The New School Segregation

HOW SCHOOL DISTRICT SECESSIONS FOSTER SEGREGATION & INEQUALITY
Importance of School District Boundary Lines

*Source National Center for Education Statistics*
Importance of School District Boundary Lines: A View from the Northeast

*Source National Center for Education Statistics
Importance of School District Boundary Lines: A View from the Midwest

*Source National Center for Education Statistics*
Importance of School District Boundary Lines: A View From the South

*Source: National Center for Education Statistics*
Proliferation of Boundary Lines through School District Secessions

What is a School District Secession?

Process by which a municipality or unincorporated territory detaches itself from one established school district and forms its own independent and autonomous school district
The Geography of School District Secessions

Data Source: EdBuild Report Fractured: The Break Down of America’s School Districts

- 71 attempted secessions
- 47 successful secessions
- 9 defeated secessions
- 6 inactive secessions
- 9 ongoing sessions
30 States Have Laws Governing School District Secessions

21 states require a voter referendum

21 states require approval by a state agency

3 states require a constitutional amendment

20 States Have No Laws Governing School District Seccissions
Incoherencies in Legal Landscape For School District Secessions

- Staunch normative commitment to localism or local Control
- Decline of active school desegregation orders
- Few states require a study of the racial and/or economic implications of a secession before allowing it
- Myopic voter referenda requirements
How School District Secessions Impact Educational Opportunity

- Increases racial and economic segregation between school districts
- Increases funding and resource disparities between school districts
- Creates inefficiencies in provision of public education
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000 Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>2005 Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>2010 Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>35860</td>
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<td>21811</td>
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<td>906</td>
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<td>5.00%</td>
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Race and Class Implications: An Example From Jefferson County, Alabama

*Source: Supplemental Report Jefferson County Bd. of Educ.*
Race and Class Implications: An Example From Jefferson County, Alabama

*Source: UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jefferson County School Aged Demographics</th>
<th>Gardendale School Aged Demographics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<td>Latino</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socioeconomically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
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Possible Solutions

Policymakers

Adopt more robust rules governing school district secessions such as:
• requiring racial and socio economic impact studies
• more inclusive voter referenda
• Encourage and incentivize interdistrict collaboration
Possible Solutions

Courts

- Adopt a burden shifting framework for evaluating the impact of a secession on an ongoing desegregation order
- More rigorous monitoring of boundary changes for districts subject to an ongoing desegregation order