Expert Report of Michelle Fine

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EXPERT REPORT OF MICHELLE FINE

I. Expert Qualifications

I am a professor of social psychology and urban education at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. For the past 20 years, I have conducted research on public schools with poor, middle income, and wealthy adolescents in and out of school; urban educators; parents; and most recently prisoners in college. I have published 13 books, over 50 chapters, 50 articles in peer-reviewed journals, and a number of scholarly monographs. My research has been published and presented in the United States, England, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. My methodological expertise spans both qualitative and quantitative methods. As my curriculum vitae indicates, I have won a number of national awards, including the Janet Helms Award from the Cross Cultural Roundtable and the Carolyn Sherif Award from the American Psychological Association. I currently serve on the National Academy of Sciences Panel on Youth Engagement, and relevant to this case, I have testified as an expert in a number of legal cases involving access to public education (*see* curriculum vitae).

II. Opinion Requested

This report responds to the research question: To what extent do structural facilities' problems, exposure to high levels of under-credentialed teachers, substantial teacher turnover, and inadequate books and materials produce adverse psychological and academic effects on children and adolescents attending schools with these characteristics?

III. Summary of Conclusions

This report details the conclusions drawn from 101 interviews conducted with elementary, middle, high school, and college students who attend (or have attended) California public schools which meet the criteria for the plaintiff class; 86 surveys collected from the same youth; and 11 telephone interviews with graduates of these high schools. Using multiple methods of data collection, across a diverse sample of elementary, middle school, high school, and college youth, this report details the adverse consequences of such schooling in terms of three psychological outcomes:

1. anger associated with relative deprivation in their schools;

2.   shame due to the mis-education received and the structural conditions of their schools, and;

3.   civic alienation and doubts about democratic promises.

The report concludes with an analysis of the developmental and academic effects that result from the psychological impact of these conditions on youth attending these California schools.

The youth who were interviewed and surveyed exhibit powerful, positive psychological qualities including pride in self and community, strong desire for quality education, and high levels of committed citizenry. Cumulative experiences in their schools, however, complicate and mutate these positive psychological qualities into more negative psychological and academic outcomes. In this report, I demonstrate how these schools, in part, transform yearning for quality education into anger, pride into shame, and civic engagement into public alienation.

Given the broad base of social inequities that confront poor and working-class youth, and youth of color, the question for this case is to what extent do these schools reproduce broad social inequities, worsen them, or reduce their adverse impact? The evidence presented here suggests that these California schools substantially worsen already existent social inequities with psychological, academic, and ultimately economic consequence.

The California schools in question are educating poor and working-class youth, and youth of color, away from academic mastery and democracy and toward academic ignorance and civic alienation. Despite the fact that the youth are asking for clean and safe school environments, quality educators, and rigorous instruction, the evidence suggests that the more years they spend in their schools, the more shame, anger, and mistrust they develop; the more academic engagement declines; and the more our diverse democratic fabric frays. We can ill afford to have youth – particularly poor and working-class youth and youth of color, so in need of higher education – continue to decide early in their academic careers that schools are not designed for them.

IV. Methodology

In order to investigate the research question, a multi-method research design was undertaken:

Surveys were completed anonymously by 86 middle and high school focus group members, prior to their involvement in the focus group discussion, with the exception of one group in which the survey was administered at the end of the focus group because of logistical difficulties. An analysis of responses indicates no significant difference between those surveys and the remaining 75 surveys. Therefore, for the purposes of analysis, all survey information was aggregated.

Eleven focus groups were facilitated with 101 youth attending schools that members of the plaintiff class attend in the San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Watsonville areas. Nine of the eleven focus groups were arranged by California-based jury consultant and/or marketing research firms. One group was arranged by counsel for the plaintiffs. The eleventh group was arranged by Dr. Michelle Fine. All eleven groups were facilitated by Dr. Michelle Fine, Professor of Psychology, and/or Ph.D. candidates in the Social/Personality Psychology Program at the Graduate Center, City University of New York: April Burns, Yasser Payne, and Maria Torre. Focus group protocols and interviews were supervised by Dr. Fine. The team spent three days in preparation for the groups, and debriefed every evening, reviewing tapes and procedures.

Eleven telephone interviews were held with graduates of California schools that fall within the plaintiff class. All of these graduates are currently in attendance at college. Details of the methodology can be found in Appendix B.

V. Findings

In this section of the report I review evidence from focus groups, surveys, and telephone interviews and draw conclusions concerning the core psychological consequences of schooling in conditions of structural problems, high teacher turnover, under-certified educators, and inadequate access to updated instructional materials. The psychological effects include: shame, anger, alienation, and civic disengagement. For the purposes of this report, we interviewed and surveyed only youth. Accordingly, the conclusions focus primarily on youth. However, because review of educator depositions and their aggregate survey data reveals very similar psychological reactions to these conditions, educators' reactions will be commented upon periodically within the report.

The findings are organized with a close examination of each psychological effect. I then examine the evidence that suggests that these schools, over time and developmentally, are educating youth away from academic mastery and toward civic disengagement. In the final section, I find that these psychological effects are detrimental not only to the youths' psychological development, but to their academic progress as well.

A.   From Yearning to Anger

The interviewed students, in the aggregate, from elementary through middle and high school, reveal a strong, positive, and healthy desire for quality education. The students often described themselves as strivers who wanted to make the most of school offerings:

> I get good grades. . . . I'm Miss Perky, I come straight home after
> school.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

> I don't know everything that I need to know, but at least, you know
> what I'm saying, I'm asking questions. I'm curious. Because it might
> be stuff that I don't know, and then when it comes to the test, I get
> something wrong. Why? Because I didn't ask no questions, didn't
> nobody else ask no questions.

(High school girl, 1/7/02 6:30 PM Los Angeles.)

They know what good education looks like, and they want it. For example, when shown photographs of a well-resourced school, one girl said, "That's what one of them schools I would like." (High school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

Students expressed desires for permanent teachers who would teach them well:

> GIRL: Like he said, we got a lot of substitutes right now . . . Some of
>   them cap [put you down], some of them play football. That's not
>   what we come to school for. So we got our teachers there that are
>   pretty cool. But last year we had all our teachers. I love the good
>   teachers, but the best ones are like . . . .
>
> BOY: They changed the whole school around.
>
> GIRL: They changed the whole school.
>
> BOY: My favorite is all the good teachers.

(High school boys and girls, 1/4/02 6:30 PM Alameda.)

These students know the difference between "substitutes" who "play football" and teachers who "change the whole school around." They appreciate a caring teacher who is responsive when they are confused. They want good teachers who will set the tone for their schools.

In response to the question, "What would your [ideal] school look like?" one young woman explained:

> It would be a classroom with enough tables, enough chairs, enough books, enough materials and a teacher who cares. Not just you put somebody that got a GED or whatever, got their diploma and is going to sit there and talk to us in any kind of way. They wouldn't want that for them. They wouldn't want the principal coming inside the classroom and going like, "Shut up. You're going to listen to what I've got to say right here," and that's the same way that they treat us. We are the same, just because we're smaller and don't know as much as they know, we are the same human beings. I would have a teacher that understands where kids are coming from especially living in the area that we do and I would have a picture that cares. Like I said, enough supplies, enough everything and just enough security.

(Middle school girl, 1/7/02 4:30 PM Los Angeles.)

Another, similar, exchange followed the question what an ideal school would be like:

GIRL: I mean, first of all there would be enough books for the students.

MODERATOR: That would be a bottom line?

GIRL: Yes. Enough books. And I guess enough desks in the classroom and a big enough class for [the] teacher. Not, the class wouldn't be so crowded, because our classes are so crowded and you can't really learn anything because if this person has a problem and somebody else has a problem, she try to help this person out and this side of the room starts talking and it really takes up time to learn.

(High school girl & moderator, 1/6/02 3:00 PM Los Angeles.)

The yearning for quality education bumps into the realization, by these youth, that they are being denied. One young woman explained:

> I don't really feel like that they're preparing me for what I have to do after high school because I don't even have a math class because they say all the math classes are too crowded. So, I don't get math this year.

(High school girl, 1/6/02 3:00 PM Los Angeles.)

As another student put it:

> Like I went to a regular public school from kindergarten to fourth grade
> and fifth and sixth I went to a whole different school and it really
> exposed to a good area. And a lot of stuff, you know, I could be behind
> because I don't know half the stuff that they did or get to experience
> some of the stuff. I think it's from a young age, we're started off
> wrong. And at least in Oakland, I don't know about other school
> districts, but so I just think that we're cheated from like a really young
> age.

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

As students recognize the inequality in their schools, resignation blends with anger concerning the extent to which their schools are lacking. While elementary and middle school students were relatively optimistic and hopeful about the conditions in their schools, this optimism seems to drain by high school, when students describe teachers who are "just here to get our paychecks" (high school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda) or other adults who are "ignorant" and "really don't care" about students (high school girl, 1/6/02 3:00 PM Los Angeles). By high school, the youth believe that they are being denied distributive justice – that is, a fair share of educational resources for their education (Fine and Burns, forthcoming). At this point, the yearning converts to anger.

> Well, it makes me feel like, you know, sort of upset. I mean, am I
> getting the same treatment as these more wealthy schools getting and
> they getting all this new equipment, all this new gym, all this stuff,
> everything, the facilities, getting fixed up and we getting the same old
> Oakland Unified School District, hand-me-down stuff from [inaudible]
> new for them. So I'm going with a book, right. It's like it makes you
> feel, you know, kind of mad, because we get no help at all.

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 Alameda.)

> People look at the city, it's like a shit hole. . . . That's the way they
> think of it. . . . California everywhere is becoming racist so it's like
> always going to be like the places are all mixed in be like, oh, you
> know, it's like a shit-hole down there, I screw them down there, right.

(High school boy, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

> I think that it's already hard enough for us as minorities to make it in
> the world, for like jobs and everything, and we're like being under-
> educated and we're not being able to, we're not getting the same
> chances as everybody.

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

>Well, at [my school] it's not really that bad because they like – it is bad but they have like another school system inside of it called like Phi Beta, like all the smart kids, whatever, and it's like no minorities in there. And they get all the good instruments and all the other stuff like engineering and they got all this stuff. And they like split them up and the like the rest of [my school], they got their own side of their school. So it's just kind of scandalous how they, you know, put everyone else, you know, on the other side of the school or just different classes.

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

>You say all those things about all those, most of the tests that we have to take in the city, those are the same tests they test outside of the city into the better parts of California, the United States. And so of course they're multi grade level but they're smarter than us because they have proper teachings and whatnot. So when they test us on these materials, it's like, what the hell is this? I haven't learned this yet. But oh well, you know, I guess you fail then. And then kids out there, oh, that's easy.

(High school boy, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

The structural conditions of their schools, combined with the belief that White and wealthy youth receive better, provoke a sense of anger voiced by many youth, particularly high school students whom we interviewed (Boyd-Franklin and Franklin, 2000). Anger flows when the inequities seem "scandalous," targeted at "minorities," or designed to keep some students "down there" (Ward, 2000). These young women and men express a cumulative and piercing sense of what psychologists call *relative deprivation*: a substantial discrepancy between what they believe they deserve and what they actually receive (Crosby, Muehrer, Loewenstein, 1986). On the basis of numerous laboratory and applied studies of relative deprivation, Crosby and colleagues find that a sense of relative deprivation, with associated anger and grievance, derives when individuals experience a discrepancy between what they have and what they want, what they have and what they believe they deserve, what they don't have and others do. For example, youth enumerated the ways in which they feel they have not been well educated and therefore believe they "can't compete" after high school (high school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.). Most feel ill-equipped to survive academically in a "serious" institution (high school boy, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco) even when they feel that they have done all that was required of them in secondary school (Ogbu, 1990).

I'm a good student, but I can only get into Cabrillo [Community
College]. Not prepared for anything else.

(Abbreviated quote in Fine's notes from 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco group.) As one young

woman, who was able to compare her education to a prior schooling experience, explained:

I feel, I don't know, I guess I feel frustrated . . . . But like when I was
in, I was in elementary school, I went to [inaudible] and like when I
went, I transferred to [inaudible] I was like I already knew everything
and I was like why are they just now learning this? And I feel like, I
don't know, we're being cheated out here. I don't know. I just do.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 Alameda.) As another young woman explained, reflecting on photos

of the well-resourced school:

[T]o what we think like a school looks like, I don't know, certain parts
is like craving, what, they have that? We can't even get the basics?
What? They say there's not enough money? Okay.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

"I don't know who to be mad at. I don't know if this is the, is it the
school board's fault being, mismanaging the money? Or is it a lack of
money? Or is it, I don't know if it's just inside my school with the
administrators? Because it just makes me wonder what's going on with
some schools, kids get new books every year. But yet I open
textbooks and it's still I have dates like 1995 in there. And you just
wonder why don't we get new books. We, is it because they think in
the so-called better schools the kids' behavior brings them new
textbooks or whatever? Because I know, as far as I'm concerned, I'm a
pretty good kid. I don't get in trouble and I get pretty good grades.
And I don't feel I should suffer . . . .

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 Alameda.)

These students' anger about their schools derives from multiple sources, including a sense of

relative deprivation and of disrespect communicated by the deprivation (Fine, 1991; Haney and

Zimbardo, 1973; Miller, 2001; Pittman, 2001; Zimbardo, 1970). Psychologist Dale Miller reviews

considerable evidence that "supports the claim that disrespectful treatment is a common determinant

of both anger and aggression" (p. 533). He continues,

As has been demonstrated across an impressive array of contexts and
research domains, people show a marked disinclination to comply with
authorities when they think those authorities have treated them
disrespectfully . . . result[ing] in diminished levels of helpfulness,
courtesy and sportsmanship . . . [and] reductions in levels of work
performance . . . moralistic anger. . . . lowered self esteem, depression
and self derogation.

(p. 543).

The writings of Crosby et al. and Miller could not more accurately describe the emotional waves that move over the youth in these schools.

> [When I see pictures of better schools] I feel like, like I said, it's a lot of frustration and you say it, well, anger, maybe even a little envious.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 Alameda.)

The anger is directed at three places: some of their educators, privileged youth from other communities, and the broken promise of democracy for all. Within these statements of anger, however, there is still pride, hope, and a yearning for something to change.

B.   From Pride to Shame

Across the focus groups with current students, and in our individual interviews with graduates, youth expressed evidence of strong, psychologically positive pride in self and community. The data collected reveal youth with high aspirations. Most plan to go to college. They envision careers such as becoming a doctor, pediatrician (2), surgeon, nurse, lawyer (2), teacher (4), preacher, police officer (2), fire-fighter (2), foster parent, navy officer, engineer, singer (2), chef, bartender, and other colorful futures. These youths, for the most part, carry a strong sense of self, family, and community. They recognize, proudly, that they have skills that other youth don't have, developed, largely, through confrontation with adversity. "I think we have more life experience," "We have more street knowledge," "We smarter, we have more street smarts, like we not just all proper and you know, just, like real smart. . . . We know about struggling, trying to get to the top and not just, you know, just bouncing right up there." (High school girls, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.) They voice pride in their persistence and high hopes for the future.

Some of these same youth commented upon specific, positive aspects of their schools. A number recall fondly teachers who supported them in hard times. One young man praised the school "choir," while another delights in the "jazz band." (High school boys, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.) One student enjoys the "freedom" of his school (high school boy, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco), and another student appreciates that at his school "they try to improve on some of the stuff that they knew students dislike" (high school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda).

The interviewed youth express strong and confident selves *within* their communities. But shame, stigma, and fear peppered their talk when they discussed wandering *beyond* the borders of their local worlds (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Davidson and Phelan, 1999; Eccles, et al. 1989; Goffman, 1963).

> [If kids from a wealthy school came in here right now,] I wouldn't talk because they would be more sophisticated or something, and understand words I don't know and I don't want to be embarrassed.

(Abbreviated quote in Fine's notes from 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco group)

Another focus group conversation reveals how some students think others outside their neighborhoods judge them:

> GIRL: Like at the beginning of the school year, the classes, they were full. The teachers were turning down students.
>
> BOY: Full. They ship them off to the valley somewhere.
>
> GIRL: Yes, they bus them out to the valley. They got to other schools in different school districts.
>
> GIRL: And I heard the valley, like, really don't want kids coming in, because . . . I think I read it in a newspaper or something. They don't want the kids from down here going out there, because they feel that it's going to make . . .
>
> GIRL: Their school look bad.
>
> GIRL: Yes, because the valley schools are actually known as far as good learning and everything. They don't want the kids out here to mess that up for them, because they have a good rep, and it's like, a lot of schools out here don't.
>
> MODERATOR: When you read stuff like that about basically your classmates, right? What's that like?
>
> GIRL: That makes me feel bad . . . .

(High school girls, boy, & moderator, 1/7/02 6:30 PM Los Angeles.)

When the focus group conversations turned to academic preparation for their futures, students expressed a recognition that they had not been prepared, resulting in shame and stigma (Goffman, 1963). These experiences of shame derive directly from the conditions focus group participants described in their schools. Schools, like other contexts of childhood and adolescence, are not simply

the places where development happens (Lerner and von Eye, 1998; Werner and Altman, 1998; Wolfe

and Rivlin, 1987). They are intimate places where youths construct identities, build a sense of self,

read how society views them, develop the capacity to sustain relations, and forge the skills to initiate

change. These are the contexts where youth grow or they shrink. Environmental psychologists

Werner and Altman (1998) argue:

> [C]hildren are not separate from their actions or feelings, nor are they
> separate from other children or the physical, social and temporal
> circumstances that comprise unfolding events. They are so intercon-
> nected that one aspect can not be understood without the others . . . The
> street . . . is not separate from its inhabitants.

(p. 125)

Separate from the focus groups, plaintiff students have testified about the corrosive effects of

a negative structural context on the developing selves of young students. For example, Alondra Jones

explained:

> It make you feel less about yourself, you know, like you sitting here in
> a class where you have to stand up because there's not enough chairs,
> and you see rats in the building, the bathrooms is nasty, you got to pay
> [for class materials].
>
> And then you — like I said, I visited Marin Academy, and these
> students, if they want to sit on the floor, that's because they choose to.
> And that just makes me feel real less about myself because it's like the
> State don't care about public schools. If I have to sit there and stand in
> the class, they can't care about me. It's impossible. So in all honesty,
> it really makes me feel bad about myself. . . .
>
> And I'm not the only person who feels that. It really make you feel like
> you really less than. And I already feel that way because I stay in a
> group home because of poverty. Why do I have to feel that when I go
> to school? No, there's some real weak stuff going on. . . .

(Alondra Jones deposition 348:17 – 349:11.)

Contexts shape individuals as much as individuals shape contexts, and the survey data reveal

the students' responses to their school contexts in low levels of pride about schools correlated with

reporting poor conditions in the schools. The data, tabulated in Table I, suggest that youth in these

California schools are very aware of and concerned about these contextual conditions of

overcrowding, structural decay, and absence of community that characterize their schools. Of the 66
high school respondents, only 6% consider their schools clean, 17% consider teachers to be highly
qualified, 6% agree that their school is a community. Only 17% indicate that "We're proud to belong
to our school," and 3% agree, "All try to keep the school looking good."

Table 1
How do California students feel about their schools?

I think that in my school . . .	High School (n = 66) % agree or strongly agree	Middle school (n = 20) % agree or strongly agree
The building is clean	6%	25%
We are a community	6%	45%
All teachers are well qualified	17%	45%
We have good books to take home	26%	60%
My classes are too crowded	37%	25%
All try to keep school looking good	3%	15%
We're proud to belong to our school	17%	15%

The data in Table I reveal that middle school students are more positive in their assessments
than are the high school students. This developmental differential, repeated across methods, may be
due to issues of sampling (small n for middle school students). Alternatively, this discrepancy may
reflect a growing cynicism in youth: the longer they attend schools of academic and emotional
disregard, the more pessimistic they grow about educational possibilities (see section on
developmental consequences below).

Across focus groups and surveys, the youths comment on the humiliating and filthy
conditions of their buildings, grounds, and bathrooms. In focus groups, students complain of missing
bathroom doors, toilet paper, and toilet seats, which combine to make students feel humiliated. Some
stated that they simply don't use the bathroom all day. It was perhaps most striking when a young
girl whispered, with some initial hesitation but then elegant simplicity:

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If I could have my ideal school, I guess I would have seats on the
toilets and enough paper in the bathroom to clean yourself.

(Abbreviated quote in Fine's notes from 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco group.)

Other students sounded the same theme. One young man explained:

[N]o one really wants to be at school that's dirty from, you know, the
front gate you walk in to your classroom. It kind of discourages
students, you know, because they just broke down, supposedly in the
ghetto school, right. And if you're in the ghetto, you know, your
school supposedly has no supplies and everything. So I would say [I
want] like the maintenance and the supplies that the school is given to
in the area, like equal, you know, equal to the amount of the schools out
there in the hills and what not, all the, you know, the better schools.

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

In another focus group, as youth again looked at photos from the better-resourced public

school, the following exchange took place:

MODERATOR: Looking at the pictures of that school, I was
wondering what you think it would be like to be a student at that
school? How would it be different from being a student at your
school?

GIRL: I think that I'd be happier at the school.

MODERATOR: You really think that?

GIRL: Yes, I don't know why but just looking at it, it looks way better
and clean and everything and the floors are shiny. So I don't think
it would be that crowded because everything looks way better.

MODERATOR: And how does that make a difference?

GIRL: I don't know. Like if you go to our school, the floors are dirty
and when you go to a school with dirty floors it's like I don't know.
You feel bad and you don't even want to go to the school because
it's so dirty and that school is clean so you feel like you want to go
to school more.

(Middle school girl & moderator, 1/7/02 4:30 PM Los Angeles.) A young man in another focus

group was more succinct about the same problem:

It's like if you go into a dirty school, that makes you feel dirty because
the school is so dirty, so.

(Middle school boy, 1/6/02 1:00 PM Los Angeles.)

C. From Committed Citizenship to Social Alienation and Government Betrayal

The Master Plan for California's Education System (2000) specifies that all students in California deserve the opportunity to develop "the social values of integrity, morality, discipline and civic-mindedness" (p. 11). Constance Flanagan and colleagues, who have studied youths' political attitudes in seven countries, have found that "[S]chools are like mini polities where children can explore what it means to be a member of a community beyond their families, where they learn they are the equal of other citizens, and where they can learn how to negotiate their differences in a civil fashion . . . . [S]chools are settings where children develop ideas about the rights and obligations of citizenship" (p. 462).

The psychology of moral development, trust, and youth citizenship, represented by the writings of Boyd-Franklin and Franklin (1999), Fallis and Opotow (2002), Fine and colleagues (2002), Flanagan and colleagues (2002), Haney and Zimbardo (1973), and Miller (2001), focuses on the conditions under which youth develop enduring bonds of trust, see themselves as contributing members of a moral community, and participate in the culture with a strong sense of civic engagement and citizenship. These researchers find that youth are most likely to develop trust and engage a strong sense of positive citizenship when they are involved with supportive adults, over time; they are invited to participate in critical decisions about their education and social well-being; they are respected, cared for, and listened to, within public institutions; and their concerns are addressed responsively.

In focus groups and surveys, the California youths express refreshing, deep, strong, and committed social engagements *toward* family, community, and cultural groups. As Bowen and Bok (1998) demonstrate with youth of color who graduate from college, these are the very young adults most likely to display a commitment to give back to the community, to serve and model an ethic of community spirit. The poor and working-class youth who were interviewed described vividly just such a spirit of citizenship, as revealed in Table 2.

Table 2
What's important to you?
Percentage of students who indicate that these goals are "very important"

How important is	High School (n = 66)	Middle School (n = 20)

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How important is	High School (n = 66)	Middle School (n = 20)
Helping my family?	92%	100%
Getting more education?	89%	95%
Improving race relations?	58%	71%
Helping those less fortunate?	56%	70%
Being active in religion?	48%	32%
Being the best?	48%	40%
Working to stop prejudice?	46%	50%
Making my community better?	41%	75%
Leaving my community?	30%	21%
Serving my country?	23%	55%

Note: choices were "not at all important" "somewhat important" "very important"

These percentages indicate number who said "very important" divided by total responses for that item (which may, at times, be smaller than the overall N).

When asked about their future goals on the survey, high school students rated the following goals as "very important": 92% helping family, 89% getting more education, 58% improving race relations, 56% helping those less fortunate, and 41% making the community better. As their conversations suggest, these youths exhibit a desire and capacity to care, connect, and be responsible.

What is most disturbing, however, is that in addition to noting strong commitments to family, community, those less fortunate, and improving race relations, these young men and women simultaneously voice a strong anger at schools that spreads outward toward other governmental institutions and the nation. While 92% consider it "very important" to help family, only 23% consider it "very important" to serve "my country." Their willingness to extend their caring and commitments to the country, to beliefs in democracy, and to a broad moral community called America has been jeopardized (Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo, Sheblanova, 1998; Yates and Youniss, 1998). For most, their alienation stretches from schooling denied to governments that betray and democratic promises that remain unfulfilled.

One young woman was clear about what she learned in high school: that her school was not designed to help poor, immigrant children. When asked, at the end of the interview, "What would

you want to tell a judge about your high school experiences?" this young woman, a graduate of a

plaintiff school, currently attending community college, spoke eloquently:

> Every day, every hour, talented students are being sacrificed. . . .
> They're [the schools] destroying lives.

(Quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews.)

Another girl, still in high school, expressed the lessons she had received in social alienation:

> At our school we could get rust poisoning and rat poison and stuff.
> They wouldn't care. I don't know. It's like they don't have no concern
> for our health, our well-being, our education. They have no concerns.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

Students seem to believe that they have been mis-educated because people in government,

people throughout the State, and even some of their teachers view poor and working-class youth, or

urban youth, as unworthy of quality education. One focus group was particularly chilling on this

point:

> I think they just want to leave all like the dumb kids in the bad schools.

(High school girl, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

> [T]hey want to keep people, like at the bottom . . . away from the top
> but still keep that.

(High school girl, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

> It's like what is the Board getting paid for and they can't even come fix
> our bathroom. They can't even mop our halls. So what they doing
> with that money?

(High school girl, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

> Willie Brown says oh, this is what, we're going to do this and
> everything and he's always talking about how San Francisco has
> wonderful schools and San Francisco is one of the cleanest cities. And
> he's a wolf ticket seller. I mean, he lies, sorry.[1]

---

[1] I offer this quote not because I believe it is an accurate representation of the commitments of Mayor
Brown, but because I believe it represents, again, how much these youths view government officials
as unconcerned and untrustworthy with respect to their educational well being.

(High school girl, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

In a second focus group conversation, students attribute negative intentions to some of their teachers who "want you to just drop out, they want you to stop coming to school" (high school girl, 1/4/02 6:30 PM Alameda.):

> BOY: [My school] is very overcrowded. My counselor would not let me take one of my required classes, Education and Career Planning, because she said that all the ECP classes were too overcrowded. I was put into some class, something I don't need for college. And now I have to take ECP during summer school. I think that is just horrible. My teacher made some of the students transfer out of the class because it was too overcrowded, it was just too overcrowded. I remember they brought an extra table for students to sit at but still there was not enough space really, and so people were sitting on stools behind the teacher's desk and at least five of the students were sitting on the countertops.
>
> MODERATOR: What do you think about that? Is that an issue in your school?
>
> . . . .
>
> GIRL: They don't transfer you out. They want for people to stop coming. They want you to just drop out, they want you to stop coming to school and then the class gets smaller and smaller. So then the weeks go by.

(High school boy, girl, and moderator, 1/4/02 6:30 PM Alameda.)

I include these quotes not because they accurately represent the intentions or perceptions of government, the citizens of California, or educators. The power of the quotes lies in the students' belief that the government, Californians at large, the public education system, and some of their teachers so fundamentally undervalue them that they wish their disappearance. It was painful to listen as some students explained that they believe that schools want them not to succeed, so that the students will leave and classes will become smaller, with no adult responsibility for the loss of student bodies. These interviews reveal a raw sense of social disposability.

The youths' comments reveal that they want nothing more than what most adults ask for today: *public accountability.* They want someone to assure that the State and the adults will fulfill their legal obligations to educate. They want someone to monitor inequities and to intervene and remedy them, and the failure to satisfy their desire for this accountability is teaching the youth an

unmistakable lesson of civic disengagement. The focus group and survey data suggest that poor and working-class youth and youth of color in California's most disadvantaged schools are being educated away from these "obligations of citizenship" and toward civic alienation. They are learning that their needs, as poor and working-class children and children of color, seem irrelevant to policy makers and government leaders.

In focus groups and surveys, youth explained, repeatedly, that "nobody cares" (*see* Valenzuela, 1999). The repeated, global reference to "nobody" seemed to include educators in their schools, school board members, wealthy people in the state of California and government officials. The vast majority of these students believe that they cannot change their academic conditions because they feel that adults don't listen to their concerns and, relatedly, feel that they cannot influence government. Only 34% agreed or strongly agreed, "People like me have the ability to change government if we don't like what is happening."

In my twenty years of researching poor youth and youth of color who attend inadequate public schools, I have heard much about teachers who don't care, schools that don't educate, and the resultant anger, shame, stress, and anxiety (Fine, 1990, 1991, 1994; Fine and Powell, 2001; Fine and Somerville, 1998; Wasley, Fine, King and Powell, 1999). I have interviewed hundreds of dropouts, students, and graduates, equally disturbed by the systematic mis-education they received and, more aptly, the rigorous education they were denied. These California youth were no exception. As one young man described his concern:

> Because before we had a teacher for like the first three weeks of our
> multi-culture class and then the teacher didn't have all her credentials
> so she couldn't continue to teach. And since then we've had like ten
> different substitutes. And none of them have taught us anything. We
> just basically do what we wanted in class. We wrote letters, all the
> class wrote letters to people and they never responded. We still don't
> have a teacher.

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 Alameda.)

What was striking and distinct about the California focus groups was the powerful voice of institutional betrayal that these youths expressed to audiences who refused to listen. It was not simply the case that these youth, like so many youth across America in under-resourced schools, were

denied adequate education and felt helpless. Many of the youth had, in the face of overwhelming

odds, tried to secure help. They had spoken up, protested, asked for a "real" teacher, or raised an

academic concern. But when they exercised voice, they were denied an audience (Fallis and Opotow,

2002). They reported broken hearts and spirits when few adults listened and even fewer acted.

As one young woman in a focus group offered:

> The teachers, they are there and then they're not there. One minute
> they're there, they're there for a whole week, and then they gone next
> week. And you try to find out, where's teacher, and they say we don't
> have a teacher. They've been looking for a teacher. We outside the
> whole day until we find a teacher. You see it like every day. . . . You
> just sit outside because there ain't nobody going to come through. We
> ask the security guards to bring us the principal over there. They tell us
> to wait and they leave and don't come back. They forget about us . . . .
> [W]e ain't getting no education by sitting outside.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

Students in another high school focus group were most agitated as they contrasted how their

schools ignored their requests for quality education, but responded (if superficially) when the State

investigated school policies and practices:

> [T]hey don't care about you. Like they just care about making the
> school look good for a little while so when they come do the little
> inspection they think everything is all good when it's not. They don't
> really care about what we think. That's what I think. Because all the
> walk outs and stuff, they don't come out, like the principal and stuff.
> They don't come out, they just send the police out and then the police
> go out there, whatever. And they use force to get us back in. But the
> principal, she should come out and like talk and let us know that she
> feel where we coming from but she don't.

(High school girl, 1/6/02 3:00 PM Los Angeles.)

These youth describe a doubled experience of disappointment and betrayal. Disappointed by

the relative absence of quality faculty and materials, they feel helpless to master rigorous academic

material and powerless to solicit effective help. Were that not enough, when these youth do

complain, grieve, or challenge the educational inequities they endure, they confront a wall of silence.

In my assessment, these schools are preparing a generation of youth who sustain ethical commitments

to family, kin, and community but believe that the government and the nation view them as unworthy

and disposable. In such settings, youth report high levels of perceived betrayal by, resistance to, and

withdrawal from persons in positions and institutions of public authority (Fine, Freudenberg, Payne, Perkins, Smith, Wanzer, 2002). These schools are helping to blunt civic engagement and produce, instead, civic alienation.

The survey data in Table 3 reveal the suspicions these youths also hold of the economy and the government. Forty-two percent of the surveyed high school students and 25% of those interviewed from middle school believe that labor market prospects will *always* be hard for them and their families. Forty percent of the high school students, and half of the middle school students, believe that government is designed to serve the "rich." Only one third of the high school students and 20% of the middle school students think they can make a change in the workings of government. Finally, whereas 65% of the middle school youth view America as "basically fair and everyone has an equal chance to get ahead," this figure drops to 23% by high school.

Table 3
Attitudes about California and the US: Government and Society
Percent who agree or strongly agree

	High School (n = 66)	Middle School (n = 20)
Getting an education helps you get a job	86%	85%
It makes me mad when I think of how some people have to live	71%	80%
No matter how well educated I am it will be hard for me to get a good job	42%	25%
The state government is for the rich and not for the average person	40%	50%
The government does not really care about what people like me and my family think	38%	15%
I have the ability to change the government	34%	20%
My school is as good as any in the state	26%	45%

America is basically fair and everyone has an equal chance to get ahead	23%	65%

Note: percent indicating agree to strongly agree on a 5 point scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree)

I have witnessed before this dynamic of youth "learning their place" at the bottom of a race- and class-stratified society, learning that the government and public institutions will "not respond" to "us." When I testified in Wedowee, Alabama, at the trial involving racial discrimination in a Southern high school, when I have spoken with high school dropouts in New York City about the disrespect and lack of attention they receive in their schools, and even when I have interviewed elite youth attending well-resourced public and private schools who insist "everybody has a chance," I have heard youth across race, ethnicity, and class reveal the ways in which schools "teach them" about social stratifications and their place within social hierarchies (Cookson and Persell, 1985; Fine, 1991; Fine, Powell, Weis and Wong, 1997). What is remarkable in the California youth, however, was the combination of their strong commitments to give back and engage as citizens in local contexts, and their systematic recoiling from, and refusal to engage as citizens in, the state and nation. They seem to have generalized negatively from their school experiences to the state and the nation. Or, at least, their schools did not dissuade them from their alienation and only exacerbated the sense of betrayal. Eager to participate actively and generously with family, neighborhood, and those less fortunate, many of these young women and men refuse to serve as neglected or disrespected citizens of the State.

The surveys and focus groups reveal that, over time, the more youth mature and the longer they are in these schools, the less they believe in themselves as potentially efficacious actors in their schools and in our democracy. They believe they have not developed the skills to compete academically. They believe they have been denied the opportunities to create positive changes in their schools. They believe, less and less, that America is a land of equal opportunity (Freudenberg, Roberts and Richie, 1999; Wortley and Tanner, 2001).

Interviews with graduates confirm and extend this evidence of alienation from schools, public institutions, and the government. One young woman explains, "What I learned in high school . . . the

main thing I learned was how to fight for what I deserve. I understood that things are not equal for everyone" (class of 2000 graduate; quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews). Another graduate reflected back on high school, when she had an interest in joining the Air Force. She explains that her interest in serving her country shifted in high school, after realizing "what our government does and how it treats people" (class of 2000 graduate; quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews).

Over my twenty years of research on public education, I have documented reliably that in the absence of a community of qualified educators and a rich, intellectually engaging school environment, most youth turn away from the academic and relational features of schooling. Those who graduate feel little loyalty to their high schools and sometimes, even survivor guilt (Lifton, 1994). A sense of civic betrayal typically characterizes those students and educators who leave (see Fine, 1991) and those students and educators who stay.

One may ask, is it really these schools that are alienating poor and working-class youth of color? Or, put another way, doesn't the society at large alienate these youths? The answers to these questions are complex. Given the broad base of social inequities that confront poor and working-class youth and youth of color, the question for this case is to what extent do these schools reproduce broad social inequities, worsen them, or reduce their adverse impact? The evidence presented here suggests that these California schools substantially worsen already existent social inequities with psychological, academic, and ultimately economic consequence. One may ask, further, isn't it the case that all public schools serving poor and working-class youth and youth of color suffer these conditions and produce these outcomes? To this question, the answer is a resounding no.

There is now a well established body of evidence, drawn from systematic studies of small schools in Philadelphia, New York City, Chicago, and elsewhere, that demonstrates that public schools can be effectively organized for poor and working-class youth and youth of color, to open opportunities, support their pride, satisfy their yearnings for quality education, prepare them for higher education, and cultivate a strong ethic of community engagement. Alienation is neither natural nor healthy. There is substantial evidence that schools can interrupt the damage of larger

social forces (see Ancess, 2000; Fine and Powell, 2001; Meier, 1988). In the last ten years, I have been fortunate to conduct research with a series of such schools in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and New Jersey. These are public schools, with quality faculty and instructional materials, dedicated to rigorous education for all students, including poor and working-class youth and youth of color. In these schools, all students are exposed to high-quality educators and rigorous instructional materials. These schools work hard to create intellectual contexts of equity and excellence. Students learn about social stratification by researching history, economics, and social movements. These students learn that they do not have to remain poor and working class and that they can help to improve broader conditions in their communities. In contrast to the interviewed students in California, students in these schools learn about the possibilities for social change and their responsibilities to help create such change (*see* Anand, Fine, Perkins and Surrey, 2002; Ancess, 2000; Fine, Freudenberg, Payne, Perkins, Smith and Wanzer, 2002).

In the California schools focus group participants describe, by contrast, students are indeed getting a "civics lesson" in which they are learning to feel powerless, alienated, shameful, angry, and betrayed. The likelihood of democratic engagement by these youths and young adults is fundamentally threatened by their experiences in these schools (Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo and Sheblanova, 1998).

D.   The Developmental Consequences of Cumulative Inequity: Schooling toward Alienation

Counter to stereotype, these poor and working-class youth want high-quality, demanding teachers and complete instructional materials and safe and adequate facilities. They are upset when caring and demanding teachers leave their schools, when they are denied textbooks, and when they are schooled among crowding, filth, and decay. Most disheartening in these data, the evidence reveals, over time, a progressive trend toward alienation.

From focus groups with one set of elementary school children, two sets of middle school youth, and eight groups of high school youth, a developmental pattern can be discerned, one that is confirmed by a broad base of educational and psychological literatures (Ancess, 2000; Boyd-Franklin

and Franklin, 1999; Bryk and Driscoll, 1988; Elliott and Dweck, 1988; Fine, 1991; Meier, 1998): young children are far more enthusiastic about education than are high school students. Turning to evidence from poor and working-class youth and youth of color, the conclusions are even more damning: the longer students stay in schools with structural problems, high levels of uncertified teachers, high teacher turnover, and inadequate instructional materials, the wider the academic gaps between White children and children of color or wealthy children and poor children, grow to be, and the more alienated they become.

In the California data, the elementary school transcripts reveal the dynamics discussed in this broad literature. The elementary school children were filled with enthusiasm and excitement about their schools, learning, math, journals, and the acquisition of knowledge. (1/5/02 10:00 AM, elementary school, Alameda.) They envision a world spread open with possibilities. They are relatively unaware that wealthy or White students receive superior education, and they are delightfully enthusiastic about their own academic prospects.

> "Our school, it's fun to be there."

(Elementary school girl, 1/5/02 10:00 AM Alameda.)

> MODERATOR: Do you feel like you learn a lot in your class? What kinds of things do you learn about?
>
> GIRL: I learn about animals and people, how we need to treat people like you like to be treated.

(Elementary school girl & moderator, 1/5/02 10:00 AM Alameda.)

In addition, these elementary school students expressed enthusiasm about academic subjects — math (3), reading (2), writing (2), and Spanish (1) — when asked what they liked best about their schools, in sharp contrast to the older students, who identified sports teams and clubs, girls, friends, and less frequently, academic subjects, as school favorites. At the same time that these students expressed a desire for improved school conditions – "The thing I would make better was the heater" (elementary school boy, 1/5/02 10:00 AM Alameda) – the elementary school students nonetheless retained optimism and enthusiasm about schooling.

By middle school, children in these schools are more sophisticated and skeptical. They believe that if only someone knew about the conditions of their schools they would respond appropriately.

> [We need] Somebody like to supervise the teacher, like oh, this teacher is ignoring the students and not doing a good job so, and then they could just write them up and tell the principal or somebody that's in charge. Like tell him you better start helping other kids, stop ignoring them or you're fired. Something like that.

(Middle school boy, 1/6/02 1:00 PM Los Angeles.)

By high school, students voice a deep, well-articulated, painfully sophisticated analysis suggesting that "no one" cares. The high school students recognize that wealthy and White students are better off educationally. Expressing a clear and unambiguous sense of relative deprivation (Crosby, Muehrer, and Lowenstein, 1986), these youth believe that the federal and state governments, the economy, and some of their teachers represent the interests of the wealthy. They view educational inequities as simply an extension of social disregard for them, as poor and working-class youth and youth of color.

One young man, a high school student, noted in a focus group:

> [Y]ounger kids coming up in conditions like this, they can bring the problem of racism because most of the quote-unquote good schools are majority Caucasian or whatever, like someone brought up about the pictures. There's so, if they look around they school and they say, well we basically all minorities. And they look at other schools and say why they getting treated better than us? Well we, we all humans, and we have been treated worse. So then that could bring some anger and then they just start lashing out at people, Caucasian people for no reasons, for all the wrong reasons . . . .

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

In the focus groups, students describe inadequate access to a considerable pool of qualified teachers and materials and to decent facilities as having immediate and long-term academic, social, and economic consequences. These students know well, and often with shame, the "lacks" that their education has instilled in them. By graduation — or when they drop out — they carry the inadequacies of their schools internally, as their own. Therein lies the shame, the anger, the betrayal, and the anxiety about future performance.

These data from elementary, middle, high school, and college students suggest that California is not only mis-educating poor and working-class youth and youth of color; the State also risks alienating a generation of California youth from civil society, involvement with government, and commitment to nation. Their faith in democracy has been tested. In their eyes, we, the adults, have failed.

E.   The Psychological Effects' Impact on Academic Performance

> I think it makes it harder for us because we're not getting educated [on] the things we need. And when we get like SAT 9 testing and all that, half the stuff on the test we haven't been taught. So we can't like take the test and get good grades on the test.

(High school boy, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.)

The California schools that focus group students describe are placing poor and working class youth and youth of color at psychological, social, economic, and academic risk. There is a vast psychological and educational literature that details the academic benefits of schools characterized by high social cohesion, sense of community, and strong academic press (Flanagan, Bowes, Jonsson, Csapo and Sheblanova, 1998; Flanagan and Tucker, 1999; Phillips, 1998; Valenzuela, 1999). In such contexts, youth and educators grow bonds of social and intellectual trust; students and educators are more likely to attend and remain at a school, persevere academically, and hold themselves accountable for their intellectual work (Meier, 1998; Oxley, 1990; Pittman, 2001). In schools with committed, consistent educators over time, youth are more likely to attend, persist, receive higher grades, and graduate (Ancess, 2000; Oxley, 1990; Raywid, 1997). Students are less likely to be involved in discipline problems, violence, and/or drop out behavior (Fine, 1994; Fine and Somerville, 1998; Gladden, 1998). In such schools, poverty is far less likely to predict academic outcomes than in large alienating institutions (Bryk and Driscoll, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 2001). Psychologists Connell and Wellborn (1991), Dweck and colleagues (1973, 1978, 1980, 1988), Eccles and colleagues (1989, 1993), Ryan (1999, 2000), and Seligman (1971, 1991) document the clear academic significance of contexts that maximize psychological well-being for youth. Educational

contexts that encourage internal motivation and perceptions of self-efficacy produce high levels of academic engagement, persistence, achievement, and post-graduate attainment.

In contrast, these same researchers find that educational contexts in which students view their efforts as unrelated to outcomes tend to undermine internal motivation and self-efficacy, producing instead adverse academic outcomes. In educational contexts such as those represented in the plaintiff class, permeated by low expectations, high rates of teacher turnover, environmental stress, and a sense of buildings that are out of control, youth develop, over time, what is called *academic learned helplessness*: a site-specific belief that trying doesn't matter and that they are unable to effect change in their schools. Some complain that lack of access to books or instructional materials hinders their abilities to learn and master academic materials. Others cite the frequent loss of educators and lack of continuity that interrupts academic progress. The often-remarked-upon substitute who doesn't know his/her content area comes to be a symbol that the system is neglecting the education of poor and working-class youth and youth of color. Relations with faculty, and the structural environment, become disrupted and stressful. These elements bode ill for academic performance.

Surrounded by what they imagine to be concentric circles of powerful adults who believe them unworthy, the youth see themselves as helpless to create change, embarrassed by their lack of educational skills, and frustrated by their inability to correct the inequities. The literature on academic learned helplessness (Burhans and Dweck, 1995; Dweck and Reppucci, 1973; Elliott and Dweck, 1988; Miller, 1985; Rholes, Blackwell, Jordan and Walters, 1980; Seligman, Maier, and Solomon, 1971; Stipek and Tannat, 1984; Zhao and Dweck, 1995) helps explain these dynamics. Scores of experimental and applied studies demonstrate that to the extent that children and youth experience a "learned noncontingency between behavior and important outcomes," there will be an associated reduction in persistence and a heightening of depressive-like affect (Burhans and Dweck, 1995, 1719). Scholars suggest that youth fall into two groups: those who face a non-contingency challenge and display a "helpless pattern" and those who confront the same situation and display a "mastery-oriented" pattern. Burhans and Dweck argue that youth who possess "contingent self worth" are particularly vulnerable to the "helpless pattern." They write,

> [A]s soon as a child is cognitively capable of possessing contingent self-worth, he or she will be vulnerable to the shame that accompanies failure-induced blows to self-worth and the task avoidance that reflects a strategy to protect self-worth; in other words, the child becomes capable of vulnerability to helplessness.

(pp. 1722-23)

This is just the shame that was evident in the focus groups. In my evaluation, many youth attending these schools tend to lose, over time, a sense of their own capacity to create positive outcomes and change (Yates and Youniss, 1998; Hart, Atkins and Ford, 1998). In such contexts, a culture of low teacher expectations, high stress, and serious academic under-preparation develops. In short, the psychological consequences of exposure to poor and crowded facilities, high numbers of underprepared teachers and teacher turnover, and absence of instructional materials negatively impact student performance.

1.   The Academic Impact of Teacher Turnover and Low Teacher Expectations.

When focus group students described teachers leaving mid-year, they also noted disrupted courses, broken promises, trust betrayed. The following focus group conversation reveals the process by which high levels of teacher turnover can produce a cumulative erosion of academic trust, engagement, and learning:

> MODERATOR: . . . What did you do when you got a teacher that you kind of trust, that you're learning from, that you got something going with and then they switch it?
>
> GIRL: It's hard for you to get back [inaudible]
>
> GIRL: That happened to me in ninth grade
>
> GIRL: It happened to me this school year.
>
> GIRL: And it messes up your GPA
>
> MODERATOR: Tell me how it makes you feel, how you think, what do you do then? Just go through it?
>
> GIRL: You start to hate that subject
>
> BOY: Yes, exactly
>
> MODERATOR: You start to what?

GIRL: hate that subject

BOY: You start all over

MODERATOR: Why?

GIRL: Because it's not the same. All teachers teach differently.

BOY: Yes, like different teaching styles, too.

* * *

GIRL: New teacher can't even pronounce your first name.

(High school girls, boys, & moderator, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

There is a fundamental sense of abandonment and betrayal in these comments. Strong words like "hate" reflect the emotional power of these faculty disruptions. The last student, who explains that new teachers "can't even pronounce your first name" is expressing a wound of being unknown, which may provoke a reluctance to trust, a "hatred" of the subject, and academic defeat. Another girl explained how teacher turnover affected her GPA and her prospects for higher education:

> GIRL: [Last year] they changed our math teacher. . . . he couldn't deal with the class. So I'm thinking, why would, I mean, how did you even become a teacher if you weren't practicing being in the class when we kids or something. Because as soon as the first day we came in he just couldn't handle it. He didn't know how to tell people to be quiet. He didn't know how to — he just couldn't control. Every five minutes he was calling the office, I'm sending the kid down, want a referral. And the office called, they was just getting tired of it. They was like, you can't send nobody else out of that classroom. You just can't. And then the next thing you know, he didn't come back. And then that's when we had a substitute. And then we had a substitute for like a whole semester. And then it's like at the end of the semester, we was all worried about how you all going, how we going to get our grades? Like that's going to mess our GPA. And do you know everybody in that class or in everybody who had that class got an incomplete on their report card. So it was like, we didn't get no credits for nothing.

(High school girl, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

This young woman recognizes that the first teacher was a problem, administrators did not solve the problem, and the resolution of the problem — the substitute — only made things worse. This betrayal and the low expectations derive from teachers' own responses to the school conditions the students and teachers both suffer. The psychological consequences of alienating schools predictably bear adverse impact not only on students, but also on educators and their relations with

youth. Like students, educators in alienating schools are more likely to report high rates of

absenteeism and less academic commitment and persistence, and they are less likely to hold

themselves responsible for high quality academic work (Sebring, Bryk, Driscoll and Cameron, 1999;

Valenzuela, 1999). Rates of disciplinary problems and violence elevate (Gladden, 1998). In such

settings, in which most students disengage from academic work, many adults leave. Among those

who stay, many withdraw from a sense of responsibility for youth development (Fallis and Opotow,

2002; Fine, 1982, 1991, 1994).

Educators, in their depositions and responses to survey items, confirm these dynamics in their

comments on the adverse and shameful conditions of their schools. On the San Francisco Unified

Teacher survey (n = 2,682, Spring 2001), educators were generally positive about their schools and

their colleagues. Sixty-nine percent strongly agreed or agreed, "The teachers at my school believe all

students can achieve the standards" and 80% strongly agreed or agreed, "Teachers at my school have

a 'can do' attitude." And yet, turning to the conditions of their schools and instructional materials, a

full 39.5% disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement, "I have enough books for all of my

students," 59% disagreed or disagreed strongly with, "The school has enough other supplies or

equipment," 60% disagreed or disagreed strongly with, "The district's budget reflects that it is

committed to high student achievement."

Shane Safir, a teacher, explains in her deposition how facilities' and administrative problems

provoke high teacher turnover and disengagement:

> [T]hese kids not only were in an unhealthy, unclean environment, but
> they had no academic continuity and that is really what is going to
> foreclose future opportunities for them . . . . Again, why are the
> teachers leaving? Well, at least in part because the facilities are
> horrific, uncomfortable, unhealthy, unsanitary and the teachers don't
> feel supported by the district or the State or even the administration in
> trying to fix that. I think they are completely related problems.

(Shane Safir deposition 351:18-352:9)

Teacher Joel Vaca also describes high rates of teacher turnover with "long-term subs" called

in, and many positions remaining "unfilled." High rates of "emergency certification" educators,

combined with "poor books . . . in horrible condition" that are not aligned with state standards, render

a school incapable of offering the kind of rigorous curriculum nationally recognized as necessary for all students (U.S. Department of Education, 2001) and particularly important for poor and working-class students and students of color. Vaca explains in his deposition (p. 49):

> Obviously there's no — there's — when there are books, there are not enough books. There's overcrowding. That's just insane. I'm expected to teach a class of 48 to 46 students with only 36 books with only 36 chairs. If those conditions don't improve, education can't improve. Again, go to any other school — and of course, you're going to see better academic program because there's more resources for more children, more one-on-one interaction with student to teacher. And again, I'm only one person. I don't have a TA. I don't have any assistance in the classroom except the other kids. . . . Overcrowding — I think overcrowded conditions are occurring at the junior high, are occurring at Fremont and occurring at some elementary schools. And it just funnels the problem all the way up. For the students that have the need for one-on-one, teachers aren't receiving that. And even if it's at the younger level at elementary or junior high — when we get them, we're expected to perform miracles, part a Red Sea, if you will.

(Joel Vaca deposition 48:25-49:24.)

When teacher frustration translates into low expectations for their students, adverse consequences for many students ensue. DeLuca and Rosenbaum (2000) recently presented their findings at Harvard University's Conference on Drop Out, documenting the direct and adverse impact of low teacher expectations and poor student-teacher relations on drop out rates. These researchers found that youths who feel disparaged or disrespected in their schools "are significantly more likely to drop out, and this is even true after controlling for test scores, other background variables and social isolation." (p. 6.)

The focus group students routinely described such feelings of disrespect. One young man, a high school student, explained how he feels when he is underestimated by teachers:

> BOY: I've always been underestimated as a young black male. It's like everywhere I go, everywhere I go to it's like, you know, I speak properly and they're like, oh, where did you come from. It's like, Oakland. And it's like, really? Who taught you how to speak so well? It's like, my mother. And you think they always . . .
>
> MODERATOR: Who's they?
>
> BOY: Teachers and just people in general underestimate youth, black youth. And they think I'm supposed to be speaking Ebonics, hanging out on the streets, dealing drugs and stuff. But and then when you get in schools and then you go overboard with your

assignments because when you first go to school, you really don't know how the teachers grade, even though they give you their rubrics and their plan things to tell you how they score and grade you. With me, I always want to do the best I can to get the best grade I can. So if they tell me to write a three page essay, I write a fifteen page essay. So I do and then it's like, well, where'd you get this from? Did you copy out of a book? And I showed them everything. It's like, you couldn't have done this without copying out of a book or stealing somebody else's, because I love to write poetry, science, stories, everything. . . . I like to go in depth with my things, and when you do that and just go really far in depth with it, it's like where'd you get this from? You copied. It's like, no I didn't. They're always underestimating your ability to work . . . . [H]ow does it feel to be underestimated? Bad.

(High school boy & moderator, 1/5/02 1:00 PM Alameda.)

This young man is expressing a searing assault on his dignity imposed, according to him, by teachers' underestimation of his abilities and challenges to the work he had produced. There is, unfortunately, a long line of scholarly work, and many other focus group participants, who reinforce the points that this young man makes both about the low expectations teachers hold for African American (and Latino, low income, etc.) students, and the adverse internalized impact of these expectations. A robust set of studies concludes that teachers' expectations for, relations with, and treatment of youth have strong predictive consequence for students' academic achievement. Research by Delpit (1995), McDermott (1987), Merton (1948), Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968, 1991), Steele (1988, 1997), and most recently De Luca and Rosenbaum (2000), concludes that teacher expectations and teacher treatment of youth are critical predictors of academic performance. These researchers, drawing from anthropology, educational studies, psychology, and sociology, find that teachers' beliefs about students' abilities, and teachers' relations with youth, significantly predict student outcomes. Meredith Phillips demonstrates empirically that students perform at significantly higher levels in schools with a strong "academic press," even more so than in schools in which there is primarily a "caring orientation." According to Phillips, caring alone is not enough. Critical indicators of "academic press" in this analysis include teachers who expect a relatively high ratio of students to complete high school and attend college, relatively large numbers of eighth graders enrolled in algebra, and high expectations for homework (1997). In schools with high "academic

press" and high teacher expectations, students excel. In the absence of academic press and high

expectations, most students flounder.

One young woman, a high school student, was eloquent about the significance of high teacher

expectations:

> Well what I think they should do is hire teachers that are going to
> expect the best from us. Because what they're doing right now is
> limiting us to like just like my teacher, my history teacher says that
> since elementary or kindergarten when they teach you your ABCs, it's
> like we're going to learn ABCDE. But what if you know the whole
> alphabet, you know? They just limit you to those letters. So they
> should have teachers that really care for the education, because other
> than that, we're going to be just waiting to see, we're just being there. I
> mean, we want to express who we are and they don't let us because . . .
> So they don't prepare for us.

(High school girl, 1/5/02 1:00 PM Alameda.)

A middle school boy contrasted the value of a teacher who expects students to learn and do

well:

> I like my lab period teacher and my algebra teacher. Like, instead of
> just hitting, like going straight into the details he'll make you relax,
> start telling a couple of jokes. Then it kind of calms you right off
> everything else that's happened throughout the day. And then you
> actually get some work done and you learn something. So that's what I
> like about my teachers. They all basically do that.

(Middle school boy, 1/6/02 1:00 PM Los Angeles.)

The students were very praising of such teachers: "They seem like they really care. A bunch

of them, not all of them." (High school girl, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.) Another girl credited

her teachers because, "But on the majority, like all of our teachers, most of the time they come out

their pocket for stuff in the classroom and they'll like contact you like on a different basis than just in

the classroom." (High school girl, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.) The trouble is, few of these

students encounter and enjoy such teachers on a regular basis. Most explain that they have had a

range of teachers, but too many disappear mid-year, are long-term substitutes, or don't know their

content areas:

> [A] lot of teachers, even if they're permanent teachers, they're put in
> slots they don't go with, like my other teacher I was talking about, man,
> I like math. Oh, you're a math teacher. That's what my degree's in.
> He didn't tell us about it. He finally — but they need an English
> teacher so here I am. And it's like, they're like put in the area they're
> needed in but not what they specialize in. So it's not like they don't
> know anything. They don't necessarily know what they're teaching.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 4:00 PM Alameda.) Students react to this teacher transience and lack of preparation and perform less well as a result.

2. The Academic Impact of Deprivation of Instructional Materials

Adverse academic and psychological consequences can be traced to the inadequate access to/absence of instructional materials as well. Some educators and quite a few students were quite explicit that the denial of rigorous materials converts into the material denial of rigorous curriculum. Students, teachers, principals, and graduates complain that insufficient numbers of honors or AP courses, even ESL instruction, could be offered because they did not have access to the appropriate materials. This material effect bears substantial adverse academic consequence, over time, for academic progress, heightened dropout rates, compromised post-graduate experiences (especially in higher education), and for educators' sense of defeat and helplessness about their own work (*see* Vaca and Safir quotes above; Fine, 1996; Meier, 1998; Newmann, 1998). This material denial, in turn, produces a sense in youth that they are viewed as unworthy of quality materials – that is, not worth the public investment, as can be heard in the following exchange:

> BOY: My school, they got all brand new books and let everybody take
> them home.
>
> . . . .
>
> MODERATOR: At your school where you get to take home your
> books and you have brand new books, what kind of message did
> that send you as a student?
>
> BOY: That they care.
>
> MODERATOR: Yes. What does it say to you about like what they
> think about you learning at the school or your future?
>
> BOY: That they care and they want us to try.

(high school boy & moderator, 1/4/02 6:30 PM Alameda)

Further, educators and students express pedagogical frustration, that is, an inability to educate the diverse student body responsibly, because of the inadequate supply of books and materials. Teachers including Safir and Vaca are concerned that they are unable to reach *all* students without level- and age-appropriate materials. In the absence of materials, educators typically end up teaching to one level – the top, the middle, or the bottom – but not all students. In the absence of materials to accommodate the variety of academic histories and learning styles in the room, educators have to rely exclusively upon their own teaching – stripped of supplemental resources – which narrows the range of students reached and (as students noted) often means that teachers are buying materials with money from their own wallets. The diverse student population present in any classroom, and maybe particularly these classrooms, is likely to be under-educated in the absence of rich academic materials and books. As a high school girl explains, the academic and psychological consequence may be confusion, which corresponds to academic frustration or, for some, giving up on the material (Diener and Dweck, 1980):

> At [my school], we use old books for so long we did get some new books. Our chemistry teacher was still using the stuff out of the old books that wasn't in the new books. And so we was confused.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 6:30 PM Alameda)

Psychologically, the absence of books and materials, and the recognition that students in "other schools" have access to such materials, produces a sense of despair about perceived social worth, as the two students below reveal:

> [In response to being shown the photographs:] It upsets me because they got supplies and it's like we don't have any. And they look like they got new books and stuff. We got books from the junior high school more and we're in high school. And it's like depressing.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 6:30 PM Alameda)

> We got raggedy books, everything. It's just like, they don't care.

(High school boy, 1/7/02 6:30 PM Los Angeles)

3. The Academic Impact of Environmental Stressors.

In addition to the impact of low teacher expectations, interrupted relations with teachers, and insufficient instructional materials, a number of studies demonstrate the specific psychological and

physiological effects of environmental stressors such as crowding, noise, temperature, and other

structural factors on students' capacity to concentrate and produce academic work and to induce high

levels of negative interactions and anger among and within the youth. Professor Susan Saegert has

studied the academic consequences of such environmental conditions, with a particular focus on

overcrowding. Saegert concludes: "higher density environments produce certain practical and

cognitive effects that then lead to frequently negative social interactions and affective states." (pp.

199, 263). The youth concurred. In one focus group, a series of comments reveals how

overcrowding affects learning:

> BOY: I just feel like it's deep — right now it's like 5,000 people overcrowded. It's way overcrowded. And it's like, you know, you don't even have to go there [inaudible], because basically they don't know if we go there, you can just come on campus or whatever. Like right now, we got three different tracks, and they don't know, like, if you don't have an ID, you just, like, you can tell them you have to take your ID picture of whatever and just go on in, and they'll believe you, because they don't really know who go there, because they've got so many kids in that school.
>
> MODERATOR: But how does that affect you as a student?
>
> BOY: Because, like, they could let the wrong person on campus or whatever or, like [inaudible], and it's really too many people, just . . . last year, I had 42 kids in my algebra class.
>
> GIRL: That's a lot.
>
> BOY: And people were standing up and . . . .
>
> GIRL: Sitting on the floor.
>
> BOY: Sitting on the cabinets and stuff and [inaudible].

(High school boy, girls, & moderator, 1/7/02 6:30 PM Los Angeles.)

Similarly, an elementary school girl articulated her response to a crowded and cold classroom

simply by explaining that she would not choose to be in such a classroom again:

> GIRL: It's just crowded and I be cold because the heater is broke.
>
> MODERATOR: The heater — how long has the heater been broken?
>
> GIRL: Like a long time.
>
> MODERATOR: Since the beginning of school?

GIRL: Yes. And there's like people, a whole lot of people coming to visit.

MODERATOR: Oh really? And what happens?

GIRL: It's kind of hard, because people, they go up there and press all these buttons and we got this little square thing for temperatures. And then it started taking hot and then it was hot in there. And now it's winter, it's cold.

MODERATOR: So what's it like to be in the class? Do you look forward to being in that class?

GIRL: I'm not there.

MODERATOR: Yes, but would you choose to be in that class again? No?

GIRL: No.

(Elementary school girl & moderator, 1/5/02 10:00 AM Alameda.)

Those environmental stressors recognized by psychologists and planners as most threatening to instruction are the very structural conditions focus group participants described in their schools, including: facilities in disrepair, overcrowding, temperature problems, filthy bathrooms, mice, vermin, animal feces, and noise. While there is a substantial academic literature that documents the adverse consequences of these environmental stressors (Lepore and Evans, 1996; Maxwell, 2000; Saegert, 1999; Spivak, 1973; *see also* Kozol, 1991), one needs to go no further than the words of Delaine Eastin, who, in 1998, noted in her presentation to the Little Hoover Commission:

> School facilities poorly maintained and just plain inadequate can depress the human spirit. Cleanliness and enough room are not frills; they enhance productivity.

(Eastin Testimony to Little Hoover Commission, March 26, 1998, p. 8.)

Buildings in disrepair are not merely a distraction; they are identity producing and self-defining. Since the early part of the 20th century, psychologists and sociologists (Cooley, 1998; DuBois, 1935; Fanon, 1967; Goffman, 1963; Mead, 1988; Merton, 1948) have argued that children and youth develop a sense of self from the messages they gather from adults and peers, structures, and institutions around them. What the culture says about the child, his/her family, and community comes to be internalized, in part, by that child. Children who are valued tend to be more positive in self-concept than those who are disparaged (DeLuca and Rosenbaum, 2000). This value may be

communicated in what people say about and to them. But as powerful, the quality of the contexts in which they are growing "speaks" to youth about how they are viewed and valued. For better or worse, these "voices" come to form part of the core of how a child feels about him/herself and/or the extent to which s/he is valued by others (Maxwell, 2000). If surrounded by decay, disrepair, and filth, and if no adult intervenes to protect, a child may come to see him/herself as worthy of little more or at least that adults see him/her as unworthy.

Saegert (1999) and Krenichyn and Saegert (2001) document the psychological and physiological impact of crowding and other environmental stressors on youth. Evans, Kliewan and Martin (1991) report that youth blood pressure rises, concentration diminishes and errors on difficult tasks multiply in the presence of noise. Edwards (1993) found that educational building conditions can hurt student performance, accounting for 5-11% of student performance on standardized tests. In a recent study of school facilities, alienation, and academic achievement, Duran (2002) systematically assessed the academic impact of structural facilities' decay on academic engagement and achievement of elementary children in New York City. Drawing on New York City Board of Education report cards for 95 elementary schools and architects' assessments of the structural soundness and quality of these same facilities, Duran found that controlling for race, ethnicity, and poverty of student body, structural problems have a direct and significant effect on students' attendance and thereby on academic achievement. Further analyses reveal that students of color and students living in poverty are far more likely (than white or middle class children) to attend such decaying buildings. Duran's findings are important on two counts. First, poor children of color disproportionately attend poor facilities. Second, the deterioration of a school facility is, in and of itself, sufficient to produce adverse effects with respect to attendance – a proxy for academic engagement – and ultimately academic achievement.

The youth spoke often about structural disrepairs, vermin, filth, rats, overheating, and excessive cold, and the academic consequences of these conditions. One young man in a focus group, commenting upon a rat that he saw in his school responded to an inquiry by the focus group moderator:

> MODERATOR: What does that do? You're in math class and you see
> a rat? Do you go back to math? What then happens?
>
> BOY: I'm thinking about the rat.
>
> MODERATOR: You're thinking about the rat.
>
> GIRL: [inaudible] The rest of the class you be checking like, oh, I
> thought he looked . . . . We're like, where did it go?

(High school boy, girl, & moderator, 1/9/02 4:30 PM San Francisco.)

Some students are traumatized by such events. Most, including the teachers, are distracted.

Andrew Baum, Jerome Singer, and Carlene Baum (1984) conclude that "Perhaps most important among aftereffects [of environmental stress] is the simple effect stress seems to have on the ability to adapt in the future. . . . When people must adapt to a number of changes of varying magnitude, either serially or at once, ease and success of adjustment decreases and adaptation becomes increasingly difficult. If the amount of adjustment required is large enough, it may render the individual unable to cope and lead to severe consequences." (p. 26) Stephen Lepore and Gary Evans (1996) have studied the cumulative consequences of multiple environmental stressors on individuals' physiological and psychological resources, over time. They conclude that: "Individuals experiencing chronic role stressors and major life events tend to be less able to marshal physiological resources for responding to acute stressor challenge. Exposure to one stressor, particularly a chronic stressor, can reduce an individual's ability to adapt to another stressor and even increase vulnerability to subsequent stressors." (p. 359) An elementary school girl in the focus groups understood this point:

> MODERATOR: What's it like to be in a class when it's really noisy
> and everything?
>
> GIRL: You can't learn.

(Elementary school girl and moderator, 1/5/02 10:00 AM Alameda.)

The evidence collected demonstrates that these schools themselves are stressful environments with substantial consequence to learning and teaching. Environmental conditions such as overcrowding have been found to reduce students' capacity to engage academically and heighten the likelihood of school violence (Astor, Meyer, and Behre, 1999; Darley and Gilbert, 1985; Devine,

1996). For students and faculty, overcrowding diminishes one's capacity to tolerate frustration and

heightens attention to environmental cues rather than personal moral values (Devine, 1996).

One of the student witnesses, Jose Garcia, confirmed these findings during his deposition:

> Actually the overcrowding affected the psychological health of the
> students, since they feel cooped up in the facility, which is designed to
> house an amount lesser than the actual numbers that Fremont had of
> students. And when I say affect the psychological health, I mean they
> feel cooped up, they start getting stressed or nervous, and they kind of
> act differently. So it's like some of the students might act in a hostile
> manner due to the overcrowding, they'll be bumping in the hallways
> because they are so crowded, which led to conflicts.

(Jose Garcia deposition 202:25-203:10.)

Further, as Darling-Hammond (2002), Fine (1991), Foster (1997), Hill and colleagues (1990),

and Meier (1998) have found, when educators work in contexts in which they feel both out of control

and powerless, they exhibit far less sense of responsibility for youth outcomes, diminished

commitment to the academic/intellectual community, and may be less likely to stay in a school over

time.

These schools not only stress youth and educators. The evidence suggests that they also fail

to buffer poor and working class youth from stressors they experience outside of school (Ancess and

Ort, 2000; Meier, 1998). Deborah Meier has written on schools which "change the odds" for poor

and working class youth, and youth of color. The schools involved in this lawsuit may, in contrast,

maintain, or even worsen the academic, emotional, and economic odds for poor and working-class

youth and youth of color. Dr. Robert S. McCord, in a systematic analysis of schools in San Francisco

Unified School District concluded, "The findings of my school facility appraisal reported in this

Declaration point to a pattern of disparate facility conditions associated with the racial and ethnic

identity of SFUSD schools. This pattern of disparate conditions is likely to convey the message of

racial inferiority that is implicit in a policy of segregation." (2002, p.12)

Finally, as Lepore, Saegert and others have documented, working and learning in conditions

of environmental stress not only undermines the capacity to concentrate and complete difficult tasks,

but may compromise students' and educators' abilities to adapt to the many stressors they confront.

Like other environmental conditions that compromise one's psychological "immunity" system, working or attending an environmentally stressful institution may interfere with youths' and educators' abilities to cope in these and other circumstances. If schools are supposed to prepare youth for life, these schools may be preparing children for lives of stress, with compromised abilities to cope.

4.   Misplaced Self-Blame as an Academic Impediment

Across the focus groups, some students narrated a particularly acute message learned and internalized: that the students themselves are at fault for the conditions of their schooling. While most of these youth attribute their mis-education to structural inequities, a fleeting, infrequent, but emotionally powerful discourse of self-blame pierced the focus groups.

> If I sit in that class and choose to talk, then, hey, that's me. That's what, I mean, I ain't going to be nothing in life. So if that teacher, even if she teaching a little bit of stuff, I know to sit down and listen to it because I mean, this all I'm going to learn. When I leave high school, I mean what else is there? I mean, on my transcript I'm not going to make it into a university. I could tell that now. I mean, all I got is a two-year college or one of them things that come on TV for computer class or Job Corps or something like that.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 6:30 PM Alameda.)

> I skipped that grade, went right to the ninth grade from seventh grade. I chose to mess that ninth grade year up. I chose to cut and shoot dice and be doing other things that I'm not supposed to do, you know. So that was my mistake, my fault. You know, in my tenth grade year, I destroyed it, you know. I made nothing of it all, nothing. I passed, I don't know how I passed, you know. So when I look at my transcript, I look at it and say this is where I failed. I know I won't be able to make it into a university because of me, not because of what peer pressure or what this principal said or what this teacher was teaching me.

(High school girl, 1/4/02 6:30 PM Alameda.)

While the students whom we interviewed recognized and discussed, in the aggregate, structural problems of teacher turnover, overcrowding, absence of books, ineffective guidance counselors, etc., they also accepted much responsibility for their own behaviors. As the two girls here exemplify, a whispered or shadow discourse flowed through the groups conveying a self-blame about past behaviors. Students who offered such analyses typically asserted a very punitive

perspective on their own biographies: past mistakes do and should dictate a life of impoverished educational, social, and economic opportunities. The first young woman sees it as her own fault that she is unprepared for college and can only pursue a two year college or "computer class" or "Job Corps." The second young woman considers her behavior in ninth grade, cutting and shooting dice, as sufficient to severely limit her future options. Surely there is a refreshing maturity or responsibility expressed in these narratives. There are, however, several disturbing implications of self-blame as well.

First, students who view educational difficulties as largely their own fault also tend to hold very low expectations for personal change or for the effective intervention of adult educators. There is little sense that school can/will help them achieve positive educational outcomes (Fine, Freudenberg, Payne, Perkins, Smith, and Wanzer, 2002). Low expectations for adults convert into self-defeating attitudes by which students hesitate to ask for help they need. One young man expressed it well: "I don't ask the teacher nothing. I just get help on my own, find some way to do it." (Middle school boy, 1/6/02 1:00 PM Alameda.) At just the age when and in just the schools in which youth desperately need (and want) adult guidance and support, they are learning not to ask. "I don't ask the teacher nothing" is of course a defensive posture, rejecting educators' help before educators refuse his request. These students then convert this defense into an internalized and unrealistic belief in personal responsibility. In the end, these students do not learn how to ask for or receive help, they do not get the help, and, in the likely event of failure, they conclude that it is "my fault."

Further, there is little recognition by these youths that stressful structural and academic conditions of their schools actually contribute, in large measure, to the disruptive behaviors that they and their peers witness and engage in. Consider the following exchange among high school students who, upon hearing a young man's story of scheduling troubles in school, attributed academic difficulties to various sources, including poor parenting, laziness, bad attitudes of students, etc.

> NINTH GRADE BOY: They didn't have no science classes available
> because they were too full so my counselor just gave me chemistry.
> And so I'm in there with eleventh and twelfth graders. And they

know what to do. I don't know so I'm just sitting there looking and the teacher don't even help you. So I'm flunking that class.

MODERATOR: What kind of help would you want your teacher to give? What would good help look like?

BOY: Just show me how to do the work.

* * *

[The conversation now turns to students explaining why failure rates are so high.]

MODERATOR: Why [do] you guys think some students fail their classes?

* * *

GIRL: Okay. My opinion at my school why students fail classes is because some parents don't have control over their kids and their kids is used to being out and doing all these things. And when they get back to school, school is just so boring . . . they decide to ditch or not pay attention in class and that changes the whole classroom environment. And some other students just don't like being there so they just like talking and everything too. So the teachers started not to care, started not caring.

* * *

GIRL: I guess I have like one or two teachers that really care but the rest of my teachers just throw the book at you and say do it.

* * *

GIRL: Well a lot of, I think, like students don't really care about their classes. Or they're just not interested in them. That's why they usually fail it or just like messing around.

* * *

GIRL: Yes, mostly like the classrooms are like out of control. And like what he said, when they aren't controlled, he will do like something. It's like also like the students' choice if they want to or not."

(High school boy, girls, & moderator, 1/6/02 3:00 PM Los Angeles.)

As the exchange between the ninth grade boy in chemistry and the other students reveals, many youth are well socialized to blame school problems on youth or poor parenting, rather than on the flawed schooling itself. The ninth grader initiated the conversation with a concern about inadequate course offerings. In response, the focus group participants attributed adverse academic

outcomes, primarily, to youth behavior — ignoring what he just told them about his inappropriate class placement. In this selective hearing and then student-blaming example, it is clear that students are reluctant to acknowledge that structural conditions may give rise to difficult student behaviors and are, instead, likely to attribute adverse academic outcomes to student behaviors. These student behaviors are, at once, a response to structural conditions and a cause of more negative outcomes. What is lost in the analysis, however, is the dynamic relation of structure and behavior: that the absence of qualified teachers, high teacher turnover, and overcrowding create a context in which disciplinary problems, cutting, boredom, and acting out become normative (Fallis and Opotow, forthcoming; Haney and Zimbardo, 1973; LeCompte and Dworkin, 1991). By blaming students, the structural sources of these problems are obscured. But the negative effects on student performance remain.

Perhaps most damaging with respect to future outcomes, some of the youth have elaborated a very punitive ideology that mistakes they have made in the past will and should predict negative future outcomes. These youths have committed what psychologists would call a "characterological personal attribution" or "fundamental attribution error" for past mistakes. When people attribute bad outcomes to a moral flaw in themselves, it tends to be difficult to shed the shame, change behavior, and/or believe yourself entitled to future, positive outcomes. They have internalized the broader societal message about poor youth: that they *deserve* bad outcomes from the time of their "mistakes" forward (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).[2]

Social scientists write about the kinds of environments youth need in order to develop a sense of stability and a knowledge of their own capacity to revise, improve, make mistakes, and initiate change. These environments include what psychologist Lorraine Maxwell calls a "safe and welcom-

---

[2] It is interesting, if a digression, to consider who, among today's youth, are allowed to make mistakes. There is an ample literature suggesting that one of the greatest differences between growing up poor and/or of color in the U.S. and growing up middle class/wealthy and White is that the latter group of children and adolescents are allowed to make mistakes, with second chances available and opportunities to try again (Lefkowitz, 1998). We understand, for these youths, that mistakes are developmental, opportunities to learn and to revise. Poor children, especially poor children and youth of color, in contrast, tend to be held personally accountable for such mistakes (*see* Lefkowitz, 1998; Poe-Yagamata and Jones, 2000), with dire consequences that can last a lifetime (*see* Ayers, Ayers, Dohrn, and Jackson, 2001).

ing school" (Maxwell, 2000; Parsons, 1959). Such environments float the strengths of youth and aid them with their needs (Ancess, 2000). The schools attended by the youth who were interviewed are, in contrast, organized in ways that only the most buoyant survive. "Mistakes" by youth in these schools are more likely to occur, given the absence of a quality educational context, and the consequences of these mistakes are likely to be costly.

5.   Inadequate Preparation for College.

In institutional settings in which facilities are decaying, books are often unavailable for independent work or homework, faculty turn over at alarming rates, and incidents of health violations are reported by youth, the social, psychological, and academic consequences for most will be serious (Fallis and Opotow, 2002; Fine, 1990, 1991). Researchers Hanson (1994) and Trusty and Colvin (1999) suggest that these conditions produce cohorts of "lost talent." In the California data, the "lost talent" is operationalized in schools' dropout rates, percent of graduates ineligible for the UC/CSU system[3] and in students' rightful concerns about academic under-preparation. The surveys reveal *that*

---

[3] Dropout statistics from schools of youth whom we interviewed, as well as percent of graduates eligible for the University of California/California State University system:

School	District	1998-99 Dropout Rate	1998-99 UC/CSU Eligibility
Balboa High School	SFUSD	51.6%	42.8%
Burton High School	SFUSD	3.5%	91.5%
Castlemont High School	OUSD	23.4%	29.9%
Fremont High School	LAUSD	46.2%	35.4%
Fremont High School	OUSD	35.9%	16.1%
Oakland Tech High School	OUSD	24.7%	8.5%
Crenshaw High School	LAUSD	16.9%	51.5%
Dorsey High School	LAUSD	56.1%	9.7%
Jefferson High School	LAUSD	19.7%	50.2%

students are concerned about under-preparation (see Table 4). The focus groups reveal *how* teacher turnover, overcrowding, insufficient instructional materials, and environmental stressors undermine the relations of learning, interfere with instruction, and produce cultures of under-preparation.

Table 4
Percent of students who expect to graduate and percent who feel less well, as well and better prepared for college than their California State peers

	High School (n=66)	Middle School (n=20)
How likely is it that you will graduate from your school?	85%	53%
How prepared are you for college: less well than others, as well, better?	Less well: 50% As well: 39% Better: 13%	Less well: 15% As well: 70% Better: 15%

As Table 4 indicates, and the surveys reveal, almost all of these youth expect to graduate from high school and attend college. A full 85% of surveyed high school students consider it likely that they will graduate from their present school, and 91% indicate that they would like to attend college after graduation. However, 50% feel that they are "less well" prepared for college than peers throughout the State of California. This represents a serious rise from the 15% of middle school students who report that they feel "less well prepared for college" than peers. The high school students appear to hold high aspirations for college, but are filled with anxiety about inadequate preparation.

Locke High School	LAUSD	35.1%	59.7%
Manual Arts High School	LAUSD	0.2%	100%
Roosevelt High School	LAUSD	19.0%	44.3%
Huntington Park High School	LAUSD	16.7%	26.4%
Watsonville High School	Pajaro Valley USD	2.2%	19.1%

Source: Education Data Partnership Website - School Profiles & Reports, located at www.ed-data.k12.ca.us.

In research with youth from low-income schools in New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia, I often hear poor and working class students express concerns, like these, about college (Fine, 1991, 1994; Fine and Somerville, 1998; Wasley, Fine, King, and Powell, 1999). What is striking about the California data are the high percentages of youth who expect to both graduate high school and attend college, matched with the belief, expressed by half, that they are less well prepared than others in the State. The problem lies not in low expectations or aspirations but in the well-founded anxieties about academic under-preparation. The U.S. Department of Education (2001) has recently determined that a rigorous high school curriculum is one of the best predictors of success and persistence in higher education. For the youths attending these California schools, their fears are unfortunately realistic. Their academic preparation will likely be inadequate to the expectations and standards of higher education.

As one high school graduate, now at UC Berkeley, summarized her experience:

> I just wasn't at all prepared, like compared to my sister. She's at UC Berkeley now but she went to Lowell. She was really prepared for college. Her school had lots of AP classes, she took 5 AP exams and passed 4. My school only had two that I could take . . . . I didn't know what to expect or about picking majors or anything. I got really discouraged when everyone around me was doing so well and knew what was going on. It was really hard for me. I had to drop out of more than half of my classes my first year. I thought about dropping out of school all together. Luckily I had the support of my friends — other students who graduated from [my school] who told me to stick it out, to just try to go slower . . . . I was feeling like everyone else was doing so well — why did Berkeley accept me?

(Quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews.) For youths who feel that they are trying their hardest, working with whatever resources are provided by their schools, and achieving against the odds, the anticipation of difficulties in higher education is stressful and anxiety producing and can be academically undermining.

A small group of graduates from these California schools who are now attending college were interviewed. Given the high drop out rates of these schools and the few who go onto college, I assume that a sample of college going students represents some of the most academically successful graduates of their schools. While the N is obviously low (11), the consistency of their responses with

respect to under-preparation was noteworthy. In response to a neutral question about how well high school prepared them for college, all eleven offered that they felt under-prepared for college (100%) (for contrasting evidence from poor and working class youth of color, in college, who attended high quality small public schools, see Bensman, 1994, 1995). While the interviewers did not ask about any particular subject area in the questioning, nine of the 11 spontaneously mentioned that they were poorly prepared in mathematics and seven mentioned college-level difficulties in reading/writing. A number admitted to thoughts of dropping a course or dropping out of college.

> I kept thinking they know more than I do. It seems like I had to do more than them, like I have to go to a lot of tutorial classes. What [my school] has offered me has made my transition to college really difficult. I'm pretty much intimidated in college . . . . I keep thinking, Am I going to make it?

(Female graduate, now at U.C. Berkeley; quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews.)

The reflections of these graduates reveal the academic and psychological costs of academic under-preparation, even for the "stars" of these schools:

> High school didn't provide me with any AP or honors classes so I was never exposed to college level work. When I took calculus my first year in college, I couldn't compete. I ended up having to drop the class and take an easier math course. The expectations and standards at [school] were too low. Many students felt like they weren't being exposed to the education they needed. We could see what students at Lowell High were getting, all the AP classes and textbooks. But we had to share most of our books and some we couldn't even take home.

(Male Graduate, Class of 2000, now at U.C. Berkeley; quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews.)

These young women and men *thought* they were top students at their California high schools. Reflecting back on their high school years, these college students all admitted that they were underchallenged. While two credited teachers and/or counselors who "really pushed me . . . taught me to keep an open mind and not to quit" (quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews), all agreed that teachers "could have given more work, they could have been harder on us." (Quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews.) When asked, "What did you get from your high schools?" these young women and men reported that high school was a context in which they

developed a sense of persistence, learning to beat the odds, to struggle, even when no one was in their corner. One young woman, now attending community college, explained:

> In high school, I didn't feel any support, especially in terms of college going. I got some basics . . . but I don't feel prepared for college.

(Quote in Fine notes from high school graduate interviews.)

VI. Conclusion

This is a time of rich, vibrant and contentious debate over the goals of public education. President Bush has placed education at the top of his national priorities. Smart and well meaning people vigorously disagree about the importance of high stakes standardized testing, the power of vouchers and choice, the curricular significance of phonics, bilingualism, whole language, prayer in school, and sex education. Five academic outcomes of public education, however, are generally agreed upon as evidence of quality education.

High achievement/acquisition of skills;

Strong sense of internal motivation and efficacy in faculty and students;

Low drop out rates

High levels of post secondary education

Broad based civic mindedness and belief in democratic American values

(see literatures by Bensman, Connell, Fine, Ryan, Meier, Raywid, in bibliography).

Systematic strategies for achieving these goals are described eloquently by the Joint Committee to develop a Master Plan for California's Education System. In August of 2000, the Joint Committee recognized that students in California deserve the opportunity to:

Learn and master the basic cognitive and social skills needed for success in life and the advanced knowledge and skills that will make them competitive with graduates of the best educational institutions in other states and nations;

Develop an awareness and appreciation of the cultures of California, the nation and the world;

Instill the social values of integrity, morality, discipline, and civic-mindedness;

Develop an understanding of the impact of education on their lives and of the educational options available to them; and

Nurture a love of learning and an enthusiasm for life-long learning.

(Master Plan/Framework, 8/8/2000, p.11.)

The California schools described by focus group participants systematically fail to offer students these opportunities to learn and master basic cognitive and social skills. To the contrary, the conditions in these schools threaten students' social values of integrity, discipline, and civic-mindedness and place in jeopardy a love of learning and enthusiasm for life-long learning. The conditions in these schools convert yearning to anger, pride to shame, and civic engagement to alienation.

The data collected, in my assessment as a Social Psychologist, suggest that the schools in question are educating youth toward intellectual mediocrity and alienation, and away from academic mastery and democracy. Both the scholarly literatures and the youths' survey and interview data indicate that the contexts in which they are learning are sites of possibility and of betrayal. In these buildings, pride in self, desire for quality education and a sense of civic engagement shrink. The state of their buildings, the quality of their educators, and the absence of books and materials combine adversely in ways that affect academic, social, and psychological development. Despite the fact that the youth are asking, desperately, for quality educators, rigorous curriculum, and clean and safe, uncrowded facilities, the evidence suggests that the more years these youth spend in plaintiff schools, the more shame, anger, and mistrust they develop; the fewer academic skills they acquire; and the more our diverse democratic fabric frays.

VII. Terms of Consultation

I have agreed to testify at trial in this case if called on to do so, and I will therefore make myself available to be deposed concerning any opinion, and its basis, that I would give at trial. My consulting fee for work on this case is $2000 per day for my work, and $300 per day for my graduate student assistants' work.

Appendix A:

Detailed Methodology

Focus groups are an established social science method used in marketing research, jury research, health psychology, and in-depth studies of social experience (see Desvousges and Smith, 1988; Denizin and Lincoln, 2000). Focus groups are the method of choice when a researcher seeks to understand a range of perspectives on a particular topic, document differential patterns of response to the same question, and observe how groups interact in response to a set of organizational questions (Wasley, Fine, King and Powell, 1999). Focus groups are particularly valued by policy analysts interested in understanding complex social and organizational dynamics (Kahan, 2001). Focus groups are highly recommended for research on youth because they produce interpersonal and group level data as well as individual data (Wasley, et al. 1999).

To be effective, focus group facilitators are trained to create safe settings for open and free exchange of ideas; to solicit dissenting or unusual perspectives; to value diversity rather than conformity; to encourage participation by all, including shy or silent participants; and to support outliers, that is individuals who hold distinct or unusual positions within the group (Kitzinger, 1994). Focus groups mixed by gender are highly recommended for research with adolescents because there appears to be less pressure for socially desirable responses than in individual interviews with an adult or interviews with males only (or females only) (see Frosh and Phoenix, 2002). For further information on focus groups, relevant citations include: Basch, 1987; Desvousges and Smith, 1988; Kahan, 2001; Kitzinger, 1994; Lederman, 1990; Merton, 1987.

Nine of the focus groups conducted for this report were organized by marketing research and jury research firms in the Los Angeles, Alameda, and San Francisco areas. Via random digit dialing, six groups of high school students were drawn from within specified zip codes, as were two groups of middle school students and one group of elementary school students. The tenth group was arranged by attorneys for the plaintiffs and included youth familiar with the lawsuit. The eleventh group was arranged by Dr. Fine and was held in the Santa Cruz area, with high school students from Watsonville. A preliminary analysis of the content of the 11 groups suggested no significant

differences in themes or affect in any one group. Therefore, for the purposes of analysis, the eleven groups were aggregated.

To illustrate the selection process: in San Francisco, to generate a focus group of twelve, 323 calls were No Answer, 63 Call Back, 4 Refusal, 2 Previous Commitment, 8 Wrong Number, 16 Busy, 121 wrong school, 2 selected out because of self identified "difficulties" with speaking skills and 12 were confirmed and interviewed.

In Alameda: 423 calls were terminated because youth attended other schools; 6 terminated because family member works for State of California; 3 involved in other lawsuits; 3 selected out because of self identified "difficulties" with speaking skills.

In Los Angeles: 59 terminated because they attended other schools, 12 terminated because they were already involved in marketing research projects; 26 terminated because of racial/ethnic sampling distributions.

One focus group was conducted with youth familiar with the lawsuit. Nine of the focus groups were conducted by April Burns, Yasser A. Payne, and Maria E. Torre, Ph.D. candidates in Social/Personality Psychology at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Two focus groups were conducted by Michelle Fine, Professor of Psychology, The Graduate Center, CUNY. All facilitators are trained in qualitative methods and are advanced in their doctoral training. The team worked for three days in preparation for the focus groups, debriefed every evening after the focus groups, and reviewed the materials upon completion of the eleven focus groups. Focus groups typically included 9-12 youth and lasted from 90 to 120 minutes.

Reviews of the transcripts suggest high content validity, suggesting that youth were comfortable expressing their individual points of view, comfortable disagreeing with others, and comfortable voicing both praise for and concerns about their schools. Because the interviews lasted up to 120 minutes, there was ample time to hear from everyone, and the strategies used (*e.g.*, going around the table to solicit positive and then problematic features of schooling) worked to get everyone speaking, and to get both positive and negative comments on tape.

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The schools represented in the focus groups included:

Balboa High School, San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) (6)
Burton High School, SFUSD (10)
Castlemont High School, Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) (8)
Fremont High School, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) (2)
Fremont High School, OUSD (11)
Oakland Technical High School, OUSD (12)
Stonehurst Elementary, OUSD (4)
Whittier Elementary, OUSD (3)
Crenshaw High School, LAUSD (3)
Dorsey High School, LAUSD (5)
Jefferson High School, LAUSD (1)
Locke High School, LAUSD (1)
Manual Arts High School, LAUSD (1)
Roosevelt High School, LAUSD (2)
Charles Drew Middle School, LAUSD (3)
Gage Middle School, LAUSD (7)
John Muir Middle School, LAUSD (7)
Huntington Park High School, LAUSD (5)
Hosler Middle School, Lynwood Unified School District (3)
Lynwood Middle School, Lynwood Unified School District (1)
Watsonville High School, Pajaro Valley Unified School District (6)

Total: 101 (see footnote 3 for drop out rates and UC/CSU eligibility information on these schools)

Survey-based gender and race/ethnicity data on 87 students indicate: 45 females and 42 males; 4 students who identify White, 1 Biracial, 25 Latino/Hispanic, and 57 Black. Parental and student consent were obtained for all focus group participants, except the Watsonville participants. (Because Watsonville focus group participants did not provide parental consent forms, I neither quote the participants in this report nor administered the survey to the participants.) Participants in groups that were organized by marketing research and jury research firms were reimbursed for their participation.

Sampling Strategy. The sampling strategy for both focus groups and surveys was designed to meet three criteria with respect to construct validity: generate a sufficiently large and diverse data set so that no one district would be over-represented in the data; collect data from a sample varied by age, gender, race, and ethnicity; and collect data using different methods so that the analyses can

triangulate (compare across methods) to document patterns in the data across methods and samples and confirm the construct validity of findings.

In order to meet these criteria, the research team used three methods and collected data in four sites and from four age groups. With respect to methods, the research team conducted focus groups, surveys, and graduate interviews. With respect to sites, the research team conducted the research in four settings: San Francisco, Alameda (with Oakland youth), Watsonville, and Los Angeles. With respect to age, the research team interviewed four age groups: elementary, middle, high school, and college students.

The primary empirical focus for data collection was high school youth because we expected these adolescents to be most articulate about the positive and negative aspects of their schooling. We were, as well, particularly interested in the cumulative effects of structural problems and disrupted relations with faculty over time. Thus, a targeted analysis of high school youth enabled the research team to collect data on the developmental consequences of exposure to adverse academic conditions.

Focus Group Procedure. After signing informed consent forms, middle and high school participants were asked to complete an anonymous survey. Items were read aloud to reduce any problems with literacy in English. The survey took approximately 15-20 minutes to administer. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix B.

After completing the survey, participants were invited to introduce themselves and to note one positive feature of their school. In order to limit any potential bias, we began with positive impressions of their schools. After going around the full table, the facilitators then asked students to identify any "difficult spots" or "problems" in their school. Both the "positive" and "problems" conversations lasted for approximately 30 minutes. The researchers explicitly asked youth, in the survey and in the focus group, questions to solicit positive and negative information about their schools. We consistently asked for positive information first. Reviews of the focus group transcripts confirm that students felt free to offer up praise and concerns.

Students were then shown laminated photos of a highly resourced school in California and asked what was similar to and different from their own schools. This typically lasted approximately 10-15 minutes. To this point there was little or no mention of the lawsuit.

At midpoint in the group, the lawsuit was introduced, with a sampling of quotes drawn from student depositions and declarations read aloud. These quotes focused on facilities problems, teacher turnover, mice, heat, bathrooms, and inadequate numbers of books. Students then discussed the extent to which these were issues of concern in their own schools. Facilitators consistently sought a wide range of opinions. This section of the group typically lasted 15-20 minutes.

Middle and high school students were then invited to create their "ideal school." This task generated a wide-ranging conversation about structures, sports, music, teachers, student body, curricular rigor, books, materials, and bathrooms. This section of the group typically lasted another 15 minutes.

At the end of each group, students were asked for a final thought, "What would you want us to tell someone in authority (newspaper, members of the Board of Education, the judge, other youth?) about how to improve your school?" We went around the table to generate varied responses. This section typically lasted 10-15 minutes.

Elementary school students were asked questions similar to those of the middle and high school students, but in simpler form. Further, they were asked to draw their schools and tell stories about them.

All focus group interviews were transcribed professionally, although due to technical difficulties one group could not be transcribed and a second was not taped. The available tapes were initially listened to, and the transcripts reviewed by Fine and colleagues to generate empirical codes for analyses. This first round of analysis involved generating codes from the scholarly literatures reviewed and from initial readings of the transcripts. A second round of analysis involved Michelle Fine coding each transcript for prominent and repeated themes (*e.g.*, stress, anxiety, "good teacher," positive aspects of schooling, desired changes, school based caring, evidence of trying to get help, response to student requests for help, student aspirations, shame, level of preparation, anger,

helplessness, ability to create change, reliance upon adults, etc.). In addition to prominent and repeated themes, however, a third reading of the transcripts and listening to the tapes was undertaken in order to identify key themes or discourses that emerged sporadically but generated strong emotional reaction in the groups. These themes are significant because they represent difficult, unsettling, and raw emotional material (*e.g.,* self blame for failure), not because of their frequency. As with family secrets or hard-to-discuss organizational issues, these themes would emerge at critical moments in the focus group conversation and would be surrounded by distinctly lively and animated response. When these data are presented in this report, they take the form of a conversation among youth, a debate of ideas among focus group participants, rather than a stand-alone quote.

For the two focus groups that I conducted personally, one was taped and transcribed and the other wasn't because the context was too noisy for taping. For the taped and transcribed session, however, in reviewing both the tapes and transcription there were important omissions when compared to my handwritten notes. That is, when a question would be asked and numerous answers were spoken simultaneously, some of these responses are not audible on the tape and therefore not present in the transcription. I indicate, in the body of this report, when a quotation has been drawn from notes rather than the tape or the transcription.

The survey and qualitative data were analyzed using three levels of analysis: each individual focus group; across the three grade levels (*e.g.,* elementary, middle, and high school); and across the full data set of eleven focus groups.

The college interviews were coded with the same themes as the elementary, middle, and high school focus groups. However, elaborated codes for "academic under-preparation" and "emotional guilt" were added after the college interviews were complete.

The Survey. The items on the survey instrument, completed anonymously by middle and high school students, were drawn primarily from the research instruments of Professor Constance Flanagan, Pennsylvania State University, on youths' political attitudes and Professor Tony Bryk and colleagues at the University of Chicago's Consortium on Chicago Urban School Reform, on school perceptions and experiences. Flanagan and colleagues have distributed their Political Attitude Scale

to youth in countries throughout the world. Bryk and colleagues have distributed their Student

Survey to youth throughout the Chicago public schools. The Flanagan, et al. survey, conducted with

5,579 adolescents in eight countries (1998), reports reliabilities as follows: Cronbach alphas on Civic

Commitment items above .68 in all countries, .74 for the family ethic of social responsibility items

and .61 for a sense of membership at school items. Bryk and colleagues (1999) report the following

reliabilities on Consortium Student and Teacher Surveys, subscale reliabilities: Press Toward

Academic Achievement, .66; Liking School, .72; Academic Engagement, .66; Self Efficacy, .58.

From Flanagan, et al., we adopted the "personal goals" and "opinions about government"

items. From Bryk and colleagues we adopted the "What you think about your school" items. We

added items to assess aspirations and expectations for graduation and college going (see Appendix C

for copy of survey instrument).

The survey was designed to capture youths' views of their schools, their aspirations for

graduation and post high school experiences, their expectations of attending college, their

perspectives on what would facilitate or hinder college going, their sense of their own preparation for

college, their personal and professional goals and their views on public institutions, including

government, the state of California and the United States. By integrating Likert-scales (e.g., 1-5,

strongly disagree to strongly agree) with open-ended items, we were able to generate descriptive

statistics and gather the individual perspectives of these students.

Interviews with Graduates

From a sample of 14 names of graduates provided by attorneys for the plaintiffs and two

graduates identified independently, eleven telephone interviews were conducted and completed.

Names and phone numbers of these graduates were provided by the attorneys. Four of the graduates

(provided by attorneys) could not be reached with the information provided. Phones were

disconnected or persons had moved. The research team was also provided a list of 18 additional

graduates who were plaintiffs, declarants, or interviewees for *Williams*. The team decided to seek

interviews only with graduates who were not plaintiffs, declarants, or interviewees for *Williams* in

order to get a broader range of perspectives from young adults not already involved in or knowledgeable about the lawsuit.

The young men and women were interviewed by one of the focus group facilitators, Ms. Burns, Dr. Fine, Mr. Payne, or Ms. Torre. The interviews lasted for approximately 20 minutes. A standardized interview protocol was established. As with the focus groups and surveys, the questions were phrased to be neutral, allowing for both positive and critical responses from respondents. Graduates were not notified, beforehand, by the attorneys that a request for an interview would be forthcoming. We did not want a call from the attorneys to prime respondents toward critical responses. Thus, these graduates received, without forewarning, a call from one of the three graduate assistants and/or Dr. Fine.

We generated a common protocol for calling, following up, and the interview questions. The three key questions for the interview concerned current educational work, respondents' view on how well their California high school prepared them for higher education, and comments they would like relayed to a judge in this case about their school. Notes were taken; the interviews were not tape recorded. Notes were reviewed and coded systematically by Dr. Fine.

Given the relatively large sample size for the focus groups and the wide variation of race, ethnicity, age, context, and school within and among groups, and given the strong consistency and confirmation of information provided on surveys, in focus groups, and through the telephone interviews, the conclusions reached in this report are grounded in sound and valid evidence.

Appendix B:

Focus Group Survey Instrument

<u>Tell Us About Your School</u>

Please choose a number to show what you think about your school.

1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Somewhat agree/disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree

In my school. . .

_____ kids feel safe

_____ the building is clean and in good shape

_____ students feel like they are part of a community where people care about each other

_____ all the teachers are well qualified

_____ students have enough books to take home for homework

_____ teachers listen to students' ideas

_____ my classes are too crowded

_____ everyone tries to keep the school looking good

_____ students feel proud to be part of the school

Now, please give us information about your experience in school

1. If you need help in your school, how do you get it?

2. How likely is it that you will graduate from your school? Please circle your choice.

1 Definitely won't	2 Not sure	3 Definitely will

3. What do you hope to do after high school?

4. What will help you make those plans happen?

5. What might get in the way of your plan?

6. If you are thinking of going to college, how well do you feel your schools have prepared you, compared to other kids from California? *Please circle your choice.*

1	**2**	**3**
Less well prepared	**As well prepared**	**Better prepared**

7. Why do you think so many students leave your school before graduating?

When you think about your life and your future, how important is each of the following for you?

1	**2**	**3**
Not at all important	**Kind of important**	**Very important**

_____ helping those who are less fortunate   _____ being the best in everything

_____ making my community better   _____ working to stop prejudice

_____ being active in my religion   _____ serving my country

_____ improving race relations   _____ getting more education

_____ eventually leaving my community   _____ helping my family

People have different opinions about California, government and America. Here's what some people have said. What are your views?

1 **Strongly disagree**	2 **Disagree**	3 **Somewhat agree/disagree**	4 **Agree**	5 **Strongly agree**

_____ Getting an education helps you get a good job.

_____ The government of California doesn't really care what people like me and my family think.

_____ People like me have the ability to change the government if we don't like what it is doing.

_____ No matter how well educated you are, it's hard for people like us to get a good job.

_____ My school is as good as any school in California.

_____ The California government is pretty much run for the rich, not for the average person.

_____ It makes me angry when I think about the conditions some people have to live in.

_____ America is basically a fair society where everyone has an equal chance to get ahead.

8. How old are you?

9. What grade are you in?

10. What school do you go to?

11. How do you describe yourself in terms of race or ethnicity?

12. If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be?

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