Distribution Agreement

In presenting this thesis as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my thesis in whole or in part in all forms of media, now or hereafter now, including display on the World Wide Web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as part of the online submission of this thesis. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis.

Erica S. Sterling April 8, 2015

A Better Chance for Brown:
The Role of the Private Sector in Equal Educational Opportunity, 1963-1978

by

Erica S. Sterling

Dr. Carol Anderson
Adviser

Department of History

Dr. Carol Anderson

Adviser

Hank Klibanoff

Committee Member

Dr. Brett Gadsden

Committee Member

2015

A Better Chance for Brown:
The Role of the Private Sector in Equal Educational Opportunity, 1963-1978

By

Erica S. Sterling

Dr. Carol Anderson

Adviser

An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of History

2015

Abstract

A Better Chance for Brown:
The Role of the Private Sector in Equal Educational Opportunity, 1963-1978

By Erica S. Sterling

This thesis uses a compensatory education program called A Better Chance (ABC) as a case study from 1963 to 1978 for understanding the private sector's role in the government's abdication of responsibility for the state of America's education system. Established through the joint efforts of Dartmouth College and twenty-three independent school headmasters, and initially funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, ABC recruited historically marginalized students (e.g. minorities and low-income whites) from the north and south to participate in a summer remedial education program, and then placed them in elite, predominantly white preparatory schools, and later, affluent public high schools. Ten years after Brown v. Board of Education, *the founders of ABC, like many others, perceived the Supreme Court's decision as a failure in the public school system.*

Coupled with the civil rights movement and President Lyndon B. Johnson's sweeping attack on poverty, the nation was never more conscious of the federal government's duty to its citizens than it was in the 1960s. But the problem of deficient public schools was far greater than a series of experimental projects, ABC among them, could handle. Nevertheless, A Better Chance offered itself as a means for underserved children and their families to abandon the traditional public school system, a trend that continues today.

This thesis argues that by historicizing modern day philanthropic endeavors and situating them within a legacy of privately funded initiatives established to correct societal inequalities, it becomes undeniably clear that the private sector has its limitations in addressing discrimination, limitations that can only be breeched by substantial policy shifts in the federal government and a fundamental rewiring of the psyche of American citizens. This thesis addresses intriguing silences in two bodies of literature – the role of philanthropy in black education and the desegregation of American education – and aims to expand upon the privatization of the public sphere.

A Better Chance for Brown:
The Role of the Private Sector in Equal Educational Opportunity, 1963-1978

By

Erica S. Sterling

Dr. Carol Anderson

Adviser

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Arts with Honors

Department of History

2015

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank Dr. Carol Anderson, my thesis adviser, for her mentorship over the years. She has been critical to my development as a budding scholar, and I aspire to follow in her footsteps.

I would also like to thank Professor Hank Klibanoff and Dr. Brett Gadsden for offering their insights.

To my Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship family, thank you for the feedback and encouragement throughout the various stages of this project.

To Emory's History Department, thank you for the opportunity to travel to the Rockefeller Archive Center in Tarrytown, New York through the support of the Theodore H. Jack Award. And to SIRE, thank you for your generous support as well, which allowed me to travel to Boston, MA and Hanover, NH for further research. Without these grants, this work would not have been possible.

To all of the archivists that I have come in contact with in the last year, thank you for taking this journey with me.

To New York University's Humanities Initiative, thank you for all of the support over the summer. This was a critical time for my research; thank you for sharing those discoveries with me.

To the Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, thank you for allowing me to be a part of a community of scholars.

And to my family and friends, I thank you for your never ending encouragement, patience, and confidence.

Table of Contents

Introduction

My Brother's Keeper

> The tragedy is that we are working only with hundreds when we could involve thousands, that there are not other programs for hundreds of thousands, that we as a nation are not committed to making the solution of our social problems our first priority.[1]

[1] William Berkeley, "No Easy Eden," ABC Annual Report, 2, 1969, Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Archive Center.

President Barack Obama made plain a "stubborn fact" on February 27, 2014, in an address to the American people: "There are some Americans who, in the aggregate, are doing consistently worse in our society- groups that have had the odds stacked against them in unique ways that require unique solutions."[2] Identifying young men of color as the most vulnerable population for virtually every statistical measure of one's life chances – underperformance in school, unemployment, likelihood of incarceration, and the list goes on – the president announced, what was in his opinion, a "unique solution" to confront such a reality. The president calls it My Brother's Keeper. The new initiative is a nonpartisan, educationally-focused effort driven by the private sector to make tangible differences in the lives of young men of color. By intervening, the president declared that not only will they "become better husbands and fathers, and well-educated, hardworking, good citizens," the nation, too, "will be richer and stronger for it for generations to come."[3]

The president's targeted effort, well intended as it may be, is an ahistorical endeavor. As one writer recently wrote, "Put simply, history matters. And the only way to truly change the odds for these kids is to take that into account."[4] The notion of helping disadvantaged youth attain what has been historically withheld is one that persists

---

[2] "Remarks by the President on 'My Brother's Keeper' Initiative," *The White House, Office of the Press Secretary*, February 27, 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/02/27/remarks-president-my-brothers-keeper-initiative. Accessed July 10, 2014.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Jamelle Bouie, "The Flaw in My Brother's Keeper," *The Daily Beast*, February 27, 2014, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/02/27/the-flaw-in-my-brother-s-keeper.html. Accessed July 10, 2014.

throughout the twentieth century, and has yet to be realized. President Obama alluded to as much in a proclamation commemorating the 60th anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education* last year: "Yet today, the hope and promise of *Brown* remains unfulfilled. In the years to come, we must continue striving toward equal opportunities for all our children."[5] My Brother's Keeper, then, is the president's attempt to fulfill the promises of *Brown*; unabridged educational opportunity and life outcomes, regardless of identity. What it further represents, is yet another effort driven by the private sector to implement dramatic changes to the social, economic, and political landscape of America.

I argue that by historicizing My Brother's Keeper and situating it within a legacy of privately funded initiatives established to correct societal inequalities, it becomes undeniably clear that philanthropic efforts, and, more broadly, the private sector, have their limitations in addressing discrimination, limitations that can only be breeched by substantial policy shifts in the federal government and a fundamental rewiring of the psyche of American citizens. My thesis addresses intriguing silences in two bodies of literature – the role of philanthropy in black education and the desegregation of American education – and aims to expand upon the privatization of the public sphere.

"Schooling for democratic citizenship and schooling for second-class citizenship have been basic traditions in American education," writes James D. Anderson, author of *The Education of Blacks in the South.*[6] He delivers the first examination of black education

[5] "Presidential Proclamation—60th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education," *The White House, Office of the Press Secretary*, May 15, 2014, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/15/presidential-proclamation-60th-anniversary-brown-v-board-education. Accessed July 10, 2014.

[6] James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 1.

from 1860 to 1935 that incorporates the political, economic, and cultural factors shaping black commitment to education. Anderson argues that the historical difference between the nation's two types of schooling – that is, education for whites and education for blacks – cannot be reduced to white southerners' racism pitted against white northern philanthropists' benevolence. Anderson debunks the common misconception that northern philanthropists created and supported black educational institutions out of a desire to "cushion the Negro against the shock of racism and to keep public education open as an avenue of Negro advancement."[7] Rather, Anderson argues that northern philanthropists advocated for second-class education for blacks in a similar fashion as white southerners.[8]

Anderson's revisionist history is an important foundation when considering the role of philanthropy in the early formation of black education. By the 1960s, a few philanthropic foundations attempted to move that history in a different direction as blacks continued to oppose the second-class education forced upon them. At the height of the civil rights movement, these foundations contributed money to various organizations and communities working towards equal opportunity.[9] I do not want to exaggerate the role white philanthropists played in shaping the lives of blacks and other minority groups in the United States. Historians such as Marybeth Gasman and Katherine V. Sedgwick have tried to shed light on the African American philanthropist to challenge the general picture of

[7] James Anderson. *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 79.

[8] Ibid., 92.

[9] Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 201-220.

blacks as "passive recipients of northern philanthropy."[10] However, there is a lesser-known history about philanthropy's role in accelerating school integration after the perceived failures of the *Brown* decision.

Historians have widely documented the battles waged over desegregation in public schools during the post-World War II era, the images and narratives of which are most familiar to the public.[11] However, alternative narratives do exist. Some historians have illuminated a history of what many believed were inherently contradictory descriptions: good, segregated public schools for black children. Vanessa Siddle Walker, for example, complicates commonly held accounts of segregated black schools. She challenges the public's default perceptions about these schools. Poor facilities and underpaid teachers did not always lead to poorly managed schools and a deficient learning environment.[12]

The history of black education in the public sphere during the twentieth century – through desegregation or community-focused approaches – is familiar. Yet another narrative, so far only hinted at in the literature, tells the story of how the private sphere initiated a new way to enact education reform. President John F. Kennedy made it so in 1963. He called on various institutions, namely those in the private sector, to conjure up

---

[10] Marybeth Gasman and Katherine V. Sedgwick, editors, *Uplifting a People: African American Education and Philanthropy* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005), 10.

[11] Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1975); Michael Klarman, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); David Farber, *The Age of Great Dream* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994); James Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

[12] Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 5; See Thomas Sowell, *Patterns of Black Excellence* (Washington D.C.: Ethics and Policy Center, 1977). See also John Rury and Shirley Hill, *The African American Struggle for Secondary Schooling, 1940-1980: Closing the Graduation Gap* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2012), 71-75.

immediately solutions to America's failing education system.[13] One of those solutions – the brainchild of Dartmouth College and various independent schools, and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation – was A Better Chance (ABC). The program recruited historically marginalized students (e.g. minorities and low income whites) from the north and south to participate in a summer remedial education program, and then placed them in elite, predominantly white preparatory schools, and later, affluent public high schools.[14]

From 1963 to 1978, ABC serves as a case study for understanding the private sector's role in offsetting the government's abdication of responsibility for the state of America's education system. Coupled with the civil rights movement and President Lyndon B. Johnson's sweeping attack on poverty, the nation was never more conscious of the federal government's duty to its citizens than it was in the 1960s. But the problem of deficient public schools was far greater than a series of experimental projects, ABC among them, could handle. A Better Chance offered itself as a means for underserved children and their families to abandon the traditional public school system. In probing the relatively quiet history between educational initiatives like ABC, philanthropic foundations, and private secondary institutions, a parallel narrative – on the backdrop of *Brown* – to the struggle for equality in education emerges that colors the current literature.

What we do know about the program is sparse, but telling nonetheless. The most recent scholarship on the organization is Andrea Walton's brief article, "Building a Pipeline to College: A Study of the Rockefeller-Funded 'A Better Chance' Program, 1963-

[13] John F. Kennedy, "Message on Education," January 29, 1963.

[14] "The First Two Years of the Independent Schools Talent Search Program: A Staff Report to the Membership," September 1965, Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York.

1969." Walton analyzes a six-year period of the program and concludes with a call to marry the histories of educational philanthropy and post-World War II higher education, which would "advance our understanding of the nature of access and deepen our knowledge of the role that private intervention has played in shaping the education experiences of African American students."[15]

Sociologists Richard Zweigenhaft and G. William Domhoff have also evaluated A Better Chance in one book-length assessment entitled *Blacks in the White Establishment? A Study of Race and Class in America*. In 1991, Zweigenhaft's and Domhoff's work intervened in a contentious and emerging conversation about the salience of race versus class in determining one's access to privilege.[16] The authors interviewed thirty-eight ABC graduates, all of whom entered the program in the 1960s and early 1970s, to ascertain whether or not class transcended race and to determine if the ABC graduates' access to the most elite spaces in society was enough to overcome a history of discrimination. Class, the authors concluded, is not enough.

Finally, studying A Better Chance incorporates another body of literature – the privatization of the public sphere.[17] Privatization in this context means, "(1)any shift of activities or functions from the state to the private sector; and, more specifically, (2)any

[15] Andrea Walton, "Building a Pipeline to College: A Study of the Rockefeller-Funded 'A Better Chance' Program, 1963-1969." *American Educational History Journal* 36, no. 1 (2009): 165.

[16] William Julius Wilson. *The Declining Significance of Race.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 187.

[17] I am using cultural theorist Jurgen Habermas' definition of the public sphere: "private people gathered together as a public articulating the needs of society with the state." Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 146.

shift of the production of goods and services from public to private."[18] The government's "disengagement" from certain responsibilities can initiate these shifts.[19] The founders of ABC created the program because of the government's disengagement from instituting educational equality for all of its citizens. Today, the charter school movement encapsulates the same disengagement. Charter schools, though technically a form of public education, receive significant support from philanthropic foundations and other private donors.[20] Although representing a small chunk of America's public schools, they have grown in popularity as a tool for education reform. Many debates surround the efficacy of charter schools.[21] But a key critique is the productiveness of shifting funds away from traditional public schools to these alternative schools. [22] And what remains true is that the families sending their children to charter schools have abandoned traditional public education.

ABC perseveres to this day. As of 2013, ninety-six percent of ABC high school seniors attended college upon graduation, almost half came from single parent homes, and

---

18 Paul Starr, "The Meaning of Privatization," *Yale Law and Policy Review* 6 (1988): 14.

19 Starr, "The Meaning of Privatization," 16.

[20] Michael Fabricant and Michelle Fine, *Charter Schools and the Corporate Makeover of Public Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2012), 3; "National Partners," *KIPP,* http://www.kipp.org/about-kipp/the-kipp-foundation/national-partners, Accessed March 29, 2015; "What Are Public Charter Schools?," *National Alliance for Public Charter Schools,* http://www.publiccharters.org/get-the-facts/public-charter-schools/, Accessed March 29, 2015.

[21] Joy Resmovits, "Roy Roberts: New Detroit District Will Include Charters, School Closures," *Huff Post,* September 26, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/09/28/roy-roberts-detroit-schools-charters-closures_n_985821.html. Accessed March 29, 2015; "Michigan Public Schools Privatizing Teachers 'Very Real' Possibility, State Lawmakers Says," *Huff Post,* October 4, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/04/michigan-public-schools-p_n_994285.html. Accessed March 29, 2015.

[22] Fabricant and Fine, *Charter Schools and the Corporate Makeover of Public Education,* 5.

over 300 schools were affiliated with the program.[23] ABC remains committed to treating a systemic problem that only local, state, and federal governments can truly rectify. By emphasizing the historical context in which ABC functioned, the reader will come away with a better understanding of the limitations of modern day philanthropic initiatives. Chapter One establishes the creation of ABC: how philanthropy, higher education, and elite preparatory schools converged to offer one provocative solution to America's disadvantaged youth. Chapter Two covers the years 1965 to 1969, and demonstrates how the barriers ABC confronted were indicative of its limitations. Chapter Three presents the program's fight for relevance from 1970 to 1978.

The point of this work is not to overstate the importance of the program; nor is this an evaluation of whether ABC was successful. A Better Chance is not perfect; its tactics throughout the 1960s and 1970s undoubtedly warrant interrogation. But ABC's ambitious history informs the way society views philanthropy, the government's responsibility to its citizens, and education reform. How is it that schools remain more segregated than they ever were; that programs must exist to overcome the shortcomings of traditional public education? ABC has not lost its relevance, but there are countless children that never get offered a better chance.

[23] "2013 At-A-Glance," *A Better Chance*, http://www.abetterchance.org/abetterchance.aspx?pgID=970, Accessed July 17, 2014.

Chapter I

Toward Equal Opportunity for All

> You've come here to prove you can make it in the best private secondary schools in the country. We've got your return tickets here, and if you're smart you'll get back on the bus and go home…Here you'll have to demonstrate that you want the opportunity for a better education. We'll expect you to work like you've never worked before.[24]

[24] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith' Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 2, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York.

Jeffrey Palmer, like so many students across the country, eagerly anticipated his first day of school in the fall of 1964. His academic record thus far was an unimpressive C average, but his confidence and character struck those with whom the adolescent Palmer interacted. The prospect of untapped potential in the young boy prompted one community member to recommend Palmer leave Steubenville High School in Ohio to seek a more rigorous education elsewhere.[25] But as both a person of color and an economically disadvantaged youth in the United States, Palmer's options – like so many others'- were limited.

American society markedly shifted in the post-World War II years during the second wave of the Great Migration. Blacks continued to move out of the south to the north and west, affording African Americans economic gains that they could not attain in the South. The product was an urban black middle class and a population that could finally, to a degree, exercise their right to the franchise. In addition to the economic and political forces at work, the world drew parallels between the Nazis' treatment of Jews and other groups in Central and Eastern Europe, and white segregationists' treatment of blacks in the Jim Crow South. The realization elicited criticism both domestically and internationally, which contributed to a shift in white American citizens' attitudes towards race and *de jure* discrimination. Although "cracks in the walls of segregation began to appear," equality remained elusive, particularly in the South.[26] By the early 1950s voter registration among blacks in the South increased from three percent to twenty percent; eighty percent still

[25] "ISTSP Class of '66," Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brother Fund, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York.

[26] Michael Klarman, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 34.

could not vote, and some counties restricted the vote altogether.[27] Few black lawyers, doctors, politicians, or businessmen worked in the south.[28]

Nowhere did white supremacists fight more to uphold segregation than in the classroom.[29] It is easy to illuminate examples of segregation in schools in the southern states, where the architects of Jim Crow enforced it so overtly. In Clarendon County, South Carolina, taxpayers spent $43 per black child and $179 per white child for the 1949-1950 school term. Sixty-one dilapidated schools each run by one or two teachers, housing 6,531 black students, were valued at $194, 575. For 2,375 white students, twelve schools existed, valued at $673, 850. [30]

In the north, legally segregated schools did not exist.[31] But northern segregation was more "subtle and elusive, and perhaps more insidious."[32] In the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education,* black and white anti-segregationists successfully eliminated all codified school segregation from the law books.[33] Although rightly considered victories for those fighting for inclusion in northern public school systems, racial differences between schools persisted as products of residential segregation and purposeful

---

[27] Michael Klarman, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement*, 56.

[28] David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 76.

[29] Michael Klarman, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement*, 57.

[30] Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1975), 8.

[31] John Rury and Shirley Hill, *The African American Struggle for Secondary Schooling, 1940-1980* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2012), 85.

[32] Ronald Cohen, "The Dilemma of School Integration in the North: Gary, Indiana, 1945-1960," *Indiana Magazine of History* 82, no.2 (1986): 162.

[33] Davison Douglass, *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 219.

discriminatory policies. Until *Shelley v. Kramer* in 1948, restrictive covenants made it illegal for real estate agents and white homeowners to sell certain homes to African Americans. Once the Supreme Court dismantled this residential form of segregation, vigilante justice replaced the letter of the law. All white homeowners' associations policed homogenous neighborhoods using fear and violence against prospective black residents whom local police offered little, if any, protection. Together with white flight, residential segregation remained firmly intact.[34] In 1950 U.S. census workers recorded a population of 35,872 residents in Steubenville, Ohio, with 8.5% of the population noted as non-white.[35] Because of residential housing policies and economic inequality intended to keep blacks and whites apart, Jeffrey Palmer and other black children would have attended all black schools.

In 1954 the Supreme Court declared the unconstitutionality of "separate but equal" in *Brown v. Board of Education.* As historian Richard Kluger has argued, *Brown* embodied "simple justice" for African Americans.[36] After centuries of oppression, the Supreme Court finally outlawed segregation and overnight blacks had "suddenly been reborn."[37] But racism did not disappear with the court's decision, nor did schools implement integration outright. There was Ruby Bridges, the first African American child to desegregate an elementary school in New Orleans; Elizabeth Eckford, one of nine to desegregate Central

[34] Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[35] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *U.S. Census of Population: 1950*, by Howard G. Brunsman, Part 35, Volume 2 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Office, 1950), 52.

[36] Kluger, *Simple* Justice, 710.

[37] Ibid., 749.

High School in Little Rock, Arkansas; and many others who bravely asserted the rights afforded by *Brown.* As standoffs between black children and white schools would continue to demonstrate, integration was not easy, nor did it readily occur after the Supreme Court's decision, so much so that in the decade after what has been referred to as the "most important Court decision of the twentieth century, perhaps the most important ever," very little had changed in America's public schools.[38] Places like Arkansas, West Virginia, and Maryland began the process of desegregation immediately after *Brown*, but because of residential segregation in these Border States, the number of black students enrolled in integrated schools remained low.[39] In the South, there was silence. Not until 1957 did some former confederate states attempt to comply with *Brown*: eleven black students entered white schools in North Carolina; Little Rock, Arkansas grudgingly allowed in nine, and thirteen blacks integrated schools in Nashville, Tennessee.[40]

By the early 1960s, school districts' pace of desegregation quickened as federal judges grew tired of intentional delays while proponents of *Brown* filed lawsuit after lawsuit against school districts for not adhering to the court's mandate. The ongoing intransigence meant that, "only 1.06 percent of southern black students yet attended desegregated schools," by 1963.[41] Almost a decade after *Brown*, segregated schools were alive and well.

---

[38] Klarman, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement*, 105.

[39] Ibid., 108.

[40] *Southern School* News, October 1954, 15, quoted in Klarman, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement*, 109.

[41] Klarman, *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement*, 110.

The limitations facing Jeffrey Palmer and those like him – black and economically disadvantaged – were brought to the forefront of America's conscience when President John Kennedy delivered a message on education on January 29, 1963, in which he deplored the inadequacies of the education system, insisting that:

> A free nation can rise no higher than the standard of excellence in its schools and colleges. Ignorance and illiteracy, unskilled workers and school dropouts – these and other failures of our educational system breed failures in our social and economic system.[42]

This was not the first time, nor would it be the last, that America was forced to reassess its progress, or lack thereof, in the aftermath of powerful decisions intended to alter both the moral and structural workings of the country.

Palmer, too, was one of those children given the duty of risking emotional well-being and stability for the sake of integration and equal opportunity in education. His role was unprecedented, for he and fifty-four other disadvantaged boys – 85% African American, 7% Caucasian, 4% Puerto Rican, 3% of Asian descent, and 1% American Indian – participated in an academic and social experiment during the summer of 1964 that would culminate in their admission to several of America's most elite preparatory schools.[43] The nation's elite created an initiative to integrate education in ways that the *Brown* decision had arguably fallen short of doing in the public school system.

Twenty-three independent school headmasters referred to themselves as the Independent Schools Talent Search Program (ISTSP). They believed that the "debilitating

---

[42]John F. Kennedy, "Message on Education," January 29, 1963.

[43] "ISTSP Class of '66," Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

effects of poverty" experienced by "promising Negro high school students" had a crippling effect on high school graduation and college admission rates.[44] The headmasters' intervention, during one of the most contentious time periods in U.S. history, was to recruit "culturally deprived students" and, without regard to race, help transition the students from the country's "virtually helpless" public schools into the most prestigious boarding schools in America.[45] The founders outlined three primary objectives for their efforts: (1) educated black leadership as a critical component for integration to materialize; (2) intellectual capability amongst blacks as a reality, not a myth, to advance in American society; and (3) an organized effort by both local communities and independent schools as a necessity for successful recruitment of minorities into private education. [46] ISTSP launched in February 1963, receiving a $25,000 grant from the Charles E. Merrill Trust to form the organization. The foundation viewed the ISTSP "as one of the first active steps by educators to get minority students into quality schools in significant numbers."[47]

The decision to utilize America's elite secondary schools as an avenue for change came undoubtedly from the headmasters' informed understanding of these spaces. Dating back to the late nineteenth century, boarding schools were established as a part of a

[44] Rockefeller Brothers Fund Proposal, March 9, 1967, Folder 2, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Archive Center; "Independent Schools Talent Search Program". September 23, 1964. Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[45] Rockefeller Brothers Fund Proposal, March 9, 1967, Folder 2, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; "Declaration of Trust of the Trustees of Independent Schools Talent Search Program," October 9, 1964, Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[46] "Independent Schools Talent Search Program," September 23, 1964, Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[47] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith' Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 21, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

movement to separate the elite from the rest of American society and preserve privilege.[48] Independent from governmental control, private secondary boarding schools are college-preparatory, typically possess religious histories, maintained by a board of trustees, and are primarily located in the eastern United States.[49] Today, schools like St. Paul's, Groton, Phillips Exeter, and Choate are still among the oldest and most renowned schools in the country, where the wealthiest individuals send their children to receive an education and gain access to Ivy League colleges. Their alumni rosters include members of the Rockefeller, Kennedy and Vanderbilt families; children of CEOs and ambassadors, and former U.S. presidents. Unsurprisingly, such elite access comes at a high price. At St. Paul's School in New Hampshire, for example, which like its peer schools is a pipeline to the Ivy League, two-thirds of the student body can afford the $40,000 per year tuition, and the endowment is equivalent to $1 million per student.[50]

The wealth and opportunity that abound in an institution like St. Paul's, as well as its distance from the general population, frustrate yet mesmerize the humblest observer. Though established in centuries past, the inner workings of preparatory schools eluded scholars and the public until the latter part of the 1900s. Sociologists Peter W. Cookson, Jr. and Caroline Hodges Persell were the first to give an in-depth analysis of American elite

---

[48] A few schools were established as early as the eighteenth century, but a majority of the most prestigious ones were established in the 1800s in response to increased immigration. Peter W. Cookson, Jr. and Caroline Hodges Persell, *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), location 421, PDF e-book.

[49] A few of the characteristics listed by Cook and Persell. For the purposes of this paper, private secondary schools, or independent schools, refers solely to those schools that are elite and college-preparatory. Cookson and Persell, *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools,* location 638, PDF e-book.

[50] Shamus Khan, *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 37.

boarding schools in their work, *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools*, in 1987. The authors use Erving Goffman's term "total institution" to describe the regimented environment of an independent boarding school: a single authority ruling over a single space wherein students adhere to a formal schedule and guidelines, all in accordance with the objectives of that institution.[51] The headmasters comprising ISTSP considered the high expectations and required self-discipline of their independent boarding schools as ideal, structured environments in which disadvantaged students could succeed.[52]

Furthermore, because preparatory schools and private colleges were and remain outside the bounds of government intervention, the founders believed that their schools were in a unique position to circumvent the laws and customs restraining the integration of public schools. "The higher education community," the headmasters wrote in a preliminary statement, "must play a leadership role in this effort. The opportunity is particularly propitious for putting to the test of leadership the vaunted quality, freedom and willingness to venture of American private education."[53]

Once the headmasters established their rationale for utilizing prep schools, they then turned their attention to recruitment. Before the ISTSP came into existence, the primary recruiting agency for colleges and universities gradually seeking to diversify their student bodies was the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students (NSSFNS). Headed by Richard L. Plaut, the organization sought to "increase and broaden

---

[51] Cookson and Persell, *Preparing for Power: America's Elite Boarding Schools,* location 660.

[52] Rockefeller Brothers Fund Proposal, March 9, 1967, Page 6, Folder 2, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[53] "A Proposal: Project ABC (Preliminary Statement- Not for Publication)," November 1, 1963, 2, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

opportunities for Negro students in interracial colleges."[54] Based in New York and founded in 1947 by Felice Schwartz, a white affluent graduate of Smith College, NSSFNS was the first ever talent search program in the United States created with the sole purpose of helping African Americans gain admission to private white colleges.

The idea for such an endeavor came to Schwartz when she was a student at Smith. Influenced by a religion professor who challenged students to embody their religious beliefs in practice, Schwartz began a letter writing campaign to the heads of white colleges to discern why blacks had or had not attended their institutions. The schools responded that they had no qualms about admitting qualified blacks to their schools, but hardly received any applications. Thus NSSFNS was born, for it was Schwartz's logic that if she provided several applications from black students, enrollment of black students at these historically white institutions would certainly increase. [55]

For much of the first half of the twentieth century, America's elite colleges, such as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton strictly regulated the enrollment numbers of Jews, Catholics, and African Americans. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants dominated those exclusive spaces, just as they did a majority of America's leadership positions.[56] By World War II, however, societal transformations compelled institutions to inclusivity. Intellectuals fleeing Nazi rule were hired as faculty, and students were increasingly selected

---

[54] Richard Plaut, "Plans for Assisting Negro Students to Enter and to Remain in College," *Journal of Negro Education* 35, no.4 (1966): 393.

[55] Linda Perkins, "The First Black Talent Identification Search Program: The National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, 1947-1968," in *Higher Education for African Americans before the Civil Rights Era, 1900-1964,* Marybeth Gasman and Roger L. Geiger, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012).

[56] Marcia Graham Synnott, *The Half-Opened Door: Discrimination and Admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, 1900-1970* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2010), xvii.

for their intellectual capacity rather than social standing alone. Prior to *Brown v. Board of Education* a few blacks, such as renowned scholar W.E.B. Du Bois, did succeed in overcoming the discriminatory restrictions to enter the Ivy League. After the court's decision, however, the landscape of higher education drastically changed.[57] The percentage of blacks and other ethnic groups admitted did increase, but the shift was further crystallized by President Kennedy's admonishment of the educational system.

Similar to the mission of the Independent Schools Talent Search Program, several colleges and universities explored ways both to diversify their own student body, and to make a tangible impact on the lives of African Americans, the poor, and other disadvantaged groups.[58] Since its inception in the late 1940s, the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students had identified black students who excelled in high school, aided them through the college application process, and ensured the availability of financial aid to their students. Because of the organization's experience with recruiting students, in November of 1963 the National Scholarship Service and ISTSP decided to collaborate, with ISTSP functioning within the existing structure of the National Scholarship Service.[59]

The founders of ISTSP puzzled over the critical question of student preparedness. Even if disadvantaged students were given a clear route to an elite education, "failure

---

[57] Synnott, *The Half-Opened Door: Discrimination and Admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, 1900-1970,* xx.

[58] Ibid.

[59] I will use ISTSP and Talent Search interchangeably to refer to the Independent Schools Talent Search Program (ISTSP). Hereafter the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students (NSSFNS) will be referred to as the National Scholarship Service.

appeared inevitable" due to a lack of preparation in local schools.[60] Dartmouth College, an institution with a somewhat peculiar history and a keen interest in diversifying its student body, provided a solution. John Dickey, then president of the college; Charles Dey, associate dean of the college; and other Dartmouth administrators had been exploring ways to increase educational opportunities for minorities. Dartmouth was one of many institutions in 1963 attempting to ameliorate the barriers blacks and minorities encountered. The college answered an explicit appeal from the federal government. On July 12, 1963, President Kennedy wrote a letter to Gilbert Tanis, an executive officer at Dartmouth, and someone Kennedy had been advised to contact. In the letter, Kennedy wrote that "American tradition" dictates that "the responsibility for education" belongs to local and state governments, and public and private institutions.[61] Referencing the "explosive situation in many of our great cities," the President believed that white and black disadvantaged youth required "special programs" in their pursuit of education and employment opportunities. As a part of nationwide effort, it was up to institutions like Dartmouth to resolve the "grave civil rights problems faced by this Nation."[62]

Those at Dartmouth understood that it was naïve to believe that, as Dickey notes, "we didn't have ingrained racism, that Dartmouth had had Negroes in the student body since 1823 and so on and so on."[63] As an institution of higher learning, it could play an

---

[60] "The First Two Years of the Independent Schools Talent Search Program: A Staff Report to the Membership," September 1965, Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[61] President John F. Kennedy, letter to Gilbert Tanis, July 12, 1963, Folder ABC Project, Box 8448, John G. Kemeny Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith' Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 2, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

integral part "in meeting the increasingly challenging problem of a modern society fractured by inequalities in educational opportunity."[64]

By September 12, 1963, Dickey compiled a list of recommendations for ways that Dartmouth could respond to Kennedy's request, such as increasing the number of black faculty and revising the curriculum. However, Dickey described Dartmouth's main problem as lacking a pool of qualified black applicants due to "inadequate secondary schooling and, even more important, from a social background" in direct contrast to "the type of home environment that successful Dartmouth applicants normally have."[65] Typed in all capital letters for emphasis, Dickey wrote that the college ought to utilize its "FINANCIAL RESOURCES, ITS PLANT, ITS STAFF, ITS FACULTY, AND ITS STUDENTS" – everything Dartmouth had at its disposal – to create a remedial education program that would prepare students for college admission.[66]

Serendipitously, Dickey visited Northfield Mount Hermon School in Gill, Massachusetts, one of the twenty-three original independent schools to join ISTSP, shortly after the creation of the talent search program. The visit had nothing to do with ISTSP or matters of educational equality. In a conversation between Dickey and Mount Hermon's headmaster, Art Kendall, the two men stumbled upon one another's different projects. This

[64] "A Proposal: Project ABC (Preliminary Statement – Not for Publication)," November 1, 1963, 5, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[65] John Dickey, memorandum to Waldo Chamberlin, John Finch and Thaddeus Seymour, September 12, 1963, Folder ABC Project, Box 8448, John G. Kemeny Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

[66] Ibid.

led to the realization that the men's two separate efforts would benefit from collaboration.[67] And so, Dartmouth College and ISTSP joined two discrete yet complementary projects to "reduce the risk" of failure. They called it Project X, unable to think of a suitable name. They knew they wanted their students to gain a better chance in life. "That's it," John Dickey, president of Dartmouth College, thought to himself: A Better Chance.[68] The program would be held on Dartmouth's campus in the summer of 1964. Charles Dey, associate dean of Dartmouth at the time, would be the director.[69]

Their intervention would present an opportunity to "determine whether an intensive and highly individualized effort on a campus of higher education can help remedy the academic and cultural deprivation" of disadvantaged students.[70] If Dartmouth's and ISTSP's venture proved successful, the collaboration between the college and the preparatory schools "would have adaptability and transferability to other institutions of higher education and schools, both public and private, in other sections of the country."[71] Those at Dartmouth and ISTSP recognized the vast potential of their project, but also knew that the current framework for recruiting students was too restrictive. Up until the 1960s, colleges and preparatory schools looking to diversify sought referrals for the "nuggets" –

---

[67] Daniel Daily, interview with Charles Dey, March 28, 2002, Oral History, Rauner Special Collection, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

[68] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith' Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 22, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation; Charles F. Dey Interview, 32, Oral history, Rauner Special Collection, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

[69] "The First Two Years of the Independent Schools Talent Search Program: A Staff Report to the Membership," September 1965, Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[70] "A Proposal: Project ABC (Preliminary Statement – Not for Publication)," November 1, 1963, 5, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[71] Ibid.

the intelligent black students at the top of their class, who were also athletic.[72] But with every Ivy and high ranking school seeking the same type of student, the realization emerged that there just were not enough "nuggets" to go around.[73] Dickey and others at Dartmouth created new criteria – "the academic risk;" "the child who, unless someone intervened in his life, would probably never develop his potential as a human being."[74] This was radical. Dartmouth wanted to court students who on paper (i.e. grades and standardized test scores) seemed unimpressive, average; but their motivation, ambition, and other factors hinted at potential greatness, if only given a better chance. The independent schools were skeptical, and rightly so. But Dartmouth's association with the recruitment and remedial education process proved invaluable because it legitimized the efforts of all involved. In an interview several years later reflecting about the creation of the programs, Dickey said, "Of course, we were a little scared. We didn't have any choice but to be careful. I'm sure everyone was thinking silently: What if we fail? We could have thrown back the cause of equal opportunity education for years. We had to be prepared for everything and anything."[75]

It was going to take a special individual with a keen eye to identify the students that the ISTSP-ABC collaboration was after. An African American man named James E. Simmons was a field representative and recruiting officer for the National Scholarship Service and ISTSP. A high school drop-out from New York City, James Simmons,

---

[72] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith' Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 2, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid., 23.

[75] Ibid., 24.

described as "a pleasant and attractive Negro," served in the Navy during World War II.[76] He participated in a specialized training program, and garnered praise from the Navy for his exceptional performance. Simmons' initial plan had been to remain in the Navy through to retirement, but the Navy's recognition of his performance made him think, for the first time, that he could achieve more in life. And so, Simmons left the Navy and returned to New York City in the late 1940s. He could not find a job. The friends whom he had left prior to the war, then juvenile delinquents, had become "adult criminals." Out of fear that he would become the same, Simmons' mother convinced him to leave the city and resume a life in the Navy. Simmons obliged, and began his journey to Atlanta, Georgia, where he would be stationed.

But, Simmons never made it to Atlanta. His grandmother, learning that Simmons originally left the Navy out of a desire to discover his potential, swayed her grandson's decision and encouraged him to finish high school. For a year he attended school by day, and excelled, and worked by night. But he grew frustrated at the fact that he was a young man attending school with people much younger than he. Tempted to drop-out yet again and re-enlist in the Navy, Simmons' grandmother intervened once more and persuaded an admissions officer at the Hampton Institute to accept her bright grandson. After five years, and with no high school diploma, Simmons graduated from the Hampton Institute with a double major in sociology, and speech and drama, and with a minor in physical education. Simmons went on to teach high school in North Carolina, serve as Assistant Dean of Men at his alma mater, teach at North Carolina College, and obtain a Master's degree in

[76] Leland DeVinney, interview with James Simmons, February 16, 1965, 1, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

educational counseling from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.[77] Richard Plaut, president of the National Scholarship Service, hired Simmons as his assistant for secondary school recruitment.[78] Simmons, once a boy with an uncertain future, searched for a new generation of students in whose lives he could intervene.

With the assistance of guidance counselors, teachers, and other perceptive members of a community, Simmons identified underprivileged boys who had both the potential to succeed in an academically rigorous environment, and possessed the maturity and resilience to endure the foreignness and potential hostility of a homogenous white setting. After receiving recommendations from school officials and community members, an application prepared by the student and his family, the completion of standardized testing, and if possible, interviewing the applicant, Simmons narrowed the pool of prospective students to a select few. The program then forwarded applications on behalf of these students to a consortium of various independent schools, all of which believed in the program's mission to open educational opportunities to historically marginalized people.[79]

To initiate such a lofty endeavor as ISTSP-ABC, one that intended to cover all tuition costs and provide free room and board and other expenses for two months at Dartmouth, more money than either the independent schools or Dartmouth College could provide was necessary. The answer? Philanthropy.

---

[77] Leland DeVinney, interview with James Simmons, February 16, 1965, 1, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[78] Bice Clemlow et al, "Loosening the Old School Tie," May 1970, 15, Project Evaluation, Unpublished Report Series 2162, Division of National Affairs, Ford Foundation.

[79] The program only recruited boys for the first summer program because additional measures would have needed to be taken to accommodate both boys and girls, and ABC wanted to test their project with a single sex group first. By the following summer in 1965, Mount Holyoke College hosted an all-girls ABC program.

Philanthropies originated at the beginning of the twentieth century, guided by a belief that the wealthiest individuals in society should have a vested interest in the public good.[80] Millionaires such as Andrew Carnegie created organizations to legitimize their charitable ventures and efficiently and effectively distribute private wealth. [81] By the 1960s, philanthropic organizations began to address the rising state of inequities among people of color, specifically African Americans. [82] The Rockefeller Foundation, for example, a legacy of John D. Rockefeller, Sr., established the Equal Opportunity Division in 1963 to, "associate itself more tangibly with efforts to eradicate the evils of discrimination, especially against Negroes."[83] The Rockefellers, however, were not new to the plight of African Americans in the United States. The General Education Board (GEB), predecessor to the Equal Opportunity Division, was established in 1902. By the time the Rockefellers dissolved GEB in 1960, the fund had contributed $325 million to education in the United States.[84] The Rockefeller Foundation, a separate division of Rockefeller finances, assumed responsibility for some of the projects previously funded by the GEB. In particular, the foundation, as well as other donors, continued to fund the United Negro College Fund (UNCF).[85]

---

[80] Robert H. Bremner. *American Philanthropy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988):101.

[81] Bremner. *American Philanthropy,* 115.

[82] Ibid, 187.

[83] Leland C. DeVinney, "Toward Equal Opportunity for All: A Summary report of the foundation's effort in this program, 1963-1974."

[84] Ibid., 2.

[85] Ibid., 7.

The discussions among Rockefeller Foundation officers and trustees about donating to black colleges unmasked a desire to publicly articulate the need "to eliminate discrimination against the Negro."[86] However, the officers and trustees debated whether black colleges were the means to do so, or if the nation's segregated yet esteemed institutions should be the foundation's focus.[87] In the end, Rockefeller continued to fund UNCF, and the foundation founded the Equal Opportunity Division. Led by Leland C. DeVinney, the deputy director of humanities and social sciences of the Rockefeller Foundation, the division emphasized three goals: cultivate minority leadership, lend support to black schools in the south, and better prepare blacks for college.[88]

The keystone of the division's goals was to dispel the myth of black intellectual inferiority, which, according to the foundation, informed every facet of discrimination.[89] Rockefeller thus looked to higher education. Described as an "exceedingly difficult and long-term process," Rockefeller bypassed the public school system for higher education because by 1963, schools remained too separate and too unequal.[90] Emory, Duke, Tulane, and Vanderbilt, for example, were four institutions that could legally admit black students. Yet foundation officers worried about situating blacks directly from high school in these colleges, and contemplated whether "more than token numbers" of black students could be

---

[86] Leland C. DeVinney, "Toward Equal Opportunity for All: A Summary report of the foundation's effort in this program, 1963-1974," 7, Rockefeller Foundation.

[87] Ibid.

[88] "Equal Opportunity," *The Rockefeller Foundation*, February 25, 2015, http://rockefeller100.org/exhibits/show/education/equal-opportunity. Accessed June 25, 2014.

[89] DeVinney, "Toward Equal Opportunity for All," 9.

[90] Ibid., 14.

recruited, if they would meet schools' criteria, and if they would encounter hostility from white students and faculty.[91]

Various institutions, many of them colleges, sent a mass of funding proposals to the Rockefeller Foundation in 1963. The proposals focused on advancing minorities at the high school level, which alleviated the problems Rockefeller foresaw at the college level. The institutions seeking to initiate these programs shared Rockefeller's belief that, "any swift, substantial improvement," for minorities and low income youth in the United States would require remedial education at the secondary and even primary levels of schooling.[92] Along with Dartmouth College, Rockefeller identified two additional summer intervention programs spearheaded by Princeton University and Oberlin College, which, as the foundation believed, offered "especially favorable opportunities" as a result of an independent school-higher education partnership. Rockefeller awarded each $150,000. [93]

Princeton's program functioned most similarly to Dartmouth's, in that it too was an eight week summer transitional program geared towards remedial education for disadvantaged white and black youth. The main difference, however, was that Princeton partnered with Princeton High School, Trenton Public School, and Lawrenceville school, an elite preparatory school, to recruit students from New Jersey's urban high schools.[94] Princeton similarly selected on the basis of unrealized potential, recommendations, and

---

[91] DeVinney, "Toward Equal Opportunity for All," 12.

[92] "Remedial Summer Programs for High School Students – Princeton University, Oberlin College, Dartmouth College," 1963, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[93] "Remedial Summer Programs for High School Students – Princeton University, Oberlin College, Dartmouth College," 1963, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[94] Ibid.

interviews; but unlike A Better Chance at Dartmouth, students returned to their local high schools, with hopes that their experiences at Princeton would translate into pursuing a college education after graduation.

The efforts of Dartmouth, Princeton, Oberlin and numerous other initiatives supported by Rockefeller ushered in and were representative of a new era of educational intervention; yet as quickly as it had begun, the federal government abruptly complicated the Rockefeller Foundation's objective.

After winning the 1964 presidential election against Republican nominee Barry Goldwater, Lyndon B. Johnson initiated his dream of transforming America into a Great Society. He firmly believed that the federal government possessed the power and the responsibility to, for example, defend the historically marginalized and promote American interests abroad. The hallmark of Johnson's liberal agenda was the War on Poverty.[95] Besides Michael Harrington's book *The Other America* published in 1962, the federal government knew little about poverty, or how to combat it. Rather than ease in a few pilot initiatives, Johnson pushed to make a considerable impact on the nation's poor and did so unapologetically. Despite how bogged down many of the bills were with ear marks and other political maneuvers, Johnson managed to negotiate medical assistance, training programs, housing acts, rent supplements and many more initiatives to increase the quality of life for America's poor.[96]

With the establishment of the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964, the country's initial conviction to combat discrimination shifted to uplifting the poor and

[95] Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s,* 105.

[96] Ibid., 108.

impacted the ways that philanthropic organizations spent their dollars.[97] Princeton University, for example, framed its remedial education intervention as a necessity for disadvantaged black and white students alike. However, Rockefeller's newly minted Equal Opportunity Division had been founded in explicit racial terms; blacks were the primary focus, but "equal opportunity" extended to any minority group. The federal government's involvement meant that more money than the foundation was capable of providing could be allotted to educational initiatives like Princeton's, which primarily defined its recruitment by socioeconomic status, or the economically disadvantaged. Indirectly, then, the Office of Economic Opportunity influenced the mission of educational intervention programs that approached the Rockefeller Foundation for additional funding.[98] Though initially compelled to operate against racial discrimination, the Rockefeller Foundation found itself "increasingly muddled by the confusion of efforts to help all of the country's impoverished people."[99] The ambiguity of the term "disadvantaged" would haunt A Better Chance down the road, as well. Nonetheless, Rockefeller approved a grant of $150,000 for a three year period for the first ABC summer transitional program that would take place in 1964.[100]

The founders of the Independent Schools Talent Search Program and A Better Chance could finally see the various pieces of their plan to answer President Kennedy's call come together. They created a pragmatic plan by which they could recruit and educate

[97] DeVinney, "Toward Equal Opportunity for All," 18.

[98] Ibid.

[99] DeVinney, "Toward Equal Opportunity for All," 18.

[100] "Resolved RF 70027," Folder 943, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

students with the support of an existing organization, the National Scholarship Service. And they procured funding from one of the nation's oldest and most recognized philanthropies. On paper, their proposal was impressive, idealistic even; but would recruitment and the ABC summer transitional program come to fruition? After receiving the initial Rockefeller Foundation grant, Charles Dey assured the Rockefeller Foundation that if the educational experiment fell short that first summer, Dartmouth and ISTSP would not "waste funds." [101]

That first year, it quickly became apparent that providing a free private education to marginalized peoples in the United States would prove to be an incredibly challenging undertaking, with an array of "unanticipated difficulties" to juggle from all parties involved.[102] Richard Plaut, president of the National Scholarship Service, approved of the ABC summer program from the outset of their partnership, but he possessed a greater liking for programs looking to impact larger groups of students than the structure of ABC permitted.[103] Although the National Scholarship Service and ISTSP were to jointly work together to recruit students, Plaut's desire to impact the masses and ABC's more concentrated approach with independent preparatory schools created a palpable tension

[101] Leland DeVinney, telephone interview with Charles Dey, November 29, 1963, Folder 943, Box 148, Record Group 1.4 Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[102] Charles Dey, letter to Leland DeVinney, March 27, 1964, 1, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[103] Leland DeVinney, "Dartmouth summer school proposal," November 12, 1963, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

between the organizations, creating an atmosphere, as described by Simmons, that was one of "hostility, futility, and rigidity."[104]

Plaut butted heads with several individuals. Presidents of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) criticized Plaut for the National Scholarship Service's "fiercely integrationist" agenda.[105] The program's primary objective was to recruit black students from the south and situate them in all white colleges. The National Scholarship Service refused to recommend or provide funding for black students to attend HBCUs.

Simmons felt that he could not do his job. Plaut used Simmons for the National Scholarship Service's college recruitment and permitted little time for Simmons to recruit the eighth and ninth grade students ISTSP needed.[106] Chronic struggles with Plaut's leadership motivated Simmons to accept a teaching position at North Carolina College. As Simmons attempted to resign from his position with the National Scholarship Service, Plaut "fired him outright."[107] The men parted ways on January 10, 1964.

Plaut asked the committee members of ISTSP for permission to a hire a replacement for Simmons. But tensions were high. Plaut accused Howard Jones, chairman of Talent Search, of acting outside of the bounds of Jones' authority. The other committee members,

---

[104] James E. Simmons, memo to Executive Committee – Independent Schools Talent Search Program, "Referral Analysis, Travel Report, and Program Recommendations," Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[105] Linda Perkins, "The First Black Talent Identification Search Program: The National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, 1947-1968," in *Higher Education for African Americans before the Civil Rights Era, 1900-1964*, Marybeth Gasman and Roger L. Geiger, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012), 190.

[106] Daniel Daily, interview with Charles Dey, 26, Oral History, Rauner Special Collection.

[107] Leland DeVinnney, interview with James Simmons, February 16, 1965, 1, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

overwhelmingly so, did not share Plaut's sentiments. They believed that Plaut's "extreme sensitivity and flagging confidence" made "every disagreement a personal attack upon himself."[108] Plaut, the committee accused, had more interest in the college recruitment aspect of the National Scholarship Service. William Etsy, headmaster of the Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut, did not relegate all of the blame to Plaut, however. In a meeting among ISTSP's executive committee members, Etsy told the group Simmons played his own role in the two men's disagreements. Etsy warned the committee that breaking ties with the National Scholarship Service would only make matters worse.

The committee ignored Etsy. In a five-to-one vote, ISTSP dissolved the short-lived partnership with the National Scholarship Service and employed Simmons for their services.[109] Simmons left the National Scholarship Service in his Volkswagen Bug with 250 perspective applicant files and drove to Hanover, New Hampshire. He quickly established an office in the basement of Dartmouth.[110] In a memo to the executive committee of ISTSP, Simmons wrote that the dissolved partnership "was not as damaging to the program as it could have been, or as damaging as some believe it has been, because of the excellent cooperation the program received from Dartmouth College."[111] Moreover, the move to Dartmouth permitted "cooperative flexibility" for the staff, "a greater sense of

---

[108] Bice Clemlow, "Loosening the Old School Tie," May 1970, 16, Unpublished Report Series 2162, Project Evaluation, Division of National Affairs, Ford Foundation.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Charles Dey, letter to Leland DeVinney, March 27, 1964, 1, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation; Daniel Daily, interview with Charles Dey, March 28, 2002, 26, Oral history, Rauner Special Collection.

[111] James E. Simmons, memo to Executive Committee – Independent Schools Talent Search Program, "Referral Analysis, Travel Report, and Program Recommendations," Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

purpose; a most realistic understanding of limitations," and an opportunity to "focus less upon the negative aspects of the program," and instead revel in the "many positive aspects."[112]

As Charles Dey, associate dean of Dartmouth noted in a letter to Leland DeVinney of the Rockefeller Foundation on March 27, 1964, Simmons managed to continue the recruitment process after the tumultuous split threatened to thwart Talent Search's and ABC's efforts. But now the independent schools jeopardized the stability of the project. "We found secondary school ABC commitments less firm than we had judged," Dey, as newly appointed director of ABC, wrote, "and the interpretation of 'deprivation' and 'risk' quite different from school to school."[113] Furthermore, some schools gave scholarships to non-ABC students, and claimed to have no more money to give; Simmons had a difficult time finding schools to accept recruited students; and the timeline for the admissions process to independent schools had passed, making it difficult to find space for ABC students. Dey was not shocked by the obstacles confronting ABC, or the reneged promises of independent schools which had signed on to the project several months prior. Simmons believed that many of the independent schools only participated in ABC "for public relations reasons but really aren't willing to take any students."[114] Nor did Simmons believe schools' excuses of exhausted scholarship funds.

---

[112] James E. Simmons, memo to Executive Committee – Independent Schools Talent Search Program, "Referral Analysis, Travel Report, and Program Recommendations," Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[113] Charles Dey, letter to Leland DeVinney, March 27, 1964, 2, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[114] Leland DeVinnney, interview with James Simmons, February 16, 1965, 2, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

Despite the setbacks, by April 1964 Simmons and Dey had acquired spots for thirty students and were more than halfway to their goal of fifty students, with a deadline of May 1.[115] And out of sheer determination and perseverance from Simmons, Dey, and all others involved, the A Better Chance summer transitional program finally launched in the summer of 1964 at Dartmouth College. Fifty-five boys entered the summer program fully funded, with full scholarships from their schools awaiting them upon successful completion of the program. Among the students were: Leslie Powell of LaCrosse, Virginia, with contingent admission to Andover; Stanford Edley of North Charleston, South Carolina, with an acceptance to Gunnery in hand; Gary Johnson of New Haven, Connecticut, bound for the Hotchkiss School; Frederick Wood of Clarksville, Virginia awaiting a new school year at Taft.[116]

The founders modeled the days after a typical routine at an independent boarding school, to which the ABC boys had to adjust in preparation for school in the fall. A typical weekday began at 7:15 in the morning with breakfast. Each boy attended four, fifty minute classes, five if the boy needed to refine his reading skills. Classes centered on English and mathematics, which were two core subjects that could provide an ideal educational foundation for students after a mere eight weeks of remedial education. By 12:30, lunch. The students then had the opportunity to meet with teachers, to study, or to enjoy free time to do as they pleased. Sports practices occurred in the late afternoons. 5:50, a formal dinner. Faculty, tutors, and students alike gathered together to mimic the structured meal time of

[115] Charles Dey, memo to Independent School Headmasters, Directors of Admission and Others, "Progress Report," April 13, 1964, 2, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[116] Ibid., 1.

preparatory school. From 7-10 in the evening, designated study hours, students completed their homework.[117]

As the 55 youngsters worked to narrow the achievement gap in the hallowed halls of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, in 1964, a war raged in Mississippi. Arrests, murders, and violence did not stop campaigns for black voter registration, or deter the Freedom Schools from their mission to organize and educate blacks in their pursuit of citizenship and equality.[118] It is possible that the occurrences down south trickled into discussions during the summer program. After all, the founders of ISTSP-ABC wanted to offer an immediate educational alternative to blacks in the United States, as did the Freedom Schools. But discussions about race were never explicitly incorporated into the curriculum during the first summer session. The founders instead spoke of racial strife with the students as "problems common to the broader human condition."[119] Sunday afternoons before dinner were reserved for group discussions, to include students, faculty, and resident tutors, facilitated by a guest speaker who spoke about "topics relevant to the ABC effort and purpose."[120] Sometimes the speakers expounded on race relations, while others did so "obliquely."[121] These inconsistencies were of little importance; ABC believed that the "harmonious integration of faculty, tutors, and students" – during the summer program and

---

[117] Davis Jackson, "Dartmouth 1966: A Better Chance," Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[118] Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s,* 94.

[119] Charles Dey and Davis Jackson, "ABC 1965 – Dartmouth," 11, Folder 950, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[120] Davis Jackson, "Dartmouth 1966: A Better Chance," 40, Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[121] Ibid.

within a prep school classroom – was enough.[122] By mere contact between whites and blacks, integration could be achieved.

ISTSP-ABC staff did not agree with this passive approach to race, however, and this division would eventually cause intense debate within the program. But for now, the summer project was purely experimental, and a host of other issues troubled the founders. Even if enough students fitting the program's criteria could be identified, and regardless of whether independent schools committed to ISTSP-ABC's cause, none of that would matter if students and their families refused to participate, or if the summer program could not bridge the achievement gap. For all the planning that went into creating the ideal atmosphere for remedial education, there was no perfect formula to determine which students would succeed, and which would falter in prep school. Reflecting on the first summer of ABC, Charles Dey described what he referred to as the "disappointment," the "surprise," and the "underdog" to demonstrate the variability of ABC students. [123]

Referred to as "Don Doe," the disappointment was one of thirty-five students the ABC staff recommended without reservations. "He is strongly motivated and will accept new challenges eagerly and competently," the ABC staff wrote. With an "infectious grin," and a "great sense of purpose," Doe "never hesitated to tackle a difficult task."[124] But upon entering preparatory school, and to everyone's surprise, Doe fell short of expectations and carried an apathetic demeanor towards his education. Because the ABC staff had

---

[122] Charles Dey and Davis Jackson, "ABC 1965 – Dartmouth," 11, Folder 950, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[123]Charles Dey, "Chapter Two of Project ABC," May 1965, 2, Folder 950, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[124] Ibid.

considered Doe an ideal fit for preparatory school, ABC experienced an existential crisis of sorts as they reevaluated all of their actions, ranging from the selection criteria to preparation during the summer program:

> How do we account for this apparent change? Has he been placed in a preparatory school in which the academic competition is too rugged? Has he been paralyzed by suddenly finding himself at the bottom of his class? Does he simply need more time to adjust? Does his lack of effort suggest lack of conviction about preparatory school education? [125]

The surprise was a boy called "Sam," who was one of twelve whom ABC staff recommended to preparatory school with reservations. At the summer program, staff evaluated Sam as being "careless with his work," and in need of "discipline and restraint."[126] At preparatory school, Sam thrived, shocking teachers, the headmaster, and ABC staff with the progress he made since entering prep school. And the underdog, "Jimmie Jones," was one of eight students not recommended to preparatory school after completion of the summer program. "Jimmie simply does not have the ability to progress successfully in a mathematics program of any rigor," ABC staff wrote in their evaluation.[127] "Though we do not feel that we can responsibly recommend that you admit him, he certainly embodies those personal characteristics that tempt educators to 'take a risk.'…He is young and perhaps he simply needs more time to blossom."[128] The preparatory school, with whom the ultimate decision lay, chose to admit Jones, who went

[125] Charles Dey, "Chapter Two of Project ABC," May 1965, 2, Folder 950, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 3.

[128] Ibid.

from failing 3 of his 4 classes at the end of the fall term, to passing 3 out of 4 classes by the end of the grading period. "Jimmie has it," the headmaster wrote, "the spirit to try, the willingness to stretch."[129]

Just as the ISTSP-ABC staff warned students and their families of what students would be sacrificing and the potential difficulties, academically and psychologically, that awaited them, the staff also realized that as smoothly as the inaugural summer program took place, an extensive study needed to be developed to determine the impact of preparatory school on ABC students. Eight weeks during the summer could offer "no definitive evaluation," and ABC could only truly attain the answers they were after from a "future study of 55 lifetimes."[130] So ABC enlisted the help of Alden Wessman, a Harvard graduate with a degree in Social Psychology, and PhD in Psychology from Princeton, to develop a study that would track students lives' over a number of years in prep school. Wessman sent his first proposal to the Office of Education in September 1964.[131]

Meanwhile in Washington D.C., President Johnson appointed R. Sargent Shriver, former head of the Peace Corps and an in-law of the Kennedy family, as director of the Office of Economic Opportunity. With a surplus of federal dollars at his disposal, Shriver searched for something in which he could invest, and turned to A Better Chance:

"Can you take one thousand students this summer?" Shriver inquired to Simmons.

---

[129] Charles Dey, "Chapter Two of Project ABC," May 1965, 3, Folder 950, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[130] "ABC Project and Students Both Measure Up to High Expectations," 1965, Folder 943, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[131] Alden Wessman, "Basic and Applied Research Proposal: Submitted to the U.S. Commissioner of Education Under the Provisions of Public Law 531," February 25, 1965, 20, Folder 944, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

"That'll take a lot of money," Simmons responded.

"Scare me with the figure."

"Ten million dollars."

Shriver replied, "That doesn't scare me."[132]

[132] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith' Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 23, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

Chapter II

"Days of Disillusion" [133]

[133] William Berkeley, "Alternative to Disillusion," ABC Annual Report 1968, Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Section 402 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 required that the U.S. Commissioner of Education, Harold Howe II, direct a study about educational opportunities in the nation's public school system. Howe commissioned James S. Coleman of Johns Hopkins University to uncover: (1) the degree of segregation in public schools; (2) educational opportunities amongst different groups; (3) knowledge gained in school, and (4) the relationship between the schools students attend and subsequent achievement.[134]

To Washington, the final report was "An Educational Time Bomb;" to Boston, "A Report Disputes a Cure;" and to Los Angeles, "Beliefs About Schools Shaken by Study." [135] The 737-page "Equality of Educational Opportunity Report," or the "Coleman Report," for short, was "the nearest thing to an educational bombshell to come out of the Federal Government in a long time," wrote Gerald Grant, a reporter for *The Washington Post* on December 26, 1966.[136] Some of the findings were not surprising. On the issue of segregation for example, in northern cities approximately forty-four percent of African American first graders attended schools that were between eighty and one hundred percent black.[137] Instead, what shocked the public and made the Coleman Report so controversial

---

[134] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, by James S. Coleman (Washington D.C.: Unites States Government Printing Office, 1966).

[135] Gerald Grant, "An Education Time Bomb," *Washington Post,* December 26, 1966; Joseph Aslop, "A Report Disputes A Cure," *Boston Globe,* January 23, 1967; Vincent J. Burke, "Beliefs About Schools Shaken Up by Study," *Los Angeles Times,* March 6, 1967.

[136] Gerald Grant, "An Education Time Bomb," *Washington Post,* December 26, 1966.

[137] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, by James S. Coleman (Washington D.C.: Unites States Government Printing Office, 1966), 40.

was the challenge it posed to traditional ideas about education and school integration. The report reads:

> The higher achievement of all racial and ethnic groups in schools with greater proportions of white students is largely, perhaps wholly, related to effects associated with the student body's educational background and aspirations. This means that the apparent beneficial effect of a student body with a higher proportion of white students comes not from racial composition per se, but from the better educational background and higher educational aspirations that are, on the average found among white students.[138]

In other words, adequately funded schools alone could not overcome educational disparities. The surrounding environment of schools, and differences in socioeconomic status within schools, made the biggest difference in the educational outcomes of students.

The Coleman Report elicited various reactions about integration from the public. For Floyd McKissick, director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the report shattered the myth, "mix Negroes with Negroes and you get stupidity." Racial integration did not improve student learning, nor was it the answer for poor black communities.[139] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, assistant secretary of labor under President Johnson and author of the highly debated, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," hailed the Coleman Report as confirmation of the "absolute necessity" of integration in the classroom:

> If we are going to produce equal educational opportunity in the United States in this generation, we must do so by sending Negro students, and

[138] U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, by James S. Coleman (Washington D.C.: Unites States Government Printing Office, 1966), 40, 307.

[139] Joseph Aslop, "A Report Disputes A Cure," *Boston Globe*, January 23, 1967.

> other minority groups of students as well, to majority white schools…There can be no fuzzing the decision: either we are willing or we are not.[140]

For A Better Chance, the Coleman Report reinforced its mission: moving students out of a predominantly black high school in the Bronx, New York, for instance, and into the esteemed halls of Groton in Groton, Massachusetts, was a vetted approach to improving the educational outcomes of America's minority and low-income groups. An evaluation of the ABC program was underway, but for now, the founders of ABC saw what was once their brainchild materialize. The first group of ABC high school graduates included: Leslie Powell, a student at Phillips Andover Academy, who graduated as a National Achievement Scholar with plans to attend Wesleyan University; Samuel Boone, a Cheshire Academy graduate bound for Cornell; and Jeffrey Palmer, a graduate of Kimball Union Academy in 1966 who was headed to Yale University.[141]

A Better Chance had a few success stories. But the program "could fold in two years," admitted Charles Dey, assistant dean of Dartmouth College in a confidential memo to John Sloan Dickey, president of the college.[142] As ABC worked to become more than just a pilot program, it firmly positioned itself as a proponent of integration in America's private – and public – schools. To the organizers of ABC, the term "public" school meant predominantly white and affluent; another small, privileged setting in the United States that could benefit underserved high school students. As ABC experimented with a new

---

[140] Robert Levey, "No Education in Segregation, Professor Says," *Boston Globe*, February 14, 1967.

[141] Gina B. Tangney, memo to Howard Jones, Charles Dey. Davis Jackson. Waldo Chamberlain, July 12, 1966, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[142] Charles Dey, memo to John Sloan Dickey, "ABC Future: Confidential," June 7, 1965, Folder A.B.C. Project 1964-1965, Box 7174, John Sloan Dickey Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection.

compensatory education model, and education reformers in the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) searched for ways to extend equal opportunity, what became clear, and what this chapter aims to illustrate, is the intersection of fleeting government interest and private investment.

R. Sargent Shriver, director of OEO, wanted to support ABC in its early stages of development. OEO had just created Upward Bound, the first federal program designed to aid low income students in their pursuit of a college education through remedial education programs and scholarships. [143] Upward Bound was ultimately one giant experiment in equalizing educational opportunity, comprised of multiple pilot programs that had only recently emerged in the wake of *Brown*. ABC represented the type of endeavor that the federal government could put its weight behind to target the cycle of poverty in America.[144] Shriver inquired about ABC on December 30, 1964.[145] ABC representatives, including founding member and chairman of the Independent Schools Talent Search Program, and the headmaster of Northfield Mount Hermon School Howard Jones; recruitment officer James Simmons; and associate dean of Dartmouth College Charles Dey all travelled to Washington D.C. to speak with Shriver and Adam Clayton Powell of the U.S. House of Representatives.[146]

---

[143] Leland DeVinney, "Visit to ABC Program at Dartmouth College" July 6 and 7, 1965, 2, Folder 944 Box 148 Series 200 Record Group 1.4 Rockefeller Foundation.

[144] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 24, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[145] Sarge Shriver, letter to Thomas J. Watson, December 30, 1964, Folder 943, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[146] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 24, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation. See also Wil Haygood, *King of the Cats: The Life and Times of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993), 301-305

Shriver and Powell ended the meeting with enthusiasm for what would transpire. In May of 1965, Shriver provided $376,031 in scholarship support for 100 students, making ABC one of eighteen pilot programs operating under the auspices of Upward Bound for the first time in the summer of 1965.[147] ABC's 1965 summer program more than doubled its numbers from the previous year; eighty boys participated in the summer program at Dartmouth, while seventy girls participated in a new ABC summer program at Mount Holyoke College.[148] In addition to creating space for increased numbers of students, the director of the Mount Holyoke program, Mary E. Tuttle, wanted to extend ABC to deserving girls. The Rockefeller Foundation provided $150,000 to Mount Holyoke for ABC's expansion, and along with $80,000 in additional grants, A Better Chance accommodated girls for the first time. Sixty-nine girls in grades eight through eleven made it to the end, and sixty-three entered independent school in the fall.[149]

Shriver, encouraged by Upward Bound's first summer of federally funded initiatives, increased the program's projects to 220 for the following summer.[150] Shriver's enthusiasm carried over to ABC as he suggested that it submit a request that would allow ABC to place 900 students – eighteen times more than 1964 – in preparatory schools for

---

[147] "Rockefeller Brothers Fund Proposal," 3, March 9, 1967, Folder 2, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; "The First Two Years of the Independent Schools Talent Search Program: A Staff Report to the Membership," September 1965, 1, Folder 1, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; Thomas A. Billings, "Upward Bound Accomplishments," *The Phi Delta Kappa International* 50, no.2 (1968): 96.

[148] "Independent Schools Talent Search Program for Disadvantaged Students," September 13, 1965, 15, Folder 950, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[149] Mary E. Tuttle and Betty A. Mitman, "A Better Chance: An Educational Program*,"* Rockefeller Foundation.

[150] Thomas A. Billings, "Upward Bound Accomplishments," *The Phi Delta Kappa International* 50, no.2 (1968): 96.

the 1966-1967 school year.[151] To Shriver, more money meant significant increases in the number of students ABC recruited. But those at Dartmouth remained hesitant, insisting that the program could only cater to a limited number of students at any given time, ideally fifty, "lest the characters of the program or its quality be injured."[152] Charles Dey attempted to curb the excitement by ceding to expansion, but within limits:

> With apprehensions similar to those I felt a few years ago when Mr. Shriver was flooding the Philippines with Peace Corps Volunteers, I am trying to prevail upon Jim Simmons and Howard Jones to think in terms of 500 students for September 1966 and 500 for September 1967.[153]

In 1966, OEO granted an additional $1.5 million to ABC, providing second year scholarships for the 100 students of the previous year and for 200 new students.[154]

It is important to reiterate that because President Johnson and his staff fashioned OEO as an agency devoted to the nation's poor, any OEO funds allotted to ABC strictly went towards low income students. This stipulation may not, according to Leland DeVinney of the Rockefeller Foundation, leave room for "highly talented Negro students" who may not be poor, but still require "academic as well as financial assistance" if they are

---

[151] Charles Dey, memo to John Sloan Dickey, "ABC Future: Confidential," June 7, 1965, Folder A.B.C. Project 1964-1965, Box 7174, Dickey Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection.

[152] Leland DeVinney, "Visit to ABC Program at Dartmouth College" July 6 and 7, 1965, 6, Folder 944 Box 148 Series 200 Record Group 1.4 Rockefeller Foundation.

[153] Charles Dey, memo to John Sloan Dickey, "ABC Future: Confidential," June 7, 1965, Folder A.B.C. Project 1964-1965, Box 7174, Dickey Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection.

[154] Rockefeller Brothers Fund Proposal, March 9, 1967, 4, Folder 2, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund. In addition to the 200 students that were recruited as allowed by new OEO funds, 225 additional students were recruited. Of the 425 total students recruited for the 1966-1967 school year, 375 participated in the summer transitional program.

to attend preparatory school.[155] Just as the Rockefeller Foundation's racialized aims were complicated by President Johnson's anti-poverty agenda, so too were ABC's.

Because of OEO assistance, "it is now expected that no further money will be requested from RF," wrote DeVinney in an internal memo at the Rockefeller Foundation.[156] Dartmouth made it clear, however, that it would not have the resources to pick up the financial slack if the Rockefeller Foundation backed out entirely.[157] According to Dey, any additional costs would be absorbed by the secondary schools and colleges hosting summer programs. A proposal would only be submitted to the Rockefeller Foundation in extreme circumstances.

As a targeted remedial education effort, "it is hard to imagine," Leland DeVinney remarked after a visit to Dartmouth's program in the summer of 1965, "how it might be done better," than ABC.[158] The rest of the country took notice, as well. "Wadleigh Pupils to 12 Top Prep Schools," read a May 29, 1965 headline in the *New York Amsterdam News.*[159] "Businessmen Backing 15 Harlem Youngsters," the paper reported again in July of 1965.[160] "Private Schools Open Doors to Talented Poor," the *Boston Globe* wrote.[161]

---

[155] Leland DeVinney, "Visit to ABC Program at Dartmouth College" July 6 and 7, 1965, 2, Folder 944 Box 148 Series 200 Record Group 1.4 Rockefeller Foundation.

[156] Ibid., 4.

[157] Douglas J Perkins, letter to John E. Hock, July 6, 1965, Folder 944 Box 148 Series 200 Record Group 1.4 Rockefeller Foundation.

[158] Leland DeVinney, "Visit to ABC Program at Dartmouth College" July 6 and 7, 1965, 4, Folder 944 Box 148 Series 200 Record Group 1.4 Rockefeller Foundation.

[159] "Wadleigh Pupils To 12 Top Prep Schools," *New York Amsterdam News,* May 29, 1965, 1.

[160] "Businessmen Backing 15 Harlem Youngsters," *New York Amsterdam News,* July 17, 1965, 33.

[161] Robert L. Levey, "Private Schools Open Doors to Talented Poor," *Boston Globe,* July 18, 1965, A_8.

ABC projected that 100 new students would be funded by the private schools, and 300 by OEO in the fall of 1966. By 1967, 100 would be funded by private schools, and 400 by OEO.[162] But, no one knew if these projections were feasible, especially Simmons. ABC now had the resources to expand its reach and impact the lives of more disadvantaged youth in America, and Simmons had no doubt that he could find enough students to fill additional spots. But America's independent schools educated an incredibly small portion of the population. Despite the extra scholarships OEO provided and the $4-$5 ABC invested per student in comparison to $1 invested by the preparatory schools, the schools believed that they were reaching a point where they could not, or would not, handle any more students.[163] The issue for ABC was space.

Charles Dey, associate dean of Dartmouth College, had always been a proponent of the public school system. He himself had attended public school, and he believed that all children deserved the right to a quality education. For the 1966-1967 application cycle, ABC rejected over 1,000 applications, "many of whom appeared fully as promising," as those students ABC accepted. There simply were not enough spots available in independent schools – which educated approximately two percent of the population – for ABC students. The schools' resources were limited.[164] Dey and his Dartmouth College colleagues initiated a proposal that incorporated the public school system, specifically "excellent public high

[162] Leland DeVinney, interview with Charles Dey September 10, 1965. Folder 944, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[163] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 24, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[164] "Independent Schools Talent Search Program and Dartmouth College- ABC Programs," 1966, Folder 943, Box 148, Record Group 1.4 Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation; "Project ABC (A Better Chance) in the Public Schools," November 11, 1966, 2, Folder 944, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

schools which do not now serve broad socioeconomic groups," into ABC's network.[165] ABC reached out to Hanover High School, less than a mile from Dartmouth, and it agreed to accept six black, one white, and two Puerto Rican students for the 1966 school year.[166] OEO agreed to spearhead ABC's newest pilot program.

ABC believed it would be mistaken to rely solely on federal dollars for its newest initiative.[167] As the Hanover project was underway, ABC opened negotiations with many New England communities that expressed interest in participating in ABC, and A Better Chance needed to locate the resources, preferably from the private sector, to make that expansion possible.[168] On behalf of ABC, Dartmouth submitted a proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation and described ABC's newest project as "an invaluable resource for equalizing educational opportunity."[169] The Rockefeller Foundation recognized the potential of using ABC as a means to impact America's public schools. Labeling the ABC effort thus far as a "marked success," the Rockefeller Foundation, while reviewing the proposal, remarked that incorporating public schools was an "imaginative new step," and as the years progress, "it is essential that [ABC] keep momentum, vigor, and spirit of

[165] "Project ABC (A Better Chance) in the Public Schools," November 11, 1966, 2, Folder 944, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[166] "Public School ABC Student Statistics: Racial Discrimination of Entering Students," December 28, 1970, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[167] "Hanover ABC Program," 2, Folder ABC Project, Box 8448, John G. Kemeny Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection.

[168] "Independent Schools Talent Search Program and Dartmouth College- ABC Programs," 1966, Folder 943, Box 148, Record Group 1.4 Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[169] "Project ABC (A Better Chance) in the Public Schools," November 11, 1966, 2, Folder 944, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

innovation."[170] Rockefeller awarded Dartmouth College $130,000 in 1966 to fund additional ABC trial public school programs. [171]

ABC created a blueprint for implementing public school programs in different communities. The staff first identified a number of individuals within a neighborhood that were willing and invested in launching and maintaining an ABC residence in their community. If successful, A Better Chance purchased a home and made necessary renovations to accommodate approximately ten male students.[172] ABC provided suggestions for typical meals, curfew, house rules, the type of kitchen utensils needed and how many – anything to run a household filled with teenage boys. The residence elicited the most criticism because of its perceived isolation from the rest of the community. If ABC intended to integrate majority white communities, why cluster the students in one home? Even Rockefeller admittedly did not understand why ABC preferred establishing a residence over placing students with families in the community.[173] ABC defended its decision. A Better Chance modeled the residence after the atmosphere of an independent boarding school, establishing strict rules and routines that fostered a structured environment in which the students could thrive.

A resident director – an adult charged with maintaining a "healthy environment," physically and emotionally, and establishing a "feeling of unity," amongst all in the house

---

[170] "Independent Schools Talent Search Program and Dartmouth College- ABC Programs," 1966, 5, Folder 943, Box 148, Record Group 1.4 Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[171] "Dartmouth College – Public School ABC Programs," Folder 943, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[172] ABC chose only boys to launch the public school program. ABC did not want co-ed households, and eventually welcomed girls into the program, who stayed with families in the community.

[173] TRF, April 28, 1967, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

– managed each household.[174] Resident directors were also responsible for "making this house visible to the community," one of the more curious aspects of the public school program.[175] ABC forced predominantly white communities, essentially untouched by *Brown* because of existing racial demographics, to integrate by bringing students of color to their doorstep.

Resident tutors, all Dartmouth students from the outset, were the most essential part of an ABC residence. Counselor, rule enforcer, personal tutor – to be a resident tutor one had to relate well to teenagers, demonstrate intellectual and behavioral discipline, and be "prepared to invest themselves fully in other human beings without being unrealistic or overly ambitious about the possibilities for human change."[176] As William McCurine, a Dartmouth student and resident tutor at the Hanover ABC public school program, explained, "I'm under constant, unconscious surveillance…acutely aware of myself and, oddly enough, I've found a good deal of comfort in that awareness. The responsibility of projecting my character is a heavy but meaningful one."[177] Dey demanded the tutors reflect Dartmouth, but differ in "race, affluence, and academic achievements."[178] Thus, thirty-five percent of ABC resident tutors were black in comparison to Dartmouth's three percent;

---

[174] "Public School ABC Manual," 1968, 39, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[175] Ibid., 40.

[176] Charles F. Dey, "Two Societies, Separate and Unequal," October 1968, 3, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[177] "Public School ABC Manual," 1968, 50, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[178] Charles F. Dey, "Two Societies, Separate and Unequal," October 1968, 3, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

sixty percent were on financial aid versus the forty percent that reflected the larger student body; and as of 1968, of the thirty Dartmouth alumni that had served as resident tutors, twenty-one graduated with honors.[179]

There were several benefits to ABC's expansion to the public school system, even though the founders of ABC initially rejected it from their educational reform model. First, because public schools offered a wider variety of introductory courses than preparatory schools, more students could be recruited "who had even slimmer chances of success in their home community." ABC students had more opportunities for remedial course work.[180] Second, although not a motivating factor for the creation of ABC's newest model for educational advancement, Dey foresaw ABC's intervention in public schools as a means to further implement the tenets of *Brown v. Board of Education*. By educating white and black children in the same desegregated space, an "appreciation and understanding between the races" would emerge.[181]

ABC did not explain their entrance into public schools as a sweeping solution to America's failing education system, a more complicated issue than ABC could responsibly handle. In a statement explaining the public school program, Dartmouth wrote:

> …such a program will not solve the larger problem of how to improve education everywhere so that each child is properly served in his home community. That goal is distant; while working towards it we must not abandon thousands of deserving youngsters whom we can help now. By opening excellent public high schools to able students from poor communities we can create opportunity for untold numbers to share in

[179] Ibid.

[180] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 24, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[181] Ibid.

> American democracy at its best – to each according to his effort and ability.[182]

"The right kind of community," and the "right kind of ABC students," Dartmouth continued, was necessary for the project to work:

> The community must be one in which there already exists a climate of concern for developing the best education possible for its children….The leaders must believe that education of their children will be improved as different types of students become involved in a significant way with those normally enrolled in the school system.[183]

ABC's articulation of the perfect combination of community and students restructured the NAACP's argument and the Supreme Court Justices' rationale in *Brown v. Board of Education.* Whites could no longer legally discriminate against blacks in education, or anywhere else. Kenneth Clark, a renowned black psychologist, had proven that segregated environments were toxic to the development of black children, adding a critical component to the NAACP's defense. *Brown* aspired to change the life outcomes of black children. But where did white children and their parents fit into this newly manufactured formula for educational equality?

The citizens of Andover, Massachusetts, for example, were confronted with a provocative proposition in 1967. The New England town had a population of 15,878 residents. Fifty-five were non-white: twenty-nine African American, ten Japanese, nine Chinese, two Filipino, and three residents designated as "other." [184] More than a decade

---

[182] "Project ABC (A Better Chance) in the Public Schools," November 11, 1966, 2, Folder 944, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[183] Ibid., 3.

[184] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1960*, by Luther H. Hodges, Part 23, Volume 1 (Washington D.C.: Unites States Government Office, 1961), 86.

after the *Brown* decision, the racial demographics in public schools changed little. So in a town like Andover, where an overwhelming majority of its citizens were white, how could racial integration manifest? And was it Andover's responsibility to ensure that it did? As the *Andover Townsman* framed the issue on February 2, 1967, "do communities like Andover, isolated as they are from a problem that affects the mainstream of America, have a responsibility to concern themselves directly with helping the lesser privileged peoples of this country to help themselves?"[185] For the citizens of Andover, the answer was a resounding, "yes." Five hundred twenty-eight Andover residents versus 119 voted in favor of welcoming A Better Chance students into their community, and into the Essex County public school system.[186]

For the remainder of white America, it now had to decide if it would embrace a new era of race relations, vehemently oppose the change, or pretend as if its communities had never been touched by racism. ABC inserted itself into this national conversation about equal opportunity in public institutions by bringing racially and economically disadvantaged students into white communities. And it forced white citizens to face their demons.

"If the opponents of ABC are organized and articulate, we're in trouble," said Thomas Mikula, director of the ABC Public School Program.[187] "ABC, Yes or No?" was

---

[185] "ABC, Yes or No?" *Andover Townsman*, February 2, 1967, Folder A.B.C. Project 1966-1967, Box 7186, Dickey Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection, Dartmouth College.

[186] Charles Dey, "Two Societies, Separate and Unequal," October 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[187] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 25, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation; Charles Dey,"Draft-ABC Proposal to Rockefeller Foundation," 6, Folder 944, Box 148, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation Thomas Mikula became the director of the ABC public school program. He spent twelve tears at Phillips

the headline of the *Andover Townsman* on February 2, 1967. The *Valley News* displayed the headline, "Dresden ABC Breeds Hassle," on March 5, 1968. "In No. Andover ABC is Snagged," read the *Lawrence Eagle-Tribune* on June 25, 1968.[188] In Appleton, Wisconsin, the *Post-Crescent* expressed its support of ABC entering its community on April 26, 1968. But the citizens of Appleton voiced similar concerns as those in Milwaukee, Manchester, and Newport. The citizens of Appleton, and all others in homogenous white communities, were not free of prejudice; rather, as one perceptive citizen put it, their prejudice was simply "unaccounted for."[189] When confronted with the very real possibility of an influx of minority students into their communities, people's true feelings surfaced. "Why ask for trouble?"; "We don't owe them (Negroes) anything."; "this whole racial situation is a lot bigger than Appleton would ever be able to accomplish," remarked an Appleton policeman.[190] White citizens attempted to block ABC by citing technicalities. Townsmen wanted referendums to vote on the inclusion of ABC in their communities, but as Milwaukee city attorney Davide Geenen admitted, "I can't find any procedures for a referendum on the operation of public schools."[191] ABC programs could be established

---

Academy in Andover, Massachusetts as a math teacher, acted as the math coordinator for the Dartmouth ABC summer program for three summers, and served as resident director of the Hanover program.

[188] "ABC, Yes or No?" *Andover Townsman*, February 2, 1967, Folder A.B.C. Project 1966-1967, Box 7186, Dickey Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection; "Dresden ABC Breeds Hassle: Voters Approve Public Support For Program After Long Debate," *Valley News*, March 5, 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation; "In No. Andover ABC is Snagged," *Lawrence Eagle-Tribune*, June 25, 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[189] "ABC for Appleton," *The Post-Crescent*, Friday April 26, 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[190] "ABC for Appleton," *The Post-Crescent*, Friday April 26, 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[191] "Schools Prepare 'Better Chance,'" *Milwaukee Sentinel*, June 12, 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

without town consensus. If a vote failed to decisively demonstrate the opinion of the city ABC tried to enter, zoning law violations were a favorite tactic formulated by townsmen against the program.

Despite a "torturous succession of suggestions, challenges, and arguments, and rebuttals," the public school program had its advocates, as well, who embraced ABC's mission.[192] A boy named Judson Bracey, the president of the Lebanon High School student council, delivered a speech at his high school graduation in which he called for an ABC program to be brought to Lebanon, New Hampshire:

> We must reject the blatantly hypocritical cries of those ill-informed and reactionary racists-at-heart who claim they are in favor of human rights, but whose only concern is the maintenance of the status quo and their property values. Let us not submit to this kind of apathy, selfishness and ignorance, and to our own lethargy, whose ultimate effects will be fatal.[193]

As the expansion of the public school program unfolded, so too did the entire ABC operation. The central office expanded by 1966. Three individuals in the basement of Dartmouth grew to eleven people headquartered in Boston. Six hundred resource people all over the country now aided in ABC's recruitment efforts.[194] In addition to Dartmouth and Mount Holyoke, Carleton College, Williams College, and Duke University signed on for the summer programs to accommodate increased numbers of ABC students.[195]

---

[192] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 25, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[193] "LHS Speakers Talk of Rights Problem in U.S.," *Valley News*, June 14, 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[194] Leland DeVinney, interview with Simmons and Thomas Mikula, November 22, 1966. Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[195] Leland DeVinney, interview with James Simmons and Garvey Clarke, February 15, 1966, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

The momentum ABC built in such a short period of time ran parallel to President Johnson's broader agenda for the War on Poverty. Although his actions were by no means undisputed, President Johnson negotiated more bills through Congress than the New Deal – the last substantive push for social relief in the United States.[196] An advocate for America's poor had emerged, and social programs, like Upward Bound and ABC, flourished; at least until Vietnam, when the United States entered an unwinnable war and diverted resources away from OEO to fund the war effort. And up until blacks, growing restless in the face of persistent discrimination, fought back.[197]

Critics quickly vilified President Johnson's poverty programs as handouts to black America. Scholarships, affirmative action programs, medical care, food stamps – all social programs eliminated incentives to work and generated an overdependence on the federal government, according to conservative critics of the Great Society. These "backlash theorists" believed that by positioning the White House as the savior of African Americans and ignoring the plight of poor whites, Johnson would certainly create a lazy society characterized by increased crime rates and birth rates, and a disrespect for American values.[198] None of this was true, of course. Poor whites benefitted the most from the president's agenda. But the public conjoined government assistance and blackness nonetheless. And any actions taken to better the lives of blacks specifically were clumped together with the president's perceived neglect of the majority of Americans.

---

[196] Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams*, 5.

[197] Ibid., 116.

[198] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano,* 246.

Johnson's adversaries were pleased, then, as the summer riots of 1964 broke out on the heels of the Civil Rights Act, and rejoiced yet again from the televised riots in Watts, Los Angeles shortly after the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Some conservative congressmen, most notably Senator John McClellan of Arkansas, drew a direct line between the riots and OEO. Senator McClellan used the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (PERM), the same committee Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin used several years prior during the Second Red Scare, to launch a three year investigation into the alleged involvement of OEO in the race riots.

McClellan's accusations were unfounded. Sixteen individuals – full time and summer employees, and one volunteer – were arrested during the riots, none of which resulted in a serious offense. OEO employed 30,565 people.[199] Regardless, from the moment Johnson created the agency, OEO was under strict scrutiny. As the administration poured money into a war that was spiraling out of control, and as lawlessness became increasingly associated with federal assistance, it quickly became apparent that President Johnson's Great Society, and the programs built to achieve it, were crumbling. Social programs like ABC, once an integral part of Johnson's vision, were in jeopardy of survival. The rapid ascension of ABC to the national stage came to a screeching halt.

In a conversation between recruitment officer James Simmons, Rockefeller Foundation officer Leland DeVinney, and ABC's new director of development Garvey Clarke on February 15, 1966, Simmons explained that Upward Bound suffered from "considerable deflation." The $25,000,000 Congress appropriated to the federal program for the 1966 fiscal year was cut to $20,000,000, and no increases were expected for the

[199] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano,* 266.

following fiscal year. At this moment ABC had no indication that OEO would discontinue its relationship with ABC.[200] But to protect themselves, ABC prepared a proposal for the Rockefeller Foundation in the event that OEO failed to follow through with the money it had promised.[201]

Simmons travelled to Washington, D.C., to discuss the fate of ABC. The program had always recognized the danger of relying on OEO support indefinitely, not just because of its poverty frame of reference, but because "the political climate is always changing."[202] Simmons spoke with a man named George Hess, the new head of the Demonstration and Research office of OEO.[203] The previous director was Dr. Sanford Kravitz, who had expressed "great interest and understanding respecting the educational opportunities and requirements of the ABC program."[204] But Hess, an "unfortunate replacement" as Simmons described him, was a "hard-nose bureaucrat, devoted to strict interpretations of the rules with no perceptible interest in education as such."[205] Hess explained that Upward Bound received $40 million of the $80 million it had requested for the 1967 fiscal year. Of the $40 million, $30 million went to programs launched the previous year, and only $10

---

[200] Leland DeVinney, interview with James Simmons and Garvey Clarke, February 15, 1966, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[201] Charles Dey, letter to DeVinney, March 1, 1966, Folder 944 Box 148 Series 200 Record Group 1.4 Rockefeller Foundation.

[202] "Rockefeller Foundation Proposal", Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[203] Leland DeVinney, interview with James Simmons, November 3, 1966, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Leland DeVinney, interview with James Simmons, November 3, 1966, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

million went to recruitment for existing programs, and to initiate any new programs. In other words, existing commitments would be reevaluated, and OEO was unlikely to commit to anything else. Due to restricted funding, Hess dared to suggest that ABC "might have to be cut off entirely."[206]

Simmons was furious, and understandably so. OEO had pledged almost $2 million for 300 students. The agency's enthusiasm for ABC to dramatically increase their numbers now left the possibility that the large number of students that OEO supplied with scholarships would have to leave their new schools. Simmons pressed Hess to at least uphold OEO's commitment to fund all of their students through their time in preparatory school. As he waited for a decision from the OEO, Simmons pivoted from the federal government to the Ford Foundation, another distinguished philanthropy, to potentially fill the void left by OEO.[207] Simmons requested $10 million for 900 scholarships over a five year period.[208]

By February 2, 1967, the "whimsical federal government" officially withdrew its support from ABC.[209] Shriver had no money to give to ABC, but assured Simmons that if President Johnson managed to procure more funds from Congress for OEO, ABC would

---

[206] Leland DeVinney, interview with James Simmons, November 3, 1966, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[207] DeVinney, interview with Simmons, November 11, 1966, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[208] Bice Clemlow et al.,"Loosening the Old School Tie," Project Evaluation, Division of National Affairs, Ford Foundation, May 1970, 50, Unpublished Report Series 2162, Ford Foundation.

[209] DeVinney, interview with James Simmons, February 2, 1967, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center; Bice Clemlow et al., "Loosening the Old School Tie," Project Evaluation, Division of National Affairs, Ford Foundation, May 1970, 101, Unpublished Report Series 2162, Ford Foundation.

benefit. The chances of that happening were slim, however. Instead, fifty students, all identified through Upward Bound, would be funded by OEO for the ABC program.[210]

ABC teetered on the brink of disaster as it faced the threat of having to discontinue the promised education of several of its students. ABC turned to the private sector, and attempted to procure funds from previously untapped sources. But by 1966 and 1967, virtually every philanthropic dollar had been directed somewhere else as the number of social welfare organizations exploded. ABC was no longer a novel entity in the private funding market, and it faced competition from other projects and mounting critiques. The Ford Foundation, intrigued by ABC's cause, suggested that it might approve a grant to support ABCs administrative costs, but declined to offer scholarship support as Simmons had previously requested.[211] Other philanthropic organizations wondered why ABC provided such an expensive program for so few students. ABC staunchly defended its position: quick fixes would not make substantive, lasting impacts on American society; efforts such as ABC needed to be sustained beyond the experimental stages.[212]

Even as the federal government's involvement decreased to one sixth of what it had initially guaranteed, independent schools still held high opinions of the ABC students that arrived on their campus. "Our first four students last year were so good that when we were asked again we said, 'You bet' – and we took 10 more," said the director of admissions at

[210] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 24, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[211] Leland DeVinney, interview with James Simmons, February 2, 1967, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[212] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 24, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

Cushing Academy, John T. Leyden. The headmaster of Worcester Academy, William S. Piper Jr., described ABC as a "tremendous program – we're awfully pleased to cooperate with it."[213] The program managed to place 288 new students in 1967. If not for the independent schools, which made up the sudden deficit in funding, ABC would have placed less than 100 students.[214] The Hanover, and now Andover, public school programs enrolled eleven black students, two whites, and one Puerto Rican.[215] In its four years of placing students, ABC enrolled 783 students in 101 independent schools in America. The dropout rate amongst ABC students was lower than their non-ABC student counterparts in the independent schools in which they were enrolled. The average academic ranking of ABC students also exceeded the standing of non-ABC students. Depending on the school, the number of black students comprised one percent to ten percent of the population.[216]

The *Wall Street Journal* in its article, "A Better Chance: Program to Get Slum Youth to Prep School Scores Success," praised the program for its educational pursuits, and did so within the context of dramatic political and social changes. "Unquestionably, in time of war a nation must hold its nonessential domestic outlays to a minimum. And for

[213] Jane Miller, "The Lucky Break Called ISTSP," Worcester Sunday Telegram, April 2, 1967, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[214] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 24, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[215] "Public School ABC Student Statistics: Racial Discrimination of Entering Students," December 28, 1970, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[216] Leland DeVinney and J. Kellum Smith, interview with William Berkeley, September 26, 1967, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

some of the Federal poverty projects, one might welcome the cutbacks, war or no."[217] But ABC, the author wrote, "has already proved its effectiveness. Indeed, it appears to be a genuinely regrettable casualty" of the Vietnam War.[218] The article summed up the situation well: somehow, ABC made it out alive.

ABC and initiatives like it gained new attention and relevance as the 1967 race riots rocked the nation. This wave of riots, like those preceding it, did not happen spontaneously. Housing segregation, police brutality, double-digit unemployment overcrowded and underfunded schools, and low-paying jobs generated unrest among many African Americans who grew frustrated with Dr. Martin Luther King's nonviolent protest tactics. Change had come, but for those living in the ghettos of Detroit, Los Angeles, or Chicago, the world looked the same, and active resistance elicited a greater sense of agency than a peaceful march ever could.[219] Young black activists turned to Black Power, a doctrine of resistance founded by Malcolm X and popularized by Stokely Carmichael that affirmed black pride and self-determination, and empowered black communities. In their most subdued form, Black Power advocates lobbied for black political participation; at their most extreme, incited rage. Black Power supporters did not cause the riots; though they agitated the unrest, years of injustice and inequality were to blame.[220]

---

[217] Albert R. Hunt, "A Better Chance: Program to Get Slum Youth to Prep School Scores Success," Wall Street Journal, August 15, 1967, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[218] Albert R. Hunt, "A Better Chance: Program to Get Slum Youth to Prep School Scores Success," *Wall Street Journal*, August 15, 1967, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 200, Rockefeller Foundation.

[219] Farber, *The Age or Great Dreams*, 115.

[220] Ibid., 206.

President Johnson charged the Kerner Commission, formally known as the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, to uncover that reality. The commission issued their report in February 1968 and famously concluded that the United States was fatally "moving toward two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal." [221] And the only way to stop it was to begin a concerted effort to reform education, law enforcement, housing and several other components in the current divided society. For President Johnson, the report was unwelcomed – infuriating, in fact – as the War on Poverty had been waged for almost four years and Congress had passed two landmark pieces of civil rights legislation. But for ABC, the Kerner Report reaffirmed the necessity of the program, specifically the public school component: "If we are to take seriously the Kerner Commission warning…the potential for this learning experience for white America is perhaps the most persuasive argument for rapid expansion of ABC to many other public school communities."[222] As a new generation of black activists began to abandon integration, ABC pursued it more forcefully than ever.

But expansion did not come easily due to financial strains and community resistance. In a proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation in April 1967, ABC envisioned expansion to ten public schools in ten predominantly white school districts. One hundred students would be recruited to attend these ten schools, five of which would be close to

[221] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano,* 264.

[222] Thomas Mikula and Charles Dey, "Proposal for a Coalition for Equal Opportunity," March 10, 1969, 2, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

Dartmouth. All of the students would be required to participate in the summer program. Dartmouth would offer admission to exceptional students after high school graduation.[223]

Neither the money, nor the support, was available for such rapid expansion. In 1967, the Rockefeller Foundation reoriented the aims of its Equal Opportunity Division. The division previously granted ABC its first large foundation grants. At the time, Equal Opportunity funded projects with a higher education focus, and ABC fell into that category. After three years, the foundation decided to move away from higher education initiatives to ones that more explicitly dealt with poverty and discrimination in urban and rural communities. "This move reflects not only a sense of urgency to come to grips with crisis situations," the 1967 annual report read, "but also the Federal Government's rapid and wide support of programs previously demonstrated by the Foundation."[224] Rockefeller noted OEO's support of the various pilot programs Rockefeller initially funded as an opportunity to move on to other equally pressing issues. Rockefeller's modified agenda supported grants for, "the development of Negro leadership in public service and business; for the easier and more effective transition of the Negro into the world outside the ghetto; and for legal and educational assistance to the underprivileged, particularly in the South."[225] The Southern Education Fund, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the

[223] "Proposal for Expansion of Project ABC to Ten Additional Public School Communities," April 25, 1967, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[224] "1967 Annual Report," 146, Rockefeller Foundation.

[225] "1967 Annual Report," 146, Rockefeller Foundation.

Friends Neighborhood Guild of Philadelphia were a few of the beneficiaries of Rockefeller's reorientation.[226]

Again, the ABC public school program attempted to grow. A Better Chance operated the public school program out of Dartmouth College, which provided a majority of the funding for the program.[227] Officials at Dartmouth realized that it could not facilitate the kind of expansion that Thomas Mikula, the public school director, desired. Dartmouth's first attempt to spread the program beyond its gates was in December 1968 when the college met with six other colleges, in hopes that each would be responsible for establishing ABC programs throughout the country. Dartmouth's leaders put it on themselves to raise the money to initiate the expansion, but ultimately, the plan did not come to fruition. They hoped to try again in September 1969.[228]

As ABC tried to broaden its reach and foundations rejected those attempts, outsiders wondered why ABC, in general, was not focused on early education. After all, the first few years of a child's life are critical for development, so why not start there? ABC declared that it provided an immediate solution for children already well along in their education, and who needed intervention right then. ABC officials and critics alike continued to question the impact of their endeavor. Davis Jackson, the newest director of

---

[226] Ibid., 147.

[227] Charles Dey, letter to Leland DeVinney, March 10, 1969, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation. The Tucker Foundation, an endowment created by the trustees of Dartmouth College to "further the moral and spiritual work and influence" of those in the Dartmouth community, adopted ABC's newest endeavor even though the foundation had no existing connections to ABC. The Tucker Foundation's current project included Bridge, summer remedial studies for incoming freshmen; Jersey City Project, an extension of "ABC into the ghetto"; and Peace Corps training.

[228] Thomas Mikula, 'Report to the Rockefeller Foundation 1968-69," September 9, 1969, 3, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

ABC, denied that A Better Chance could affect all underserved children in America. Instead, he believed that the students who went through the program would have a profound impact on many communities, a "ripple effect," as Jackson described it.[229]

A much larger question, and one that interrogated the very foundation of ABC and was consistently at the forefront of people's minds, dealt with legitimate integration in the majority white spaces – public and private – to which ABC sent its minority and disadvantaged students. Frank Reynolds, an ABC resident tutor in Andover, MA in 1968 commented in an ABC newsletter that the boys in Andover participated in extracurricular activities, but nothing "social." Reynolds believed that the time ABC students spent in the residence indicated "the absence of true acceptance of the ABC program by the bulk of the Andover community."[230] About the Andover program specifically, and applicable to ABC generally, were critiques about the program forcing integration and the fundamental principles of *Brown* on white communities:

> Isn't it tokenism? Isn't Andover salving its white, upper middle class conscience by accepting a program that brings in young men of tested potential when it could make a more direct attack on urban education problems with a project that would involve young people of color closer to home?[231]

At first glance ABC's inclusion of affluent public high schools into its program seemed like a radical concept. Utilizing America's publicly funded school districts to educate the

---

[229] Davis Jackson, "Dartmouth 1966: A Better Chance," 8, Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[230] "ABC Newsletter: Andover Committee for A Better Chance, Inc.," 2-4, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[231] "Andover Committee for A Better Chance, Inc. ABC Newsletter Vol. 1 No. 1," Winter 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

neediest children seemed like a clever way to circumvent the legal battles raging in the public schools. ABC operated on a local level and could only work if the communities allowed it to work. Although ABC should be recognized for its creativity in extending educational opportunity to minority and low income students, it merely followed the wealth.

The common denominator between independent schools and the public schools ABC chose was middle and upper class white communities with the social and financial capital to fund their children's education. These communities had particular kinds of public schools; ones that represented the very best of what a free American education could look like. Yet a finite number of these schools existed. Moreover, they were overwhelmingly – most often totally – white. Thus, critics of ABC correctly identified the program's Achilles heel: ABC's integrationist approach in elite private and public high schools abandoned more students in urban and segregated school districts than the program was capable of saving.

But many black and brown people did not want to be saved. The citizens of Ocean Hill and Brownsville in Brooklyn, New York, for instance, at first embraced integration in the New York City public schools. In 1964, activists proposed Educational Park, a campus that would serve all of Brooklyn's 10,000 junior high and high school students and eliminate residential segregation. The New York City Board of Education ignored the proposal. Activists then devised a voluntary busing plan in 1965 that brought Brownsville children to nearby schools in the predominantly white communities of Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, and Canarsie. White teachers, parents, and their children welcomed the Brownsville students with physical and verbal abuse and neglect, and the Brownsville

children returned to overcrowded local schools after several weeks of harassment. Disgusted and wearied by failed attempts to integrate Brooklyn's public schools, Brownsville parents did not look to escape their community; they turned inward, and argued for community control of the schools. And they succeeded for a short time. The parents of Brownsville, and those of nearby Ocean Hill, hired new principals and teachers and established a new curriculum for students. But once conflict ensued between parents and teachers exploded in 1968, any hope of parents controlling the education of their children in Ocean Hill-Brownsville schools disappeared.[232]

Despite the heated debates about who should determine what education looks like, A Better Chance anticipated that 1969 would be a good year. In a report to the Rockefeller Foundation on July 22, 1968, ABC informed the foundation that fifty-two additional communities indicated their interest in establishing ABC public school programs. Pennsylvania and Ohio, for example, were on the roster for expansion. Under the name of Dartmouth and the Tucker Foundation, ABC reached out to twenty-eight private foundations. It appeared as if ABC's extension into the public school system garnered even more support than its presence in independent schools; in fact, it became increasingly difficult to obtain funding for students in private schools. For the 1969-1970 school year, ABC hoped that thirty new public school programs would be established, at a price tag of $1 million. ABC believed it would be successful if it could reduce the cost per student in public school, and the costs of the summer program.[233]

---

[232] Wendell Pritchett, *Brownsville-Brooklyn* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 221-236.

[233] "Dartmouth Public School ABC Program: Report to the Rockefeller Foundation," July 22, 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

ABC raised $650,000 in the past year alone. And OEO, no longer a dominant contributor to the program, continued to supply fifty students to participate in ABC from the federal Upward Bound program. By this point, independent schools were spending $1.5 million per year to support ABC students.[234] The Ford Foundation, after rejecting ABC's initial request, provided a $200,000 grant to the program because of the foundation's own interest in impacting "these virtually all-white 'elitist' institutions."[235] In addition to Ford, new grant givers in 1968 made large contributions of up to $75,000.[236]

For the 1968-1969 school term, ABC placed 306 students total, sixty-six of which were placed in public schools.[237] ABC placed 1,240 students from disadvantaged backgrounds in prep schools and public schools since the program's first year in 1964. One hundred eighty-three had graduated from high school. Various colleges and universities granted admission to all ABC graduates, and included financial aid.

At the close of 1968, ABC posed two questions in its Annual Report: is the program as necessary today as it was in 1963, and should independent school placement still be a

---

[234] Leland DeVinney, interview with William Berkeley and Garvey Clarke, December 13, 1968, Folder 434, Box 52, Record Group 1.2, Series 20, Rockefeller Foundation.

[235] "Final Report to the Ford Foundation on ABC's Development Program," September 1, 1971, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation; Bice Clemlow et al., "Loosening the Old School Tie," Project Evaluation, Division of National Affairs, Ford Foundation, May 1970, 50, Unpublished Report Series 2162, Ford Foundation.

[236] The Henry Luce Foundation with $75,000 gifted to ABC, the Independent Foundation with $75,000, the Richard King Mellon Foundation with $30,000, and the Public Welfare Foundation with another $15,000. William Berkeley, "ABC Annual Report 1968," Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[237] Thirty-six percent came from the South, thirty-six percent from the Northeast, nineteen percent of students from the Midwest, seven percent of students originated from the Southwest, and two percent were from the northwest. Blacks made up seventy-six percent of those students; whites, Mexican-Americans, American Indians, those of Asian descent, Puerto Ricans, and other Spanish-speaking comprised the rest of student demographics. William Berkeley, "ABC Annual Report 1968," 5, Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

part of their education model. William Berkeley, the newest director of ABC, answered yes to both of those questions. Berkeley still believed that the independent school space possessed "the potential for true democracy in microcosm," noting that the contact between ABC students and white students, faculty, and the administration exposed the latter to the "insidious subtleties of their own racism," and allowed the former to see that it was possible for white individuals to have positive responses to integration.[238] Berkeley, reflecting on ABC in its entirety as it entered its fifth year in 1969, believed that the program "successfully passed some crucial tests in the areas of finance, program and philosophy."[239]

The year 1969, however, proved explosive. "We were left scarred from that period" said Michael Choukas, headmaster of Vermont Academy and a charter member of the original Independent Schools Talent Search Program. Choukas was referencing the militancy and racial strife of both the nation, and of the 1969 ABC summer program. For the first time, and much disputed amongst the staff, ABC incorporated a Black Studies course into its curriculum, mimicking the national trend across college campuses.[240] Black college students, enchanted by the Black Power movement, sought to carve out spaces for themselves in the colleges and universities they attended by protesting the predominantly white student bodies and faculty, and the Euro-centric curriculum. The schools' leadership listened. Victories such as Blacks-only housing, increased minority enrollment and faculty hiring, cultural centers, and the "Afro-American Studies" department resulted from college

[238] William Berkeley, "Alternative to Disillusion," ABC Annual Report 1968, 1, Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[239] Ibid., 2.

[240] William Berkeley, "Alternative to Disillusion," ABC Annual Report 1968, 5, Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

students across the country at Williams, Cornell, Columbia, Berkeley, and others shouting for inclusion and validation. This drastic shift away from interracial cooperation to the development of empowered, racially-separate worlds was not contained on college campuses. At the close of the 1960s, Black Power, along with similar cries from Native Americans and Mexican Americans for Red Power and Brown Power, shifted the civil right rights movement away from integration to separatism.[241]

ABC recognized the separatist mood of America's minority groups, and adjusted the remedial curriculum of the summer program to promote empowerment amongst their students. But ABC remained an integrationist organization, and for those who had forsaken traditionally white American institutions, ABC was a sellout. What had the potential to be a formative year for ABC summer sessions was instead "downright hostile."[242]

The 1969 summer session had been reduced from eight to six weeks for double the ideal number of students. ABC juggled criticisms about its "phoney white liberalism" that created "oreos" by situating blacks in predominantly white settings.[243] Black graduates, the argument went, adopted a "white middle-class success ethic" which "denied their true identity as black people."[244] ABC had now been around long enough for several ABC graduates to enter the administrative ranks of ABC leadership. Rather than being hailed as a triumph in the face of institutional barriers, or receive recognition that the skin color of

---

[241] Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams,* 202-205.

[242] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 26, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[243] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 27, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[244] Ibid., 26.

the leadership had shifted as a consequence of the program's vitality, ABC's officers deflected criticism for their complicity in the white establishment from pro-separatists.

ABC did not view itself as complicit. It remained firm in its decision to utilize independent and affluent schools, while adopting Black Power rhetoric to guide the development of the program's students. To some, integration and separatism were inherently contradictory. To ABC, the latter instilled a strong sense of a student's group identity. The program worked towards developing "racial pride" most explicitly in ABC's public school programs.[245] The ABC residence in Andover, for example, included a library containing many pieces of black literature, such as *Black Power* by Stokely Carmichael, *A Summer in Mississippi* by Charles E. Baker, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* by Howard Zinn, and *Black Boy* by Richard Wright. In describing how he broached the topic of race amongst ABC students, Albert Moncure, an Andover resident tutor, said that ABC students first reacted with a combination of annoyance, shock, and shame. "At this point the boys undergo a feeling of self-satisfaction, a feeling of having 'made-it.'"[246] "The annoyances they suffer," Moncure continued, "[are] a result of being distracted from their peaceful illusion that all is well and that there are no problems in this country."[247] Adopting both a self-determination and a talented tenth framework, Moncure stated: "By espousing the virtues of racial pride and the moral necessity of all black people who have 'made it' to return to their communities, we can prevent the harmful suggestion of the [white] middle

[245] "Public School ABC Manual," 1968, 1, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[246] "Public School ABC Manual," 1968, 69, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[247] Ibid.

class society from being completely internalized by our boys."[248] ABC wanted their students to remain uncomfortably aware, at all times, that they were in a privileged position. The discussions resident tutors facilitated were meant to clear away any trace of disillusion that the boys may have adopted during their time in a predominantly white community.

Unable to ignore ABC's use of white schools to advance the education of minority groups, critiques of the program remained. While defending its methods and goals, ABC was in the midst of its most difficult fundraising year to date. Congress debated the Tax Reform Act of 1969, which Southern conservatives had drafted as a direct attack against philanthropic foundations. Russell Long of Louisiana, Herman Talmadge of Georgia and Tom Steed of Oklahoma were among those who wanted stricter separation between philanthropy and politics, and more safeguards against tax evasion. At its worst, the measure would establish a lifespan for foundations. In the meantime, many foundations froze grant giving until Congress voted on the final draft.[249] Private schools, too, were in a bind. The schools had to increase their tuition to continue to function, but in doing so, fewer students applied to independent schools because of the expensive price tag. For those students who could previously afford tuition, they now required financial aid.[250]

---

[248] Ibid., 70.

[249] "Final Report to the Ford Foundation on ABC's Development Program" September 1, 1971, 2, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation; See also Olivier Zunz, *Philanthropy in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 223-231.

[250] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

A decline in Rockefeller Foundation support, a trend that would proceed into the next decade, struck ABC as well. Mikula and Dey created a proposal for a new Coalition for Equal Opportunity and requested funding from the Rockefeller Foundation for this new endeavor. Dartmouth's William Jewett Tucker Foundation requested $1.5 million over a three-year period to create a collaborative partnership among nine colleges – including Dartmouth College, Tufts, Middlebury, Amherst – and one state agency, Minnesota Commission on Human Resources, that would work on different initiatives all geared toward equal educational opportunity. "The past decade has brought to each of us new awareness of the hopelessness, dehumanization, and explosiveness of large numbers of poor, semi-literate minorities imprisoned by prejudice, zoning codes, and harsh economic realities," Charles Dey and Thomas Mikula wrote.[251] "This disgrace is deeply etched on our national life…Whether the yardstick be crime, population statistics, education, or welfare payments, clearly time is not on our side."[252]

The Rockefeller Foundation did not share the same urgency with which Dey and Mikula explained their new initiative. In a letter from Leland DeVinney to Charles Dey, DeVinney wrote that he was "not optimistic" about getting the Rockefeller Foundation to fund it because of the foundation's shift in priorities for its Equal Opportunity Division.[253] "I don't see how we can respond to this or any other proposal," DeVinney scrawled in a

[251] Charles Dey and Thomas Mikula, "Proposal for a Coalition for Equal Opportunity," March 10, 1969, 5, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[252] Charles Dey and Thomas Mikula, "Proposal for a Coalition for Equal Opportunity," March 10, 1969, 5, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[253] Leland DeVinney, letter to Charles Dey, March 13, 1969, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

memo, "until we decide upon some priorities and strategies."[254] Despite Rockefeller's initial ambivalence, it remained wedded to its focus on vocational and professional opportunities, which they had begun two years prior. Rockefeller's 1969 grant recipients fell under the umbrellas of the inner city, community public school programs, community leadership, professional advancement, vocational training, rural development, and research.[255] ABC was not one of them. Dey was "disappointed but not greatly surprised."[256]

For all of the ideological and financial debates ABC engaged in as the 1960s came to a close, it managed to persevere. By 1969, 822 students enrolled in ABC member schools, 328 of which were new students. [257] Each scholarship dollar that ABC raised translated into three more dollars from the preparatory school the student attended. For the 1969-1970 school year, independent schools contributed more than $2 million. Since ABC's inception, independent schools had provided a grand total of $6.5 million in scholarship money.[258] And in six years, ABC had solicited a grand total of $14,588,270.[259]

---

[254] CHS, letter to Leland DeVinney, April 7, 1969, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[255] "Annual Report 1969," 13, 16,18, Rockefeller Foundation.

[256] Leland DeVinney, interview with Charles Dey, May 6, 1969. Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[257] The racial demographic of the incoming class was eighty percent black, seven percent Puerto Rican, six percent American Indian, and the remainder of the students were of Asian descent and Spanish speaking individuals. Charles Dey and Thomas Mikula, "Proposal for a Coalition for Equal Opportunity," March 10, 1969, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[258] Ibid.

[259] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith': Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, Folder 947, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation. This figure excludes the $200,000 grant, which was key in attracting new donors; "ABC Annual Report", 1969," Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

ABC's various barriers did not hinder the program's ability to address inequality, either. ABC drafted the "8-10 Percent Plan" to dramatically change the student body of independent schools. ABC wanted to push the schools to have minority and disadvantaged students comprise eight to ten percent of the population. ABC believed that by situating more minority and disadvantaged students in independent schools, "a consciousness of and perspective on poverty and racism can be instilled in white students who traditionally move from independent schools to power positions in various areas of American life."[260] Not only would this change the lives of ABC students, but it would also make a substantial impact on the majority of the population who could then proceed in life with an awareness and better understanding of America's minorities and poor people. To "expose affluent Americans to the ugliness of urban ills" would bring about "substantive commitment to the solution of those ills." [261] ABC envisioned their efforts going beyond independent schools to majority white colleges. These institutions would interrogate their own student bodies and use ABC as a model to increase enrollment and challenge existing recruitment plans.[262]

But was A Better Chance working? For all that ABC imagined itself to be, the verdict was still out on how predominantly white schools impacted ABC students. In fact, very little research evaluating compensatory education programs at the high school and

[260] Garvey E. Clarke, "Signs of Progress: Quarterly Report," March 31, 1969, 2, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[261] Garvey E. Clarke, "Signs of Progress: Quarterly Report," March 31, 1969, 3, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[262] Garvey E. Clarke, "Signs of Progress: Quarterly Report," March 31, 1969, 3, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

college levels was available.[263] A Better Chance set out to fill in these gaps after the inaugural summer program in 1964. It commissioned Alden E. Wessman, who was now an adjunct psychology professor at Dartmouth College and the research director of ABC, to conduct a study. In April of 1969, Wessman published his findings in a report titled, "Scholastic and Psychological Effects of a Compensatory Education Program for Disadvantaged High School Students: Project ABC." Sponsored by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the Office of Education Bureau of Research, the study aimed to critically assess how the program operated, and the academic and psychological outcomes for students during the program's foundational years. The test group consisted of eighty boys, all of whom attended ABC's summer transitional program in 1965 and continued into thirty-nine prep schools. Wessman also created a control group of twenty-three non-ABC students who attended local high schools. He conducted the first set of interviews during the summer program, covering topics such as family life, previous schooling, and future goals.[264] Two years later, he administered a second interview based on continuation or dropping-out of the program. For those who remained in the program, questions were asked regarding the initial transition into a new environment, academics, and future aspirations.[265] For those who left the program and returned home, questions about their decision to leave and experiences being home were asked of the former

[263] Alden E. Wessman. "Scholastic and Psychological Effects of a Compensatory Education Program for Disadvantaged High School Students: Project ABC." *American Educational Research Journal* 9, no. 3 (July 1, 1972): 361.

[264] Alden E. Wessman. "Scholastic and Psychological Effects of a Compensatory Education Program for Disadvantaged High School Students: Project ABC." *American Educational Research Journal* 9, no. 3 (July 1, 1972): 364.

[265] Ibid.

participants.[266] In addition to interviews, Wessman administered a series of personality, intelligence, and achievement tests, and assessed faculty reports and students' grades.

He concluded that "educational miracles did not occur."[267] Generally speaking, ABC students' level of performance in their home community differed little, if at all, to their subsequent performance in preparatory school. Besides the academic assessment, Wessman concluded that his findings on the psychological effects of the program can only be read with caution because of the short time span of the study. Over a two period, the boys grew in several measures, such as confidence and goal setting, and they also experienced increased levels of anxiety. Ultimately, ABC boys adjusted well to their new environments, but to obtain a complete picture of the effects of compensatory education programs on students, more research needed to be done.

This was a "sobering" reality for A Better Chance.[268] The founders established the program at the height of the civil rights movement and within an atmosphere of possibility. But the tide shifted. By the close of the 1960s, the excitement over educational interventions like ABC began to disappear. And Wessman's results indicated that smart children in Chicago will still be smart in Wallingford, Connecticut. Although Wessman did not deliver a glowing evaluation of ABC, the results allowed A Better Chance to point the finger at the structural shortcomings of American society. William Berkeley, the newest

---

[266] Ibid.

[267] Ibid., 370.

[268] Alden E. Wessman. "Scholastic and Psychological Effects of a Compensatory Education Program for Disadvantaged High School Students: Project ABC." *American Educational Research Journal* 9, no. 3 (July 1, 1972): 371.

president of ABC, explained the state of race relations in stronger, more racially explicit tones than ABC had ever done publicly:

> How can we resolve this paradox of unequal opportunities in a land that pledges liberty and justice for all? The easy answers offered in 1964 have proven ineffective and naïve. It isn't just integrating the schools, or providing job training, or distributing income supplements, or building low-cost housing. It is all of these plus the important missing ingredient – a change in the basic attitudes people have toward each other and toward themselves. White arrogance must give way to humility and a determination to solve our national problems. Black self-hatred must be transformed into self-respect and a strong sense of purpose. Our American Indian and Spanish-speaking citizens must feel a sense of belonging in a country that has, in effect, a culture alien to their own."[269]

Berkeley spoke beyond the capabilities of ABC and all social programs. Amid debates about integration versus community building, Berkeley emphasized that nothing in the United States would ultimately change until the human psyche and perceptions of blackness and other people of color changed. In the program's fifth year, ABC still felt that it was fulfilling its original mission. But the one critical area that ABC believed needed attention and innovation was the retention of its Native American students. Only sixty percent of Native American students in the program made it to high school graduation; for African American students, ninety percent. To ABC, these numerical differences in success meant the program was failing. But to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a federal agency charged with upholding the well-being of the country's Native American population, sixty percent was enviable.[270]

---

[269] William Berkeley, "No Easy Eden," ABC Annual Report, 2, 1969, Folder 9, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[270] Charles Dey, "Two Societies, Separate and Unequal," October 1968, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

ABC's journey to a targeted pursuit of equal educational opportunity for Native Americans began with a man named Eleazar Wheelock, who, like most white, God-fearing men of the eighteenth century, believed that he could stop the cultural, moral, and spiritual plight of the American Indian. His language fused with what scholars now recognize as imperialist rhetoric, Wheelock pitied the Indian. Western ideals were the key to salvation. As a graduate of Yale University and an ordained minister, Wheelock opened Moor's Charity School in 1754 to educate Indian boys and girls in "Reading, Writing, and all Liberal Arts, and Sciences," and Christianity. [271] And the best way to do that, as was common practice in colonial America, was to remove the children from their homes and separate them from any non-European cultural influence.[272] In need of space for more students, Wheeler founded Dartmouth College in 1769 in what is now Hanover, New Hampshire. The charter described Dartmouth as an institution devoted to spreading "Christian knowledge among the savages of our American wilderness." [273] "Education and instruction of youth of the Indian tribes in his land," would include "reading and writing, and all parts of learning which shall appear necessary and expedient for civilizing and christianizing children of pagans."[274] At first glance, Wheelock explicitly defined Dartmouth College as a place devoted to the education of the American Indian. But in actuality, growing increasingly perturbed by what he perceived as "cultural resistance and

[271] Colin Calloway, *The Indian History of an American Institution* (Lebanon: Dartmouth College Press, 2010), 7. Girls also learned domestic work form nearby families.

[272] Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* (San Francisco: City Lights Publisher, 2004).

[273] Calloway, *The Indian History of an American Institution,* 22.

[274] Ibid.

resilience," and the difficulty of recruiting American Indian students to attend the college, Wheelock and his predecessors hoped to expand Dartmouth with white students.[275]

Regardless of Wheelock's ultimate intentions, the words written in the 1769 charter would be taken for face value two hundred years later in an attempt to reaffirm Dartmouth's original conviction to educate American Indian students through institutional changes to the college, and ABC. By the beginning of the twentieth century, nothing in Dartmouth's century-long history indicated that American Indian peoples had been the foundation of the college's formation. The U.S. census of 1900 documented 237,000 American Indians residing in the United States. Excluding the role of colonialism and pseudo-scientific notions of race, the prevailing conclusion for educators and reformers predicted the extinction of American Indians. Dartmouth, too, subscribed to this belief, resulting in few attempts to legitimate its original promise. Dartmouth carried a contrived identity that had been established over the years on the basis of cultural appropriation. [276]

Dartmouth and several independent schools challenged that history when it formed the ABC program in 1964. The number of American Indian students enrolled gradually increased, creating, in Dartmouth's eyes, a pool of qualified American Indian candidates from which it could diversify its student body. For the first time in 200 years, Dartmouth appeared to be on the way to honoring its educational commitment.[277]

ABC asked itself, what could it be doing to better serve this population of historically marginalized students? To find the answer the program hosted a conference at

---

[275] Calloway, *The Indian History of an American Institution,* 23.

[276] Calloway, *The Indian History of an American Institution,* 130-134.

[277] Ibid., 154.

Harvard in May of 1968. After talking to Native American undergraduates from Harvard, Dartmouth, and Boston University, and seventeen current ABC students, A Better Chance came away with a better understanding of how to keep Native American students enrolled in their predominantly white member schools through high school graduation.

Meanwhile, shortly after ABC's conference, Duane Bird Bear, a Mandan Indian of South Dakota and a student at Dartmouth, presented a proposal to the Dean of the college, Thaddeus Seymour. Bird Bear implored Dartmouth to recognize the very foundation upon which the college had been established. In order to reduce attrition rates Dartmouth needed to "recognize that Indian students come from a background and culture that is entirely different from the typical American middle-class background as represented by the majority of students at Dartmouth."[278]

The federal government underwent its own moment of self-reflection. The sixty percent figure that ABC reported to the Bureau of Indian Affairs was deemed remarkable, prompting BIA to discern what the summer/majority white school program was doing right. ABC's and Dartmouth's moments of self-reflection, along with an intrigued federal agency, led to the creation of ABC's first Native American public school program at Hartford High School in White River Junction, Vermont in 1968.[279] The BIA selected ten American Indian students from Alaska and the Southwest to attend the Dartmouth ABC summer program. By having a program just for these students, Charles Dey believed that the students might "begin to develop some of the determination and confidence and

[278] Charles Dey, "Two Societies, Separate and Unequal," October 1968, 6, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[279] "Dartmouth Public School ABC Program: Report to the Rockefeller Foundation," July 22, 1968, 4, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

characteristic of other ABC minority groups."[280] ABC launched its second American Indian-focused program in Woodstock, Vermont for the 1968-1969 school year. The BIA contributed two-thirds the cost of the program, and local students who were partaking were included in the Dartmouth summer program.[281]

By 1969, a handful of congressional acts indicated that lawmakers were at last acknowledging a history of neglect for its American Indian peoples.[282] Independent schools and institutions of higher education, like the federal government, shifted their focus to the education of American Indians, and many did so through their existing relationship with ABC. Just as token numbers of black students attended preparatory school before ABC came into existence, Native Americans attended preparatory schools in negligible numbers.

Until now, American Indian cultures had been suppressed, or more accurately, obliterated, by the U.S. education system. There were concerted efforts, like those of Wheelock, to educate Indian peoples under the guise of Christianity. But this education was genocidal, the sole purpose being to "kill the Indian, save the man," and assimilate American Indians into dominant white culture.[283] American Indian boarding schools existed into the early twentieth century. Independent schools and higher education took a

[280] ABC officials selected ten students from within the White River Junction community to participate in the public school program, as well. However these students did not live in the house; they benefitted from the personal tutoring and attended an ABC summer program. Charles Dey, "Two Societies, Separate and Unequal," October 1968,6, Folder 945, Box 148, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[281] Thomas Mikula, 'Report to the Rockefeller Foundation 1968-69," September 9, 1969, 1, Folder 946, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[282] James Patterson, *Grand Expectations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 723.

[283] Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* (San Francisco: City Lights Publisher, 2004).

more holistic, and comparably less meddlesome, approach to Native American to education.

Dartmouth made national headlines as it publicized a plan to increase American Indian representation on its campus. In 200 years, 117 American Indian students attended Dartmouth; nineteen graduated, and four were enrolled in 1970.[284] In assessing the minimal numbers of American Indian students who graduated from the college, Dartmouth officials concluded that culture shock was to blame, as well as a "deterioration of relations between whites and Indians."[285] To overcome that, a new Native American-centered program was imagined, comprised of several new initiatives to pragmatically solve the problem. Fifteen students would be added to each class, a quota that would continue into the future. An Indian Center, a space specifically for Indian students to express their culture in whatever way they wished, would be built. Various forms of academic and cultural support would also be provided for Native American students, such as remedial courses in math, English and science for entering freshman.

Dartmouth partnered with the BIA, which agreed to fund a portion of the program. John P. Olguin, a 1965 graduate of the University of New Mexico, and a former employee of the Office of Economic Opportunity and the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, spearheaded Dartmouth's newest Native American-centered initiatives. [286] Olguin acknowledged that at this point, there was no "real recipe" for broadening educational and

[284] Judith Brophy, "Indians on rise at Dartmouth," *Boston Globe,* August 16, 1970.

[285] Judith Brophy, "Indians on rise at Dartmouth," *Boston Globe,* August 16, 1970.

[286] M.A. Farber, "Dartmouth Adds Indian Students," *New York Times,* July 26, 1970.

occupational opportunities for Native Americans. "But Dartmouth is giving us a chance to make mistakes."[287]

John G. Kemeny, Dartmouth's newest president, supported the college's newest initiative[288]. As previous chairman of Dartmouth's Committee on Equal Opportunity, which made recommendations to the college for new programs targeted at poor whites, blacks and American Indians from New England, Kemeny was familiar with thinking critically about ways to diversify Dartmouth's campus. [289] Kemeny believed that a "cultural conflict" happened to Native American children attempting to enter "dominant society" as they discover that they "can't cope."[290] "He has nothing to fall back on," Kemeny remarked, "since his history has been distorted by books and television, and since he has been forced to adopt to ways of an alien society."[291]

Dartmouth created a plan that would nurture American Indian students and create an environment in which they could thrive academically and culturally. Yet, only four students were enrolled at the college in 1970. Dartmouth did not have the numbers to implement the plan. However college officials did not puzzle over how to increase enrollment for long. Dartmouth had partnered with ABC since 1964, and ABC's newest recruitment focus was housed at Dartmouth. During the summer of 1970, more than fifty

---

[287] M.A. Farber, "Dartmouth Adds Indian Students," *New York Times,* July 26, 1970.

[288] John G. Kemeny, letter to Louis R. Bruce, March 17, 1970, Folder Tucker Foundation, Box 8440, John G. Kemeny Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection.

[289] M.A. Farber, "Dartmouth Adds Indian Students," *New York Times,* July 26, 1970.

[290] Judith Brophy, "Indians on rise at Dartmouth," *Boston Globe,* August 16, 1970.

[291] Ibid.

ABC students were Native American.[292] Twenty students were bound for Woodstock and Hartford, Vermont for ABC public school programs previously established for Native American students, while the rest headed to preparatory school. ABC thus provided a pool of students that would, as was A Better Chance's hope, graduate from high school. From this pool of qualified applicants, Dartmouth and other colleges could increase Native American student enrollment.[293] "If you put one Indian in a white man's school, you won't have much success," explained Bill Yellowtail, a senior at Dartmouth and associate director of the ABC summer program at Dartmouth. "But if you put 10 Indians together, you'll have a better chance of success. They can be among their own kind."[294]

[292] M.A. Farber, "Dartmouth Adds Indian Students," *New York Times,* July 26, 1970.

[293] Judith Brophy, "Indians on rise at Dartmouth," *Boston Globe,* August 16, 1970.

[294] Ibid.

Chapter III

Benign Neglect

> The time may have come when the issue of race could benefit from a period of 'benign neglect.' The subject has been too much talked about. The forum has been too much taken over to hysterics, paranoids, and bloodlers on all sides. We may need a period in which Negro progress continues and racial rhetoric fades.[295]

[295] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, memorandum to Richard Nixon, January 16, 1970, 7, The Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, California, nixonlibrary.gov/virtuallibrary/documents. Accessed March 31, 2015.

In the earliest years of A Better Chance, the program could speak of the broader implications of its endeavor only in vague, hopeful terms. The founders hoped that their experiment in compensatory education would create a group of individuals that could potentially alter the life outcomes of minority and disadvantaged groups in the United States. They spoke in theoretical terms. Very little research existed to guide ABC, various federal agencies and locally born projects on their pursuit of equal opportunity. They simply acted, for society offered bleak realities for low income and minority groups. Yet many of these programs, "tried, hastily evaluated, declared a failure," never broke through the experimental stage.[296]

ABC was one of the few that did. The 1970s affirmed and challenged the program's mission in a vastly different context than the 1960s. As Peter Carroll argues in his work, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, the 1970s did not mark an immediate halt to the social movements born in the 1960s, nor was the decade solely a representation of everything gone bad in American society. Instead, an "almost subliminal revolution was altering the contours of the cultural landscape."[297] Historical actors continued to challenge the social, political, and economic shortcomings of the nation; but the methods and outcomes looked different than they had a decade prior as many citizens, black and white alike, began to reject traditional American institutions.

---

[296] Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 234.

[297] Peter Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened* (New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1982), ix.

Reflecting on its sixth year in the 1970 annual report to donors and supporters of the program, ABC recognized the "prevailing mood of wariness" in the country.[298] Prospective donors, for example, critiqued ABC more than they had ever done. They questioned the program's small enrollment numbers, disliked the inclusion of preparatory schools in ABC's model, and criticized costs per student. A Better Chance, however, could counter such critiques with sixth years' worth of data illustrating what the program perceived as a successful run at achieving equal opportunity in the United States:

> Who, we ask, are better qualified to do something about the related problems of race and poverty than persons with both a first-hand feeling for those problems and the education and skills to combat them? Who – other than ABC graduates – have such an excellent opportunity to acquire sophistication in dealing with the established institutions of our society, sophistication needed to implement change?...No other program in the country so dramatically improves the level of education of the very poor and liberates their potential for leadership.[299]

In this moment, ABC "gained a new program identity – a clear sense of what the program was trying to do:" cultivate a new group of leaders with the life experiences and the education to finally deal with problems of race and poverty.[300] ABC left the experimental stage – a blessing and a curse – but the federal government never abandoned that frame of thinking in how it approached America's education problems. As A Better Chance struggled to remain relevant to both its funders and as a solution to the county's disparities, the program's tactics became increasingly problematic; but the undergirding tensions stemmed from a problem far greater than ABC could tackle.

---

[298] "ABC: Annual Report, 1970," 1, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[299] Ibid., 3.

[300] Ibid., 3.

As A Better Chance assumed what renowned black scholar W.E.B. Du Bois would refer to as a talented tenth approach, the courts seemed to catch up with a more sweeping solution for educational disparities.[301] Impatient with the South's display of massive resistance for the last fourteen years, the Supreme Court ruled in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Va.* in 1968 that school districts must draft and implement a school desegregation plan. So far the only attempts to desegregate, if at all, appeared in freedom-of-choice plans, which intentionally preserved segregation.[302] Then in 1971, the court called for an immediate end to segregation in public schools by mandating that busloads of black and white children be brought to one another's schools in Charlotte, North Carolina.[303] With the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare enforcing the court's decision, by 1972, the racial composition of schools transitioned to looking markedly different than they did prior to *Brown*.[304]

Many proponents of desegregation approved of the court's decision because it overcame patterns of residential segregation.[305] But public opinion as a whole, from blacks and whites alike, disapproved of busing. A majority of whites did not support the court's decision and approximately half of blacks agreed.[306] President Richard Nixon mimicked

---

[301] The "talented tenth" is a term that black scholar W.E.B. Du Bois coined to describe the need for "exceptional" black people to become leaders of the black race. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth," from *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative Negroes To-day,"* (New York, 1930).

[302] Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, 731.

[303] *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Board of Education.*, 402 U.S. 1 (1971).

[304] Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 176.

[305] Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, 732.

[306] Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*, 732.

public opinion. His civil rights record, as described by Kenneth O'Reilly in *Nixon's Piano,* "was a disgrace. An entirely separate disgrace," from what would later materialize with Watergate.[307] Speaking for the "silent majority," or those Americans disenchanted from the activism of the 1960s, the president addressed Congress, saying, "What we need now is not just speaking out against busing…We need action to stop it."[308] Heeding Daniel Patrick Moynihan's advice to assume "benign neglect" towards race relations, Nixon In 1972 went so far as to propose a freeze on busing throughout the nation, and used busing as a major point of debate during the 1972 presidential election.[309]

Busing became the most contentious race issue of the 1970s. Many whites had already relocated to avoid sending their children to school with black children, and now the court's order upset that strategy. Some whites reacted with violence. Others simply left, moving families to areas less afflicted by busing ordinances and increasing the white flight already in progress. Some created private white academies to escape the government's oversight.[310]

While the Supreme Court's busing mandate evoked fervent debate and resistance about what schools should look like, the Rockefeller Foundation echoed the national focus

---

[307] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano,* 329.

[308] Ibid., 304.

[309] Nixon used busing as leverage against Northern Democrat rivals in the 1972 presidential election. He enlisted Gerald Ford, then a congressman from Michigan, to bait potential presidential Democratic nominees Edmund Muskie and Ted Kennedy into revealing their stance on busing. O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano,* 305.

[310] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened,* 38-44; See David Nevin, *The schools that fear built: Segregationist academies in the South* (Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1976); See also Sarah Carr, "In Southern Towns, 'Segregation Academies' Still Going Strong," *The Atlantic,* December 13, 2012, http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/12/in-southern-towns-segregation-academies-are-still-going-strong/266207/. Accessed March 21, 2015.

on public education. Beginning in 1967, the trustees had shifted their goals away from higher education to urban communities. As explained in its 1971 Annual Report, the foundation chose to do so because "the Federal Government, and the colleges themselves, [had] assumed a major part of the financial burden" for higher education initiatives:[311]

> In the last three or four years the Foundation has sought out – in some cases, initiated – programs that concentrate on improving life in the neighborhoods where most of the deprived people are: the urban ghettos that America had chosen to forget until some of them erupted in frustration.[312]

The foundation envisioned itself as catalyst for change in urban communities.

ABC began to shift its focus to those areas, as well. But in the eyes of general purpose foundations like Rockefeller and Ford, ABC no longer qualified as an experimental endeavor. These foundations awarded money to innovative projects that offered a potential solution to a problem. To foundation officers, ABC's continuous growth indicated that the program no longer needed their help. [313] And so foundation support for ABC decreased by more than $300,000 from the 1969 to 1970 fiscal year as Rockefeller

---

[311] "President's Ten-Year Review & Annual Report 1971," 58, *Rockefeller Foundation*, http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/annual-reports. Accessed March 15, 2015.

[312] "President's Ten-Year Review & Annual Report 1971," 58, *Rockefeller Foundation*, http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/annual-reports. Accessed March 15, 2015.

[313] In the world of philanthropy, there are five categories of foundations. General purpose foundations include the big names, like Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford, which provided more than half of all grants issued in a given year by 1968, and were particularly geared towards issues of education. These foundations awarded money to demonstration projects, or experimental endeavors that the foundation deemed worthy of their support. More importantly, foundations did not award money simply because they liked an organization. Special purpose, family, corporate, and community foundations made up the remainder of foundations. In the eyes of foundations like Rockefeller and Ford, ABC no longer qualified as an experimental project. And along with the shifting tenor of the times, most notably the flagging economy, grant money decreased. "Development Digest: A collection of speeches on fundraising and the independent school," Folder 438, Box 53, Series 200, Record Group 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation.

and Ford shied away from the larger grants that characterized the earlier years of the program.[314]

Consequently, ABC conjured up new experimental projects and recruitment practices in urban communities to attract foundation funding. The new leadership intern program, for example, included five pilot programs. For eight weeks during the summer, rising high school juniors and seniors and college freshmen lived at home while interning at welfare offices, prisons, law enforcement agencies – anywhere with "particular relevance to nearby economically disadvantaged communities," wrote Garvey Clarke, vice president of development for ABC, in the 1970 annual development report.[315] The goal, Clarke said, was for students to gain "an awareness of the complexity of problems confronting a community and insight into ways problems are approached and decisions made."[316]

The leadership intern program was one of two ABC proposals the Rockefeller Foundation rejected in 1971. Charles Smith, associate director of Rockefeller's social sciences division, wrote in a letter to Clarke that although the two proposals were "extremely interesting and imaginative," Rockefeller now focused on "developing new leadership at all levels for the public schools."[317] That year grant recipients included

---

[314] Garvey Clarke, "A Difficult Year: Annual Development Report," 4, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[315] Garvey Clarke, "A Difficult Year: Annual Development Report," 6, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[316] Garvey Clarke, "A Difficult Year: Annual Development Report," 6, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[317] Charles Smith, letter Garvey Clarke, December 21, 1971, Folder 437, Box 53, Series 200, Record Group 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation.

Arizona State University to study minority parent involvement with pre-school students, City University of New York to research adolescents in Harlem, and the Minneapolis public school system to grow its community center.[318] Paradoxically, as ABC left the experimental stage, it lost the renewed support of the big name foundations looking to fund new research projects.[319]

That same year, and still trying to center its focus on urban communities, ABC decided to decentralize its operations in the hopes of reaching more of the country, and obtaining community investment in the program. As ABC described the decision in its bi-annual newsletter, the program's new focus on specific urban areas would "provide concrete and visible success models for area[s] frustrated by the educational process."[320] Cities included Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Columbus, and New York.[321] However, as was ABC's prerogative from the beginning in 1963, the program removed students from their home environments to attain an education in majority white schools. But did that approach effectively create a solution for neglected public schools? ABC drifted towards irrelevance as the court increased attention to public education, and big players in the private sector followed suit. A Better Chance neared a point where it would only function as a superficial initiative, rather than one trying to overturn the foundations of American society.

---

318 "President's Ten-Year Review & Annual Report 1971," 121-126, *Rockefeller Foundation*, http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/annual-reports. Accessed March 15, 2015.

319 Garvey Clarke, "A Difficult Year: Annual Development Report," 4, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

320 "New York Model Cities," *ABC Newsletter* 1, No.3, page 4, Fall 1971, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

321 Garvey Clarke, "Annual Development Report to the Friends and Supporters of A Better Chance, Inc.," September 25, 1972, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

ABC exposed the limitations of its community-centered recruitment when it dramatically altered the summer program. The founders of ABC deemed it as a critical component of the ABC model. The eight week time frame was essential to provide adequate preparation for independent and public school entrance. ABC staff made the first cut to six and a half weeks on five college campuses. By the summer of 1970, two, three week summer sessions for boys and girls were held at Williams College.[322] ABC's mission was no longer remedial summer education; rather, the shortened summer programs would "give students the confidence in their ability to adjust to independent schools."[323] ABC shortened the summer component because it was too expensive to maintain in its original form; a $300,000 endeavor now required $76,240. The Rockefeller Foundation had provided a sizable grant for the summer program, but with the last installment used for the summer of 1969, a refusal to renew, and the unlikelihood of finding a grant of the same magnitude, ABC was forced to rethink what had once been perceived as the crux of their project.[324] And yet they increased the risk factor of their students. In 1970, sixty-one percent of entering students lived with single parents, and forty-four percent lived with families receiving welfare – the highest percentages so far since the program began.[325]

---

[322] Garvey Clarke, "Annual Development Report to the Friends and Supporters of A Better Chance, Inc.," September 25, 1972, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[323] "ABC: Annual Report, 1970," 3, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brother Fund.

[324] Garvey Clarke, "A Difficult Year: Annual Development Report," 3, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; A Better Chance then introduced a pilot preparation experience for sixteen of its new students. Each student spent five days on the campus of the school they would attend in the fall. The sixteen students then came together for a five day conference. ABC hoped to expand this to 100 students the following year. "1971 Annual Report," 12, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brother Fund.

[325] "ABC: Annual Report, 1970," 3, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brother Fund.

A tension resides here. ABC's talented tenth declaration, delivered in the same breath as the decision to severely limit the summer program – its niche from the outset – and recruit riskier students do not fit neatly together. This was a time when "identity politics" replaced nationalism. Blacks and other racial minorities did not want to carve a space for themselves in a society that continually rejected their quest for legitimate citizenship. ABC opened itself up to further critique from anti-integrationists. But for some, ABC offered an alternative.

For Edouard Plummer, a math and social sciences teacher at Wadleigh Junior High in Harlem, New York, ABC provided an exit plan. Upon learning about ABC in 1964, Plummer created a program at Wadleigh for students with "determination, drive, talent, discipline, and ambition."[326] Meeting twice per week, Plummer provided his students with intense sessions of remedial work and preparation for life in preparatory school. He called it the Special Program. Plummer's goal was to produce competitive applicants for ABC. And he did. ABC picked up more students from Wadleigh Junior High than any other school in the inner city.[327]

Plummer faced criticism for perceiving predominantly white schools as a means to change the educational outcomes of his students from administrators and faculty, community members and parents. In defending his stance on ABC's approach to educational opportunity, Plummer remarked:

> Black people have always felt out of place, so what's new? And how is placing sixteen kids out of ten thousand taking away 'the cream of the

[326] Robert Sam Anson, *Best Intentions: The Education and Killing of Edmund Perry* (New York: Random House, 1987), 55.

[327] Robert Sam Anson, *Best Intentions,* 44.

> community'? And if they are the crème de la crème, then what the hell have the New York City schools been doing with them?[328]

ABC functioned as an alternative to failing public education. So long as schools remained unequal, ABC retained its relevance. They just needed to convince everyone else. **"**We cannot," wrote Garvey Clarke, ABC's vice president of development, "allow for ABC to become another 'victim of the times.'"[329]

Constructing a narrative of relevance, then, meant that ABC needed to study itself within a broader context of American education. Clarke met with Leland DeVinney, the associate director of the social sciences division of the Rockefeller Foundation on January 7, 1970. Clarke wanted to assess the foundation's interest in providing $60,000 for a two year evaluation of the ABC program.[330] "After having spent fourteen million dollars during the past six years," ABC's proposal to Rockefeller stated, the program wanted to "state clearly what it has accomplished."[331] If ABC could offer an insightful analysis, the findings could be beneficial to other programs with the same academic and leadership goals for disadvantaged students. Although Joseph Black, director of the social sciences division of the Rockefeller Foundation, commented on DeVinney's meeting notes that the foundation officers would view the proposal favorably, the foundation's answer, delivered

---

[328] Robert Sam Anson, *Best Intentions,* 51.

[329] Garvey Clarke, "1974 Annual Development Report," 3, December 1974, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[330] Leland DeVinney, memo to Joseph E. Black, January 27, 1970, Folder 436, Box 53, Series 2000, Record Group 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation.

[331] "A Financial Assistance Proposal," January 16, 1970, Folder 436, Box 53, Series 200, Record Group 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation.

on March 26, 1970, was no.[332] With fewer grants to give, more areas of interest, and the constraints the Tax Reform Act of 1969 introduced, the Rockefeller Foundation could not extend itself to "marginal areas from the standpoint of our current guidelines."[333]

ABC looked elsewhere, and with grants from the Henry Luce Foundation, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and New York Community Trust, ABC began a two year study to assess the program's impact and effectiveness in 1971. George Perry, the principal investigator, paired non-ABC students who were of similar potential and background to ABC students who enrolled in the program in 1967. All 1967 ABC students gained admission to colleges, primarily competitive ones. For non-ABC students, nearly half went to technical schools upon graduation, worked semi-skilled jobs, or enlisted in the armed forces. Between fifteen and twenty percent of ABC students dropped out of college. For non-ABC students in the study, attrition rates were closer to fifty percent.[334]

Perry also measured the effectiveness and impact of the program using five criteria: fate control, aspiration, self-concept, relationship to home, race relations. Fate control, aspiration and self-concept all increased while in school and matched that of the students' white counterparts. The race relations criteria yielded similar results to other school integration studies conducted in the aftermath of *Brown.* ABC student attitudes became

---

[332] Leland DeVinney, interview with Garvey Clarke, January 7, 1970, Folder 436, Box 53, Series 200, Record Group 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation. Joseph Black quoted in Leland DeVinney, letter to Garvey Clarke, March 26, 1970, Folder 436, Box 53, Series 200, Record Group 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation.

[333] Leland DeVinney, letter to Garvey Clarke, March 26, 1970. Folder 436, Box 53, Series 200, Record Group 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation.

[334] "1971 Annual Report," 11, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; Between 1960 and 1970the graduation gap between whites and blacks closed by more than twenty-five percent. More black students were on track to graduate than ever before. According to John Rury and Shirley, historians have overlooked this. See John Rury and Hill, *African American Struggle for Secondary Schooling*, 123.

increasingly "separatist," a product of "prejudice, culture shock, and gaining a greater sense of pride in their own background" while attending predominantly white schools.[335] Student behavior, on the other hand, became more integrated because of social interactions with white students. Minority group students spent most of their leisure time with others in their group, however.

Relationship to home yielded the most interesting results for ABC. Perry found that for several of the ABC students in the study, a feeling of separation – of attitudes and values – between the students and family and friends in their home communities existed prior to joining ABC, and increased throughout their time in secondary school. However, the separation pushed the students to reflect on their homes with gratitude, and hope to make a difference for other impoverished people.[336] In other words, ABC schools exaggerated the attitudinal separation between students and their homes, while simultaneously fostering a stronger connection to change the life outcomes of people like them. This is the outcome ABC wanted for its students.

The mood of the nation did not prove entirely antagonistic towards ABC's agenda. In 1971, the Office of Economic Opportunity became a viable funding option. ABC received financial support from the federal government for the first time since the agency withdrew funds in 1967. Two sources – New York Model Cities and the New Jersey Bureau of Children's Services – contributed to a successful year of fundraising. New York Model Cities contributed $246,900 for 100 ABC students entering the program in the fall of 1971,

[335] "A Better Chance: Annual Report 1972," 5, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[336] Ibid.

and agreed to continue funding the students for the duration of their secondary schooling. Model Cities, a legacy of the Great Society, was a federal program that focused on urban development in many cities across the nation.[337] The Model Cities grant served as a key contribution to the development of the ABC program, and the "the first endeavor on any scale to utilize community resources directly," in the ABC program. [338]

Yet again, ABC left itself at the mercy of the federal government. It quickly remembered why it did not depend on federal dollars as the memory of the late 1960s resurfaced. Congress renewed Model Cities' funding on a yearly basis, so Garvey Clarke, vice president of development, and other ABC staff believed two years of funding for 150 new students was realistic. ABC, just like when R. Sargent Shriver and OEO came into the picture several years prior, had no reason to believe that these 150 new students, all with two years of secondary school remaining, were in jeopardy of not being funded. The least of ABC's concerns, however, quickly became a threat to the program's recruitment abilities as government funding decreased. ABC scrambled. It had set its sights on a 700 student enrollment for the fall of 1973, but it was forced to lower those projections to 525 students. It still had to raise more than $2 million – more than the program had ever raised on its own – to fund a new class of students. [339]

---

[337] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 48.

[338] "New York Model Cities," *ABC Newsletter* 1, No.3, page 4, Fall 1971, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; see also Charles E. Olkin, "Economic Development in the Model Cities Program,"

[339] Garvey Clarke, "Annual Development Report," October 1973, 1-7, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

ABC broke its own fundraising record that year.[340] "ABC has never been stronger," Garvey Clarke wrote, "than it is now."[341] Despite foundation cutbacks and the fickle nature of government funding, ABC made financial gains throughout the decade as corporate and individual donor support grew. Independent schools continued to shoulder a significant amount of scholarships. These schools contributed more than forty percent of their financial aid budgets to minority and low income students – a figure that exceeded financial aid allocations of most colleges.[342]

ABC continued to expand its reach. The Bureau of Children's Services in New Jersey introduced fifteen foster children and wards of the state for the first time in the ABC program. Many of A Better Chance's students came from disadvantaged backgrounds, marked by welfare dependency, "broken" families, or poverty.[343] ABC found that these students, whom "experienced the most extreme kind of poverty and emotional deprivation," succeeded to the same extent as other ABC students with less afflicted backgrounds. The "logical next step," to ABC meant incorporating foster children and wards of the state into ABC's private and public school models.[344] The state granted

[340] Garvey Clarke, "Annual Development Report," October 1973, 1-7, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[341] Ibid., 7.

[342] Ibid., 11.

[343] "New Jersey Foster Children Enter ABC," *ABC Newsletter* 1, No.3, Fall 1971, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[344] "Ibid.

$158,150 towards the education of these students, which was less than the amount of money needed for the state to care for them.[345]

The Ford Foundation rejoined ABC in 1972 with a $178,972 grant to ABC for the development of a government relations office in Washington D.C., which would allow ABC to have a pulse on potential government funding. The grant to ABC was one of four Ford awarded to organizations offering alternatives to the traditional public school approach to education. In an internal memoranda, Ford reasoned its support "would not only be timely, but could help direct the public's attention to the problems and the unique role of these schools in the total education picture."[346] Awarding grants to ABC, the Council for American Private Education, the National Association for Independent Schools, and Phillips Andover Academy, Ford hoped to help these educational programs, "1) define and think through their own problems, 2) continue to explore mutually compatible and complementary relationships with public institutions and 3) open wider the doors of American non-public education to help increase the opportunities of educationally underprivileged minorities."[347] Ford looked positively on America's private schools, and believed that they would continue to make worthy contributions to society if well-resourced and well-supported.

---

[345] "1971 Annual Report," 8, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund; "New Jersey Foster Children Enter ABC," *ABC Newsletter* 1, No.3, page 1, Fall 1971, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[346] "Section 1: Request for Grant Action or Internal Memoranda (for a grant out of DAP)," 2, Reel 1972, Series 2286, Ford Foundation.

[347] "Section 1: Request for Grant Action or Internal Memoranda (for a grant out of DAP)," 2, Reel 1972, Series 2286, Ford Foundation.

ABC looked at its growing alumni roster and saw what had begun as pure speculation evolve into, as the program believed, "a model for nationwide educational reform."[348] As ABC asserted itself as such, the Supreme Court began its retreat from America's public schools. Now under the helm of conservative Chief Justice Warren Burger, the Supreme Court issued a key decision about public education in 1973. But this time, the court triggered a reversal in desegregation schemes that would span four decades. In a 5-4 vote in *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*, the Supreme Court upheld the use of property taxes as the primary funding source for public education. To the Mexican American plaintiffs who argued that local funding produced disparities, the Supreme Court responded that the Constitution did not guarantee citizens' right to an education.[349]

The real turning point came in 1974 when the Supreme Court, again in a 5-4 decision, overturned a ruling from 1971 that granted permission to school officials in Detroit to merge several of the inner city and suburban school districts for the sake of metropolitan desegregation. In *Milliken v. Bradley*, the court declared that students could not be bused across district lines because of the *de facto* suburban school districts. The decision shattered any chance of reversing the effects of white flight and solving the problem of segregation in metropolitan areas.[350]

---

[348] "1971 Annual Report, "Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[349] Patterson, *Grand Expectations*, 734.

[350] Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton, *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: The New Press, 1996), 30; see also Peter Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing* Happened, 177. In 1975, James Coleman, author of the controversial "Coleman Report," now at the University of Chicago issued another study that identified busing as a catalyst for white flight. Although a proponent of racial integration, Coleman granted the anti-busing movement unintended support.

In Boston, the *Milliken* decision did not quell the conflict that had already erupted. Shortly before the Supreme Court issued the *Milliken* decision, federal district court judge W. Arthur Garrity ruled that the city of Boston must bus white and black students throughout the city to reconcile Boston's segregated public school system. In neighborhoods such as Charlestown, South Boston and West Roxbury/Roslindale the majority of white citizens strongly disapproved of busing, especially white ethnics who had created their own neighborhoods. The violence and displays of racism that surfaced in Boston, labeled as "the Little Rock of the North," mirrored the standoffs between civil rights activists and white segregationists in the south. The antibusing movement in Boston was more organized and impassioned than in any other city in the United States, and it did not happen in a vacuum. Years of hostility between blacks and Boston's Irish population, and school officials' intransigence towards the conditions of public schools, contributed towards the ratcheting up of antibusing resistance in Boston's public schools.[351]

This highly charged atmosphere provides a backdrop for ABC's efforts to retain relevance in the 1970s. ABC wanted to more explicitly address the problem of urban education by being more closely connected to those environments. In attempting to do so, the program showed its limitations. Previously in 1971, ABC had decentralized its operations. ABC's new approach required that it focus student recruitment locally instead of nationally. It had always taken pride in the program's recruitment abilities, a mechanism that had been fine-tuned for over a decade. Schools looked to ABC to help bolster minority enrollment. But from 1972 to 1976, ABC began to lose spots for its students in the more

[351] Ronald Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 1-11, 109.

elite independent boarding schools, the ones "viewed as pace setters within independent secondary education," said William Boyd, president of ABC, in a letter to the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.[352] When ABC questioned these schools, their response was that the caliber of the students was not what it used to be. When ABC shifted their recruitment from a national scope to targeted, community-based recruitment, the quality of the students entering the program decreased. Volunteer ABC recruiters, who became central to the recruitment process, "sought candidates they wanted rather than those [ABC] needed."[353]

The schools were willing to rejoin if ABC tweaked its recruitment process to filter in stronger candidates. ABC complied. The program tightened its requirements so that all students had to fall within the top ten percent of their class and average an eighty-five percent in their classes. Students had to test into a reading level one grade higher, provide a letter of recommendation from an English teacher, a report of the students' reading and writing abilities, and Secondary School Admission Test (SSAT) scores. ABC provided more training to staff members and volunteers, and visited all target cities to ensure the integrity of the recruitment process. [354] ABC's stricter criteria, coupled with the program's distinction between the wants of the community and the needs of ABC, emphasize the innate tensions within ABC's compensatory education model. Regardless of the program's

---

[352] William Boyd, letter to John Etsy, November 17, 1976, 1, Folder 5, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund. Recall that the John D. Rockefeller, Sr. founded the Rockefeller Foundation in 1913. Rockefeller Sr. had a son, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Rockefeller Jr. then had three sons, and these sons founded the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in 1940. Rockefeller Brothers Fund is a family foundation, which is smaller than the Rockefeller Foundation, a general purpose foundation. "History," *Rockefeller Brothers Fund,* http://www.rbf.org/content/history. Accessed March 31, 2015.

[353] William Boyd, letter to John Etsy, November 17, 1976, 1, Folder 5, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[354] "Agenda for RBF Executive Committee," January 26, 1978, Folder 5, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

urban-focused recruitment, there would always be students whom ABC could not accommodate.

ABC continually developed and redefined its operations. To cut back on expenses, ABC closed the government relations office in Washington D.C. and reduced its development staff from fourteen employees to six. Several of ABC's demonstration projects, intended to attract foundation money and continue to bridge equal opportunity gaps, were deemed unsuccessful and ultimately a drain on resources. "In effect," wrote ABC's newest vice president of development, Michael Zoob, to the Ford Foundation, "ABC had promised more things than it could deliver."[355]

Recognizing its shortcomings, A Better Chance refocused on what the program had always done: recruit students to attend prestigious independent schools and excellent public high schools. Yet as ABC improved its operations, opponents of the Office of Economic Opportunity threatened social programs across the nation. Just as Vietnam negatively impacted OEO, so too did Nixon's 1972 presidential re-election Nixon beat George McGovern, a Democrat, by a larger margin of votes than any other president in American history.[356] Voter turnout, however, only reached 55.7 percent of registered voters. The low level of voter participation, later analyses suggested, indicated a rejection of both candidates and their platforms, not indifference.[357] Citizens began to adopt silence as a form of political protest. By the dawn of the 1970s, the Black Panthers, a militant group of Black Power advocates, rejected old resistance tactics. Many of them died at the hands of

---

[355] Michael Zoob, letter to Ralph Bohrson, April 23, 1976, 3, Reel 2286, Ford Foundation.

[356] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 89.

[357] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened* , 91.

the government because of that resistance. Nixon had set out to destroy the Black Panthers, casting them off as dissidents and eliminating the day care, free breakfast for children, and adult literacy programs the organization provided in numerous inner cities across the nation.[358]

Nixon's attack on the Panthers' sensible social programs extended to OEO. Patrick Buchanan, Nixon's senior advisor, described OEO and other legacies of the Great Society as "the Pleasure Island of the Welfare State – that wholly owned and operated subsidiary of liberalism – that has destroyed the moral fiber of America's black poor."[359] For the next few years Nixon's staff dismantled OEO. R. Sargent Shriver and Bert Harding, his successor, acknowledged that President Johnson had created OEO as an experimental agency devoted to eradicating poverty. Before Nixon came to the White House, Harding and Shriver had already begun to pass off viable programs to other government agencies. Nixon followed their lead, giving Job Corps to the Labor Department and Head Start to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Hoping to be done with it by 1974, budget writers for the 1974 fiscal year allotted no funds to OEO programs. Howard Phillips, a staunch conservative and the newest director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, took the funding changes as an opportunity to deactivate the entire agency. But the courts ruled Phillips actions illegal, arguing that Congress had to approve or veto the budget before any

[358] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened* **,** 312-313.

[359] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano,* 314.

action could be taken, which they did. That did not stop the president's men from continuing their campaign against the remnants of the Great Society.[360]

The final dissolution of OEO simultaneously appeased both supporters and the opposition. For fiscal year 1975, the White House tried again to eliminate funds to OEO in the federal budget. But successful lobbying from directors and representatives of OEO programs resulted in Congress' decision to dissolve OEO and shift all of the programs to existing agencies.[361] Shriver, reflecting on OEO, said the following:

> Nothing I ever did before or since had a more beneficial effect on so many people as the war on poverty…We gave people a stake in the system who never had it before…Sure, we made mistakes. Stupid mistakes and inevitable mistakes. But this was supposed to be a war. Westmoreland made mistakes in Vietnam, and we excused them. We were never permitted the same margin of error.[362]

Shriver expressed enthusiasm for what OEO had been able to accomplish in a relatively short period of time. But for those who were tired of fighting against the overwhelmingly stagnant political, economic, and social landscape – tired of waiting for resolve – the militancy and repression of the late sixties and early seventies gave way to alienation. The Nixon administration remained indifferent to the nation's African American, Native American, Puerto Rican, and Mexican American groups. By 1973 they made up 15.4 percent of the population, and wrestled with an array of societal inequalities such as poverty, disparities in education, high unemployment, and poor health outcomes.[363]

---

[360] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano: Presidents and Racial Politics from Washington to Clinton* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 315.

[361] Mark R. Arnold, "The good war that might have been," *New York Times*, September 29, 1974, 66.

[362] Ibid.

[363] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 103.

All of these groups felt squeezed out of American society in the early 1970s, and each group grappled with assimilationist and self-determinist debates, a dilemma that remained unresolved.[364]

President Nixon resigned from the presidency on August 9, 1974. In 1974, the highest inflation rate ever recorded, high unemployment, and a stagnant economy moved the United States into the worst economic crisis to unravel since the Great Depression. These economic conditions greatly inhibited black social mobility. White flight continued out of the inner city to the suburbs, furthering residential segregation and *de facto* school segregation. "Forced" busing remained a highly conentious issue.[365]

President Gerald Ford did little to outshine Nixon's civil rights legacy. The southern-strategy, to many onlookers, remained firmly planted in the White House.[366] By the middle of the decade, ABC assessed the political climate. "ABC must move aggressively into the seventies…we predict a year of hard work and cautious optimism ahead. We must be sure that we have a case that continues to be relevant and able to meet the needs of the times."[367] Energy shortages, environmental protection, economic crises, feminism and gay rights pushed race relations out of the American conscience.[368] Independent schools were not impervious to the shift, either. They had always shouldered

---

[364] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano,* 322.

[365] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 158, 173.

[366] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 35.

[367] Garvey Clarke, "1974 Annual Development Report," 3, December 1974, Folder 11, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[368] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 153.

a significant portion of ABC students' tuition. And many had no problem doing that. But now independent schools also criticized ABC. The money used to fund one black or Hispanic student or a poor white student could be used for multiple white middle class students who could not foot the entire tuition bill. And for white alumni of the independent schools, increased minority student enrolled siphoned money away from other whites.[369] White Americans were fatigued by the social programs of the 1960s, believing that racial discrimination was a thing of the past, and looked poorly on affirmative action programs.[370] A former student at the Commonwealth School in Boston, Alice T. Friedman, Class of 1968, demonstrated that fatigue. Referencing minority recruitment, Friedman insisted that Commonwealth's solicitation of scholarship dollars from alumni "was an unfortunate example of the way in which Commonwealth allows itself to be compromised by students too quick to play heavily on white liberal guilt feelings."[371]

Throughout the latter half of the decade, William Boyd, ABC's newest president, initiated several studies for ABC to not only evaluate the program, but to become a part of national conversations that further highlighted the program's relevance. "SAT Scores: Not the Final Word on Minority Students," delved into the commonly held belief that SAT scores were the sole predictor of student performance in college, regardless of race. Boyd believed that ABC could offer valuable insight into the age old debate about standardized test scores, and the Ford Foundation agreed, granting $5,800 towards the cost of

---

[369] Bruce Kimball, "'No reason…except faith,' Ten Years of ABC," February 1974, 32, Folder 957, Box 149, Series 200, Record Group 1.4, Rockefeller Foundation.

[370] Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams*, 265-266.

[371] Bice Clemlow et al, "Loosening the Old School Tie," May 1970, 32, Project Evaluation, Unpublished Report Series 2162, Division of National Affairs, Ford Foundation.

performing the study on July 7, 1977.[372] Boyd chose the Ivies, selective colleges, and/or colleges where twenty or more ABC alumni had been enrolled. From these schools Boyd sampled 334 students, who were black or had Spanish last names, and who enrolled in the schools between 1969 and 1972.[373] Boyd concluded that minority students' SAT scores prior to college did not absolutely predict their performance in college, and to rely on those scores exclusively "discriminate against minority students."[374]

Fred Crossland, a program officer at the Ford Foundation wrote that Boyd could publish and disseminate the study wherever and however ABC saw fit. But, Crossland warned, Boyd needed to have other individuals double-check his data analysis. "We both know that there are plenty of unfriendly critics waiting in the wings," Crossland wrote, "and it wouldn't help the cause if inadvertently we gave them any vulnerable targets to shoot at."[375]

In an internal Ford memo Crossland wrote that the results of ABC's study "did not provide any startling new insights." The study illuminated the fact that well-prepared minority students perform better in college than a supposedly objective measure, like the SAT, may suggest. But it was important, Crossland warned, "not to jump to the questionable conclusion that the predictors themselves are flawed." He continued:

> The ABC students probably are the best in their pool and get preferred treatment at some of the best preparatory schools and colleges; almost

[372] Williard J. Hertz, letter to William Boyd, July 7, 1977, Reel 1281, Ford Foundation.

[373] William Boyd, "SAT Scores: Not the Final Word on Minority Students," 2, July 19, 1977, Reel 1281, Ford Foundation.

[374] William Boyd, "SAT Scores: Not the Final Word on Minority Students," 1, July 19, 1977, Reel 1281, Ford Foundation.

[375] Fred Crossland, letter to William Boyd, August 4, 1977, Reel 1281, Ford Foundation.

> certainly there are halo and hawthorn effects that cause them to 'overachieve' statistically. This may be most of what Boyd demonstrated in his analysis. But even so, it is worth being reminded of these facts and having some statistical evidence to back them up. It was a useful grant. It may not have broken any new ground, but it added nourishment to that already plowed.[376]

Boyd published another study that same year. The college enrollment numbers of black students were no longer on the rise; college admissions kept the numbers stable, or allowed them to decline. In his study, "Black Undergraduates Succeed in White Colleges," Boyd asks, "Should the progress toward greater black enrollment in these institutions have been stopped? Should it be resumed?"[377] ABC conducted a longitudinal study to evaluate the experiences of black undergraduates in predominantly white colleges because for the first time, college demographics included more than just token numbers of black students. In 1973 ABC first sampled 789 students dispersed among forty, four year colleges and universities that were predominantly white. In 1975, ABC obtained another random sample of 784 students. Interviewers, mainly black undergraduate or graduate students hired by ABC, asked participants more than fifty questions pertaining to preparation in secondary school, academics, family background, future plans, extracurricular activities – topics that could paint a picture of students' time in college thus far. Three primary findings emerged. First, the students interviewed in 1973 adjusted to college well; the students interviewed in 1975 indicated more positive experiences at their schools. Second, regardless of the year, the students who attended highly selective colleges reported more positive experiences than

[376] Fred Crossland, inter-offce memorandum to File # 775-489, May 26, 1978, Reel 1281, Ford Foundation.

[377] William Boyd, "Black Undergraduates Succeed in White Colleges," 309, *Educational Record* 58, no.3, 1977, Folder 5, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

their counterparts at less selective colleges. And third, in highly selective colleges, former ABC students reported better adjustment than non-ABC black students in those schools.[378]

Even with a poor educational background, Boyd concluded, ABC students adjusted to independent schools and comparable public high schools. As Dean of admissions at Harvard, Fred Jewett explained, "Harvard is a tough nut to crack, but ABC alumni arrive here with experience in cracking this type of nut."[379] Boyd believed that both the private and public sectors should make a concerted effort to increase minority enrollment in America's best public and private secondary schools because, as ABC's study indicated, the students then do well in the nation's top colleges and universities. "It can be done," Boyd persuaded, "and it can be done at no greater cost to taxpayers."[380] "Wasting money is unwise. Wasting the human potential of thousands of talented minority group youngsters is criminal."[381]

Despite all of the studies ABC produced that demonstrated how well ABC students performed in school and thus, the proven effectiveness of the program's approach to equal educational opportunity, one cannot overlook the nation's minority groups that remained at the bottom of the society, disproportionately affected, and victims of white backlash.[382] President Jimmy Carter had done nothing for social programs and made no substantive

---

[378] William Boyd, "Black Undergraduates Succeed in White Colleges," 311, *Educational Record* 58, no.3, 1977, Folder 5, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[379] Ibid., 314.

[380] Ibid.

[381] Ibid.

[382] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened*, 252-256.

reforms to counter the social problems that remained rooted in black and other minority communities. This exacerbated issues in the public school system. White families continued the trek to the suburbs, which reinforced residential segregation, siphoned money from urban school districts, and skewed the proportions of black and white students in schools. Parents and school boards remained firm in their resistance to mandatory integration measures. By the late 1970s, the courts halted the desegregation of public schools as school district by school district successfully persuaded the courts to end mandates for racial balance in the classroom.

The conservative backlash against racial remedies came to a head in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* in 1977. The medical school at the University of California, Davis used a quota system to ensure racial balance amongst admitted students. Allan Bakke, a white male, believed that U.C. Davis unfairly denied him admission to make room for less qualified minority applicants. The University of California called on the Justice Department to issue an amicus brief on the college's behalf. President Carter wanted to fall in the middle: keep affirmative action while eliminating quotas. But the mood of the country dispelled two extremes. For the silent majority, or white Middle America, Bakke suffered reverse discrimination. His merit, not race, should have been enough to grant him entrance to the university. For Derrick Bell, historian and legal scholar, preferential treatment had been around in colleges and graduate schools for years. And for white affluent Americans, who could access the best schools and benefit in many other ways from being members of the upper class, this was especially true. Carter did not want

to align with either of these arguments. Without the president's help and after dozens of drafts, the Justice Department produced a brief containing one sentence opposing quotas.[383]

ABC inserted itself into this national debate when on August 29, 1977, NBC's "Today" show delivered a debate between two men about the *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* awaiting a decision from the Supreme Court. Albert Shanker, president of the United Federation of Teachers, believed the standardized tests were entirely objective, and no real evidenced existed to challenge its legitimacy. Therefore, Shanker argued, race, and subjective measures like it, cannot be considered in college admissions. Upon watching the segment, William Boyd immediately sent a letter to Tom Brokaw, NBC's news anchor, informing him that Shanker's argument was unfounded, and Boyd provided a copy of the recently completed ABC study, "SAT Scores: Not the Final Word on Minority Students." [384]

In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that quota systems were illegal, but racial criteria could still be used to achieve a critical mass. The ambiguity of that decision continues to influence affirmative action programs today. The decision also marked a shift in attitudes toward racial issues in the United States. No longer did many Americans believe that they had anything to atone for by offering race-based solutions in education and the work place.[385] In fact, America now faced an uglier problem of reverse discrimination, the argument went.

---

[383] O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano,* 343-347.

[384] Nothing groundbreaking occurred, but this example is used to illustrate the type of impact ABC wanted to have on society. Fred Crossland, letter to William Boyd, August 4, 1977, Reel 1281, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center.

[385] Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened,* 260-264.

In 1978 sociologist William Julius Wilson aggravated the discourse further when he published *The Declining Significance of Race*. He argued that race could no longer explain the obstacles blacks in America confront today. Rather, class determined black Americans' life chances. Wilson drew his theory from the growing black middle class, which benefitted from increased social, political, and economic inclusion. The black underclass – those experiencing the worst of unemployment, poor performing schools, and residential segregation– remained rooted at the very bottom of society. For Wilson, labeling the plight of the black underclass as a product of racial discrimination was not a sufficient explanation.[386]

When Wilson's book hit the shelves, debate immediately ensued and the controversy made national headlines.[387] Scholars and the public alike recognized the profound implications of Wilson's argument. If in fact Wilson's theory was correct, affirmative action policies, already in a precarious position because of the *Bakke* decision, required modification to emphasize class-based remedies rather than race-based ones. Not everyone was convinced. Kenneth Clark, the prominent black psychologist that provided critical research for the *Brown* decision, immediately dismissed Wilson's claims.[388] And many others perceived Wilson's analysis as an inaccurate assessment of class differences within the black community. ABC had begun to shift away from recruiting low income

---

[386] William Julius Wilson, *Declining Significance of Race* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

[387] Roberto Suro, "Income, not race, to divide Chicago," *Chicago Tribune,* March 17, 1978; Hollie West, "Is Race Less Important for Blacks Now?" *Washington Post,* May 13, 1979; Paul Starr, "Not Simply Black and White," *New York Times,* January 17, 1979.

[388] Kenneth B. Clark, "Race, Not Class, Still Sets Limits for Blacks," *Detroit Free Press,* May 11, 1978; Walter Goodman, "Dr. Kenneth B. Clark: Bewilderment Replaces 'Wishful Thinking' on Race," *New York Times,* December 27, 1984.

whites towards recruiting middle income minority students. The program piloted this approach in 1975, and by 1978, approximately ten percent of ABC students had parents making monetary contributions to their education, in addition to the funds provided by ABC and the member school.[389] ABC's attention to race, according to Wilson's argument, failed to capture America's newest barriers to mobility.

Wilson's book perpetuated the silence begun by Nixon and threaded throughout the 1970s. As America approached a new decade and a new president, it appeared as if race was quickly becoming an antiquated memory. Perhaps proving Wilson's point, ABC had many alumni on its roster. There was Charles C. Boyd, a 1973 graduate of Phillips Academy, 1977 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and a market analyst in Cleveland for Republic Steel Corporation. Jennifer Casey graduated from the Baldwin School in 1971, Carnegie Mellon University in 1975, Columbia Graduate School of Business in 1977, and worked in White Plains, New York as assistant product manager of General Foods Corporation. John Washington was a 1966 graduate of Northfield Mount Hermon School, 1970 graduate of Harvard, 1973 graduate of the University of Washington, and worked as a nuclear physicist at Seattle Medical Center.[390]

Possessing the data to definitively say that ABC alumni do well in college, graduate school, and chosen careers, the program decided to expand. "They are hard-working and productive citizens whose influence on public policy is beginning to be felt…All of us at ABC are inspired by their appreciation of the ABC experience and the depth of their

---

[389] "A Better Chance, Inc. Fifteenth Annual Report 1977-78," 8, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[390] "The ABC Achievement Report," Spring 1979, Folder 6, Bix 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

conviction that others should have the same opportunity."[391] ABC planned for the creation of an endowment, more parent involvement, college fairs, bi-annual visits to member schools and a litany of other modifications to the program.[392] By 1984, the twentieth anniversary of ABC, the program hoped to place their 10,000th student.[393]

The 1970s encapsulated the problems of a public-private partnership in advancing educational equality. A Better Chance relied on short term funding mechanisms for what the program hoped would be long term gains for its students. Always at the mercy of its funders, ABC consistently adjusted, and at times rebounded from near fatal blows to its recruitment capabilities. Although A Better Chance learned to skillfully navigate the private sector, the foundations, corporations, and individual donors that bankrolled the program could change their agenda at any time. ABC asserted itself as necessary tool to build towards the discarded dreams of the 1960s. But rhetoric and outcome would never compare.

[391] "A Better Chance, Inc. Annual Report, 1978-79," Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[392] "A Better Chance, Inc. Annual Report, 1978-79," 1, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

[393] "A Better Chance, Inc. Annual Report, 1978-79," 8, Folder 10, Box 2, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

Conclusion

History Matters

Edmund Perry, a young African American boy from Harlem, New York, was described by friends and family as an "intellectually aggressive" student, with childhood dreams of becoming president of the United States.[394] But on the evening of June 12, 1985, Perry was shot and killed while allegedly assaulting a white police officer.[395] The New York Police Department had become increasingly notorious for its connection to the deaths of black males in the 1980s, and the killings had lost the ability to shock the public.[396] Nevertheless, one summer night made national headlines when Perry, an alumni of A Better Chance, was murdered in Harlem. As a recent graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, with a full scholarship in hand to attend Stanford University in the fall, he was supposed to be exempt from the narrative of inner city violence.[397]

I conclude with this anecdote to draw attention to the present tensions and criticisms surrounding initiatives like A Better Chance and My Brother's Keeper that aim to offset persisting failures of American society. The governing body of ABC understood that to uproot an impressionable teenager from his home and situate him in an environment as foreign as America's white middle to upper class, could potentially prove traumatizing for the student.[398] Edmund Perry, who had immense difficulties navigating life in black Harlem and white Phillips Exeter towards his final years of schooling, was the sort of

---

[394] Robert Sam Anson. *Best Intentions: The Education and Killing of Edmund Perry.* (New York: Vintage, 2011), 53.

[395] Ibid., 6.

[396] Ibid., 16.

[397] Ibid., 53.

[398]Nancy Kopperman and George A. Perry, "Evaluation of Student Attitudes and Academic Performance, 1964-1972, Summary Report," March 1973, Folder 4, Box 1, Record Group 3.1, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Archive Center.

tragedy ABC hoped would never materialize. A death like Perry's, a boy who succumbed to the same fate as if he had never left the inner city, begs the question of what happens to the countless students who get left behind.

There are many inspiring stories of school administrators and teachers that have created an environment in which their students are expected to succeed, despite what societal expectations and statistics dictate. Mott Hall Bridges Academy in Brownsville, Brooklyn is one of them. It recently made national headlines for raising more than $1 million for student visits to Harvard.[399] In a community where the number of shootings surpassed those in all of Manhattan in 2014, the school's principal, Nadia L. Lopez, is an influential force in the lives of her sixth, seventh, and eighth grade "scholars."[400]

Similar examples to Mott Hall Bridges Academy and Ms. Lopez exist. But they are the exception within a much larger narrative of America's failing education system for minority and low-income students. Jonathan Kozol in his book *Shame of the Nation* argues that the country's schools are more segregated than they ever were.[401] Stark differences in early education, school reform, curriculum, facilities, and the life experiences of students all contribute to the existing racial divide in education.

Kozol tells the story of a student named Anthony from the South Bronx who loved to write poetry. He attended a middle school more focused on discipline than education,

---

[399] Alexandra Zaslow, "Humans of New York Raise Over $1 Million for Students to Have Experience of a Lifetime," *People*, http://www.people.com/article/mott-hall-bridges-academy-humans-of-new-york-harvard. Accessed March 28, 2015.

[400] Natalie Musumeci and Rocco Parascandola, "Gun violence rises in Brownsville where cops see more victims than any other precinct," *New York Daily News*, May 21, 2014, http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/b-kln-neighborhood-troubled-gun-violence-article-1.1799868. Accessed March 27, 2015.

[401] Jonathan Kozol, *Shame of the Nation* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005), 18.

and a high school that did not nurture his writing talents. His standardized test scores did not indicate that he was ready for college, either. But someone recognized Anthony's gifts. They secured an interview with the headmaster of a boarding school in New England, who also saw that Anthony was more than how he was represented on paper. The headmaster admitted him, and by the eleventh grade, Anthony was flourishing. He went on to graduate high school and college, with hopes of becoming a teacher. [402]

People and institutions intervened in Anthony's life, in the same way ABC has done since its founding. As of 2013 ABC has placed more than 14,000 students in esteemed private and public schools across the country.[403] Torrence Boone, now the Managing Director at Google for agency relations in North America is an ABC alumni and a 1987 Phillips Academy graduate. Deval Patrick, former Governor of Massachusetts, graduated from Milton Academy in 1974. A 1978 graduate of Lower Merion High School in Lower Merion, Pennsylvania, Jody Armour is now the Roy P. Crocker Professor of Law at the University of Southern California.[404]

In Chicago public schools, 396,683 students are enrolled for the 2014-2015 school year.[405] A recent report from the University of Chicago notes, however, that "45 percent of CPS graduates begin their senior year not doing well enough academically to attend a four-year college. In the fall after graduation, the most common outcome for these students was

---

[402] Jonathan Kozol, *Shame of the Nation* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2005), 126-130.

[403] "Statistics," *A Better Chance,* http://www.abetterchance.org/abetterchance.aspx?pgID=970, Accessed March 27, 2015.

[404] "Success Stories," *A Better Chance,* http://www.abetterchance.org/abetterchance.aspx?pgID=949, Accessed March 27, 2015.

[405] "Stats and Facts," *Chicago Public Schools* http://cps.edu/About_CPS/At-a-glance/Pages/Stats_and_facts.aspx. Accessed March 27, 2015.

to be neither working nor in school." In addition, "statistics from the City Colleges of Chicago also show a grim picture. From the fall 2009 semester, of the more than 2,800 CPS high school graduates attending CCC, 71 percent needed remedial reading, 81 percent needed remedial English and 94 percent needed remedial math."[406] The view from New York City is equally dim. By the 2021-2022 school year, 1,073,623 students are projected to be enrolled in the New York City public school system.[407] Yet, as the *New York Times* reported on June 17, 2013, according to the New York State Education Department "only 38.4 percent of New York City high school students who graduated in June are considered ready for college or a career."[408]

ABC, statistically, is fulfilling its mission: "to increase substantially the number of well-educated young people of color who are capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American society."[409] But for the millions of children in Chicago, New York City, and the rest of the country – who do not get offered a better

---

[406] Josh Dwyer, "The Truth Behind CPS's Graduation Rate Rise," *Illinois Policy*, June 3, 2013, https://www.illinoispolicy.org/the-truth-behind-cpss-graduation-rate-rise/. Accessed March 29, 2015.; Melissa Roderick, Vanessa Coca, Eliza Moeller, and Thomas Kelley-Kemple, "From High School to the Future: The Challenge of Senior Year in Chicago Public Schools," University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research, February 2013." http://ccsr.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/publications/Senior%20Year%20-%20Final.pdf. Accessed March 29, 2015; "College can be a Rude Remedial Awakening," *Chicago Sun-Times*, May 29, 2011.

[407] Statistical Forecasting LLC, "Enrollment Projections for the New York City Public Schools 2012-13 to 2021-22 Volume II," February 2013, 3. http://www.nycsca.org/Community/CapitalPlanManagementReportsData/Demographics/2012-2021StatisticalForecastingReport.pdf

[408] E.C. Gogolak, "New York City Graduation Rate Remains Steady," *New York Times*, June 17, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/18/nyregion/new-york-city-graduation-rate-remains-steady.html?_r=0. Accessed March 29, 2015.

[409] "Mission," *A Better Chance*, http://www.abetterchance.org/abetterchance.aspx?pgID=967. Accessed March 27, 2015.

chance and cannot attend a Mott Bridges Hall Academy – state and federal government officials have labeled them as the pariahs of the public school system, consigned to failure.

Chapter Two and Chapter Three are riddled with tensions as ABC responded to shifts in national discourse and philanthropic agendas. Pro-integration supporters and pro-separatism critics of ABC were not necessarily wrong in their assessments of the program. Rather, the varying challenges to the program's philosophy were indicative of a desire for a solution that ABC, and programs like it, ultimately could not provide: an education system uncharacterized by the inequalities that accompany the color line.

Furthermore, privately sponsored initiatives cannot overcome the root of America's racialized problems. In the introduction of the thesis, I presented a quote from a writer who criticized My Brother's Keeper for, among other things, the ahistorical nature of Obama's endeavor. The quote in its entirety reads:

> Put simply, history matters. And the only way to truly change the odds for these kids is to take that into account. Indeed, that goes for young men like Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis, who had active fathers, who lived in decent neighborhoods, who had opportunities. They didn't die because their parents weren't involved enough; they died because they lived in a country where their lives were feared.[410]

Edmund Perry, Jordan Davis, and Trayvon Martin and a host of others all had opportunities to overcome the structural barriers plaguing American society, whether afforded by an esteemed preparatory school, or as the president has suggested, the presence of an active father. But ABC, My Brother's Keeper and similar initiatives are merely band aids over the much larger institutional issues that are as present today as they were in 1963, yet

[410] Jamelle Bouie, "The Flaw in My Brother's Keeper," *The Daily Beast*, February 27, 2014, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/02/27/the-flaw-in-my-brother-s-keeper.html. Accessed Jul7 17, 2014.

operating under a different disguise. Is President Obama incorrect in his belief that unique solutions are required to assist people of color in the United States? Absolutely not; but the trail of initiatives funded by the private sector goes back much further than February 2014. And more importantly, in 50 years, the same issues facing young men and women of color have not disappeared.

As Diane Ravitch writes in *The Troubled Crusade,* "Idealism and aspiration alone were not enough to shake loose the shackles of the past; not enough, perhaps, to win the day, but enough to stir the nation's conscience and to keep alive the campaign for equal educational opportunity until the right political and social circumstances made success possible."[411] America's ideal political and social circumstances still have not arrived. To acknowledge the loop between historical and contemporary endeavors leads one to a different path of transforming the lives of historically marginalized groups; one that attempts to dramatically alter not only the laws of this country and their disparate impact, but also the ways in which we as society attempt to make amends for America's yet unfulfilled notion of equal opportunity for all.

[411] Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), xiii.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Material

Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York
Rockefeller Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York
Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York

John G. Kemeny Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collection, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.
John Sloan Dickey Presidential Papers, Rauner Special Collections, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Virtual Library

Published Government Papers

U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, by James S. Coleman. Washington D.C.: Unites States Government Printing Office, 1966.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population: 1960*, by Luther H. Hodges, Part 23, Volume 1. Washington D.C.: Unites States Government Office, 1961.

Secondary Sources

Anderson, James D. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988.

Anson, Robert Sam. *Best Intentions: The Education and Killing of Edmund Perry.* New York: Random House, 1987.

Billings, Thomas A. "Upward Bound Accomplishments." *The Phi Delta Kappa International* 50, no.2 (1968): 95-98. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20372237.

Bremner, Robert H. *American Philanthropy.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Calloway, Collin. *The Indian History of an American Institution.* Lebanon: Dartmouth College Press, 2010.

Carroll, Peter. *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened.* New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1982.

Chicago Public Schools. "Stats and Facts." Last modified February 27, 2015. Accessed March 27, 2015, http://cps.edu/About_CPS/At-a-glance/Pages/Stats_and_facts.aspx.

Churchill, Ward. *Kill the Indian, Save the Man.* San Francisco: City Lights Publisher, 2004.

Cohen, Ronald. "The Dilemma of School Integration in the North: Gary, Indiana, 1945-1960." *Indiana Magazine of History* 82, no.2 (1986): 161-184. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27790972.

Cookson, Peter W. and Caroline Hodges Persell. *America's Elite Boarding Schools.* New York: Basic Books, 1987.

Douglass, Davison. *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Dwyer, Josh. "The Truth Behind CPS's Graduation Rate Rise." *Illinois Policy*, June 3, 2013.

Fabricant, Michael and Michelle Fine. *Charter Schools and the Corporate Makeover of Public Education.* New York: Teachers College Press, 2012.

Farber, David. *The Age of Great Dreams.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1994.

Formisano, Ronald. *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.

Gasman, Marybeth and Katherine V. Sedgwick, eds. *Uplifting a People: African American Education and Philanthropy.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2005.

Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage.* New York: Bantam Books, 1987.

Gogolak, E.C. "New York City Graduation Rate Remains Steady." *New York Times*, June 17, 2013.

Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.* Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991.

Haygood, Wil. *King of the Cats: The Life and Times of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993.

Jamelle Bouie, "The Flaw in My Brother's Keeper," *The Daily Beast*, February 27, 2014, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/02/27/the-flaw-in-my-brother-s-keeper.html.

Khan, Shamus. *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Klarman, Michael. *Brown v. Board of Education and the Civil Rights Movement.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Kluger, Richard. *Simple Justice.* New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1975.

Kozol, Jonathan. *Shame of the Nation.* New York: Crown Publishers, 2005.

"Michigan Public Schools Privatizing Teachers 'Very Real' Possibility, State Lawmakers Says." *Huff Post,* October 4, 2011.

Musumeci, Natalie and Rocco Parascandola. "Gun violence rises in Brownsville where cops see more victims than any other precinct." *New York Daily News,* May 21, 2014.

Nevin, David. *The schools that fear built: Segregationist academies in the South.* Washington, D.C.: Acropolis Books, 1976.

O'Reilly, Kenneth. *Nixon's Piano:Presidents and Racial Politics from Washington to Clinton.* New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Orfield, Gary and Susan Eaton. *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of Brown v. Board of Education.* New York: The New Press, 1996.

Patterson, James. *Grand Expectations.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Perkins, Linda. "The First Black Talent Identification Search Program: The National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students, 1947-1968." In *Higher Education for African Americans before the Civil Rights Era, 1900-1964,* edited by Marybeth Gasman and Roger L. Geiger, 173-194. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012.

Plaut, Richard. "Plans for Assisting Negro Students to Enter and to Remain in College." *Journal of Negro Education* 35, no.4 (1966): 393-399. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2294137.

Pritchett, Wendell. *Brownsville-Brooklyn.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Ravitch, Diane. *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980.* New York: Basic Books, 1983.

Resmovits, Joy. "Roy Roberts: New Detroit District Will Include Charters, School Closures." *Huff Post,* September 26, 2011.

Roderick, Melissa, Vanessa Coca, Eliza Moeller, and Thomas Kelley-Kemple. "From High School to the Future: The Challenge of Senior Year in Chicago Public Schools," *University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research,* February 2013.

Rury, John and Shirley Hill. *The African American Struggle for Secondary Schooling, 1940-1980.* New York: Teachers College Press, 2012.

Sowell, Thomas. *Patterns of Black Excellence.* Washington D.C.: Ethics and Policy Center, 1977.

Starr, Paul. "The Meaning of Privatization," *Yale Law & Policy Review* 6, no.1 (1988): 6-44. http://www.jstor.org/stable/.

Statistical Forecasting LLC. "Enrollment Projections for the New York City Public Schools 2012-13 to 2021-22 Volume II." February 2013.

Sugrue, Thomas. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Synnott, Mary Graham. *The Half-Opened Door: Discrimination and Admissions at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, 1900-1970.* Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2010.

Walker, Vanessa Siddle. *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Walton, Andrea. "Building a Pipeline to College: A Study of the Rockefeller-Funded 'A Better Chance' Program, 1963-1969." *American Educational History Journal* 36, no.1 2009): 151-169.

Wessman, Alden E. "Scholastic and Psychological Effects of a Compensatory Education Program for Disadvantaged High School Students: Project ABC." *American Educational Research Journal* 9, no. 3 (Summer 1972): 361-372. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1161752.

Wilson, William Julius. *The Declining Significance of Race.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Zaslow, Alexandra. "Humans of New York Raise Over $1 Million for Students to Have Experience of a Lifetime," *People,* January 29, 2015.

Zunz, Olivier. *Philanthropy in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.