data, generating categories, coding the data, testing the emergent understandings, searching for alternative explanations, and writing the report in order to make meaning of the "raw, inexpressive" (p. 152-153) nature of the data collected.

After data were organized, the sequential yet recursive coding process explained by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used. In the first phase, I examined interview transcripts and documents for salient themes. I saturated the categories with available data during this open coding process. In the second phase, I collapsed categories both according to stakeholder categories and research questions to achieve a broad but varied

overview of the findings. This phase assisted me in deciding how to write the narrative. In the final stage, I created new categories organized according to the research questions but guided in form by the overlapping stakeholder narratives as they fit each question, which best describes the relationship between the questions that guide this study and its findings. The object of this phase of analysis was to reduce the database into a smaller set of findings that characterize the process of restructuring as discovered in my examination.

I began organizing and coding data using NVivo, a qualitative computer software program. After data were organized, I began to question whether the process of coding on NVivo was the best method for extracting meaning from the narratives in the way in which I could as a human researcher working with human subjects. Because of the volume of data, initial codes were developed through NVivo. In the second and final phases, coding by hand was the only way that I felt I could truly engage, capture, and reflect the nuanced stories and experiences of the participants in this study.

Reliability and Validity

In attempting to understand and explain attitudes, perceptions, meaning, and behaviors, the researcher is contending with the inconsistency of human behavior (Maxwell, 2004; Merriam, 2009). In this context, the test of reliability and validity is not that of replication, as it is in quantitative research, but of determining if the conclusions are consistent with the collected data (Maxwell, 2004; Merriam, 1998). To ensure reliability and validity, I worked to triangulate data collection procedures by using autobiographical and biographical documents, interview and focus group data across and within stakeholder categories, documents on the process as illustrated in reports and

memos, and my researcher's journal. Once interviews were complete, member checking by e-mail was used to clarify participant narratives. Member checks allowed participants to confirm their account, identify problematic and unclear areas, and assisted in the creation of interpretations and triangulation.

Establishing acquaintance with the participants and settings is a strategy I used not only to aid in access but to enhance the reliability and validity of findings (Merriam, 2009). Because data collection occurred over a two-year period, I became familiar with the setting and participants. The time that passed allowed for familiarity to be established and enhanced the comfort of the researcher-participant relationship, allowing for greater authenticity and openness in interviews.

Merriam (1998, 2009) also explains that reliability and validity are concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. She encourages the use of thick, rich description of interactions and observations, achieved by using direct quotes from participants. The second strategy involves describing how typical the reconstitution experience is related to the findings from existing literature on school reconstitution. The discussion section of this study reveals how findings of this work are similar to and different from extant research on reconstitution. A final strategy is an effective system of storage for retrieval and access of related data. Data were systematically catalogued on a computer using folders labeled with stakeholder categories. In each folder, a sub-folder was created for each participant. Further, each participant folder contained subfolders entitled "Interviews," "Documents," "Biographical," and/or "Personal Correspondence." All entries were named using the date a document was acquired or an interview was conducted. This system of

organization resulted in a chain of evidence that documents the development of data sources and collection. Finally, electronic organizational systems developed clear connections between the research questions, literature, data, and coding strategies that were used in this study.

Researcher Positionality

As an African American woman, the lived experiences and racial realities of African Americans is of import to me because a perspective and worldview is offered that is strikingly similar to aspects of my own experience (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Leonardo, 2003). In addition, as an emerging scholar of color, I share an interest in critical race theory scholarship and its commitment to "equity, social justice, and human liberation," that moves "research to activism" and explores the ways that well-meaning scholarship "distorts the realities of the Other in an effort to maintain power relations that continue to disadvantage those who are excluded from that order" (Ladson-Billings & Donner, 2005).

My educational experiences were shaped by my identity as an African American, and my background played a large role in my desire to investigate successful reforms of schools that educate Black children to learn the process as experienced by Black leaders who engage, shape, and oversee reform conceptualization and change processes. I expect that my race and background also had implications for access as well as for the manner, content, and style in which participants communicated with me. To be sure, several participants explained that somebody helped them to get where they are today, so they explained that they felt compelled to support a young, African American graduate student in her journey. This mutual sense of connection and kinship based on shared heritage and

interest in Black education and opportunity contributed to the authenticity, depth, and richness of data collected and subsequently, to the manner in which it was analyzed and interpreted.

Given my shared kinship with the participants, I consciously attempted to separate my reactions through the use of a research journal. As recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985), my journal included a schedule of persons interviewed, and it acted as a personal diary that provided a space for reflection, catharsis, and chronicling what was happening in relation to my own values, experiences, and interests. I also employed my researcher's journal to speculate on directions for additional research and questions. As I did in my pilot study, my journal served to confirm or disconfirm findings, to separate personal thoughts from data, and to determine the extent to which I needed to revisit the data to control for bias as themes emerged during analysis.

Limitations

One of the most significant limitations of this study is self-imposed. In particular, I am guided by Emory's Institutional Review Board standards for the conduct of ethical research, which indicates that the researcher will cause no harm to the participants and culture studied. Few researchers would cause intentional harm, but a researcher with such intimate access as I have had does encounter difficult issues and complex dilemmas related to the extent to which communication and narratives shared can or should be revealed. These dilemmas were resolved from an informed ethical perspective. Information that would clarify motivations on the process and contexts of restructuring but that would result in harm to the culture of the community or to the professional or

personal reputation an individual who participated in this study was not incorporated into my reconstructed narrative of the process.

Additionally, it is important to note that what is not considered in this study is what occurred in Fowler Elementary School subsequent to restructuring. The success of student outcomes is surely influenced by the culture, educators, and curricula, and support mechanisms that sustained restructuring once the school was reopened. Those factors, though critical to a holistic understanding of successful student outcomes, were not within the scope of this study.

A significant portion of the data used to generate findings was collected through oral history interviews where participants involved in the reform process recalled the details and circumstances of their collaboration, and ultimately, the restructuring process. The reliability of self-report data can be questioned because it is derived from participants' recollection and perceptions of events that occurred in the past; self-report data emphasizes the participants' perspective as central to the process (Yin, 1994), which can unintentionally deemphasize the positions and participation of others. Additionally, with time, memories fade and individuals selectively recall particular events and feelings. I controlled for these limitations by interviewing a number of persons who were involved in reform efforts and by purposefully selecting participants with different positions and interests. Moreover, by analyzing documents provided to me, I coded and analyzed with an eye toward triangulation, confirmation, and commonalities in participants' self-report of the events.

A final limitation of this study lies in its bounded nature, an approach utilized to capture local-level contexts and actors. This study did not focus on mid-level analysis or

what political scientists consider to be district-wide or city-level units of study. My approach also did not consider ideologies and structural changes by the state. Such an approach does not consider the widespread influence of state or district interests in reform. Instead, my approach was focused at the individual-level, on participants who were collective actors in restructuring, rooted in my assumption that local-level, human agency is central to school change. It further posits that local structural constraints, resource inequalities, group interests, and political alliances are variable yet powerful in reform outcomes, a conclusion based on my review of the literature and revealed in pilot study findings. Thus, my focus on the agency of local urban actors who came together in coalitions around reform ideas and who brought localized and independent political, racial, organizational, and economic resources to bear on restructuring efforts restricts the generalizability of this study.

Chapter IV: Findings

Findings that illustrate contextual considerations that led to restructuring and the process by which restructuring was pursued are detailed according to four principal phases, each characterized by different social influences and political strategies. Phase One provides a historical explanation of the genesis of Fowler Elementary School and its community beginning in 1932, when White and Black leaders set and pursued agendas for social and educational transformation through the emergence of public housing. Phase Two moves forward in time to the details of Fowler Elementary and its community in the years between 1982-1987, when a new principal was hired at Fowler to increase student performance and teacher quality while under pressure from the Atlanta Public Schools' central office. Phase Three, the years between 1987 and 1991, illustrate the social context to explain why demands for the reform intensified and how collaborative efforts expanded, bringing to bear external investment in Fowler's well-being. In Phase Four, between 1991 and 1994, external politics shifted the focus from a direct investment in Fowler's capacity to a byproduct of improvement within the context of a larger, localized social and political agenda. Finally, in Phase Five, the years between 1994 and 1998, Fowler's restructuring occurred, and I pay particular attention to various stakeholders and their roles as well as the out-of-school contexts that honed in on school restructuring as a goal pursued, aligned with, and folded into Techwood's neighborhood revitalization.

Phase One: Housing in Atlanta in Black and White, 1932-1936

In the early 1930s, America's population was approximately 122 million. During this time, many families lived in substandard housing. Scholar Catherine Bauer (1940)

wrote of the conditions in the nation in the 1930s: “Even before the Depression commenced, over 10,000,000 families in America, or more than 40,000,000 people, were subjected to housing conditions that did not adequately protect their health and safety” (p. 15). Thus, as Franklin Delanor Roosevelt said in his second inaugural address on January 20, 1937, “ I see one-third of a nation ill-housed” (The Atlanta Housing Authority Collection, Volume I, oversized material, films, “And Now We Live”).

For Atlanta, efforts to change public housing began in 1932 with Charles Palmer. Specifically, Palmer’s work in housing reform was aimed at Techwood Flats, an impoverished Atlanta neighborhood that was 72% White and 28% Black (Holliman, 2008; Lands, 2009). He drove by Techwood Flats daily, witnessing Whites who lived in squalid conditions (Palmer, 1955). Palmer mused, “Ugliness was packed close . . . crowded, dilapidated dwellings, ragged, dirty children, reeking outhouses – a human garbage dump – a slum” (p. 7). Indeed, in the 1930s, conditions in Atlanta’s communities dramatized exploitative and degrading conditions suffered by those who resided within them. Techwood Flats was a “slum” of small shacks and shanties that had degraded into weak and rotting wood planks. The community had unpaved roads, unsanitary or nonexistent sewers, and no running water. Homes lacked bath tubs and toilets, had poor ventilation, and were structurally unsound. Children ran in the narrow streets and played next to outhouses in the tiny backyards. Overcrowding added to the unhealthy potential for disease and sickness. Techwood Flats, once a respectable part of the city, had fallen to disrepair (The Atlanta Housing Authority Collection, Volume I, oversized material, films, “And Now We Live”).

Palmer and city planners characterized Techwood Flats as "a racially-mixed but predominately White low-income neighborhood . . . whose crime, disease, high rates of immorality, and truancy rates were the highest in the city" (Keating & Flores, 2000, p. 277). Moreover, in the 1940 film "And We Now Live," produced then by the recently created Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA), the narrator explains that "most White and Black tenants (prior to public housing construction) had not previously experienced indoor plumbing, insulation, or even electricity…. Demolishing these buildings meant demolishing whole areas that menaced an entire city . . . the tower of tax burden…." That appeal to a tax-conscious citizenry was a hallmark of Palmer's work to sell the idea of public housing: "Slum clearance will actually put money into taxpayers' pockets, rather than taking money away from them, as some people mistakenly believe," Palmer stated in an April 29, 1939 release from AHA while serving as its first chairman (AHA Collection, 1939-1940, Vol. 1, Box 4, Folder 123, "Media Content").

Palmer and White civic elites eliminated racially-mixed Techwood Flats, and in 1935 replaced it with Techwood/Clark-Howell Homes (Techwood), an all-White development that was the nation's first federally subsidized public housing. During the planning phases of Techwood's reform, John Hope, a Black civil rights activist and educator, reached out to Palmer to partner to rehouse Blacks (Palmer, 1995). In partnership with Hope and Black civic elites, in 1936, developers leveled a "slum" (Palmer, 1955, p. 12) bordering Atlanta University to build the 635-unit University Homes, a segregated project that brought attractive brick apartments and courtyards to rehouse Black families in Atlanta's increasing Black west side (Keating & Creighton, 1993; Lands, 2009).

Wise in the ways of politics and power, Hope embraced and partnered with several civil rights organizations to accomplish his goals for Atlanta within the Black community. These organizations included the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), W. E. B. DuBois' Niagara Movement, and the southern-based Commission on Interracial Cooperation. He was also very active in social service organizations such as the National Urban League, the "Colored Men's Department" of the YMCA, and the National Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, an organization in which he also served as president (Davis, 1998). Additionally Hope became the first president for the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (Atlanta History Center archives).

Upon partnering with Palmer toward the advancement of housing, Hope's relationship with Palmer and White elites resulted in tensions with Black leadership. As Davis (1998) notes, Hope's deep involvement in race matters often strained his relationship with the prominent White liberals and philanthropists, who were influential in the continuing development of Black higher education, especially after the death of Booker T. Washington. Similarly, though his intentions were to uplift and ensure affordable housing for Black families, Hope's partnership with Palmer, Rockefeller, and White civic elites drew criticism from Black leaders (Davis, 1998) who viewed the displacement of Blacks and segregation after the Techwood Flats demolition as accommodating White segregationist ideals. Even as Hope rejected the conservative stance of Booker T. Washington and The Atlanta Compromise, other Black leaders – W. E .B. DuBois, Mordecai Johnson, and James Weldon Johnson – considered Hope's partnerships with Whites evidence of his moderate stance (Davis, 1998). Davis

concludes that "many African American students …went further and labeled Hope a conservative – even an accommodationist – badly out of step with the times" (1998, p. xxv). Conversely, Palmer's memoir (1955) praises Hope and Black civic leaders' commitment, those "who had developed plans for a Negro housing project on a slum site in the heart of this great university for colored students" (p. 16).

Palmer states that Hope dreamt "about this place changing into something beautiful" (p.17) for the Black residents in the city. In response, Palmer expressed to Hope that the men would have no difficulty in their plans for housing transformation. Illustrating a different vantage point on their partnership as well as the differences in their lived experiences in White and Black communities and in racial politics, Hope predicted they would have "great difficulties … a struggle" (p. 17). Indeed, for the two years that Hope and Palmer partnered, they did encounter struggle, primarily within the Black community according to Palmer (1955). For Palmer, segregation of Blacks satisfied the White agenda in Atlanta. For Hope, such segregation cut against the aims of Black leadership for integration in American life. These tensions permeated the strategies Hope used to realize his goal.

The Politics of Bettering Black Housing

On October 13, 1933, the federal government approved funding for 600 White families at Techwood and for 800 Black families at University Homes. Fowler Elementary was conceived of and constructed in the Techwood community to serve children from White, low-income families ("And Now We Live"). Ground was broken for Techwood Homes in 1934, and FDR came to town to dedicate the project on

November 29, 1935. Less than a year later, on August 15, 1936, the first residents of Techwood moved into their new homes.

To build Black housing around the Atlanta University Center, the biracial coalition of civic elites "applied the pattern set by Techwood experience" (Palmer, 1955, p. 16). University Homes was completed in October of 1936, and opened its doors to residents soon after, on April 17, 1937. Hope lived until 1936, long enough to see housing constructed and completed around his Black colleges as he imagined it to be.

For Palmer and White civic leaders, their efforts were a success. For Blacks, the effort was a success as well yet still far short of equality in American life. Lands (2009) notes that nearly 25 years later, in 1959, a representative from the Council for Human Relations described to the United States Civil Rights Commission that the coalitions in Atlanta that restructured housing during the 1930s "not only created a rigid segregated pattern where none had existed, but cloaked it with official responsibility" (p. 173). Lands (2009) concludes that Whites used the public housing program of the 1930s to refine segregation while positioning their visible commitment to improving poor housing in Atlanta. Such positionality worked well for White leaders because housing was one of the few areas that Whites could tout as disproportionately benefitting Blacks. For instance, in 1959, in defense of the claim laid by the Council for Human Relations, M. B. Satterfield, then Director of AHA, explained to the Civil Rights Commission that "the non-White have fared well under this policy" as 51% of housing had been built for Blacks (Atlanta Housing Authority Collection, Volume 2, Box 6, Folder 27). To be sure, his statistics were accurate. By the second wave of building in 1941, 59% of housing was allocated to Blacks (Atlanta Housing Implementation Plan, AHA Collection, Volume 2,

Box 6, Folder 27). During my interview with Mike Proctor, a White leader in AHA who is the Chief Policy Officer in the Office of Policy and Research, he indicated that rhetoric like Satterfield's served Whites' purposes in that it assured the public that government offices actively responded to Black demand for better and more public housing while masking the intentions of White civic elites to manage racial housing demographics and geographies.

With media, business, political, and labor leaders as partners and with support from federal leaders, slum clearance became a transformative and profit-driven issue in Atlanta. Moreover, segregated housing became the blueprint that did not change but only transitioned. For instance, over the years, Techwood evolved from an all-White to an all-Black community after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that prompted White flight to the suburbs. City of Atlanta policymakers – focused on issues brought forth related to *Brown* and school integration – directed their attention away from maintaining and managing what became all-Black public housing and toward managing issues of integration (Lands, 2009). However, the partnership between Hope and Palmer, and the politics, process, and tensions of biracial coalitions that permeated the construction of Techwood and University Homes reemerged in future leaders of Atlanta as Techwood disintegrated because of policy neglect and as Atlanta once again found low-income housing to be substandard and counterproductive to a thriving urban citizenry and a healthy city.

The school in the center of Techwood, Fowler Elementary, also reflected the population shift of its constituents. Fowler evolved from an all-White student body to an all-Black population through the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. Moreover, as issues of disrepair,

inadequate maintenance, and neglect from city leaders manifested themselves in neighborhood dysfunction, Fowler witnessed a similar decline marked by disciplinary problems, low student achievement, and a transient student and teacher population. As the Techwood community fell into long-standing neglect, many residents relocated, teachers transferred each year, and by the 1980s, Fowler was facing a series of principals who transferred in and out of the school, adding to its instability. In 1982, Gwendolyn Mayfield, a Black veteran principal in the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) district, began a 16-year term as principal. Her leadership would mark the beginning of change for Fowler Elementary as APS contemplated closing Fowler's doors.

Phase Two: Principally Speaking, 1982-1987

Opened in 1936 and consisting of 80 low-rise townhomes and 13 three-story apartments, after White flight and years of wear and tear, the neighborhood was isolated in an area of predominately industrial and institutional land uses. It was a virtual island among the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), a university recognized nationally for excellence. Because Fowler Elementary sat in the center of Techwood Homes, it was inaccessible without driving into the neighborhood itself, thus making it an island school that served only the families who lived in the community. Techwood Homes was also an island all its own, its dilapidated characteristics in sharp contrast to the manicured lawns on the adjacent Georgia Tech campus, northeast of the neighborhood, and to the innovative building design of the worldwide Coca-Cola corporate headquarters located on the west side.

With a sprawling 400-acre campus, Georgia Tech University is located in a premier area, among its city's most valued real estate. Academically, Georgia Tech has a

reputation as one of the top research universities in the nation and in the world, and is recognized consistently as one of the top 10 public universities in the United States (U.S. News & World Report, 2012). From 2007 through 2012, *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Georgia Tech seventh among public universities, and 36th among all universities in the United States. In 2012, *The New York Times Higher Education World University Rankings* listed Georgia Tech 24th in the world overall, and 10th in engineering and information technology. Further, according to *The Times*, Tech was ranked 20th in North America, and fifth among public universities in 2012. It held the number four ranking for both undergraduate and graduate engineering programs. Finally, all of Tech's 13 undergraduate engineering programs ranked among the top 10 in their field (*New York Times Higher Education World University Rankings*, 2011-2012). In addition to the prestige of the university, in its midst and adjacent to Techwood Homes and Georgia Tech was also the world headquarters of Coca-Cola, ranked 70th on Fortune 500's 2011 list of America's most profitable corporations (Fortune, *And the Winners Are*, 2011). Coca-Cola manufactured, distributed, and marketed over 400 products in Africa, Asia and the Pacific Rim, Europe, North and South America, and Australia.

The wealth and prestige of Georgia Tech and Coca-Cola stood as a daily reminder of the stark contrast between White privileges and the living conditions and life circumstances of Black families residing in nearby Techwood Homes and their children, who attended Fowler Elementary. A small school composed of nearly 200 students in grades kindergarten through fifth, Fowler Elementary served an exclusively low-income, African American student body. A small number of students who did not live in Techwood resided in nearby homeless shelters (G. Mayfield, personal communication,

February 7, 2007). As a result of the neighborhood dynamics, the student population was highly transient, student absences were excessive, and Fowler suffered from frequent teacher turnover and abysmal test scores.

In 1982, Dr. Alonzo Crim, the first Black superintendent of schools in a major city in the South, appointed Gwendolyn Mayfield as the new principal of Fowler Elementary. Mayfield reported that when Crim assigned her to Fowler in 1982, there had been two principals in five years. Keeping a principal proved difficult because of Fowler's student population and its reputation as a failing school. Mayfield stated that Fowler was "an interesting little school in its racial context and in that it was one of the most ignored in the district. Despite being next to Tech and Coke, it was completely invisible." She remembered the contrast in social conditions when she recalled her tour of the school and community in the summer before school started:

> Outside the school…it was a mess. Beer bottles, broken glass, cars parked on lawns, children running around— some dressed well and others in a t-shirt and a Pamper. I thought, "Oh my God. What is the job that You have sent me to do?" (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 7, 2007).

In addition to the area immediately outside of the school building, Fowler Elementary sat directly in the center of Techwood Homes. Unlike Hope's vision of University Homes as a way of complementing the Atlanta University Center, Mayfield recalled Fowler and Techwood as an entity separate from Georgia Tech and Coca-Cola. Perhaps because of class and race, Mayfield indicated that Techwood, with its proximity to Georgia Tech and Coca-Cola, constituted "separate worlds" for Blacks and Whites:

> There were separate worlds. In this little school and this little community—they did not live as far from White people and wealth as maybe some in other parts of the city. The separation though, the difference . . . it was shocking to see. White people would pass by on their side of the street to go to their homes maybe two blocks away—probably Georgia Tech students. Georgia Tech's students' kids went to an entirely different school, not to Fowler. But they walked by the community, so there was some passing back and forth, but no mixing. It was truly separate worlds between two or three blocks. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Initially, after her tour of the community, Mayfield was disappointed by her appointment at Fowler. She noted that, with so few teachers interested in Fowler, the student–teacher ratio resulted in large class sizes and diminished individual attention and instructional quality. As a result, student performance at Fowler was near its lowest when Mayfield began.

> I was supposed to be somewhere else, and I ended up there, against my wishes. When I began at Fowler [in 1982], my staff consisted of 11 teachers, for 170 or 180 students. It was slated for closing, and the achievement level was in the minus. Well, it was in the single digits. I think it was like 16% of the kids scored at the national norm on the standardized tests. And that's documentable. The teachers at Fowler who were there —of the 11 of them— about half were placed there because they had been in trouble at other schools, and they just put them at Fowler because it was kind of a dumping site. Needless to say, I did not want to be there. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Mayfield remembered how she navigated the separation between Fowler and Techwood and its separation from Georgia Tech during her first year in the community. She recalled battling the isolation and then brainstorming how she would lead in a school, neighborhood, and community like Fowler. As she recalled her beginning, she continued to describe her evolution in perspective about the school, the community, and the district challenges:

> I saw Fowler through a lot of changes. I stayed for 16 years, from August 1982 through June 1998. When I first started Alonzo [Crim] was the superintendent, and when I started, Alonzo and I had an agreement. He knew the population was challenging; he knew my kids had the greatest needs. Many only had one parent in the household. Many parents weren't working. Drugs were a problem. Crime was a problem. Some students didn't have a home – they were in shelters. But those were going to be my kids, and school was their opportunity. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Mayfield recalled battling the isolation and then brainstorming how she would lead in a school, neighborhood, and community like Fowler. After her first year, she met with Crim and the nine-member Atlanta School Board. In the meeting she requested support for a two-year period to give her an opportunity to make improvements in students' achievement on state tests before the district definitively decided to close the school. Crim and the Board agreed. Mayfield noted:

> As long as the effort was there by the teachers and as long as the school continued to improve, Alonzo and I agreed that we would hold off closing it. Closing hung over my head every single year. But I couldn't let it close. As an educator, I

> couldn't let it close. A school is like a family. School is often a kid's stability, especially in neighborhoods like Fowler, so Fowler was whatever community stability the kids had. If it closed or if I left, it would be another thing that was transient in their lives, another thing they couldn't rely on. I decided that they could rely on me. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Once she committed to Fowler, Mayfield embarked on a myriad of changes to improve the education and achievement of students, the quality of teachers, and the richness of the curriculum. Her first effort was to retool her staff and to reach out to the community for support. As Mayfield recalled those early years, she stated,

> I had to build from scratch, but I couldn't fire all the people at once. I had to work with what I had. After about two or three years people retired, other people left, and I was able to turn the faculty over, almost, in just two or three years. I brought in a group of young, energetic teachers who were willing to try to rebuild the school and what we offered. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

For the district's contribution to Mayfield's efforts, school board minutes revealed that Crim and the school board approved the addition of six new teachers in a 5-year period. At the school level, Mayfield connected her new staff to partnerships she made in the community. Mayfield was instrumental in reaching out to Georgia Tech, creating what was called the Techwood Tutorial Project, which was an after-school academic support group for students coordinated at Georgia Tech. Georgia Tech recruited students to tutor Fowler's students after school. Mayfield encouraged the coordinator of the tutorial project at Georgia Tech to find out if professors would be willing to visit the

school to talk to students about their careers. She pursued enrichment opportunities, she said, because she identified herself as an instructional leader.

> I initiated a series of curriculum and staff changes and created staff development opportunities through partnerships at Tech and with neighboring churches and businesses. Because of the nature of my background and experiences, I considered myself a true instructional leader. Curriculum and instruction were my strengths, and I knew that often, if you ask for help, you shall receive help. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Using her partnership with Georgia Tech and the professors who were willing to support Fowler, she provided supplemental learning opportunities for students through academic clubs. Using Title I funds, Georgia Tech professors, and nearby churches, she created and maintained four extracurricular programs: Broadway Jr., a drama club; Invent America, a science club; the Choral Company, a music forum to develop and showcase students' talents and interests; and after school basketball, where men in the community coached students after-school and students played games against each other using the nearby church gymnasium.

Enrichment opportunities for students grew from community partnerships both inside and outside of school. Those opportunities included the addition of environmental science to the curriculum and on-site educational field trips. As Mayfield reflected, she noted the changes:

> We began to see differences. The first change was in the teachers. If you increase their morale and then increase their self-esteem, they pass that on to the kids. Then we established a relationship with the Unitarian Universalist

> Congregation, so it became sort of a three-prong adoption from the church, to Georgia Tech, to our school. The Unitarians brought in an environmental science program, and the students were able to study environmental study in their 5th grade science classes. And one of the things that we were able to do at the end of each year for three years—because the Unitarian church had a three-year grant—was to take the kids to the mountains in North Carolina. The Unitarians had a mountain retreat, so church members, teachers, and the kids stayed a week, studying environmental science outdoors, on the mountain. They had an opportunity to learn how to read a map on a scavenger hunt. They learned about different forms of clay. They learned about erosion. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Mayfield reflected that changes in the students were nearly immediate and that "one of the things we noticed when we started to do these things was that their writing started to change because the kids now had something to write about." (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Over time, Mayfield expanded Fowler's partnerships. She pursued the investment of members of Peachtree Presbyterian Church, who developed a football league for Fowler's male students. Because of students' significant interest and response, Mayfield and church members created four teams. Teams practiced in the Georgia Tech gymnasium, and they played their games at Georgia Tech on Saturdays.

The improvements that Mayfield saw in the teachers and students, she noted, were most pronounced in better attendance and decreased behavior problems. Improvements did not, however, translate into dramatically higher test scores though students' scores

were improving. Five years after Mayfield arrived, students' proficiency scores on tests climbed. Though in our interview Mayfield stated that 16% of students were passing achievement tests when she began, data from the district indicate that 9% of students met goals. That percentage climbed to 23% by 1987 (Atlanta Public School Archival Data Records). Mayfield stated that Crim and the school board members were sufficiently satisfied with the changes that had occurred, most notably the changes in disciplinary referrals, teacher turnover, and curricular changes. Each year, the board voted to delay Fowler's closing. Mayfield stated:

> [I] recognized early on that the only way I could change these kids' lives was to keep their school open to give them a place they could come and learn. To do that, I also had to connect with their families. I had to create a sense of belonging. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Partnering with Parents

Mayfield's belief was that schools, teachers, and a community function together to give children a foundation. Born in the 1950s, she recalled the importance of education in the African American community and the message she received: "If kids don't get an education, they will end up working in some job they hate, if they can get much work at all" (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007). She spoke at length about the critical role that parents in the community and teachers at school played in her upbringing. Specifically, she spoke of how parents' values, childrearing styles, and relationships with teachers played a large role in students' ability to succeed in school. The conditions that seemingly did not have as much of an impact on their ability to learn and academic success, as many would argue today, were the socioeconomic

status and/or educational level of the parents. Mayfield described growing up middle class but surrounded by poor, working class families. "Maybe I was poor too. But I've never seen it that way. I was never made to feel poor. And so I sought to make these kids feel the same sense of love and wealth and community that I did. As much as I was an instructional leader in the school," she stated, "I was also a leader outside of schools, in this community."

The lessons and experiences of Mayfield's childhood were easy to instill in the Fowler community. One of the benefits of teaching in a self-contained community, Mayfield said, was the ease of access to parents. Mayfield remembered leaving school during the day, and knocking on doors to have conversations with parents.

> I could access parents so easily. I could reach out and talk to them just by walking to their door. But, I came to realize that in this community it was both a blessing and a curse. Everyone in the community was so closely linked, and the school was within walking distance because it was *in* the community, literally in it, in the center of it. So that was the blessing. I would leave Fowler, and walk to a child's house to talk to their Mamma any time I felt that it was needed. But there was also something sad about that convenience because most of the time, when I knocked, somebody was home because so many parents weren't working. They weren't used to teachers knocking on their doors either, so when I first started going, they were suspicious. I started going after school, just to say, "Jamal did a good job today." Eventually, they were always happy to see me, even if I was bringing bad news (she laughed), and they greeted me with "Hello, Mrs. Mayfield!" They were always welcoming, whether I was bringing good

> news or bad. After about two years of visiting, I came up with this idea: How can I bring them to me? (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 1, 2008)

To bring the school and parent community together, Mayfield initiated support forums for parents. She remembered, "We had a relationship also with an agency in the community called National Families in Action (NFA), which was a drug prevention organization. As we worked with the mothers in the community, we connected them to this organization and held meetings with parents and NFA."

Parents received counseling and counseled others on the importance of education and drug prevention, Mayfield recalled. They were counseled on the importance of checking their child's cell phone, reading their school papers, and looking in their rooms, and why such acts are not invasions of privacy but hallmarks of good parenting. NFA supported families in completing their paperwork for housing assistance and healthcare subsidies. The program brought families into the school, and connected parents with teachers and with at-large community organizations. Participation grew, and programs expanded into meetings with other organizations that provided counsel on applying and interviewing for jobs, and finding early childhood programs for children who were not yet school-age. Over time Mayfield noticed that

> In a sense [it] was not entirely good for our program [school], but it was wonderful for the families because once we took the programs [meetings] out of the school, it wasn't as much about Fowler anymore. As it raised the attendance and achievement for the students and supported and enlightened the parents, they moved out of public housing. So each year we were starting over with a whole new group. So, like I said, it was good for the kids, but not for my school in the

> ways the district wanted it to be because a lot of my efforts were not showing up on our achievement scores. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

However, Mayfield noted, "We were able to get kids to come to school. Attendance improved by at least 100%. Parents came in and talked with kids, volunteered in the classrooms. The parent community was supporting us. We had our successes."

Sharon Roberts, a teacher at Fowler, remembered one powerful success in particular, a student who appeared on television for his accomplishments in science, fostered in Fowler's after school science program with the Unitarian Church. Roberts recalled hearing about the student's success:

> Elum and their science group were invited to the State of the Union address, and he was on TV. We called each other and told each other about it. We all watched that night. They had him stand during the address. Well, we [educators from Fowler] called each other and said, "There's our kid!! There's Elum!" So, here he is, 6th or 7th grade, and you have to know that the foundation was laid at Fowler. He was one of the students who was in the science club with professors at Georgia Tech and in the Unitarian church. He was a kid who was a part of going to the mountains and doing experiments, the foundation we laid and provided for him. (S. Roberts, personal communication, August 14, 2009)

During this time, from 1982-1987, many APS schools were improving. In 1987, an *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article noted Crim's report that 53% of students read above national norms and 60% scored above national norms in math. Dr. Crim was credited with managing an urban educational program that worked (Jay, 1987). Further,

computer-assisted instruction had been placed in all high schools and middle schools, and in over 50% of elementary schools. Fowler Elementary, however, was not one of those schools. Mayfield recalled,

> I asked the board "When are we going to receive our computers?" The answer never came. Schools with White children who were already doing well were placed above all the schools that served public housing communities. But they wanted me to improve student achievement, to stop coming in close to last, even as they put us last when it came to increasing the number of teachers, giving us professional development funds, and installing new technology. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

In spite of the lack of support from the central office, Mayfield had successes. She recalls, "We knew we were doing good things, so we nominated ourselves for an award for curricular change and reform, an award from the University of Maryland." Fowler received honorable mention for their extracurricular programs and parent support groups and placed 14th overall. Yet in spite of an increase of nearly 14% of students who met standards on state assessments, Crim and the school board continued to discuss Fowler's closing because student proficiency hovered at approximately 30%. In fact, Mayfield recalled her frustration around the pressure in absence of support, which was typically illustrated through planned site visits from district administrators.

One day in particular Mayfield was preparing for a planned visit to the school by the deputy superintendent and a school board member. They were visiting all underperforming schools in the district to assess teacher performance and student learning as the district made decisions about which low achieving schools would close.

She said, "I was glad to see them come, but not for those reasons. I told them that my staff was still changing." Mayfield indicated that teachers often applied for a transfer from Fowler because discussion of its closing surfaced each year. Therefore, when the deputy superintendent and school board member came to visit, many of the teachers were in their first or second year. Mayfield recalled,

> The teachers had just gotten there, and they told me, "We're not the reason student achievement is where it is, and they're not giving us a chance to address it." The two [teachers] who had been with me for three or four years asked me if I could arrange it so they could speak with the deputy and school board member. The deputy and school board member came to a faculty meeting, and I told them before we started, "I'm not going to introduce you to my faculty. Let me introduce them to you." And I started out with "Those of you who have been here x-number of years, please stand." The deputy looked up. And he found out that for about three-fourths of the faculty, this was their first year. It turned out that introducing my faculty to them was a really smart move. The deputy told them that he would give them a chance and if they could pull the school up by the end of the year, not only would they vote not to close the school and they would let them stay, but the first year teachers—and there were six of them who had only been there a few months—that he would take them to dinner and have them picked up in a limo. One year to pull up achievement? Let them stay? We didn't need a limo. We needed professional development funds. We needed computers. We needed money for programs for the kids and parents. We needed district support. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 22, 2007)

Mayfield highlighted the lack of consensus and understanding between the central office and Fowler. She recalled, "The district was fragmented. They had end goals in mind, but the process of how to get there was not uniform or shared. They simply expected each school's leader to meet certain achievement benchmarks." In the absence of support and of a shared approach to improving Fowler between Mayfield and the central office, she pursued support through the parent and at large communities and through businesses surrounding Fowler, those that were in close proximity and linked to the school. Even amid her accomplishments, she lamented the limitations she felt she faced. She recalled, "I would have liked to have tried approaches that were novel, but I was limited in time and human resources."

Dr. Norman Johnson, former assistant in the office of the president at Georgia Tech, confirmed Mayfield's perception. Johnson, a Black professor who taught organizational management and sociology at Carnegie Mellon University before moving to Georgia Tech, noted that Georgia's Tech investment in Fowler's success increased and expanded in 1988, after the arrival of Patrick Crecine, Georgia Tech's new president. Johnson remembered,

> We became very involved in supporting Fowler, and Mayfield was very committed to the Fowler/Techwood community—kids, teachers, and parents. I found, over time, that the distrust she had of the [APS] district was rooted in a lack of a shared plan for how to improve the education for children who attended Fowler. They [Mayfield and APS] were beyond at odds. There are no words to truly describe it. But when we [Georgia Tech] came on board, we started to engage in reforms outside the box. A number of parents, teachers, businesses,

> and Tech faculty were working overtime with the teachers who had already been working overtime. We started to do even more with the support of Georgia Tech in Fowler. (N. Johnson, personal communication, February 22, 2007).

With the arrival of Dr. John Patrick Crecine, a White administrator who served as the ninth president of Georgia Tech. Crecine and Johnson met when both worked at Carnegie Mellon during the 1980s. Both professors of sociology with interests in urban planning and policy, the two professors became partners in conceiving new directions for Carnegie Mellon. When Crecine accepted his position at Georgia Tech, Johnson joined him as a part of his administrative team.

Similar to the biracial partnership between Palmer and Hope in reforming low-income housing in the 1930s, Crecine, a White administrator, and Johnson, a Black administrator, found themselves together at Georgia Tech in the late 1980s, partnering to improve educational programs. Crecine had a vision for Georgia Tech, and during his tenure, he established three new colleges: the College of Computing, also the first such college in the country; the Ivan Allen College of Management, Policy, and International Affairs; and the College of Sciences. Johnson embraced a vision for Black students, and brought his ideas to Crecine, who supported Johnson's initiatives. During Crecine's tenure as president, African American student enrollment doubled at undergraduate and graduate levels, and academic performance at the undergraduate level significantly exceeded majority student performance with approximately 40% of freshman African American students making the Dean's list and with most African American students enrolling in demanding engineering programs. Graduate Ph.D. production for minority students in engineering approached that of the rest of the nation combined. Numbers of tenure-track

minority faculty tripled and female faculty doubled (Crecine papers, 1994). Indeed, the arrival Crecine and Johnson at Georgia Tech in 1987 ushered in new changes in educational reform and in the levels of support afforded to Mayfield, Fowler, and the Techwood community.

Phase Three: The Social Context of Reform, 1987-1991

"Organizations are built for a purpose. All organizations are built to accomplish things. We should not be surprised when they function well and do the things we built them for."

~ Dr. Norman Johnson, retired Georgia Tech administrator and professor

In his reflections on the early years of his investment in Fowler and in the Techwood community, Dr. Johnson shuttered. His background in organizational management and sociology provided a particularly keen account of public housing and schooling. He described the genesis of public housing as conceptualized in the 1930s as a mechanism to isolate low-income people through public housing neighborhoods constructed by the federal government, the purpose of which, he argued, endures today:

> As an organization, it accomplished what it was built for. First to house low-income people, who happened to be White. But when Whites left the city because of integration of schools, it became the vehicle to house low-income Blacks—to confine them, to create a division, a class of "us" and "them." (N. Johnson, personal communication, February 22, 2007)

Johnson reported that to deal with its location and the contrast between Techwood Homes and the Georgia Tech University campus, prior to Crecine and Johnson's arrival, Georgia Tech erected a stream of concrete barriers between Techwood Homes and their

university's students' family housing. The concrete barriers closed off the entrance and exit to Techwood Homes, and prevented entry into or from Georgia Tech from the distance closest for Techwood residents. The barriers resulted in isolation for the Techwood community and provided opportunities for little engagement with anyone outside of the borders of their neighborhood. Georgia Tech loomed large locally and nationally, yet sitting across the street from Techwood Homes, Georgia Tech seemed remote. The fortress-like barriers were a constant reminder of the separation. Johnson described the effects of that isolation on the children and residents.

> The barriers at the edge of the property came to represent a denial of freedom, of access to better: a better education, better services, a better life. It was intended to make Tech's students feel safe, so it had a practical purpose for Tech but a psychological purpose for Techwood residents. And I'm convinced there was no thought about what it meant to the residents of Techwood. The barriers locked them into their own world while the people who lived beyond the barriers had the freedom and the access and the choices that [residents] otherwise would have had, should have had. (N. Johnson, personal communication, March 1, 2007)

Furthermore, students of Georgia Tech who were married resided in married students' housing, located approximately 10 yards from Techwood Homes. Zoning data from the APS archives that revealed Georgia Tech arranged for a rezoning of Fowler Elementary School's district lines so that children of married students at Georgia Tech attended a different elementary school and not Fowler, which was "a three minute walk from their dorm," (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 8, 2006). The other elementary school was located more than 9 miles away from Georgia Tech's student

housing. Thus, the barriers created a residential enclave for the children and families in Techwood Homes.

Johnson, as well as several non-school, elite stakeholders who were participants in my study, argued that building new housing would not break the cycle of poverty and the resulting consequences for African Americans that existed and that were perpetuated within public housing. Johnson argued:

> Public housing creates a certain sociology that informs mindsets. Residents are dealing with limited opportunities, low expectations for what they can do and for what they can contribute to society. That was the mentality of Tech officials who, as a matter of policy, placed those barriers between Techwood and the Tech campus. They send the message [to Blacks] and then create policy that reinforces it. So it should be no surprise that low-income becomes cyclical, generational, within families. Those are but a few of the effects of poverty and isolated public housing. You have those who look at the generational poverty and assign blame to the people who live within it. Then you have those who can change social policy—policymakers—but they aren't thinking deeply enough, outside the box, and instead they're thinking of how to keep [Blacks] inside the box because while the "Black" problem in public housing and in society at large is tragic and we bemoan it—conceive of the "solutions" to apply to it—the truth is it's more convenient to maintain the status quo than it is to conceive of and pursue over time real solutions to institutional and societal racism and its effects. Public housing is not really the agent, the reason. It's not even poverty. The agent is

> classism and racism. The manifestation of it is public housing and poor schools. (N. Johnson, personal communication, March 1, 2007)

When asked to elaborate on his conclusions, Johnson offered the following rationale:

> The thinking goes like this: We had the *Brown* decision, and we were optimistic about racial equality. Ironically, in looking back, there's a curious way that optimism prevented us from anticipating how that legislation – which to many embodied racial progress – would result in a form of backlash. Policymakers like to highlight the gains in our society, such as the civil rights gains, affirmative action, and increasing numbers of elected Black political officials, administrators, and so on. There is no question that these developments have been important. However, because of these symbolic policies, people tended to underestimate the significance of the staunch hold of racism on the American people of color, on all of us, because of its deeply entrenched historical roots and socialization. We have affirmative action. We have Blacks who are middle class and upper middle class. We have had integration . . . or desegregation. So for people who have agendas more important than continuing the fight for racial equality or for those who are just not truly interested in that fight, they can and do say, "We have policies that have created equality" but really it's the appearance of equality or the opportunity for equality. And they continue with, "If Blacks or Asians or poor people or women or anybody who is not White and male would just pursue them, right, then there would be equality." So the conclusion that follows when you have a Black, Asian, woman, poor person who is not what mainstream says they should be is "They must want these conditions or they would change them." That is the

> conclusion and answer applied specifically to public housing and, more broadly, to other forms of the question, "Why aren't you more like us?" And that mindset is another issue—it creates another issue: Apathy on behalf of the thinking of policymakers. So it advances a misunderstanding that has become systemic about those who live in poverty and are persons of color. And in this case, they [Black families] are confined to public housing in the truest sense, and it's all their fault. The result? People become – and are truly stuck – in public housing. Rare is the person or the family who achieves beyond it. (N. Johnson, personal communication, March 1, 2007)

He then added his assessment of how being stuck in public housing affected Fowler and its children. He recalled Georgia Tech's students' children and the revised zoning ordinance that allowed those students to attend a different elementary school farther away:

> In the wake of *Brown* and White flight, schools tried to integrate with busing – taking little Brown children from their segregated communities and busing them to White schools. Up until recently, busing was the answer to integration, to White flight, a response to try to achieve what Brown was supposed to be about. So APS bused Tech's students' kids to a White school where they didn't have to sit and learn next to the poor child who lives in public housing, who lives in a homeless shelter, etc. As a policy matter, we tried busing, which we hoped would help increase human sensitivity beyond color and would help Black children get the resources they needed and lacked in their neighboring schools. But I remember when that started. I knew that busing was not going to work in itself. I

> knew that we didn't need busing. We needed schools, communities… we needed schools and their communities to have unequal investment of resources and support for a time being, at least until the outcomes were equal, could be equal for the children and their families. Yet as a policy matter, who's going to get on board with the articulation of "unequal investment of resources" even though human beings – school administrators, teachers, policymakers, and all the folks involved who make decisions – they know that you can't segregate children, only in buses this time, and expect that this would help segregated schools or help to integrate schools in the ways *Brown* was intended to do. Every time I saw buses, I saw them or interpreted them as segregated busing because what was happening was that the Black children were being put in the buses and sent somewhere though in Techwood, it was the opposite. They took White kids a few miles away to a better school than Fowler, the one they were zoned to. It was Georgia Tech initiated and APS supported White flight. Where is the equality in segregated busing? (N. Johnson, personal communication, February 22, 2007)

Charged with improving the educational opportunities and programs at Georgia Tech upon his arrival, Johnson focused on the Techwood Homes community as an extension of his service to Georgia Tech. When he arrived in Atlanta, he chose housing that was in close proximity to the Tech campus, which in addition to being close to campus was also four blocks away from the Techwood Homes neighborhood. Like Palmer in the 1930s, Johnson stated that his interest in Techwood Homes was ignited initially by walking past the community daily on his way to campus. Then, in the evenings, he recalled hearing gun fire and police sirens. One day he decided to venture into the community. Upon

doing so, he discovered Fowler Elementary, which horrified him, to think that an elementary school existed in the midst of the violence he overheard and imagined in the evenings. He decided to forge a relationship with Fowler and went into the building to meet Mayfield. In their conversation, he learned what she had been doing with Georgia Tech in order to foster a supportive relationship for students and her faculty.

As Johnson's relationship with Mayfield grew, he spent more time in Fowler and with other administrators at Georgia Tech who were in charge of the after school tutorial program and who knew Fowler and its students and teachers better than he. Eventually, he was affectionately referred to as "Doc" at Fowler and with the Techwood parents that he grew to know. His observations of Techwood, coupled with his interest in the wellbeing of Black children and families, sustained his desire to understand the organizational decisions that preceded him and that resulted in a stark division between Georgia Tech and Techwood.

A year after their arrival and at Johnson's urging, Crecine and the executive committees at Georgia Tech became proactive about increasing its African American student enrollment. Their determination to increase educational opportunities for Blacks at Georgia Tech and Johnson's growing relationship with Fowler and the Techwood parents resulted in a focus on the children who lived in Techwood Homes. Oral history reports conducted by AHA corroborate interviews with four stakeholders who participated in this study, indicating that in the 52 years that Georgia Tech stood next to Techwood Homes, until Crecine's appointment, the university never had a relationship with Fowler Elementary School beyond student tutoring. Further, Georgia Tech had no relationship with the Techwood Home community. Johnson recalled data that Georgia

Tech collected about the children and families who resided in Techwood Homes. Data revealed that over 3,000 children ranging from birth to age 18 lived in the Techwood community. He stated that

> The one statistic that grabbed me and said "that makes no sense" was that no child had ever worked his way from Fowler Elementary through Inman Middle School through Grady High School and back to Georgia Tech. Studies show that by living next to colleges and universities, children are naturally drawn to higher education. Yet, in this community such was not the case. (AHA oral history interview, September 2002).

Moreover, APS data revealed that in 1988, only 25% of students met proficiency standards on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, lower than the 31% proficiency students reached on state-mandated tests. Thus, though scores rose in the years after Mayfield began as principal, for an outsider new to the community, like Johnson, 25% and 31% were dismal results for children.

Dovie Newell, a resident of Techwood who worked with Georgia Tech stakeholders, stated that the residents' only hope in partnering with Georgia Tech was to create an elementary school that would produce a different result. Johnson added,

> It was easy to align that goal because we [Georgia Tech] also wanted Fowler to produce a different result. It represented a natural stream of Black talent right there in the neighborhood. One day I was working in Fowler, meeting with Gwen [Mayfield], and had a chance to visit classrooms. I started asking the same questions to the kids: "How many of you have been to the History Museum? The Coke museum?" It was depressing to realize that they lived in the center of one

> of the most culturally rich cities in America and yet most of them had never been to the airport, a museum. I came to realize how locked in these children and families were, and I knew we had to do something about it. Exposure is so important. It is a vital part of education, and in this community, exposure was seriously lacking. (N. Johnson, personal communication, January 24, 2008)

Johnson noted that after visiting Fowler for nearly a year, new efforts began in 1989 when professors and officials from Georgia Tech held meetings with parents and residents in Techwood Homes over four months. The result was the creation of a community group that comprised Georgia Tech stakeholders and Techwood Homes parents and residents. Like the meetings held with National Families in Action and other community groups, meetings with parents, residents, Fowler's teachers, and Georgia Tech personnel were held at Fowler. Shortly afterwards, the community group approached Mayfield directly with their ideas for investing in the school and for establishing a deeper relationship among Fowler, Techwood Homes, and Georgia Tech. The school-based improvement group, aptly named the Curriculum Committee, aimed to improve student performance and included principal Mayfield, Fowler teachers, parents of students who lived in Techwood, Dr. Johnson, and professors from Georgia Tech. The Curriculum Committee acted on their shared vision for reforming the school, which first addressed reshaping the curriculum into one that was aligned to Georgia Tech through a focus on math, science, and technology.

Soon after the formation of the Curriculum Committee and early in the stages of curricular redesign, Georgia Tech solicited the support of Coca-Cola, which who had invested in the past in rehabilitating housing in the Techwood community but had limited

investment in Fowler until Georgia Tech encouraged Coca-Cola's involvement. According to Ingrid Saunders Jones – who leads the company's philanthropic commitment to sustainable communities in her position as Senior Vice President of Global Community Connections and the Chair of The Coca-Cola Foundation – years before, between 1985 and 1986, Coca-Cola invested approximately $20 million in improvements for the Techwood community. Jones recalled that in addition to funding new curbs around the neighborhood, Coca-Cola provided new windows for all of the housing structures and roofs for the entire housing development. After being approached by Georgia Tech and the Georgia Tech Foundation, which were supporting the Curriculum Committee, Coca-Cola provided financial assistance that was used to purchase computers for students and professional development training for teachers. Jones [Coca-Cola], Mayfield [Fowler], and Johnson [Georgia Tech] stated independently in interviews that it was only later, when interest in Fowler was prompted by Georgia Tech's investment, that Coca-Cola's investment expanded.

The Curriculum Committee benefitted from the educational expertise of teachers, administrators, and Georgia Tech professors as well as from the financial capital provided by Coca-Cola and Georgia Tech's Foundation and Board of Trustees. From 1988 through the early 1990s, the Curriculum Committee crafted curricular reforms to change Fowler and to prepare students for middle school, high school, and emergent technological advances in schooling and society. Their meetings resulted in a curriculum that both was complementary across disciplines and that contained a math and science theme, an intentional alignment with Georgia Tech. They pursued these efforts before the possibility of completely restructuring Fowler Elementary. The formation of the

Curriculum Committee was the beginning of a meaningful and longstanding investment in the elementary school by Georgia Tech.

After the Curriculum Committee formed and began making progress, resident skepticism was aroused by external stakeholders' interest in Fowler and the expanding frequency with which neighborhood community groups like NFA began to engage residents. As previously mentioned, crime and drug activity were high in Techwood Homes, and interviews with residents of Techwood revealed that to participate in the Curriculum Committee and to ensure their safety and relationships, residents had to convince local drug dealers that the investment that the residents, Georgia Tech, Coca-Cola, and NFA were making in the school and its residents was not tied to suspicion of or targeted action against drug dealers' illegal activity. To combat this obstacle, the residents of the community, in conjunction with parents of children in the school, formed a Safety and Security Committee and moved any meetings that had been held on the Georgia Tech campus into the community. The task of the Safety and Security Committee was to protect the well-being of the residents and parents who were meeting with external stakeholders and who were committed to improving Fowler.

According to their account, Dovie Newell and Andrea Crowder Jones, residents in the Techwood Homes community, were arguably the most active members in the Curriculum and Safety and Security committees. Residents and elite stakeholders revealed in interviews the perils that accompanied participating in consensus building around reform efforts for Fowler and Techwood. In his report on the tensions, Johnson stated:

> Here we are, deep into improving this school and community. And we [Tech] also had our antennae up for women; we wanted more women at Tech. My feeling was that if we were going to begin to have this push for women and this push for Blacks that the first people that were going to get hurt were going to be Blacks or women because they [drug dealers] had worked out an accommodation for White boys. They knew about White boys, and everybody in the neighborhood who did the wrong thing [selling drugs] just knew "Don't mess with no White boys." (N. Johnson, personal communication, September 8, 2007)

Moreover, Loretta Stewart, resident of Techwood Homes, added texture to Johnson's statements:

> The safest man in Techwood was a White boy. And it's funny because White people are afraid of public housing communities. But you know what? A White boy is the safest person in them. When a White man came into Techwood everybody knew that they either worked for the Man or they were the Man or they were a customer [for drug dealers] or a Tech student. And they're there because they're either supporting the trade [by buying drugs] or looking to bust somebody [the police]. So everybody knew that you don't mess with a White boy because if a White boy was hurt or killed that woulda brought all kinds of attention [from the news media]. As long as it was Black folks who got hurt then they *might* report on it, but nobody came in and started really looking at what was going on unless it was a White boy [who was hurt]. (L. Stewart, personal communication, November 4, 2009)

When residents began meeting with professors and administrators from Georgia Tech, drug dealers asked residents questions about the intent of the meetings and if residents were seeking to curb drug activity in the neighborhood. Loretta Hall, a 20-year resident of Techwood, recalled the fear that was aroused. Hall stated:

> Drug dealers sometimes paid the bills for people. We had issues with these little punk gang bangers. They'd pay a water bill or an electric bill or get somebody a fan in the summer… give 'em a little money. If people looked the other way—didn't see nothin' and didn't say nothin'—then they'd get a little somethin'-somethin' on the side. They could say "I need money for this," and they'd get it. And those people [who made deals with drug dealers] knew their families were safe . . . from any straight up problems with the drug gangs anyway. (L. Hall, personal communication, February 6, 2008)

Eric Pinckney was the Techwood community's informal resident leader. An African American man, he was formerly a student at Georgia Tech, a tutor for the children in the after school program, and the organizer of a Friday evening basketball club he created to keep children occupied and away from drugs and illegal activity. Pinckney arrived in Atlanta from Boston immediately after he graduated from high school. As he stated, "He just landed in Techwood." He recalled his arrival and integration into the Techwood community:

> I arrived in Atlanta in the early 1980s from Boston, readying to attend Georgia Tech. I showed up in Atlanta with clothes and an acceptance letter. I chose Techwood because it looked like home. I made friends, starting playing and doing things in the community that summer, and eventually I was crashing on

> people's couches. That whole summer those ladies took care of me. And I took care of them. I played with the kids, ran errands, and had a good time. Even when I got housing at Tech, I turned it down. Techwood had become my home. (Personal communication, July 10, 2007)

Pinckney stated that he did not apply for public housing or assistance. He relied on his instincts and befriended people in this Black community by playing basketball with the men and children and helping the ladies in their homes with their kids. He continued,

> I was there illegally; I wasn't on anybody's lease or paperwork. I think about that now because it was just good fortune for everybody that I was a good man. I think about all the men I met who weren't and who were making Techwood home for all the wrong reasons. I ended up being really important because as an in-between, I protected those ladies and their children. I could talk to gang bangers and to mothers and their kids. I was a son and a brother. I was a liaison. I helped the kids with their homework, and initiated a Big Brothers program for the boys, and I kept gang bangers away from my kids [those who he tutored and mentored]. I couldn't afford housing at Georgia Tech or rental of a nearby apartment. I just arrived with bags, not knowing anything about financial aid. I really had no place to stay. The residents allowed me to stay in their homes the whole time I was working on my undergraduate degree. (Personal communication, March 17, 2008)

Pinckney described the tensions surrounding the meetings of the Curriculum and Safety and Security committees and the difficulties that surrounded partnerships between Techwood residents and Georgia Tech:

> The residents wouldn't even go to a meeting without them [dealers] giving them [residents] permission to go. They would never go to a meeting unless the dealers and bangers who were locking down the apartments let the women whose rent they were paying know that it was okay to go to that meeting. And if you went and there was suspicion that you had this meeting diming [telling] on drug dealers, you couldn't go home. So it was real, real dangerous. (AHA Oral History, September 2002)

Though Georgia Tech students were partnering with Fowler by tutoring children at the school, parent meetings had been held at Georgia Tech, which increased suspicion and made residents' participation dangerous. To combat the suspicion created as a result of meetings between Techwood residents and Georgia Tech personnel at Georgia Tech instead of in the Techwood community, meetings were shifted from offices at Georgia Tech to Fowler Elementary where parents and residents could say that they were working with the school, lessening any questions they might have received about their motivations for meeting with White officials from Georgia Tech. After the change in venue, participants reported having a conversation about ways to keep resident committee participants safe. The conversation extended to addressing safety in the community at large. An additional task became addressing issues of access – the barriers – between Techwood Homes and Georgia Tech, an issue that became central to both the Curriculum and Safety and Security Committees.

Pinckney recalled that the barriers were an inconvenience and a safety hazard. Not only did residents have to spend an extra 50 cents on a cab to get into their neighborhood by driving around the block, but the response time of first responders, who

were on the scene often, was also slowed. Using Johnson's position at Georgia Tech and his membership on the committee, the Safety and Security Committee recommended through Johnson to Crecine that the barriers be removed so that the children in the community could have "visible access to its surrounding community and psychological and physical access to the university" (Dr. Norman Johnson, personal communication, February 22, 2007). Johnson said the feeling was, "Let's open up our place and let the kids come to the game. Let's not make this a big, strange place." Fittingly, this change was aligned with the aesthetic purposes that Crecine and Georgia Tech were pursuing. Crecine facilitated the removal of the barriers amid protest from professors and students at Georgia Tech, actions that came to characterize his turbulent relationship with Georgia Tech's faculty and students (Crecine papers, 1994). However, it was an action that drew him closer to the residents of Techwood. Pinckney recalled,

> Crecine delivered on a very small thing. The closest entrance to Techwood would have been on North Avenue, but the barriers were placed there. First responders, firemen and police . . . they had to drive all the way down North, turn left to head south down Lucky, enter Techwood and drive up and come back around. As a medical issue, people could die between the route and the lights. So when Crecine had them removed, that spoke volumes to residents. (Personal communication, February 6, 2008)

Dovie Newell recalled that "Johnson and Crecine made good on that promise – to remove the barriers," which she too stated was a key factor in establishing trust between the Techwood residents, Fowler Elementary, and Johnson and Georgia Tech.

In addition, Georgia Tech invested in Fowler beyond their involvement in reshaping the Fowler curriculum and in having the barriers removed. The Georgia Tech Foundation provided Fowler Elementary with $5,000 a year for three years, funds used to contribute to school improvement that included replacing textbooks, providing equipment for physical education and science classes, sending teachers and administrators to conferences, and supplying food at community and school events.

By early 1991 – nine years into Mayfield's principalship, four years after the arrival of Crecine and Johnson at Georgia Tech, and two years after Georgia Tech began investing in Fowler's curriculum – Fowler Elementary school's programs differed greatly from the school of 1982, when Mayfield began. Though computers were limited because APS did not provide Fowler with computers and donations were received from Coca-Cola instead, technology had been integrated into teacher instruction and student learning. In addition, alignment of learning objectives across subjects occurred, teachers attended conferences because of financial support from Georgia Tech, tutorials for students were held, and several academic and athletic extracurricular activities were offered. Furthermore, the Techwood community was connected to and invested in the changes that were occurring for Fowler and within its neighborhood, and residents were benefitting from NFA and other community groups.

Yet, in spite of high levels of cooperation and significant intellectual and financial investments, participants indicated that student achievement and the sociology of the neighborhood remained relatively unchanged. What changed through the collaborative investment in Fowler, however, was a stronger relationship between educators at Fowler, parents and residents of Techwood Homes, and personnel at Georgia Tech. This bond

was critical to efforts as stakeholders from these groups grew to either represent or oppose the voice of the community in the next phase of social and political contextual change. The inciting incident, occurring without notice and far removed from Fowler, was Atlanta's successful bid to host the 1996 Olympic Games.

The World Is Coming

On September 18, 1991, Atlanta won an improbable bid to host the 1996 Olympic Games, beating other big name cities that boasted the kind of international cachet that Atlanta's civic leaders had always coveted (Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG), Olympic Planning Report, 1997). The Olympics would bring citizens and dignitaries from countries around the world. The early 1990s became an exciting time, marked by the expectation that the games would catapult Atlanta into the upper echelon of world-class cities. In preparation for their arrival, in January 1992 another committee formed outside of the Techwood community. Mayor Maynard Jackson created the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) and its subcommittee, ACOG's Board of Directors, as a private, not-for-profit organization to facilitate the city's readiness for the upcoming event. Among members of ACOG were soon-to-be Mayor Shirley Franklin, who served as Senior Vice-President for External Relations and ACOG's primary liaison with various labor unions; Milton Jones, Chief Operating Officer for Bank of America; Ingrid Saunders Jones, Chair of Philanthropy for Coca-Cola; Patrick Crecine, President of Georgia Tech; civil rights groups; city planners; neighborhood and community organizations; and environmentalists.

For his part in and support of Atlanta's bid package, Crecine conceived of and arranged funding for the development of a computerized, virtual reality model of the

competition as well as living and support facilities to be constructed. Thus, he and the Georgia Tech Foundation were active members of the Olympic planning committee from 1988 through the 1996 arrival of the Games. In exchange for their contribution to the winning bid, Georgia Tech expected to have a voice in the location of the events. Documents from ACOG confirm that in its initial meetings, ACOG made the decision to host a part of the games adjacent to Georgia Tech on land owned by the Atlanta Housing Authority. The location was the site of Techwood Homes, and by default, of Fowler Elementary. Johnson noted that:

> The bid was put together in 1988, around the same time that we were taking an interest in Fowler. And here the truth is revealed: Initially we were interested in Fowler primarily to address the environment that surrounded our university on all sides. That was really our primary goal, as an institution. The deeper interest in Fowler came later through me, as I got to know the kids and people within it and the circumstances around it…how depressed their environment and opportunities were and so on. (N. Johnson, personal communication, February 22, 2007)

When Georgia Tech put its resources behind the bid, the exchange for their investment was that the neighborhood encompassing the university would be a part of the site for Olympic events. Georgia Tech saw the opportunity to leverage the resources that the Olympics would create to improve their campus and the surrounding neighborhood. Johnson stated, "No great university in America exists in a bad neighborhood. . . . They [universities] address it [the neighborhood] so that the external environment does not decay the reputation and resources of the university and of the city in which it operates." Political motivations to address the Techwood community surrounding its campus,

motivations that were congruent with its investment in Fowler, drove Georgia Tech's involvement and investment in Atlanta's bid for the games.

Efforts of members of the business community who were associated with ACOG and their preparations of Atlanta for the Games resulted in an eventual convergence and divergence of interests between the Curriculum and Safety and Security committees at Techwood, the operations of Fowler, and ACOG, many of whose stakeholders were the same. Once ACOG and Georgia Tech identified their interest in Techwood Homes, ACOG directors joined in conversations with Fowler residents, specifically the Safety and Security and Curriculum Committees, to merge their overlapping interests for reforms. Joining those meetings were Ingrid Saunder Jones from Coca-Cola, Milton Jones from Bank of America, executives from SunTrust bank, and city-level officials. Thus, when Atlanta became the site of the Olympic Games and when ACOG identified Techwood Homes as a location for a portion of the games, a new phase of investment in Fowler and Techwood was initiated, marked by an increase in the number of stakeholders and in the resources directed toward Fowler and Techwood Homes. Over time, however, conversations about the aims of reform for Atlanta and within Techwood Homes omitted Fowler altogether. In addition, meetings and conversations excluded the residents of Techwood Homes and educators from Fowler, a decision that foreshadows conflict both for school and community reform and for city preparation for the Olympics. Therefore, the newest phase of change was marked by unexpected resistance from the community, resulting in the alienation of the residents and in parent, resident, and school recalcitrance.

Phase Four: The Community Matters, 1991-1994

Another outgrowth of the Safety and Security Committee that coincided with the impending Olympic Games was Coca-Cola's willingness to invest a second time in the improved appearance of Techwood Homes. Jones revealed that Coca-Cola was motivated to invest in Techwood because as long-standing sponsors of the Olympics, they were concerned about their corporate image as it would be perceived if they did not address the Techwood Homes community. In recalling Coca-Cola's renewed interest after Atlanta won the bid, Pinckney stated that

> Coke had their own sins, and their sin in the mid-80s – when they put all that money into windows and things – was, "Let's invest in the way it looks; let's give it a facelift." But they never invested in the people. So when it all went to pot a few short years later they said, "Well, let's just fence ourselves in." Just as Tech put up the barriers, Coke put up a fence around its headquarters. Coke adopted the Georgia Tech strategy when renovation didn't work and that was "Let's just fence them out." (Personal communication, February 6, 2008)

However, Pinckney also noted that Jones and several on her staff were champions. He reported that Jones was responsible for the renovations and efforts in Techwood in 1985 through 1986, a battle that waged within Coca-Cola: "It was her [Jones] victory. They [her department] couldn't get Coke to give more, but what she was able to persuade them to give was a lot. It just wasn't money completely well-spent because the residents also had needs, not just the property."

Jones confirmed that when the Olympic bid was secured, Coca-Cola's interest in Techwood was reignited. "The world was coming," she said. "And how would it look if we were putting money behind this event, as a national corporation who has a large

philanthropic division, but who would be perceived to be not taking care of the people in our own backyard?" She went on to say, "This event was a momentum point. We had to do something with this community just outside our window" (Personal communication, January, 22 2008). Coca-Cola subsequently invested differently in the community. In alignment with ACOG, they became partners with Techwood's Curriculum and Safety and Security Committees as well as with other businesses who were investing in aesthetic redesign. Coca-Cola and SunTrust Bank laid new grass in the community. Georgia Tech met with Fowler's educators while Coca-Cola and Sun Trust Bank worked with the Georgia Tech's Board of trustees to lend more financial support to teacher development and school events. Jones recalled,

> I worked with Carl, who was the highest ranking African American here [at Coke]. Soon we were talking to Doc [Johnson], who had a real passion for the community. Carl and I got it. So because of Doc, Carl and I started to think about the people as well and not just what we needed to do for Coke. We weren't like, "Let's just give them some band-aids." We wanted to support what Doc was trying to do, and as African Americans who know the struggle intimately, it was easy to get on board because Doc was on the front lines and he had Tech behind him. Carl and I talked for days on end about our dual purposes – meeting Coke's needs and partnering with Doc and Tech. We would look and think, "Wouldn't it be great if we could fix it?" But we were met with resistance from inside. We fought, and we won some things, and that was major. It may not have been enough, but it was what we could muster at that time. (I. Saunders Jones, personal communication, April 12, 2008)

With Coca-Cola and Georgia Tech planning its investment in Techwood Homes and Fowler, other businesses also associated with ACOG were making efforts in the Techwood community. Olympic Game Planning Reports (1997) indicate that ACOG, in conjunction with the Private Industry Council, initiated the Neighborhood Jobs Training and Employment Program "for residents of areas around [the event] venues" (p. 17). Newell, Crowder Jones, and Hager, residents of Techwood Homes, stated that ACOG "had no idea that Gwen [Mayfield] had already started this years ago. So they come up with this thing 'for us' that they think is wonderful… they thought we'd jump on board with them… but we were on board with Gwen. It showed how ignorant they were."

As important, residents in the community stated that the primary concern of ACOG and elite, external stakeholders did not appear to them to be an interest in improving their lives. Instead, Newell, Crowder Jones, Hall and many of Techwood's residents said they felt that corporate and ACOG efforts were directed at creating the appearance of improvement, investment, and resident opportunity. Residents stated that this new level of investment raised skepticism and resistance. Residents concluded that instead of an authentic focus on the needs of residents, children, teachers, and Fowler, and in the health of Techwood as a neighborhood, the investment of stakeholders was aimed at the appearance of a "wholesome city" (M. Hager, personal communication) and directed toward creating that image because of the Olympics.

The starkest example of the duality of interests surrounds building towers in the community. In advancing their interest in investing in the land, ACOG and Georgia Tech approached residents and offered to build four towers in Techwood Homes in preparation to house Olympic athletes. After the Olympics, Georgia Tech would convert two towers

to resident housing and the remaining two would become Georgia Tech University's student housing. Although the extent of the resistance within the Techwood Homes community is unclear, all of participants from the community that I interviewed stated that residents and their resident leaders opposed the towers. Dovie Newell recalled,

> It became all about the city, the event. They were doing what they wanted to do and what was best for them and then tellin' us what was gon be done. We were terrified, not happy, like they thought we'd be. We didn't know if we could trust 'em, didn't know what would happen to us, and we didn't know if we could stop 'em. Good things had been happenin' and they were talking 'bout makin' things better but doin' it by moving us out of our homes, putting up towers? Not all of us were drug dealers and criminals. And we told 'em that. We had hoped they would help us, even though we didn't trust 'em. And it was right on. We shouldn't have trusted 'em. They were about to make it worse. We didn't wanna move, and we didn't want no dang towers. So we did what we thought we could do and went to our resident leader, told him that those towers weren't gon' work. Then … they [the Atlanta Housing Authority] asked us to vote on it, and everything changed. We got busy, telling everybody, "Vote NO!" (D. Newell, personal communication, July 17, 2007)

The concern of residents was that the towers would create a concise, compact market for drug dealers to market drugs to those who would occupy the towers during the event, and later, students who attended Georgia Tech and residents who lived in Techwood. Pinckney added to Newell's account of the concern:

> One of the more important things to know about the history is that there was a whole bunch of justified defensiveness. . . . We wanted change because Fowler and the community weren't very functional, but at that time we didn't want it how it was being presented. It was bad in the early 80s, but by the late 80s with crack cocaine had taken over. . . . Still Georgia Tech was coming in and had been doing some good things. Then they came with others who we didn't know, and we weren't sure what was going on. Then came this proposal for towers and they presented it like a gift to the "poor" residents. And we thought, "Towers for what? And more important, for whom? And why now?" The Olympics. So all of that was very suspicious 'cause nobody had been talking about building new housing for us before. We were either ignored or we got temporary solutions. So my thinking and the residents' thinking was, "What's really going on?" (Personal communication, July 10, 2007)

Community respondents noted that in the time frame of elite stakeholders' merging around Techwood's improvement—those that were elected officials, executives from businesses and banks, and real estate developers—the voices of the community, of teachers, administrators, parents, and residents, were muted. Residents reported that they were not represented on ACOG committees, committees they learned about much later. The ACOG committee, Georgia Tech, and other businesses, who were planning how to improve Techwood Homes, had created a renewal agenda to address those concerns on a larger scale without the input of the residents who lived within it. The result was elites imposing ideas for change on residents, which resulted in warranted distrust. Newell recalled, "It just didn't feel right. We wanted to protect ourselves and our own interests."

Although cross-sector collaboration was present, represented by a few elite stakeholders at meetings of the Safety and Security and Curriculum Committee meetings in attendance with resident leaders and teachers, such cross-sector collaboration was limited to issues that were relevant to the interests of elite stakeholders and that materialized in the form of episodic concerns of safety in the community. Conversations were not in depth enough to consider either resident or school stakeholders' motivations and needs.

Acting as the city's redevelopment agency, ACOG tried to mollify Techwood community concerns by proposing that a new advisory committee be formed that would replace the Safety and Security committee and that would include a larger representative voice of Georgia Tech and Coca-Cola. The Safety and Security Committee opposed their proposition, and in so doing, gained official recognition in their own community as a unified voice.

For instance, Mayfield and her teachers, who were concerned about their students, their enrollment, and their students' families, aligned behind the Techwood Homes residents in the opposition to ACOG's proposal to build the towers. The Safety and Security Committee met weekly, and their minutes revealed an evolving plan of resistance, which included attempts to anticipate what ACOG and Georgia Tech would propose next. Residents overall action plan was to say "No" to any proposal because they could not determine the true motivations of elite stakeholders. Safety and Security Committee meeting minutes and newspaper accounts indicate that The Legal Aid Society; Union Mission, the nearby homeless shelter; the Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless; and the Salvation Army publicly spoke out against proposed transformations

for Techwood that proceeded without residents and community agreement. Johnson, Pinckney, and Newell reported that Dennis Goldstein of the Legal Aid Society led the community's opposition and became the community's public voice with the media. In addition, Jack Jersovic, the owner of a small cable station in the city, rallied around Goldstein and the residents and used his cable station as a platform for community opposition by filming the residents' activism and concern. With Pinckney as a former student at Georgia Tech, Goldstein as the attorney who was the residents' public face with the media, and Jersovic as their media outlet, the residents' voice translated into weighty opposition around issues of renovation through the construction of towers.

In spite of heightened public opposition, elite leaders and ACOG moved forward in conversations with the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) for renovations at Techwood. Newell and Crowder Jones [Techwood residents], who had worked with Johnson and Crecine for years preceding the Olympic Games planning, crafted a private plan. They approached Johnson and Crecine and asked for a private meeting regarding the towers. Newell and Crowder Jones, as well as Johnson, reported that residents spoke to Crecine and Johnson about the Techwood community's opposition to the towers. When they expressed their concerns – "that those towers will destroy this neighborhood and create a closed, private market for drug dealers" – Crecine and Johnson recognized that such a plan would not coincide with their long-term goals for Georgia Tech and in turn, they supported the residents' opposition. According to school board members, Johnson had to be the public face of support for residents because politically, Crecine, as president of Tech and a committee member at ACOG, could not publicly support the residents of Techwood. However, publicly Crecine and Johnson could appear to be at

odds because Crecine was in the midst of a tenuous relationship with the faculty of Georgia Tech. Therefore, Johnson's public disagreement with Crecine was anaddition to existing tension expressed by just another Georgia Tech faculty member. As such, their disagreement would be unquestioned though privately Crecine and Johnson were in partnership. Thus, Johnson went on to side with residents against city leaders and ACOG in building the towers in Techwood Homes.

Johnson was a liaison between residents and ACOG and although Crecine was instrumental in ACOG and in the successful bid for the Olympics. However, Georgia Tech's influence in the bid and Crecine's relationships with other ACOG stakeholders was not powerful enough to overcome the consensus of the ACOG committee on constructing towers in Techwood Homes. ACOG and the Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA), under the leadership of Earl Phillips, moved to present the issue to residents, in spite of mounting protest.

Before ACOG could build towers, they needed the support of the Housing Authority, the owner of the land on which Techwood Homes sat. Earl Phillips and the Housing Authority's executive board were willing to sell the land to the city; however, regulations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) were such that the Housing Authority had to involve the residents in a Demolition and Disposition application that it would present to HUD. Demolition and Disposition was a process by which the Housing Authority applied to HUD to sell and release land, either to residents who could afford its purchase or to businesses and/or community officials who wanted to obtain the land for their own use. As a part of that process, if the residents were not interested in the land or could not afford its purchase, they still had to agree to release the

land to the Housing Authority for market purchase in exchange for an agreed upon relocation process for those who resided on the property (HUD, 2007).

In accordance with Demolition and Disposition guidelines, AHA and ACOG devised a voting mechanism for residents. Once residents realized the power given to them by the provisions of Demolition and Disposition, their furor and conviction grew. When presented with the vote in 1992, their opposition was heard; the votes were tallied, and the motion to release the land to the city to construct towers in Techwood Homes failed.

Residents won the immediate battle, but a more difficult battle was ahead. Resident participants' responses revealed that in spite of their victory over elite stakeholders, there was a sense of concern and disempowerment among them because they lacked confidence that the general public would find cause for long-term concern and support. Though they had the support of Fowler personnel, nearby clergy, and various business and grassroots community organizations, residents viewed the power of elected officials and corporate business stakeholders as superior to the power they achieved as a collective. Residents reported that the best way to deal with external politics, over which they were not sure they could wield influence, was to align through a back door with Johnson and Crecine, who at least had "a seat at the table" (Pinckney, personal communication, February 6, 2008) and the potential to influence ACOG through his relationships with executives on Olympic planning committees.

The vote failure forced ACOG to reevaluate its plans for Techwood Homes. Resident participants stated that ACOG decided that two towers instead of four would be built; however, they would not be built within Techwood. The towers would be built

instead outside of Techwood Homes, parallel to the interstate. Participants also confirmed that Georgia Tech and Georgia State University, also stakeholders in the Olympics, reached an agreement: because of its new location outside of the Techwood community, Georgia State would purchase the two towers from Georgia Tech for their first student housing instead of Georgia Tech's planned conversion to use the towers for residents after the Olympics. Johnson stated that the defeat Georgia Tech and ACOG suffered in building the towers prompted renegotiations in the summer of 1993 that resulted in broader considerations for how adequate housing could be accomplished for Olympic athletes and for how Georgia Tech would benefit from its investment in the Olympic Games planning committees.

Through resident resistance, they avoided the creation of towers in Techwood Homes while elite stakeholders reimagined housing for Olympic athletes. When presented with the Demolition and Disposition vote again in late 1993 – a proposal that involved towers outside of the Techwood community and a park within Techwood – residents approved the sale of a part of Techwood Homes to the city for the purpose of designing Olympic Village Park as a part of Georgia Tech, without the construction of towers.

Physical redesign plans for Georgia Tech continued, but the extent of Techwood Homes involvement diminished. Though not removed from consideration, elite stakeholders realized that they would have a battle with residents over any changes, a battle that would be time consuming given the power residents had to vote on alterations to their community.

Although ACOG and Crecine moved forward to partner with other elites in planning for the arrival of the Olympics, Johnson continued his dual focus on Georgia Tech and Fowler. In forging the battle with ACOG and in talking with Crecine about how Georgia Tech would evolve, Johnson met and befriended Aaron Watson, an attorney whose firm was working with ACOG and the city of Atlanta. Johnson's friendship with Watson became transformative and essential to the plan for Fowler that would be set into motion.

After years of witnessing the difficulty that Mayfield, Fowler Elementary, Techwood residents, and Georgia Tech had in working with APS to achieve dramatic change for students and teachers and in working with city leaders to thwart well-intended but harmful civic changes pursued by city leaders, Johnson decided that he needed a different level of influence and positionality in decision-making. He had developed a strong working relationship with Aaron Watson because he and Watson shared the same passion related to the education of Black children. Watson, an active African American parent of two children in the APS system, was recruited to run for a school board position. He encouraged Johnson to run for the second vacant at large position on the board so that they could partner to marry their interests in serving the children within the APS system.

In 1993, Watson and Johnson were elected to the two at-large positions on the Atlanta Public School Board. Watson's election was the first of his two 4-year terms on the board, set to begin in 1994. Moreover, his colleagues chose him as president of the board for five of the eight years he served, from 1994-2002. Watson also chaired the Finance Committee of APS, overseeing a $450 million annual operating budget and a

$430 million capital improvement budget. Johnson's win expanded his role and influence in educational and community affairs in Atlanta. As a Georgia Tech professor and administrator and now school board member who was partnering with other city leaders, he and Watson became allies in their fight for social justice for students.

In early 1994, as Watson and Johnson began their terms on the APS board, construction began at Georgia Tech for one of the Olympic Villages. As a result of renegotiations, both on-campus housing and student athletic and recreational facilities more than doubled at Georgia Tech as the university acquired a new natatorium and hosted the swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, and water polo competitions. The compromises reached only satisfied resident and school stakeholders for this crisis – not having towers in their community. However, their need for a stronger school and community, which had been sidelined, was still pressing. In spite of high levels of collaboration and cooperation and significant intellectual and financial investments, participants indicated that the focus shifted from improvements at Fowler to protecting the Techwood neighborhood. Though Johnson still pursued reforms for Fowler, during the fight over the towers, the investment in increasing capacity at Fowler diminished. For all the political conflict and advocacy, both student achievement and the sociology of the Techwood neighborhood remained relatively unchanged. What changed through the collaborative investment in Techwood, however, was a stronger relationship between Johnson and Watson and teachers, school leaders, parents and residents, Georgia Tech, and stakeholders from SunTrust Bank, Coca-Cola, and Bank of America. These shifts in leadership became critical to reform efforts as stakeholders from varied positions in the city infrastructure became allies or adversaries and grew to either represent or oppose the

voice of the school and community in the next phase of social and political change. This phase began in September 1994, when Renee Lewis Glover, an African American AHA board member, replaced Earl Phillips, the African American executive director, and became the new president and Chief Executive Officer of the Atlanta Housing Authority. Her appointment set into motion changes that ultimately would transform Techwood Homes and Fowler Elementary.

The changes in leadership and vision within the Atlanta Housing Authority in 1994 resulted in a large scale revitalization plan for Techwood Homes of which the restructuring of Fowler became a part. The details of the evolution of housing policy in Atlanta holds the details for how Fowler's restructuring came to fruition. Therefore, in the next section of the story of Techwood Homes and its revitalization, as well as the Black leaders who pursued it, will provide essential details and insights on the process and politics of Fowler Elementary's restructuring.

Phase Five: Why Children Are the Measure of Success, 1994-1998

"If you concentrate poverty in the residential arrangement, you cannot help but concentrate poverty in the neighborhood school. And, if you concentrate poverty in the school, it does not work."

~ Dr. Norman Johnson, Georgia Tech professor and APS board member

In an interview, Carol Naughton, former attorney for AHA, stated that by late 1994, Techwood's conditions had deteriorated to a level that rivaled its previous years. She labeled the housing development as "extremely distressed," one where nearly all of the residents received services from the AHA (Boston, 2004). Documents and studies of Techwood illustrate that "extremely distressed" includes all that the label implies: aging, dilapidated buildings, inadequate maintenance of properties, the wear and tear of generations of families with young children, and high levels of crime among the residents (Boston, 2005; Popkin et al., 2004).

Soon after Renee Lewis Glover took the helm of AHA, a tragic event occurred in one of the public housing projects: an 8-month-old infant died when a cockroach lodged in her throat, suffocating her ("Mother of Baby who Choked to Death," 1997). The new AHA leadership already was focused on the plight of the public housing residents. Indeed, increasing the quality of neighborhood schools for children, opening the doors to society's mainstream for the parents and residents, and ending their virtual imprisonment in concentrated poverty was a much higher priority than merely replacing the decrepit and obsolete buildings in which they lived. But the infant's death, along with many other issues, crystallized AHA's mission. The compass to chart change in Atlanta's public housing had a needle pointing in one direction: to the children. However, needs of the

school as a mechanism that also takes care of children become collapsed into the larger conversation that takes place about the Techwood community.

Atlanta Housing Authority's leaders knew the task of revitalization was immense. In addition to the substandard living environment, the surrounding business community was economically depressed. In spite of ACOG and city efforts to prepare the Techwood area for the Olympics, vacant business buildings continued to line the streets, and Techwood lacked nearby health care facilities and libraries. Of the many communities managed by the housing authority, Techwood was among the worst. By 1994, when Glover began her leadership, Techwood's crime rate was 69% above the city average, and 35 times higher than the national average (AHA private document collection, 1996). Moreover, in 1994, an Inspector General's audit report of AHA properties conducted by HUD found conditions in Techwood to be so unsafe, unsanitary, and poorly managed that the federal government nearly took over the Housing Authority . According to the report, 88% of inspected units did not meet minimum safety and sanitary standards, and maintenance work orders were 60 to 90 days in arrears.

By December 1994, the vacancy rate in Techwood had reached 94.1% (AHA, 1993). Although a small part of this drop was due to normal attrition, there were multiple more significant causes for the accelerated departure of residents. Prior to leaving, Phillips ordered a change in AHA policy that increased the eviction of residents for minor lease infractions . AHA officials speculated that Phillips' change in policy was intended to move residents out of Techwood to allow the number of residents to be so small that AHA was not required to adhere to the Demolition and Disposition legislation, which would have allowed AHA to sell the land to the city and in turn, allow the city to build

the towers (AHA officials, personal communication, June 29, 2009). Second, another Phillips policy involved a new position on rent payments: AHA refused to accept partial rent payments, which they had permitted previously. Once the vacancy rate reached 50% in 1992, other residents may have left because of security concerns created by the empty housing units (Keating, 2000). Many units were boarded-up, while others had missing or defective windows and doors, electrical hazards, leaking and backed-up toilets, rodent infestations, and lead-based paint exposures (AHA, 1993). Moreover, for six consecutive years, from 1988 through 1993, unemployment was higher than in any of the other 42 housing developments managed by AHA (AHA, 1993).

As a nested system existing in the larger context of Atlanta, Techwood Homes reflected the plight of Blacks who lived in the city of Atlanta. In 1994, Atlanta had more per capita public housing than any other large city in the United States. Further, 12% of the city of Atlanta's population and approximately 40% of Atlanta public school students resided in AHA's public housing communities because of the elementary schools that were built in the center of public housing communities in the 1930s (Boston, 2004). Although metropolitan Atlanta's overall trends in early 1990s were positive—median income rose and poverty dropped—in the core of the city was a dramatically different story by race. The typical household income for Blacks was $38,000 less than that of Whites; one in four Black children had no working parents; and where more than two-thirds of Whites held a bachelor's degree, only 13% of Blacks did. The result was that a third of Atlanta's Black population lived below the poverty line, as did 40% of its children, the highest among all metropolitan cities in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000).

In 1994, a series of changes converged in Atlanta that allowed for new, expanded collaboration for both Fowler Elementary and the Techwood Homes community. Mayor Maynard Jackson's term ended, and a new mayor, Bill Campbell, was elected. Earl Phillips resigned as Executive Director of AHA shortly after Campbell's election, making way for new leadership. Glover sat on the board of AHA from 1989-1993, and after a prolonged and unsuccessful national search for a new executive director – a search hampered by the housing authority's reputation as one of the worst in the nation – the AHA board chose Glover as its new executive director.

With a master's degree in finance from Yale University and a juris doctor with an emphasis in corporate law, Glover's position as a partner in an Atlanta law firm, her four years as a board member on the AHA Board of Directors, and her 20 years as a resident of Atlanta made her an attractive candidate. During her time on the board, she noted the decline in public housing conditions in Atlanta and specifically in the opportunity structures for Black families. As newly appointed Executive Director, Glover turned her attention first to Techwood, in part because of the attention generated by the impending Olympic Games, and in part because it was the poorest functioning development owned by AHA. Techwood's dysfunction and vacancy rates provided a unique opportunity for Glover to test a social experiment: creating a mixed-income, mixed-use housing community. Glover noted that her vision for mixed-income housing and new legislation from HUD significantly influenced her decision to become the new Executive Director:

> A compelling factor was a meeting I attended in Washington, D.C. about the HOPE VI Urban Revitalization Demonstration Program. Elected officials and HUD executive officers had convened the meeting to share their passion and

> excitement about the possibilities of the HOPE VI Program. They stated that public housing was failing and they challenged housing authorities to use the HOPE VI program to re-conceptualize public housing. (Personal communication, September 27, 2007)

Enacted in 1992, HOPE VI provided grants to local housing authorities for the revitalization of the most distressed public housing in the nation (Popkin et al., 2004). Initial HOPE VI legislation mandated one-for-one replacement of housing units. In 1993, HOPE VI was a demonstration program, one in which cities were awarded grants to address their most troubled housing developments and asked to respond to HUD with a plan for how AHA would use those funds. The Atlanta Housing Authority was one of the first recipients of HOPE VI funds, and prior to his departure, Phillips and the AHA board intended to use HOPE VI funds to address structural defects and backlogged work orders in the most distressed communities.

When Glover accepted the position as Executive Director, she considered how to approach improving public housing. She had long harbored thoughts that AHA board's previous approach of fixing the buildings would not bring forth the improvements needed over time and in particular, in residents' lives. Her doubts about taking the position and if she would be supported in radical change for public housing prompted a letter to HUD. Seeking a waiver to not begin the job until she could determine HUD's commitment to transforming public housing in meaningful ways, she stated:

> I believe, for a whole host of reasons, that the course [the Atlanta Housing Authority] is pursuing is doomed for failure. If you start with the proposition that the desire of HUD is to create and maintain quality public housing that will be

> long-term sustainable for forty years, then the approach of renovating buildings which themselves are forty or fifty years old and designed in a way that is psychologically and physically repressive will result in guaranteed failure. The United States Armed Services have as a policy matter determined to demolish all pre-World War II housing and build new. Similarly [the housing authority] believes that a policy to demolish and rebuild our public housing, wherever economically feasible, with a vision of revitalization, de-concentration of poor people, mixed-income, scattered site housing, economic development, and resident empowerment, will be a successful long-term strategy. (Glover, 1994, letter written to Henry Cisneros, Director of Housing and Urban Development)

The enormity of the changes that needed to occur in Atlanta, in the housing authority, and in public housing in Atlanta caused Glover to question the support she would receive to address the range of challenges before her. After all, the context of Atlanta as a place of change was as formidable as the change that needed to occur within AHA and within Atlanta's public housing communities. However, Glover understood business and finance because of her tenure as a seasoned corporate finance lawyer from the private sector. Further, she believed in private sector strategies and solutions and knew how to advance agendas and build partnerships. If HUD would support her vision to construct mixed-income units as a mechanism for deconcentrating poverty, she would reconsider. According to Glover, HUD responded with a letter of support for Glover's initial vision, but asked for additional provisions and details of her plan.

Under Glover's leadership and after the 1995 Congressional change to HOPE VI legislation that eliminated one-for-one replacement of housing units, Glover and AHA

proposed a plan to replace the existing 1,195 units at Techwood Homes with 900 units in a mixed-income, mixed-use community, a plan approved by HUD. As Palmer and Hope did in the 1930s, Glover embarked on a radically different set of ideas that might redefine public housing. Because elementary schools were in the center of those communities, the changes in communities would impact them too. Fowler's restructuring occurred during this final phase, under the umbrella of these political changes, in part because of the vision and agency by new leaders and, in certain instances, in spite of new leaders' resistance.

Seeing With a Different Eye

Shortly after beginning in her new position, Glover devised a request for proposals (RFP) that she released to the public that asked development companies to respond with their conceptualization of a revitalized community. Of the proposals received, only one company, The Integral Group (Integral), proposed multiple types of housing – rental and homeownership – a distinction that set their proposal apart. Their proposal also included retail venues, a library, childcare facilities, and other private sector entities. In describing her reaction to Integral's bid, which not only complemented but also advanced her vision, Glover stated,

> In many ways, economic segregation has proven to be meaner and more destructive to the human spirit than racial segregation because in America poverty is equated with failure. If you are poor, you are assumed not to be capable of doing any better. And the fundamental design of the policies, regulations, and standards governing public housing has, in an insidious way, been based on that assumption of permanent failure and low expectations. The same is also true for

> schools, which was the final straw in Atlanta. Each public housing project was served by a failing, captive elementary school. The only children who attended that school were the children who lived in the neighboring public housing project. Most if not all of the other children in APS whose parents had choice had abandoned those [public housing] schools. As a consequence, many of the families and individuals who find themselves in this dysfunctional system at a fragile time in their lives are confronted with even greater obstacles and over time failure becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. (E. Perry, personal communication, September 4, 2007)

Glover argued that the confluence of these debilitating factors almost ensured that poor, African-American families and children who lived in these housing projects were doomed to a lifetime of failure: "Only the extraordinarily gifted and strong-willed individuals made it out of that chaos successfully." In a separate interview, Egbert Perry, the Black owner and Chief Executive Office of Integral, stated:

> Unlike poverty in other countries, poverty here is a like a crime. If you're born poor [in the United States], you're sentenced to substandard schools. You're sentenced to live in an environment that is horribly negatively impacted, whether it's the concentration of drugs and crime or poor schools or a lack of life-sustaining support facilities and so forth. That's not necessarily true in other countries. So we started thinking about our proposal with a question: "What would the community need to look like if I was going to live there?" (E. Perry, personal communication, January 23, 2008)

Glover and Perry met after Integral was awarded the bid to create blueprints for redesigning Techwood Homes. In a series of meetings, they found that they shared complementary missions influenced by similar but different personal histories. Whereas Glover grew up in an affluent, segregated Black family and neighborhood community in the South, Perry was born and raised poor in Antigua as one of 11 children. Each recalled what drove their mission in Techwood based on their recollections of their childhoods. Perry stated that:

> We set out to change the dynamics that exist in this area, where you have a large concentration of poor. And a lot of that concentration in the U.S. is driven, in large part, for racial reasons. For instance, I grew up poor. My father made the equivalent of $1,000 U.S. dollars a year. I am the ninth of his 11 children, and all of us went to college. All 11 of us. College for us was never doubted. We lived in a close-knit community, everybody knew everybody, and we were protected and nurtured by the entire community and our education was fostered and supported. As an adult business man who works in urban centers, on behalf of urban centers, I want that for all Black children, a community that nurtures them. When I moved to the U.S., I saw tremendous differences in how Black families were treated and how Blacks responded. Over time, it became clear to me that these are policy issues because every country has poverty. So the question is "How do we treat the poor through policies and what policies drive and enforce those treatments?" (E. Perry, personal communication, September 4, 2007)

Perry was raised in a family that stressed the importance of education and educational attainment. He and his siblings were all excellent students, and though poor, poverty was never what he felt nor did it inhibit the quality education he received in Antigua. His parents wanted their children to attend college in the United States and, as a part of that goal, Perry won a scholarship to a prestigious school in New York that allowed him to move to the United States on his own as a sophomore in high school and complete his high school education. After graduation, he enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and went on to earn a master's degree from Pennsylvania's The Wharton School of Business as well as two other master's degrees. As he matriculated through college, poverty, race, and his childhood background and academic achievements came to define his professional pursuits. In his mid-20s, he focused on creating his own business and finding ways to influence poverty, housing, and housing policy:

> Poverty and race were always at the forefront of my mind once I landed in the U.S. . . . I would walk through communities in New York and in Philly, and I couldn't help but witness the effects of poverty for Black families here. So I always came at this with the idea that in the right social dynamic, poverty can be and should be just a temporary condition, as it was for me and my siblings. My idea was to do that in some of these communities and to achieve positive incomes for adults and positive outcomes for Black children and their families, in spite of poverty. For me, it was kind of like self-actualization. So when we [Integral] won the bid with AHA, after I met with Renee for the first few times, I went to

> my executives [at Integral] said, "Let's see if we can do all that stuff we've been talking about." (E. Perry, personal communication, September 4, 2007)

Equipped with a vision to deconcentrate poverty, retool public housing, and empower and change lives for African American families, Glover and Perry began meeting regularly to discuss a community plan and approach. Though 94% vacant and its structures crumbling, considerable controversy surrounded the decision to remove remaining residents from the two-story Techwood Homes and to replace existing housing with substantially fewer units within a mixed-income community. City leaders, grassroots advocacy groups, and residents were not pleased with the vision Glover and Perry presented for the future of Techwood Homes. Perry recalled,

> Their chief complaint was that our efforts were aimed at displacing the poor to make room for wealthy, White neighborhoods in Atlanta. And they were disgusted with us, as Blacks – as well-to-do Blacks who had made it, who "got there," right? – and then who were turning our backs on our own people. (E. Perry, focus group interview, August 28, 2009)

For Glover and Perry, the criticism pained but did not deter them:

> We wanted people to understand what we were trying to do, but we were up against years and years and years of "Yeah, right" type of distrust. We couldn't spend our time getting people to believe us. We knew the integrity of our mission and our commitment to see it through. Renee had just started, and Integral was newly created, only a few years old. We were fresh and motivated and we had the positions [within the city] to make change. They [critics] would only know when they could see it and live it. So instead of spending a lot of time dealing with

> criticism that couldn't truly block us, we focused on the plan and on the people…. the people who lived in Techwood… because they felt the same way. They distrusted us. It was those feelings and those people who we had to focus on. (Perry, focus group interview, June 28, 2009).

In a focus group with elite stakeholders, Glover and Perry recalled the distrust and skepticism that they faced from residents. Residents asked them, "Who's going to want to live next to us?" Such a question communicated their disbelief around a plan to bring together people from varied socioeconomic backgrounds. Among middle- and upper-class families, Glover noted that the question asked was similar: "Who's going to want to live in a community next to them?" In order to close that divide, Glover focused on elevating "what unites us as human beings, the common threads and desires that we all have." Those included a safe community, transportation, and the acquisition of skills for residents locked out of the mainstream, skills that would result in gainful employment and perhaps future homeownership.

To begin the process of change in the community, Glover stated:

> [I] really had to elevate the common threads because if you followed that natural path, the line of thinking about the poor and those who are not poor, you'd never be able to bring the two groups together because there would be all of these accusations, distrust, and name calling, all based on false assumptions of values, on disconnected realities. (R. Glover, focus group interview, June 28, 2009)

Two important insights took place for Glover and Perry. First, each recognized the divide between poor, middle, and wealthy families and the need to develop strategies and policies not only for rebuilding housing and communities but to connect "disconnected

human beings" (Glover, focus group interview, June 28, 2009). Second, Glover remembered, during her time as a board member of AHA, the residents' resistance to the location of the towers. She and Perry had to establish relationships with residents they planned to serve.

To create a mixed-income community, Glover knew that residents had to trust her, that she had to have their support for change to occur. In addition, she recognized the valid mistrust that residents had for city officials and for the housing authority in particular, and she believed that the first step in moving forward was not to obtain the support of groups who were protesting, but rather to acknowledge to residents their justified mistrust, to hear their concerns, and to attempt to reach an understanding of what could occur.

As they had been about other external, elite stakeholders, residents of Techwood Homes were suspicious of Glover and her interests. They questioned whether her interest in their lives and living conditions was genuine, and more, they were concerned about a forced move. Although Techwood was deplorable, residents stated, many who remained worked in the vicinity and were able to take public transportation or to walk to work, and the children and their parents knew Fowler and Mayfield. Improvements in the property were happening because of the Olympics, and if Glover would partner with that plan, they believed, Techwood could be the very different community they wanted without having to "turn over the apple cart, tear apart what [they] had come to know and rely on," Dovie Newell stated (Personal communication, March 5, 2008)

Glover and housing authority staff, Perry and his real estate team, and associated consultants met with residents of Techwood Homes twice a month in the Techwood

Homes community. Glover issued invitations to all residents and to the general public, and soon Johnson and Mayfield joined the meetings. One of the residents also in regular attendance was resident leader, Eric Pinckney. He recalled that Johnson's side conversations with Glover and Pinckney after community meetings had ended reinforced residents' skepticism. Pinckney, prompted by Mayfield, started to question Johnson's allegiance to the Techwood community and to Glover's demolition plans, the second in a round of talks of demolition within Techwood. Pinckney recalled:

> When plans for demolishing Techwood came our way, I had graduated but was still there. I was educated now, had grown up some, and was in my masters [program] at Tech, studying urban planning. I was the most logical person to support the community. It was my community. So it was like, "What are they trying to do? We're not doing this, and we're not going down without a fight. You're not going to tear us apart to build nice housing for somebody else. Women had lived here for 40 years! Naw, we have to fight. (Focus group interview, June 14, 2009)

At this point the alliances were Glover and AHA and Perry and his developers whose plans were in conflict with the alliance represented by residents of Techwood, community advocacy groups, Mayfield, and Fowler Elementary. Johnson, who was attending the meetings, was greeted with suspicion on both sides. Now a school board member and still a member of the Georgia Tech administration, neither the Techwood community nor Glover and Perry were sure of his position on demolition and revitalization. Though perhaps on the same side of the issue, several individuals did not know of each other. As meetings moved forward, three residents who led the opposition

to the towers were also instrumental in the meetings with Glover and associated stakeholders. Johnson, though always an ally with Mayfield and for the community, met with suspicion from residents who watched as he talked with Glover and Perry after community meetings. Eventually, he was also met with suspicion from Mayfield once he began meeting with Glover and Perry to discuss their plans and as he embraced their vision for Techwood. Johnson's perceived shift from ally of the Techwood community to ally with Glover and Perry allowed for the ease with which Pinckney became a voice for the entire community and school, and he stepped into the role as defender of their desires.

Johnson recounted the power of the mistrust residents had when he described his first encounter with Pinckney:

> Eric had been a student at Tech and a resident of the community, yet we had never formally engaged each other. When we first met officially at the end of one of the community meetings, he didn't know who I was. I told him—Tech professor and administrator, APS school board member, and partner with Fowler—and he said, "Oh, I understand now, man. You're the new Uncle Tom at the door." And of course that absolutely shocked me. Then he proceeded with invective that I shall not forget because the general feeling was that I was formally invested in the community and the easiest person to convince residents to go along with the plan. I was the set-up guy, the one who would do bad things to the community. And it took me a minute to kind of show Eric, who seemed to be their guardian, that it was not my interest to socially take advantage of the community or the school but rather to try to see if we couldn't do something with

> Fowler, knowing that this was a long-term effort, but it could have become a pipeline for African American students from public housing to head over to Tech, just as he had. (AHA oral history, September 2002)

He went on to add

> And Eric, after many, many tests – many tests – decided that – and I am absolutely convinced that the only reason Eric would even consent to engage with me was because he and I are in the same fraternity. I'm convinced that had I not been in the same fraternity, that the outcomes that ultimately came to pass would have never happened. He was willing to give me a little bit of leeway. Clearly these outcomes would have never happened without Eric. And some people have heard me say this… and I say it again… that for every big effort, you need a John the Baptist. And Eric, at least in the Techwood arrangement, was our John the Baptist. And thank goodness that he was or all the people we were talking to, all the people you are talking to, wouldn't have had a chance to make all this history. The residents knew me, but they trusted much more whatever Eric told them. He was the key. Residents would have never voted to demolish their community without Eric. (AHA oral history, September 2002)

In describing the tensions between elite stakeholders and residents, another resident, Paul Edicose, indicated that Glover:

> just kept coming back, coming back with more and more of her staff. At first we felt threatened and we were going to meetings to figure out how to fight them. They asked us questions about what we wanted in our neighborhood, how we would we want it to change. We didn't believe them—that they cared—but we

> played the game and talked. We told them. We had to see their reaction and what they did next, after we told them. Techwood was a mess, but it was ours. Because there were so few of us and so many of them, we worried we'd lose anyway, but we had to fight. So we took the approach "Why not tell 'em and see what they do? Then we'll know." And she kept coming back, every two weeks, like she said, with the same staff and the same people and with plans that were like what we said we wanted. And they came back with new plans to show us and they asked us about it. There was a building here, and a park there. This is our new neighborhood? Yea, right! We were still suspicious. I don't think that ever changed, but it was like, "Well, let's go with this for a moment. Let's see what happens." (P. Edicose, personal communication, September 7, 2008)

Over time, a rapport between Eric Pinckney and the residents, Johnson, Glover and the housing authority staff, and Perry and real estate developers grew, but it was Mayfield and Fowler who found their interests outside of the larger alliance. Though trust remained an issue, the residents enjoyed the frequency of the meetings, the opportunities to voice their concerns, and the follow-up meetings targeted toward their expressed needs. Mayfield, however, did not see Fowler as a part of the plan. As meetings moved forward, initial plans for redesigning Techwood did not include a new elementary school. Instead, students were to be rezoned to the elementary school that children of Georgia Tech University's students attended. The plan was unsatisfactory to Mayfield and to the residents, including Johnson, who still resided close to Techwood Homes and who had been vested in reforming Fowler since 1988.

Perry [Integral] recalled that Johnson told him in a meeting that, "The one important thing that is missing in this whole plan is the school. You're going to build a new community and simply renovate the school?" Perry explained that their plans involved "creating a nice, new school, but it was a renovated school, a renovated Fowler. And after a series of the meetings with residents, it was Johnson who said, 'Well, Egbert, you engineering and financial types always get the numbers and the money right, but I think we need to spend some time focused on the sociology,' which is what we thought we were doing," Perry said. Johnson talked to Perry and other stakeholders, and challenged them to envision a school. Perry recalled Johnson telling them to

> Think broader about the educational component, and let's see what we can do to create a first class school here, in this community. You've already decided that you've got to get rid of anything that suggests that this is a continuation of the past when it comes to the housing environment. Why are you not going to the same lengths when it comes to the educational component? (E. Perry, personal communication, September 4, 2007)

Glover and Perry were in familiar territory on housing reform, but found themselves in unfamiliar territory on education reform. Johnson, as a professor of sociology and organizational management said, "That's why we need to have collaboration. Whereas you may not be as comfortable with handling the educational component, Mayfield and I can help you with that." In a focus group for this study Perry noted, "And that's how Centennial [Place Elementary], as it's currently conceived, came into being" (June 28, 2009). Stakeholders agreed that the sustainability of urban renewal would be enhanced if the new community had short access to a high performing school.

"People will move for a good school," Johnson stated. "They do it all the time. Schools are often the key to neighborhoods that thrive. They secure property values, and they ensure that residents will be attracted to the neighborhood."

This exchange highlighted a critical turning point in relationships and alliances. Johnson, who had been directly aligned with Fowler, APS, Georgia Tech, and the Techwood community realigned with housing authority officials and real estate developers to add the educational component to their evolving plan. In his new position as school board member, he unintentionally displaced Mayfield as someone to whom external stakeholders would turn in planning Fowler's new direction because she was busy with the day-to-day operations of Fowler. Indeed, Glover stated that Johnson was the missing piece, an important part of reconceptualizing the new community with a school and of bridging the gap between residents and elite stakeholders. Because Johnson formed a relationship with Pinckney, whom residents trusted, and because residents became aware that Johnson was not simply an external stakeholder but had been and continued to be vested in the best interests of the Techwood community, they were more willing to trust Johnson and Pinckney and what each was developing with Glover and Perry.

To build rapport with residents, Glover revealed to them her belief that concentrated poverty was the result of Jim Crow legislation and that for Black children and families to reach their potential, concentrated poverty would have to be eradicated. In recalling those meetings with residents, she stated,

> Although racial segregation was a part of my experience and reality of growing up in the Jim Crow South, my family and social networks did not allow it to

> define or deny my life prospects, character, or dreams. As a consequence, when I see public housing residents here, who live in racially and economically segregated environments, I also see that their networks are different. I see children with unlimited human potential who should be destined to be the next great leaders of our nation. However, in order to realize this potential, the families and individuals must be nurtured and protected from the vagaries and dysfunction that have come to naturally exist in environments of concentrated poverty and hopelessness. Poor families must be integrated into mainstream America. (R. Glover, personal communication, January 13, 2009)

After establishing a rapport with Techwood residents, Glover invited representatives from Atlanta Legal Aid to subsequent meetings. She recalled:

> We needed a part of the larger community. We had built some level of trust with the residents, but outside of their immediate community, trust was limited. We wanted to instill a sense of trust and to evidence our sincerity both to the resident community and to the community around them that they had come to know. We had hoped to pull all the parts together. (R. Glover, personal communication, January 13, 2009)

Atlanta Legal Aid asked residents to share the issues that had to be addressed before residents would consider a mixed-income community developed, owned, and managed by private sector developers. In meetings residents stated that they wanted four primary things before they would approve demolition: (1) Section 8 vouchers for relocation within the City of Atlanta because they did not want to move to another public housing project; (2) information on and input in the blueprints and development of the

new community because they did not want to hand over complete control to the authority; (3) one-for-one replacement of all of the public housing units to be demolished; and (4) involvement in setting the standards for return because they did not trust the authority to be firm enough with people they did not know or compassionate enough with people they knew (Techwood Community meeting minutes, January 1995). Those outcomes were captured in a document termed by residents and AHA as the Further Assurances Agreement. The Agreement listed requirements that all subsidized residents would have to meet to return to the new community. The residents, Glover and AHA, and other external stakeholders agreed to the terms, and AHA held a public event to highlight the Agreement. In addition to Glover and AHA, Perry and Integral, and residents, in attendance were the news media and city officials to acknowledge publicly the Agreement reached. As part of the Further Assurances Agreement, two members of the Affected Residents Planning Group participated on the five-member Evaluation Committee as plans for Techwood moved forward. Glover was clear, however, that she had to have final say because she had the fiduciary responsibility to AHA, the mayor, the city, and HUD regarding the integrity of the process.

The Evaluation Committee unanimously selected the private management company to oversee the development and management of the new community's property once constructed. AHA provided the residents with vouchers to move to a new location, and their return was guaranteed in so far as residents met the conditions of the Agreement. With residents relocated and demolition permits approved in 1995, the 1,195 units at Techwood Homes were demolished.

Of those most unsatisfied with the plans, however, were Mayfield and the teachers at Fowler. Mayfield recalled that plans for demolition included relocating Fowler to a school building owned by APS but no longer used. She stated that she and the teachers went to visit the building and that it was condemned. She described the building:

> [It was] boarded up with windows broken. When we first walked in, we couldn't believe it. Grass was growing up out of the second floor. A part of the bottom floor was below ground, and the vagrants had moved in. They had pulled the pipes out and the bottom floor was flooded. Water was everywhere. The walls were crumbling. They closed it because of it. The vagrants had taken over. In fact, there was one man there who was charging other homeless people to live there. We walked into the principal's office and a man was asleep on the floor. We almost stepped on him. You can imagine that the restrooms—they had taken something and beaten the porcelain restrooms down to chips that the custodian later swept up and threw away. He had to use hip boots for weeks to go down and try to clean the bottom floor out. We were never able to use it, but it had to be done so we could put the plumbing back in and get rid of some of the smell and that sort of thing. So we were to go in there and try to make it a school, and we had no choice because that's what they thought of us and the kids. At some point we looked at each other and somebody said, "They expect us to teach children in here?" (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 5, 2007)

While AHA was taking care of residents' relocation, it was unclear to Mayfield and the Fowler staff who would care for them and their students during the transition. She turned

to Johnson, her longtime ally and now an at-large board member of APS, and asked him what he was going to do about Fowler.

The Future of Fowler

School personnel and the remaining residents were relocated from the Techwood community in 1995. The physical structure of the neighborhood and school was razed, despite opposition from Mayfield. The Atlanta public schools as a district had agreed to the demolition and to rebuilding a new APS elementary school. With residents relocated, city officials' desires to build on the land once occupied by Techwood Homes satisfied, and the overall development approved by HUD, plans for rebuilding Techwood and Fowler moved on in spite of opposition from Mayfield and the Fowler staff.

Mayfield stated, "When they moved people out of the neighborhood, we lost all momentum. We had to vacate our building too, like the residents did. APS did some fix-up work to the building on Old English Avenue, and we moved in, which was a killer." Mayfield stated that at that point, Johnson had turned against her. From her perspective, he was caught up in a much larger vision:

> [He was] excited about the enormity of people who would help to create a new school. He had been a big supporter, and then for some reason—I'm sure it had to do with politics or whatever—he just totally turned against me. So, he and the school board put us in there. We were all but cast aside, forgotten about. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 5, 2007)

Mayfield, however, was not alone in her fight. The presence of strong opposition to reconstructing Fowler arose in school board meetings. Conflicts occurred initially because of the longstanding tensions between school board members and their ideologies

related to using private interest and investment to reform schools. The conflict over the school attracted media attention in part because of the criticism of neighborhood demolition of which Fowler was a part. The Atlanta Public Schools received significant criticism from the public and school board members who did not represent the district were in direct conflict with Johnson and his allegiance to rebuilding Fowler in conjunction with AHA. Watson and Johnson argued that board members resented the tremendous resource investment that Watson was prepared to put behind rebuilding Fowler. Those board members were responsible to their communities, and according to Watson, who was also the head of the Finance Committee for APS, "It was good for their politics to oppose Fowler's reform. I understood that. They weren't getting a new school of this caliber and with support from the mayor, the city, Tech, and Coke." Given that a school board majority vote was needed to advance restructuring and major reforms, Watson, Johnson, and Davis had to win the vote of at least two additional school board members.

To advance the agenda beyond the opposition, a critical tool was the positionality of Johnson and Watson. As the school board president and head of the Finance Committee, for political reasons Watson could not be viewed publicly as a biased, unrelenting advocate for restructuring in light of the many needs of the district at large and amid majority board member resistance. Because Johnson had been vested personally and professionally for the past seven years and was not the president of the board, he was able to assume the public face of support for Fowler's restructuring. Because he had Watson's support behind the scenes, as the most powerful member of the

board in the duality of his two positions within APS, Johnson was able to argue strongly for restructuring.

The investment and support of a coalition of businesses, entrepreneurs, and public and private investors fueled resistance and backlash from school board members who viewed the external self-interest as a business takeover of one of their schools. The division among the school board, represented by the two-seven split, fueled discord. Watson recalled,

> They were truly concerned about private investment in the school and district and they worried about the relationships that they thought we were encouraging—how it might spill over into their representative zones. What they didn't really care about was the money but for the fact that money was being directed to Fowler in sums that far exceeded what was going toward their schools. But that wasn't really their issue. For all those years, money, computers, and resources were poured into their schools, and they knew that. But money was an easy public face to fight about, so it's the face they adopted. Doc and I ran with that. (A. Watson, personal communication, February 12, 2007)

Of the nine-member board, three came to support the restructuring—Watson, Johnson, and another member—and six opposed. Watson and Johnson had private conversations with opposing school board members to understand better what would be required to silence their public opposition. Watson noted that the outcome was financial arrangements with certain members who were the most vocal opponents and who had the most political clout. Each member opposing restructuring had educational needs that were unsatisfied in their representative school districts. In exchange for a shift in their

position on restructuring, they reached an agreement whereby the board would approve investments for those board members that would satisfy specific identified issues in the schools each represented. Watson called it "blank checking." In addition, because neighborhood renewal and school restructuring was supported by Atlanta's most powerful city leaders, those on the board who opposed restructuring quickly found themselves in the minority. Watson stated,

> I decided that I was going to leverage this moment, these funds, these people and their businesses, this support—I was going to leverage it for the benefit of APS and more, for these children and for this community. Specifically for these Black children who had long been neglected. It was an opportunity to do for the most vulnerable school and to fold it under the Olympics and neighborhood renewal so that we didn't get the normal flack of "Why are you investing in that poor school, i.e., those poor Black kids, when it's not going to change a thing. . . . As the board president and financial manager, I had a chance to do something incredible for the kids. I couldn't allow a few school board members motivated from a different place and perspective to get in the way of that. Others who opposed were steamrolled. It's just as simple as that. We steamrolled some folks to get this done. And the amount of money that went into it. . . . If people only knew, it would have been hell. So we kept them happy with money of their own which kept them away from wanting to know. (A. Watson, personal communication, February 12, 2007)

When the vote was added to the school board meeting agenda in 1995, restructuring was approved by a 6-3 vote. APS would have to make a decision about the

existing Fowler; it would have to be either closed or relocated, and Mayfield did not have a voice in the decision. Watson and Johnson decided that they could not close the school; it would be too abrupt an ending for Mayfield and teachers, and however dysfunctional and limited, it had been a piece of life for children and their parents, one that they knew and that should remain in this otherwise tumultuous transition. The APS Board decided that Fowler would be relocated while a new school was built.

Mayfield remembered that after the Board approved the restructuring, they promised her and her teachers that their new location was temporary. Johnson invited her to be a part of designing the new school with a team of architects, real estate developers, and city planners. She grew excited about the newly built school, recalling that returning was her dream:

> We had worked so hard on our programs since I started at Fowler. It was a dream to think of returning to a healthy building that was conducive for teachers and students and for our programs. We had a solid program and curriculum and supports that we put together with Georgia Tech and Coca Cola and other businesses that we were going to initiate in that building. So we never opposed the restructuring because we were promised that we were coming back. We only worried about what would happen to us in the interim – where were we going to be and what would we be doing? (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 5, 2007)

As plans for a new Fowler progressed, however, Mayfield said she knew she was not going back when she was offered a "phony" job with the Superintendent near the end of the 1995/96 school year. Ben Canada, who was hired in 1994 as the new

superintendent of APS, offered Mayfield the new position. She stated that because the superintendent reports to the board, he was directed by Watson, and by extension Johnson, to give her a new position so that they could begin a search for a replacement principal at the newly constructed Fowler. Mayfield recollected that:

> The job itself, it was not a real job – Director of Something… Assistant to the Superintendent in Charge of Whatever… something they made up. The Board approved that and assured me that I would not lose my pay or tenure or anything by moving. It was going to be a lateral move. I said, "I can do this. I only have a few more years," [until retirement] but I still thought that the teachers were going to go back because they had invested so much in the teachers, and the teachers had done all of this work at Fowler and with the kids and curriculum. Then I found out that the union president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) was coming back because she was not going to be the union president anymore, and she needed a place. She was from APS before she went to the AFT. So rather than put her back in the classroom—because she was a teacher—they decided to divide my job in half, give me half and her half. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 5, 2007)

When asked to elaborate on the sudden change in position with Fowler, Mayfield speculated: "They wanted a different color person there [at Fowler]. You aren't going to be able to attract Coca Cola and Georgia Tech's employees' children and keep the Georgia Tech Foundation invested in this school with a Black principal." In retrospect Mayfield said she now understands why the board and superintendent Canada did not move her immediately:

> I don't think they would have been able to keep the relationships with the business community and all of those people if I had moved. I was the one who knew everyone [neighborhood businesses] and who partnered with them for over a decade. They were going to keep me in place until they were able to really strategically do whatever it was they were trying to accomplish. And if I wasn't opposing the restructuring, then the business community and grassroots folk, who trusted me, weren't going to oppose it too much either. I was the stable person who the business community trusted, and they [elite stakeholders] just wanted, I guess, that stability. I was a good principal. I had been in and out of the fray, I had done everything Fowler needed, and I was the only person who had stayed during the worst of times. So if they gave me this position with the superintendent they could tell the business community that "We gave her a promotion, a new position, Assistant to the Superintendent," so that it would look like I had been taken care of and then they [the board and superintendent] could do whatever they wanted to do. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, August 1, 2008)

When asked about his decision-making regarding representing Mayfield and Fowler, Johnson offered a different perspective. He confirmed his belief that Mayfield had been a stabilizing force for the school and community and a good principal during troubled times, but as the vision for Fowler changed to something on a larger scale, Mayfield, according to Johnson, was not the person who could help to actualize the vision for the new elementary school.

> Gwen had been there for so long and that was essential to whatever sustainability Fowler had in not getting closed all those years. I credit her for that. But Fowler wasn't going to be Fowler anymore. And I knew Gwen better than anyone. As I was talking to her about getting on board with what we were doing, folding in mixed-incomes into the school and other stakeholders – what that would look like organizationally – she couldn't grasp it. It was outside of her comfort zone. We had everyone on board to create – finally – what had been needed at Fowler for a long time, but it was too far outside of Gwen's comfort zone. She had been so accustomed to working alone, to going it alone. Even with the support Tech had provided, she was always the lone person, in reality… the only one at really implementing. The thought of that changing and of truly partnering… she couldn't do it. She never said it, but I saw it in her reactions and in her suspicions. (N. Johnson, personal communication, October 4, 2009)

Johnson seemed certain about Mayfield's inability to lead the new elementary school near the end of Fowler's last year of operations. In the spring of 1996, Mayfield and the teachers decided to host an elaborate prom for fifth graders who would be transitioning to middle school. In April 1996, students were dressed in prom gowns and brought in limousines to Peachtree Presbyterian Church, which hosted the fifth grade prom. Johnson recalled that when he asked Mayfield about this school-sponsored event, she indicated that she had decided to have a prom because many of the students would likely never make it through high school to their senior prom. She wanted to give them the opportunity to experience a dance like prom, a moment of glory for their

accomplishment. It was at that moment, Johnson stated, that he realized that Fowler needed new leadership:

> Her time at Fowler had become a hindrance to the new vision. Here we were fighting—literally fighting—and putting in long hours of planning for the creation of a new school, a school that would produce African American talent that would not only finish high school but that would matriculate to Tech. And here she was creating events to celebrate them finishing elementary school because she thought that most of them would never finish high school. We were trying to change that mentality and all that comes with it, and it was so much work already—laboring and talking and negotiating with forces we were trying to join with and with forces that we were never going to be able to join with so we had to manage them. We couldn't invest in getting her there too with this vision of change. There were too many who already saw it and too many who didn't. We had our hands full, and we needed leadership who would come in with a big, bright vision of the school and for the teachers and children. We had to have someone who understood in fundamental ways the politics and struggles of this change and what we were trying to do and who would compliment that vision to help us actualize it. (N. Johnson, personal communication, March 12, 2009)

Understandably, Mayfield's account and Johnson's account of how her time with APS ended differ. Mayfield explained her final departure from APS. According to her, she asked to meet with Ben Canada, who called her into his office at district headquarters for the meeting. Mayfield said:

> He asked me, "Why are they after you?" And I'm thinking, "He's been given some instruction [from the board] and he's been asked to do some things and he doesn't know why." I told him I didn't know either because I didn't, not really. Ben concluded, "Gwen, you know too much." (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 5, 2007)

She stated that she went home from that meeting, moved from Fowler in its last year, and did not have a job because she turned down the offer to work in the superintendent's office. Mayfield stated that she felt that APS was determined to get rid of her, but her performance reviews were satisfactory so they could not fire her for cause. As Mayfield prepared to leave Fowler, she watched and waited to see what would happen to her faculty, who were unsettled by Mayfield's departure and by the future of the new Fowler Elementary and their role in it.

What Happens to the Teachers?

Atlanta Public Schools had a standing policy for a period of voluntary transfer for teachers who want to move to teach in a different school (APS District Policies, no year). By the time Mayfield was preparing to leave Fowler, rumors were rampant about her departure, and she could provide no clarification for her staff. Adding to decreased morale, Mayfield stated, was that teachers believed they were in a dilapidated building that was consistently burglarized and vandalized. She recounted:

> They were trying to keep a school in place, in this broken down building, waiting for the new one, and at the same time, I was leaving yet we had been given the status of—it was like a model school status—because we had teachers who were

> coming in to see our program and to see if they could imitate it. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 5, 2007)

To be sure, amid the shifts in leadership at Fowler and the restructured school plan taking shape, Fowler was folded into Jimmy Carter's educational program (Mayfield's private collection). She recalled:

> We were part of that. We were working with them, and we were given a grant to do a video about our program. We were going all over the state and everywhere. Then came a grant from the National Families in Action; we got their grant. We were all up in Kentucky and everywhere, talking about our program. We were doing all of this from our dilapidated school that was about to be shut down. Teachers can do everything with paper, so they had covered up the cracks in the walls with beautiful murals and all kinds of things. Once, when a group of people came, a lady asked us, "Is this a real school or is this just a school set up for staff development?" We were that good and that well-recognized. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 5, 2007)

Though accolades poured in, rumors circulated that APS was going to dismiss all of the teachers at Fowler. Susan Coleman, a teacher at Fowler, reported that teachers were trying to get transfers, but that APS did not allow them to apply because teachers were assured that their positions were secure and that applying for a transfer would bog down an already laborious process of teacher transfers between district schools. Pollard remembered,

> We kept asking [if we needed to and could transfer]. We even went to the board. We were asking. And they said, "Oh, no. You're going back. You're going back."

> So we said, "Okay, if we're going back, we'll stay." Then, when they closed the voluntary transfer process, within a few days, they delivered the letters at 4:00. We were still at the school working. (Focus group interview, October 4, 2007)

Coleman was referring to letters that she and other teachers received which stated that their jobs were open and that they would have to reapply for their jobs for the upcoming school year. During a focus group with teachers, Kelly Richardson, Coleman, Massey, Roberts, and Mayfield agreed that the decision to release teachers and to encourage them to reapply was a decision made by the superintendent and the board of APS. Because children had moved from the community, enrollment was low and so were the number of teachers. Mayfield and the teachers who participated in this study recalled that the board's decision to release them from their positions affected approximately 15 to 16 teachers.

Teachers reported that several teachers reapplied and interviewed for a place at the new school. Massey stated,

> We were good, committed teachers, and we had a feeling that we would be selected. But, we weren't, not many of us. It was just totally demoralizing. We were told, on top of that, that we had to pack up the building at the end of the year and get ready so that they could move stuff out of it. The Old English Ave. building was closing again. Fowler was done . . . and so were we. (Focus group interview, October 4, 2007)

Eleven teachers from Fowler applied, and four were hired to work at the new Fowler Elementary. After a few years, two additional teachers from the old Fowler and former teacher turned school counselor returned after the new Fowler reopened, but there

were more who did not. Of the four teachers who APS hired, two left after two years through the voluntary transfer process. Coleman applied and was not hired, but went on to teach at Margaret Fain Elementary in the APS district. Sharon Roberts taught at the new Fowler, but was one of the teachers who left during the voluntary transfer process within a few years. Richardson and Massey moved to Morris Brandon Elementary. Many of Fowler's teachers continued their careers in the APS district, but not Mayfield. After a few years at Miles Elementary, she retired from APS.

> The interesting thing about Fowler is that we had kids from the housing projects and from at least four homeless shelters, and to this day, when I see those ladies [her teachers] here and there, we just marvel at what we were able to do with some of those kids and families. (G. Mayfield, personal communication, February 5, 2007)

The Atlanta Public Schools did not have to search for a new principal. During their years of working on the board and in the central office, Watson and Johnson had developed a relationship with an administrator who was the Chief Financial Officer for APS. Dr. Cynthia Kuhlman was a White woman who had held a Master's in Educational Administration and Leadership and a doctorate in Education, both from Georgia State University. She had held positions in APS for 28 years, and was attractive to Watson and Johnson as a candidate for the principalship at the new elementary school because of the scope and depth of her intimate knowledge of the district at large. Watson recalled, "She knew the operations of the school inside and out. She knew the board members, she knew the politics, and most important, she knew where the money was buried." Kuhlman had never held a principalship, and after 28 years in the APS system, she was

excited about the opportunity to work in a school and with students and teachers (Kuhlman, personal communication, March 2006). Before accepting the position, one of her conditions—informed by her years as a district administrator and by witnessing the operations of schools and perhaps Mayfield's leadership—was that, like Mayfield had at Fowler, she had to be given the autonomy to select her own teachers. The majority of principals in APS were not permitted to select their staff, and Mayfield and Kuhlman saw the practice of selecting their own teachers and counselors as crucial to building the culture of the school they envisioned. Kuhlman was hired in late 1996, and was contracted to begin her appointment in June 1997. In the summer of 1997, armed with the Fowler math and science themed curriculum created by Mayfield, the Fowler teachers, Johnson, and Georgia Tech, she prepared for the opening of the new Fowler Elementary.

Building a New Community

"Human beings can survive and struggle at anything. I think the question that we have as policymakers and administrators is shouldn't we be about the focus of creating environments where human beings can thrive and flourish?"

~ Renee Lewis Glover, Executive Director of the Atlanta Housing Authority, September 27, 2007, Oral History Interview

The land formerly occupied by Fowler Elementary and Techwood Homes sat empty for nearly two years, 1995 through 1997, while plans for redevelopment took shape and while APS worked with external, elite stakeholders on plans for a new school. Through this planning phase Glover's vision—in conjunction with her work with Perry and others—evolved. Under her leadership, the Atlanta Housing Authority pursued a radically different approach to providing housing services that would distinguish them

from local and national norms for reforming public housing. First, she argued that conventional public housing communities had not mainstreamed families as intended. Instead, housing communities became known as "the projects" and had served as "warehouses for the poor." Second, she maintained that the population density, concentrated poverty, and squalid housing conditions had produced a cycle of social disorders that were impossible to break by simply rehabilitating the housing units. Therefore, conventional public housing properties had to be demolished and revitalized mixed-income, resource-rich communities must be built in their place. Third, while it was absolutely necessary to reconstruct the physical environment of public housing properties, she maintained that the highest priority should be placed on improving the human condition of families. Addressing those conditions meant including resources within and around the community, including access to a high-performing school. Finally, she argued that sustainable communities could not be achieved if AHA focused only on building affordable housing for the poor because policies to aid the poor were not a priority in the United States' economic and political climate. In time, newly renovated properties would revert to the squalor and dysfunction that happens when those in need are ignored and abandoned. Therefore, instead of self-contained affordable housing communities, the focus should be on building affordable housing with a market-rate component integrated seamlessly. As she noted:

> There are two types of sustainable communities. The first is self-sustaining, the kind of community that you and I inhabit. In self-sustaining communities, the people who pay the mortgage – as owner or landlord – sustain their property and community within their budgets and household allowance, and it is their priority

because it is their livelihood, their home, where they're raising their kids, where they plan to retire. Though impacted by policy, politics, and the economy, those influences are more limited than in the second type of community. That second type is a government-sustained environment. The problem with government-sustained communities, especially low-income communities of color, is that they are subjected to leadership changes, budgetary cuts, and to the priorities of people who are far removed from the communities themselves. If funding is cut, the maintenance of those properties is cut, often drastically while at the same time, other urban priorities take center stage. Most often that result is what we saw in Techwood Homes because we do not live in an America that gives credence to people who live in poverty. The only way that we could try to ensure the continued health, vitality, and opportunity for upward mobility of people who are subsidized is to make it a self-sustaining community and that happens most assuredly in market-rate circumstances. Future health is likely to be insured because people who are paying for their condo or townhouse or home have a voice that is heard and respected with policymakers and other owners. Therefore, we tried to insure this property against future neglect. You only have to look at what public housing was in Atlanta before to predict the reemergence of disrepair and dysfunction that would have reoccurred if we had proceeded to fix it with the same pattern of self-contained, homogenous communities managed within changing leadership and the values of those leaders and only with the capacity of what are usually limited public dollars provided to AHA from the federal government. (R. Glover, personal communication, September 27, 2007)

While rebuilding Fowler and housing with what would replace Techwood Homes, AHA developed several new, innovative programs for residents. They advanced and extended the success they had in lobbying HUD for a new dimension to the federal Housing Choice program, one which allowed residents to rent a home outside of a public housing community. Further, when residents relocated to a new home, AHA incurred the cost of security deposits and activation fees for residents' utilities and paid a portion of moving costs associated with truck rentals or movers. In addition to the support provided to residents during demolition and relocation, AHA created programs for sitting residents. Affordable Workforce Housing (AWH) was a new homeownership program that provided counseling and savings mechanisms, tools to helped residents save for the purchase of their own home. Provisions were such that after successfully completing counseling on applying for a loan and the realities of home ownership – as well as saving a minimum $1,500 – AWH paid the remaining portion of the down payment and all closing costs. Additionally, AHA sponsored the Atlanta Housing Resident Scholarship Program to support high school seniors who intend to enroll in a post-secondary institution. Another program created involved pursuing relationships with private and governmental agencies who are willing to hire adults subsidized by AHA for part-time or full-time work after residents completed AHA's jobs training program. In short, AHA embarked on a dual plan of community revitalization, educational reform, and resource-based resident programs and care that would support their families and ambitions.

Perry echoed Glover's sentiments related to the plan and policies enacted in the creation of the new community that would replace Techwood, named Centennial Place. Specifically, when asked to speak to the rationale for and concerns and criticisms about

new, market-rate communities for Black families, such as disenfranchising Blacks and destroying communities, Perry stated:

> I have my standard, very provocative response, and then I have a more measured response. My measured response is this: The community was 60 years old at the time. The way people lived in the 1930s was not the way they live today. Appliances are much bigger needs. Space needs are much greater. The number of appliances that you plug into the wall is different. The on-line sewer structure was shot. There was actually a portion of the Techwood Homes site that was sinking because the turn of the century sewer system was collapsing – and that's also in Atlanta in general, but we [city leaders] fix it in self-sustaining communities, right? Even if we spent $64,000 a unit to renovate, we were still going to have a substandard product because the infrastructure was in bad shape. The cost to renovate was $10,000 or $12,000 a unit cheaper, yet we'd still have a substandard product than if we had done it totally new. The other response is, "You guys are concerned about the people, their community connections and history, right? Then where were you when they were killing each other and when drugs were holding mothers and their children hostage? Where were you when children were flunking out of school, enticed by the money of the drug trade, when girls were getting pregnant because the school and community couldn't overcome the social environment? Where were you when young children were sleeping in their bathtubs to avoid the nighttime gunfire that penetrated the walls of their home while they slept? Were you lobbying for new legislation for the

> poor? No. Moving next door? No. (E. Perry, personal communication, September 27, 2007)

Perry continued to argue that most who oppose radical reform in low-income communities and in underperforming schools, do not take context into account. His position on opponents for dramatic reform in schools and communities was to question how they were investing in change prior to their advocacy efforts:

> So I tell them, "If you really cared that much about the people, you would have been out here protesting the God-awful conditions they were living in before. You would have been protesting unequal educational facilities – on the ground. On the ground. But you just want to have an intellectual conversation that advances your agenda because you don't really know what happens in these schools and communities around the clock. But for the people who live there, who attend school there, it is real life. Ninety-nine percent are sentenced to a lifetime of crime, pregnancy, and jail sentences in their surroundings. They are sentenced to chaos and to student misconduct while they're in school… to frequent teacher turnover. In other words, the only thing stable about their lives is its instability. We changed that in Atlanta for low-income, Black families who receive subsidies from AHA.

A school reopens. Deliberately set on the perimeter of the neighborhood instead of in its center and opened as a magnet school, in the spring of 1998, Centennial Place Elementary enrolled first students who resided in the Centennial Place community. After those places were filled, an open enrollment process was available to the APS community at large. Within three years, during the 2000/01 school year, Centennial Place

Elementary students, with a population that was 99% African American and 78% on free or reduced lunch, outperformed all but four of the 66 elementary schools in the district. Despite characteristics that traditionally typify low academic performance, 94% of the students met or exceeded performance benchmarks in reading, and 82% met or exceeded benchmarks in math (APS District Data Reports, 2002).

Prior to school restructuring and neighborhood revitalization, no Black child who lived within the parameters of Techwood Homes and who attended Fowler Elementary had ever attended Georgia Tech, right across the street (Johnson, personal communication, May 10, 2011). Since its reopening in August 1998 as Centennial Place Elementary through 2011, 22 Black students from that inaugural year matriculated to Georgia Tech, and 13 have graduated. As of 2010, in total, 74 Black students from the entering 1998/99 entering class of students enrolled in a 4-year college or university (AHA 15-Year Progress Report, 2010).

As city leaders did in 1935, by 1998, Atlanta civic leaders made housing history again. Further, through 2012, Glover became both nationally respected and criticized for her vision of public housing. However controversial, her seismic shift in policies, a shift that subsequently became a national model for HUD, also helped to retool housing policymakers' thinking on education and its role in public housing communities. Concentrating poverty, it is now argued in housing policy circles, is devastatingly bad public policy in both housing and education. Ending concentrated poverty, as Glover had argued since 1994, is a "necessary and essential step" to creating healthy communities and high-performing schools. As she stated in our interview, "Housing policy must uplift families because the most effective way to get to children – to their uplift and to securing

their future – is through their families. How children fare is the measure of success. We went at that through their families by transforming their housing and by addressing their school and the resources in their school and community." (R. Glover, personal communication, September 27, 2007)

As his comments illustrate, Perry and The Integral Group embraced education, housing components, and enrichment programs as the scope of public housing neighborhood revitalization plans. When reflecting on the process and its results, he stated:

> Centennial Place Elementary turned out to be the linchpin of our entire redevelopment plan. We didn't see it initially, but we got there. We secured the money, and the building and design were the easy parts. It's the people, and serving the people, that challenged and continues to challenge us. The school was the hardest because we didn't control many of the variables. That turned and the market-rate piece turned out to be the most essential in creating the community because it is the reason for its sustainability. Related to the school, we came to realize something vital, and we corrected ourselves mid-stream. A first-rate school was essential for the success of Centennial Place as a whole. (E. Perry, personal communication, September 4, 2007)

Glover added,

> We had to change everything when the school came into play. And when you get the environment right outside of the school, when you build programs that support families, and when you have an environment that truly meets kids' needs and can educate them in the ways that kids are educated in schools that don't have poverty

> – when that package comes together – you see lives transformed. How children fare is the most revealing piece. Children are the measure of our success. (R. Glover, personal communication, June 27, 2009)

Summary

Certainly this study of the process and politics of change for Fowler and the methods by which it came to be are a significant departure from how schools are traditionally reformed. At heart, restructuring is a race-conscious, human capital reform grounded in the assumption that upgrading the human capital in low-performing schools will improve the performance of those schools. This site provides a rare opportunity to view the process and contexts of reforms through the lens of its outcomes – improved student performance that has been maintained. Without question, Fowler's restructuring and Techwood's revitalization led to better test results for Black children. Yet that rendition – while successful on the surface and in the measures and aims deemed most important for all stakeholders – is complicated. In the next section I discuss those successes and complications as well as implications for future research and policy.

Chapter V: Discussion

"Up to recently we have proceeded from a premise that poverty is a consequence of multiple evils: lack of education restricting job opportunities; poor housing which stultified home life and suppressed initiative; fragile family relationships which distorted personality development. The logic of this approach suggested that each of these causes be attacked one by one. Hence a housing program to transform living conditions, improved educational facilities to furnish tools for better job opportunities, and family counseling to create better personal adjustments were designed. In combination these measures were intended to remove the causes of poverty. While none of these remedies in itself is unsound, all have a fatal disadvantage. The programs have never proceeded on a coordinated basis or at a similar rate of development."

~ Dr. Martin Luther King, 1967, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?*

The purpose of this study was to examine the process and contexts of Fowler Elementary School's restructuring from the perspective of school, non-school, and community stakeholders. Four research questions guided my exploration of stakeholders' perspective:

1. What historical, political, and social factors created the conditions for restructuring?
2. What were political, school, and community stakeholders' goals and activities prior to restructuring?
3. What was the relationship between political, community, and school during restructuring?
4. What were the roles of race, class, and power in the convergence and divergence of goals and motivations prior to restructuring?

Findings revealed that school restructuring was conceived as a by-product of neighborhood revitalization, initiated by elite, non-school stakeholders, and pursued

within the context of an investment in neighborhood revitalization. To be sure, the goals and actions of stakeholders are captured in the above words of Martin Luther King Jr. in that their efforts to revitalize Techwood Homes, to restructure Fowler Elementary, and to develop supportive programs for families were pursued simultaneously. Findings also reveal that within this successful model, several contexts weighed on the process and efforts. Moreover, a number of variables that influenced the process of restructuring must be taken into account.

First, in this setting the viability of restructuring as a mechanism to turn around a low-performing school pivoted on the presumption that restructuring within the context of neighborhood revitalization would improve the stock of human and social capital available in the school and its neighborhood, thereby stimulating and sustaining major and meaningful improvements in organizational capacity and student achievement. Student outcomes suggest that their presumption was accurate for children. However, reorganization took a toll on educators. Restructuring reform, by definition and design, dismantled the organizational infrastructure of the school. Fowler's principal and teachers were removed and in so doing, erased were the standard operating procedures and established practices that teachers and students rely on to regulate and reinforce systems of teaching and learning. My study demonstrates that rebuilding the organizational infrastructure as well as addressing the organizational context of the neighborhood was an extremely difficult, daunting process. In this case, that process imposed intense, excessive task costs for educators in the form of increased time and effort to accomplish their work in the face of insufficient resources and undependable support.

Second, findings show that the alignment of forces and the alliance that was created for restructuring was best solidified when there was an external prompt that pulled on and ensured the self-interest of entities with resources and resource capacities beyond the school and its district. Such an alliance ensured energy and resources to levy toward the formidable change that restructuring entailed and toward the continued sustainability of those efforts. These resources are typically lacking when schools and school districts enact restructuring within the resources available only at the district level.

Extant literature on restructuring reform recognizes the need for dramatic school reform, but unidentified is an obvious point of leverage for change. For Fowler, the leverage point was the Olympic Games, which unified and propelled the self-interest of elite stakeholders which in turn animated emerging, new perspectives on reform and removed the practice of divorcing reform from the forces and institutions that have a greater capacity to convert dreams for reform in urban settings into lasting practice. When this external prompt initiated restructuring among like-minded individuals with a unified vision, shared norms and collaboration was the tissue and sinew that held together the communal body. To exert force, they needed to be integrated and placed broadly throughout institutions within the city and school district. Exerting force, however, brought into focus another critical issue. Specifically, the impact on educators who were acted upon at Fowler when external events prompted school change were minimized against the larger, external impetus for reform efforts.

As this case illustrates, when a newly restructured school is the recipient of multiple interests, educators may find their perspective and experience lessened in the construction of the vision for that school while voices of the elite become more vocal.

Because external, elite interests have more power, coupled with broad resources, the school may become the recipient of external stakeholders' vision and activities absent the consideration of the educators themselves. Educators then are no longer equals in crafting an educational plan and vision for reform; their interests are subsumed in a larger agenda as they become acted upon by more powerful entities. Therefore, despite a unified goal and agenda item – a high-performing school – educators who consider schools their primary agenda versus stakeholders for whom a vibrant school is important but not the main agenda renders a perspective among the elite that educators are a subset issue to deal with while they focus on larger concerns. In this setting, educators were considered more easily satisfied, and the elite moved forward with navigating their primary objectives. The perception among elites that educators are easily satisfied can result in an expendable orientation toward educators within the school; teachers and administrators can be viewed as replaceable by a different body of equally if not more capable teachers and administrators (Mintrop, 2000).

Importantly, Black educators were working hard in difficult circumstances for African American children. The approach of replacing them echoes the dismantling of Black educators at the point of desegregation and may suggest that elite, external stakeholders do not have confidence that Black educators who are teaching children under the most difficult circumstances can educate children in integrated schools. Further, the race of Black teachers and principals may be a consideration that actually prompts their dismissal as external stakeholders seek to satisfy and assuage the concerns of White and middle- to upper-income families whose children will attend the newly restructured school (Siddle Walker, 1996, 2009). Thus, a workable partnership toward

reform – while limited to the resources of those engaged in those efforts – evolved into a contentious battle when external interests began to bear weight on and direct restructuring efforts.

Theoretical Frameworks and Themes from the Literature

The views, values, and motivations of Black participants in this study provide important voices that address their experiences with urban school structuring and that fill a void in extant literature. As a means of filtering and examining their experiences, urban regime theory (URT) and critical race theory (CRT) provide theoretical frameworks within which to analyze stakeholders' engagement and perspectives.

The interest convergence that allowed for restructuring produced intense strains for teachers and students. Those strains, which occurred at the outset, persisted throughout the process and up until Fowler's closing. Fowler's educators talked candidly about feeling "overwhelmed," "losing momentum," and having "decreased morale" because they were teaching in a "broken down building" and remained "uncertain about their future." They continued to focus on restoring the organizational infrastructure and establishing routines for themselves and students. Moreover, the costs associated with dismantling and rebuilding the infrastructure of the school during the restructuring process was borne not only by principal Mayfield and teachers but also by the students who attended the school. The influx of rapid change along with the disruption of reform took a toll on the teachers' capacity and on the instructional opportunities for students who were removed from the Georgia Tech and business community that had supported them before restructuring occurred.

The comments of many, including those who never opposed restructuring, corroborate this appraisal. Often preoccupied with, if not consumed by the demands of a frantic, at times chaotic environment, the staff did not have the support necessary when restructuring was occurring. Although the evidence presented describes the nature and distribution of costs associated with restructuring, critical is that the ability of site personnel to cope with these tasks was undermined by the lack of elite stakeholder and district support. My data are replete with references to the frustration and overload educators experienced as they tried to cope with the demands restructuring reform imposed without the supports they anticipated. Thus while interests converged, elite stakeholders supported each other and provided supports for residents but not for educators.

Studies of school reform in political science that utilized URT and that have focused on Atlanta are replete with examples to illustrate that Atlanta, while often ahead of other cities in its capacity for biracial coalition building, had not amassed a collective effort around systemic urban educational reform (Henig, 1999; Orr, 1998; Stone, 1989, 1998). Findings in my case run counter to the observations of political scientists. The history of Atlanta may be shifting with the emergence of new Black leadership in the city's core, which has created a coalition with a capacity for change for the past 16 years and implicitly centered their agenda around schools, communities, and racial uplift. Black leaders housed in different institutional environments were needed to advance reform agendas and to achieve and sustain restructuring efforts. When Black leaders from different institutions advanced their agenda, they managed to do so by amassing the collective efforts across the city, being unified in weaving together formal and informal

sources of power, by manipulating racial and class-based politics, and by establishing viable working relationships between elected officials, school board members, housing officials, businesses, and residents and parents in the effected Techwood community. These stakeholders put aside a history of disengagement from each other (Stone, 1989) – the school from the community and city and the community and city from the school – and created a coalition with a capacity for change.

Futhermore and related to issues of race, counter-narratives also provided for this study reveal that race was minimized in the agenda creation and implementation phases of change, but now that change has occurred and White stakeholders and business entities have been satisfied through the convergence of interests, Black leaders are able to articulate their agenda. Though implicit in the publicly presented agenda, race was not only the driving force that motivated stakeholders, but it also represented a powerful perceptual filter, rooted in personal and historical experiences, that affected the bonds of trust and loyalty upon which collaborative efforts depended.

This reality coincides with the permanence of race and Whiteness as property tenets of CRT. In her 1995 article, "Whiteness as Property," legal scholar Cheryl Harris examined the connections between race and property in America and how this intertwined relationship has evolved from "historical forms of dominance" to replicate "subordination in the present" (p. 280). To avoid what they anticipated to be subordination and suppression of their agenda of racial uplift, Black leaders devised a public argument of economic uplift that functioned to converge with White interests and to mediate the criticism or withdrawal of resources from reform and revitalization. The most common examples of the property that Whiteness holds and of the enduring

permanence of race may be that Black leaders created interest convergence to advance reforms with White power brokers. In other words, the absence of this property right limits Black individuals' ability to pursue, with support, the reforms that Black and White leaders claim to want for low-income children of color. As the rhetoric functions to garner support for dramatic reform legislation such as NCLB, counter-narratives in this study reveal the realities of race and class in reform efforts by illustrating of the unwillingness of Whites to invest in reforming urban schools in the absence of interest convergence. Findings not only included numerous examples of embedded racism within social and educational policy but narrative data and recollections across all categories of stakeholders revealed the ways in which "racist hierarchical structures govern all political, economic, and social domains" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27).

Implications for Research

The results of this case suggest several avenues for additional research. The unique circumstances that set this reform into motion are unlikely to be replicated in other settings and at other times; however, findings reveal important contextual considerations that exceeded the scope of this study but that are necessary for a more complete understanding of the outcomes. For instance, although it is easy to assume a correlation between restructuring and neighborhood revitalization, more research is needed to determine the influence of several factors on educational outcomes.

First, student outcomes on test scores may be a function of new leadership, the new curriculum, a different culture, or the training and/or experience levels of principal-selected teachers. Second, additional research is needed to consider relationships in the community and how they function in Centennial Place Elementary and for teachers and

students. Third, future research should consider the extent to which educators are or are not a part of the vision of reform once restructuring is being implemented. Finally, while Centennial Place Elementary's population of students has remained constant – 95% of students are African American and the percentage eligible for free/reduced lunch has remained between 72% and 85% in the 13 years since it reopened (AYP reports, Georgia Department of Education, 2011) – research is needed to examine more closely the demographics of the student population to determine if the students who attend Centennial Place are the same children within the community or if they are drawn from other neighborhoods throughout Atlanta.

A final avenue for additional research lies in the differences between Techwood within the City of Atlanta and other stories of revitalization in Boston, Chicago, and Denver (Cloud, 2011; Popkin et al., 2004). In the revitalized Techwood community, middle- to upper-income Blacks and not Whites comprise 40% of the neighborhood, replacing what was mostly low-income Blacks. This may represent an important and specific class dynamic, one that needs additional investigation because the race of students is constant while socioeconomics changed significantly, which may suggest that race is secondary to class.

Implications for Educators

Important lessons are contained by examining the perspectives of educators who participated in this study. We must not forget, as Apple (1996) has pointed out, that we should take seriously some of the criticisms of government or what Stone (2005) calls "urban governing coalitions" external to school environments. In particular, we must remember the connections among "resources, power, institutional interests, failure, and

hence, continued bureaucratization and expansion" (Apple, 1996, p. 8). Hence in the growing tide of attention paid to education in urban settings, schools of education would be well-served to include courses and programs of study on education in urban settings. In addition, the rise in the presence of external stakeholders in education reform allows us to conclude that pre-service teachers would benefit from training that considers education a political field subjected to external agendas and politics. Finally, while stakeholders argued that a high-performing school was important to producing and sustaining their mixed-income model of housing transformation, such import and attention was directed at the school as an institutional tool and not directed toward the best interests of the individuals within the school, educators who determine its quality. Because schools do not exist in isolation but are embedded in larger social structures and local political realities, the challenge for educators is to learn to examine and look beyond political rhetoric to the actual realities of agendas as they unfold.

Implications for Policymakers

In the process of reading and reviewing the literature, of collecting data for this study, and in writing and fine-tuning my analysis of findings, I found myself increasingly persuaded by the validity that, in the current political and economic climate, the terms "democratic," "mixed-income," and "privatization" are not necessarily in opposition to each other nor do they lend themselves to similar meanings under the overarching concept of "conservative reform." A particularly powerful finding was the ways Black leaders publicly presented their agenda and the responses that followed from grassroots organizations who latched onto that explanation and embarked upon criticism and efforts

intended to interrupt (or to at least force Black leaders to make clear) why demolition was necessary to create a healthy community.

This finding demonstrates that "democratic" or "conservative" reform, and ideologies invoked and assumed about the motivations of leaders and policymakers, depends less upon an outsider's labeling of the outcomes of actions and results and more upon the motivations and agendas set and pursued by individual actors and their alliances. Neoliberal advocates and many advocates of privatization and decentralization, i.e., conservative reforms, consider magnet and charter schools as well as school choice and restructuring to be "democratic" (Chubb & Moe, 1992; Hess, 1998) whereas progressive supporters of public schools couch their arguments for democratic and equitable schooling in a call for social justice (Apple, 2001; Wells, 2004).

This study shows that depending on the actors, those goals are not diametrically opposed or mutually exclusive. The quality of education for children depends ultimately not on specific techniques, practices, or structures that are universal, but more on basic human and social resources that support a school and on the commitment and competence of stakeholders; the will and skill of educators; the support that educators and administrators receive; and on school, parent, and community partnerships. In short, specific innovations should be seen as structural tools to be used for specific purposes in particular situations.

Similarly, the effectiveness of each education restructuring tool, either alone or in combination with others, depends on how well it understands, organizes, or develops the values, beliefs, and technical skills educators and schools need to improve student learning. Restructuring initiatives, by definition, introduce substantial departures from

conventional practice. As this study revealed, new configurations of power and authority challenged educators, parents, and leaders to perform new roles that required new skills and attitudes. The more that new practices and structural tools depart from conventional practice, the greater the difficulties of implementation. Overcoming these difficulties, then, becomes a dominant concern of reformers, practitioners, and researchers. As such, policymakers would be remiss to proceed with reforms by merely observing what is deemed to be effective reform strategies for a particular school or district and then, in subsequent reforms, to apply those strategies universally, in different schools, districts, and cities and within the varied and unique contexts of race, class, leadership, history, and power. Policymakers must utilize education research and the voices of educators, administrators, parents, and city leaders to ensure that reform goals acknowledge the expertise of those charged with implementing reforms as well as the contexts and circumstances in which reforms are implemented.

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Appendix A

Basic Tenets of Urban Regime Theory (URT)

URT Tenet	Definition	Source
Agenda setting	How governmental and non-governmental elites within public and private sectors formulate and set an agenda	Stone (1989)
Presence of a coalition	Establishment, evolution, and change between elite stakeholders at any given time during agenda setting and reform processes	Stoker (1995)
Competing interests	Relationships between goals and motivations of stakeholders in setting an agenda and pursuing change	Stone (1989)
Resources	Financial and human investment and capacities directed toward change processes.	Stone (1998a)

Appendix B

Basic Tenets of Critical Race Theory (CRT)

CRT Tenet	Definition	Source
Counter-storytelling	Narratives and stories that chronicle experiences of people of color as a method of challenging the status quo	Matsuda (1995)
Permanence of racism	Racism, both conscious and unconscious, is a permanent aspect of American life.	Bell (1992)
Interest convergence	Significant progress for Blacks is achieved only when the goals of Blacks are consistent with or at least do not undermine the interests of Whites	Bell (1980)
Whiteness as property	Because of the history of race and racism in the U.S. and the role U.S. jurisprudence has played in reifying conceptions of race, the notion of Whiteness can be considered a property interest	Harris (1995)
Critique of liberalism	Critique of three basic notions embraced by liberal, legal ideology: colorblindness, incremental change, and neutrality of the law	Crenshaw (1998)

Appendix C

Interview Participants

Elite, Non-School Stakeholders		
Person and Position	**Date of Interview**	**Number of Interviews**
Dr. Norman Johnson, APS School Board Member and President, Assistant to the President at Georgia Tech,	February 19, 2007; February 22, 2007; March 1, 2007; July 9, 2007; September 8, 2007; January 24, 2008; February 6, 2008; March 12, 2009; October 4, 2009; May 10, 2011	10
Aaron Watson, Member and President of APS School Board	February 12, 2007; March 2, 2007; October 10, 2009; May 11, 2011	4
Mitch Sweet, APS School Board Member	October 9, 2009	1
Renee Lewis Glover, Executive Director of AHA	September 27, 2007; January 23, 2008; March 21, 2008; January 13, 2009; June 27, 2009; March 5, 2011	6
James Brooks, Executive at AHA	March 6, 2009	1
E. Mike Proctor, Chief Policy Officer in the Office of Policy and Research Executive at AHA	March 6, 2009; March 5, 2011	2
Carol Naughton, Attorney at AHA	March 4, 2009	1
Egbert Perry, President of Integral Group, a real estate development company	September 4, 2007; January 23, 2008; August 4, 2009; March 3, 2011; October 13, 2012	5
Valerie Garrett, Executive at Integral Group	March 3, 2011	1
Ingrid Saunders Jones, Vice President of Philanthropy for Coca-Cola	January 22, 2008 (telephone); April 12, 2008	2
Milton Jones, Georgia president, Atlanta market President, and Finance	April 12, 2008	1

Services Executive for Nation's Bank and Bank of America		

School Stakeholders		
Person and Position	**Date of Interview**	**Number of Interviews**
Gwen Mayfield, Principal of Fowler Elementary	January 9, 2007 (telephone); February 5, 2007; August 1, 2008	3
Cynthia Kuhlman, CFO of APS and Principal of Centennial Place	July 10, 2007; September 16, 2008	2
Susan Coleman, Teacher at Fowler Elementary	June 18, 2009; October 9, 2009	2
Sharon Roberts, Teacher at Fowler Elementary	August 14, 2009	1
Kelly Richardson, Teacher at Fowler Elementary	June 18, 2009	1
Terri Massey, Teacher at Fowler Elementary	June 9, 2009	1
Carl Williams, Teacher at Fowler Elementary and Centennial Place Elementary Place Elementary	August 21, 2009	1
Heather Walters, teacher at Fowler Elementary and Centennial Place Elementary Place Elementary	August 18, 2009	1
Vanessa Simmons, Counselor at Fowler Elementary and Centennial Place Elementary Place Elementary	August 21, 2009	1

Community Stakeholders		
Person and Position	**Date of Interview**	**Number of Interviews**
Eric Pinckney, Resident Leader of Techwood	July 10, 2007; February 6, 2008; March 17, 2008	3
Dovie Techwood, Resident of Techwood	July 6, 2007 (Telephone conversation); July 14, 2007; July 17, 2007; March 5, 2008; November 4, 2009; October 2, 2011 (telephone)	6
Andrea Crowder Jones, Resident of Techwood	March 5, 2008; March 8, 2008	2
Margie Smith, Resident of Techwood-Clark Howell	March 13, 2008	1
Paul Edicose, Resident of Techwood-Clark Howell	September 7, 2008	1
Loretta Hall, Resident of Techwood-Clark Howell	February 6, 2008	1
Loretta Stewart, Resident of Techwood-Clark Howell	March 13, 2008; November 4, 2009	2
Mary Lolis, Resident of Techwood-Clark Howell	April 4, 2008	1
Sam Williams, President Metro Chamber of Commerce	April 7, 2008	1
Anita Beaty, Director of Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless	May 2, 2008	1

Total number of participants: 30
Total number of interviews: 66

Appendix D

Invitation to Participate Letter

Date

Name and Address of Intended Participant

Dear Mr./Ms./Mrs./Dr. [Name of Person],

My name is Tirza White, and I am a doctoral student in the Division of Educational Studies at Emory University. Currently, I am conducting a study on the reconstitution of Fowler Elementary School, which was renamed after its reform and is now Centennial Place Elementary Place Elementary. In a former study that I conducted of Fowler Elementary, my work was focused on elite, political stakeholder involvement in the reconstitution. Findings of this work revealed that the reconstitution of Fowler occurred as a subset of the larger agenda of neighborhood revitalization. My current study adds to my previous work and focuses on the involvement of school and community-level stakeholders. Specifically, this study seeks to explore the multiplicity of stakeholders and their participation, contribution, and interest in Fowler.

To this end, I will be conducting a series of interviews with stakeholders who worked at the school and who are or were a part of the larger school and surrounding community. Questions aim to understanding the process and contribution of stakeholders as well as the influence of the social and political context on the agenda for reconstitution. I will be conducting interviews beginning [INSERT DATE] and would appreciate your perspective on the reconstitution. Should you agree to participate, our interview will take no more than one hour of your time. If questions arise after our interview, I would appreciate your willingness to be contacted so that I can ask for additional clarification on the process of reconstitution. You are not obligated to be available or to answer those questions. In addition, you will not be asked to meet or engage with other stakeholders who were involved in the reconstitution of Fowler Elementary.

While this study may not benefit you or your affiliation directly, my research is likely to contribute to ongoing conversations about effective methods of organizational change in schools and on behalf of students and the conditions under which those changes are conceptualized, pursued, and implemented. Because I believe that an understanding of the complexities of effective school change lies in the knowledge and experiences of those who are invested in such efforts daily and over time, I hope that you will be willing to offer your perspective on the reform that occurred at Fowler Elementary. If you are willing to participate, I can be reached at 404-210-9009 or via email, twwhite@emory.edu. I will also follow up with you within a week to ensure that you have received this letter to participate. If you are willing to participate, I will schedule an

interview with you at the place and time of your choosing and will mail you a consent to participate form in advance of our meeting.
Thank you in advance for considering my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Tirza White
Doctoral Candidate
Division of Educational Studies
Emory University
twwhite@emory.edu
404-210-9009

Appendix E

Informed Consent

Emory University
Division of Educational Studies
Consent to be a Research Subject

Title: *School Reconstitution*
Principal Investigator: *Tirza White*

Introduction/Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the process of reconstituting one kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school. School reconstitution is a school reform policy that typically involves revising the curriculum and replacing existing teachers and administrators as a method for improving student performance. Reconstitution is used most often in schools with a history of low student achievement, and the changes in school personnel and curriculum are intended to result in dramatic improvements in student achievement. This study aims to examine the process of reconstitution for a school that has successfully reconstituted, determined by consistent and maintained increased in student achievement over a period of seven years.

Information on the process of reconstitution will be obtained through interviews with those involved in the reconstitution of the school and through an analysis of documents associated with the reconstitution, such as newspaper articles. An examination of the process of reconstitution will be achieved through an analysis of the roles and contributions of the persons involved based on information gained in interviews with participants.

People who were involved in the reconstitution of Centennial Place Elementary Place Elementary School are being asked to volunteer for this research study. Participants are being asked to volunteer because they were directly involved in the process of reconstituting the school and because each stakeholder brought a unique perspective and contribution to the process of the reconstitution. Participants are being asked to volunteer for two interviews, with each interview taking no more than one hour of their time.

Procedures: Interviews will be conducted at the time and place of each participant's choosing. Interviews will consist of a series of questions that explore the successes and challenges participants encountered as they worked with others to reconstitute the school. With the permission of participants, I would like to tape record interviews. As a participant, if you would not like interviews tape recorded, I will take handwritten notes. If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed individually and will not be required or asked to have any interaction with other participants in the course of your involvement in this study.

Risks: In interviews questions will be asked to you about your contribution to and perspective on the process of reconstitution. Some questions may make you uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to, and there is no penalty or loss to you for deciding not to answer any question.

Benefits*:* Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but educators and researchers may learn new things about school reform and school reconstitution that will help others who study school reform or who are involved in school reform efforts.

Confidentiality: There is a chance that people other than me may look at this study's records and interview data. For example, agencies that make rules and policy about how research is done have the right to review these records. Those with a right to look at the study records also include the Emory University Institutional Review Board and my faculty advisor, Dr. Vanessa Siddle Walker, a professor in Emory University's Division of Educational Studies. Records can also be opened by court order. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms will be used in all records in place of your name, all other participants, the name of the school, the school district and its location, and the name of the city. Any notes and recordings will be secured in a locked file cabinet and kept private to the extent allowed by law. As principal investigator, I will do this even if outside review occurs. There is also a chance that this study will be presented or published. Your name and other important facts that may point to you will not appear when I present this study or publish its results.

Costs: As a participant, you will not have any costs because of your participation in this study.

Contact Persons: If you have questions about this study, you can contact me at 404-210-9009, or you can contact my advisor, Dr. Vanessa Siddle Walker, at 404-727-6468. If you have been harmed from your participation in this study or if you have questions about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. James W. Keller, chair of the Emory University Institutional Review Board, at 404-712-0720.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time after giving your consent with no penalty or loss to you. Your participation in this study is limited to interviews, and there is no risk of physical harm to you if you decide not to participate. Should you decide not to participate at any time, the interviews will stop and any information provided to that point will not be used if you wish to withdraw your responses.

Consent to Participate: I will give you a copy of this consent form to keep. If you are willing to volunteer for this research study, please sign below.

_____	_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date	Time
_____	_____	_____
Principal Investigator's Signature	Date	Time

Informed Consent

Emory University
Division of Educational Studies
Consent to be a Research Subject
Use of Real Names

Title: *School Restructuring*
Principal Investigator: *Tirza White*

Introduction/Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the process of restructuring one kindergarten through fifth grade elementary school. School restructuring is a school reform policy that dramatically alters a school's organizational and governance structures. It is used most often in schools with a history of low student achievement, and the changes in school organization, governance, personnel, and curriculum are intended to result in substantial improvements in student achievement over time. This study aims to examine the process of restructuring for Fowler Elementary School, which became the successfully restructured Centennial Place Elementary, determined by consistent and sustained increased in student achievement over a period of years since it reopened in 1998.

Information on the process of restructuring will be obtained through interviews with those involved in the restructuring of the school and through an analysis of documents associated with the restructuring, such as newspaper articles. An examination of the process of restructuring will be achieved through an analysis of the roles and contributions of the persons involved based on information gained in interviews with participants.

People who were involved in the restructuring of Centennial Place Elementary School are being asked to volunteer for this research study. Participants are being asked to volunteer because they were directly involved in the process of restructuring the school and because each stakeholder brings a unique perspective and contribution to the process. Participants are being asked to volunteer for one to two interviews, with each taking no more than one hour of their time.

Procedures: Interviews will be conducted at the time and place of each participant's choosing. Interviews will consist of a series of questions that explore the successes and challenges participants encountered as they worked with others to reconstitute the school. With the permission of participants, I would like to tape record interviews. As a participant, if you would not like interviews tape recorded, I will take handwritten notes. If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed individually and will not be required or asked to have any interaction with other participants in the course of your involvement in this study. At the request of stakeholders who were participants in an earlier pilot study conducted from 2006 through 2007, real names are being used with the consent of

people involved. The use of real names is extended to their professional affliation. Should you wish for your identity to remain anonymous, your position will be respected and an alternative consent form for participation is available for your review and signature.

Risks: In interviews questions will be asked to you about your contribution to and perspective on the process of restructuring. Some questions may make you uncomfortable. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to, and there is no penalty or loss to you for deciding not to answer any question.

Benefits*:* Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but educators, researchers, and policymakers may learn new things about school reform and school restructuring that will help others who study school reform or who are involved in school reform efforts.

Confidentiality: There is a chance that people other than me may look at this study's records and interview data. For example, agencies that make rules and policy about how research is done have the right to review these records. Those with a right to look at the study records also include the Emory University Institutional Review Board and my faculty advisor, Dr. Vanessa Siddle Walker, a professor in Emory University's Division of Educational Studies. Records can also be opened by court order. Any notes and recordings will be secured in a locked file cabinet and kept private to the extent that participants' request such action and as allowed by law. As principal investigator, I will do this even if outside review occurs. There is also a chance that this study will be presented or published. Should you sign this consent form, your name and other important facts that may point to you will appear when I present this study or publish its results.

Costs: As a participant, you will not have any costs because of your participation in this study.

Contact Persons: If you have questions about this study, you can contact me at 404-210-9009, or you can contact my advisor, Dr. Vanessa Siddle Walker, at 404-727-6468. If you have been harmed from your participation in this study or if you have questions about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. James W. Keller, chair of the Emory University Institutional Review Board, at 404-712-0720.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time after giving your consent with no penalty or loss to you. Your participation in this study is limited to interviews, and there is no risk of physical harm to you if you decide not to participate. Should you decide not to participate at any time, the interviews will stop and any information provided to that point will not be used if you wish to withdraw your responses.

Consent to Participate: I will give you a copy of this consent form to keep. If you are willing to volunteer for this research study, please sign below.

_____	_____	_____
Participant's Signature	Date	Time
_____	_____	_____
Principal Investigator's Signature	Date	Time

Appendix F

Interview Protocol and Questions

Participants' Background

1. Describe your professional background.

2. Can you describe when and how improvements began at Fowler? (Time frame, who was initially involved, efforts, resources?)

3. How did those efforts evolve and who was involved at various times?

Individual Agenda

4. What were your perceptions of Fowler?

5. What goals did you have for the restructuring? What changes did you want to see take place? Why did you have those goals?

6. What are the factors that explain the restructuring and your goals?

Collective Agenda

7. Who else played a role in the restructuring?

8. What other goals became apparent as others expressed their objectives?

9. Were there differences among those who were involved? What were they?

10. How were those differences resolved?

Process

11. Can you describe how the restructuring happened?
12. Can you tell me who was involved?
13. How did the process unfold?

Resources

14. What resources were brought to support the restructuring?

15. Of those resources, what did you (or your organization) bring?

    a. Tangible materials (supplies and/or financial resources)

b. Intellectual value

c. Community value

d. Political value

16. How were those resources brought to the efforts?

17. How did those resources influence the success/the outcome?

18. What capacity-building efforts and resources do you consider to be the most valuable to restructuring?

Implementation

Non-educators:

19. What difficulties were encountered during rebuilding of the school?

20. What issues were resolved and what issues were not?

21. How did those involved work to resolve the issues?

22. How did the community respond to restructuring?

Educators:

23. How were decisions made related to restaffing and do you know who was involved in making those decisions? (How was the school restaffed?)
    a. Administrators?

    b. Teachers?

24. Was the curriculum changed? If so, how?

25. Who had the authority to decide to change the curriculum (who was empowered)?

26. Who was involved in the decision to change the curriculum?

27. Who was involved in revising the curriculum?

Restructuring Policy

28. What role do you believe race, class, and power played in the restructuring? Was one more significant than the other?

29. In looking back, are there goals that you had for the restructuring or assumptions you made when thinking of restructuring that were misplaced or wrong?

30. Are there missing tenets in how the restructuring was implemented that you feel would enhance the success?

31. What were any unanticipated or unintended consequences of restructuring?

32. As other schools and communities begin restructuring, what factors would you identify as critical to success?

33. Are there any influences on restructuring that I didn't ask or is there additional information that you feel I should know about the restructuring of Fowler and how it happened?