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Fundamentally Linked: Neighborhood Revitalization and School Quality in the City of Cleveland

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FUNDAMENTALLY LINKED: NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION AND
SCHOOL QUALITY IN THE CITY OF CLEVELAND

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Bachelor of Science in Journalism
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This paper examines the effect of poor school quality on neighborhood revitalization efforts in four Cleveland neighborhoods: Ohio City, Detroit Shoreway, Tremont and Downtown. The report employs survey research and real estate data analysis to examine the extent to which failing public schools encourage residents to leave the city for the suburbs, undermining efforts at revitalization. The research was particularly concerned with examining the effect on middle-class residents, or “residents of choice,” who chose to live in Cleveland although other options are available to them financially.

Original research bore out common assumptions about the impact of poorly performing local schools on middle-class tenure in the city. A survey of 271 Near West and Downtown Cleveland residents revealed an overwhelmingly negative perception of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Prospective parents almost universally reported they do not perceive the urban school district to be a viable option for their future children. Only 9 percent reported they would remain in the city and send their children to a public school, given the opportunity. This attitude was reflected as well in the neighborhood’s parents, a clear majority of which (65 percent) reported their children are enrolled in private schools.
It is easy to see how this negative perception of the public school system could hinder residential and neighborhood stability. About 72 percent of those surveyed said they either “had not reached the stage in their life for children,” or had children that have not reached school age. A total of 62 percent of this population said they would move to a suburban district when the time came, or that they “weren’t sure” whether they would move or stay. A supporting real estate analysis, although limited in scope, showed that 66 percent of neighborhood residents who sold homes valued at $100,000 or more relocated to a suburban municipality.

These results have important implications for these four “emerging neighborhoods.” Advocates of urban revitalization in Cleveland should be focused on helping ensure the local school system is considered a viable option among middle-class residents in order to prevent residential turnover and the resulting decline in real estate values.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Few in the urban planning profession doubt the importance of strong schools to neighborhood stability. So closely linked are schools and neighborhoods, that pioneering planner, Clarence Perry, defined neighborhood as a residential area served by a single elementary school—a standard to which many practitioners still abide. But the fields of urban planning and education have evolved into entirely separate fields, so that today they are almost completely divorced from each other. Educational officials generally ignore neighborhood conditions, except to the extent that socioeconomic conditions undermine students’ ability to learn. Planners, meanwhile, from the field of community development, have focused intensely on housing as a source of revitalization.

Silverman 2008 noted the broad trend toward nonprofit development of affordable housing, a phenomena that is known in the industry as “nonprofitization” and “devolution.” This has occurred even as sprawl and white flight have contributed to an urban education crisis that further erodes inner-city real estate values. Nowhere
is this more true than in Cleveland, where, I will argue, underperforming public schools are inhibiting community development efforts in four “emerging” neighborhoods: Ohio City, Tremont, Downtown and Detroit Shoreway.

A classic example of a successful Cleveland neighborhood revitalization strategy is the Gordon Square Arts District in the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood. Here $30 million in public investment helped revitalize two historic theaters and fund a dramatic streetscape redesign. The investment has spurred hundreds of millions of dollars in private investment in the neighborhood, leading to the emergence of a growing restaurant and bar scene and a revitalized housing market, according to the architects of the development (Roller, 2010). The neighborhood’s public schools, meanwhile, have yet to benefit from the influx of wealthier residents, typified by the $100 million Battery Park Condominium Complex, where homes begin at $170,000. According to the Ohio Department of Education, at both the neighborhood’s public elementary, Watterson-Lake, and public middle school, Joseph M. Gallagher, 95 percent of students were listed as “economically disadvantaged” for the 2009-2010 school year.

The intent is not to criticize developments like the Gordon Square Arts District, which is a laudable community development success story for the city of Cleveland. In order to make neighborhood revitalization catalyzed by public investment sustainable, however, I will argue that the local school system needs to become part of the strategy. This thesis will examine national strategies for building stronger neighborhoods around stronger schools. It will also examine how the current
school climate in the four Cleveland neighborhoods is affecting resident behavior and ultimately neighborhood health.

Literature Review

It is telling that when determining a title for the public presentation of the city of Cleveland’s 2020 comprehensive plan, Mayor Frank Jackson and city planning officials chose the headline “Making Cleveland a City of Choice” (City of Cleveland, 2007). This title underscores the critical importance in the eyes of city leaders of attracting middle-class residents back to the city. In community development circles in Cleveland, this coveted population is often referred to as “residents of choice.”

The title is both a bold and optimistic vision for the city, because for decades Northeast Ohioans with the means to choose to live outside the city of Cleveland have overwhelmingly done so. In 1993, researchers Tom Bier and Ivan Maric described the outward migration of middle-class families in metro Cleveland, in a paper titled “The 100-Year Exodus from Cleveland.” The authors sum up a decades-long mass migration with this sentence: “for most people, moving ‘up’ has meant, and means, moving further out.”

This is true not only in Cleveland, but many, if not most, metro areas around the country. In a later paper titled “Moving Up, Filtering Down” Bier asserts that American is a nation of movers—and in most cases moving means moving up, to a bigger home, a bigger yard, a more expensive community. In Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati, for example, between 84 and 88 percent of all seller/buyers moved
up; the median price increase ranged between 57 and 69 percent. For example, a homeowner sold for $100,000 and then purchased for $160,000 (Bier, 2001).

USA Today summarized the trend toward suburbanization in a 2006 article “Americans Leave Big Cities.” Examining census data for the country’s 25 largest metro areas, 18 lost population, the article noted. “Just about everywhere, people are escaping to the outer suburbs, also known as exurbs,” the author noted. Notably, the city of Cleveland was no exception, losing a combined total of nearly 15,000 residents between 1990 and 2004 (USA Today, 2006).

Of course by the 1990s, the middle-class exodus from Cleveland was already a long established trend. Bier offers evidence from a study conducted by city of Cleveland officials in 1941, which prophetically stated: "A major portion of the population of Cleveland which has the highest standards of living and the most desirable characteristics from a civic viewpoint is leaving corporate Cleveland. From a dollars and cents standpoint, the population trends outlined above have reached significant proportions. If they are permitted to continue without hindrance, the whole structure of the central city is jeopardized…” (Bier, 1993).

Bier went on to describe how that trend has continued in Cleveland over the course of decades. He noted “outmigration has had staggering negative impact on the city of Cleveland because of the loss of upper- and middle-income residents.” According to a recent study by the Brookings Institution, married couples with children, in particular, have abandoned the city of Cleveland for farther flung pastures. According to the report, the city of Cleveland experienced a 33 percent decline in the number of households occupied by married couples with children
between 2000 and 2010, among the largest of any metro area in the country (Frey, 2010).

Poor school quality is generally assumed to be a primary motivator for the trend away from urban living, but the precise impacts of the struggling Cleveland Metropolitan School District on residential housing trends has not been rigorously studied in the city of Cleveland. There is ample evidence from other regions, however, that poor school quality is directly tied to population trends. Early this decade, *The Cincinnati Enquirer* conducted an analysis of mobility trends in Hamilton County with respect to school quality. The analysis found that all 10 of the county communities whose public schools received the state's top academic rating managed to maintain a stable population or post growth over the previous decade. Further, the number of school-aged children in most of these communities grew at double-digit rates. On the other hand, of the county’s six districts that received the state’s lowest academic rating, five suffered population loss. The largest of this group—Cincinnati—lost 9 percent of its total population (Curnutte, 2001).

The outmigration of middle-class families has a stark effect on housing values in urban areas. Cleveland State University researchers Youngme Seo and Robert A. Simons examined the connection between school quality and residential sales prices in a 2004 study. They noted in the introduction “school quality is considered one of the most influential factors on housing prices in the United States.” Their research found that homes in poorly performing school districts were discounted by 11 percent, compared to a control group (Seo & Simon, 2004).
Furthermore, the loss of middle-class residents to suburban areas exacerbates economic segregation, leading to concentrated poverty that further handicaps urban school districts. Richard Kahlenberg writes about the negative impacts of concentrated poverty in schools, in his book “All Together Now: Creating Middle Class Schools thought Public Choice.” Kahlenberg’s argument is that schools that are made up of a majority of poor students—this includes approximately 25 percent of the nation’s schools—are failing to educate students. He contends that separating middle-class children from poor children necessarily leads to bad outcomes for poor children, while more economic diversity, if moderate, does not harm middle-class children’s achievement.

Kahlenberg takes pains to outline the persistent “achievement gap” between low-income students of color and middle-class whites.

“Today, low-income twelfth-graders read on average at the level middle class eighth-graders. Children whose families are at the bottom income quintile are twice as likely to drop out of high school as those from families in the top quintile. In the end, 76 percent of high-income students complete bachelor’s degrees compared with a mere four percent of low-income students” (Kahlenberg, pg. 3).

However, Kahlenberg cites a wealth of research showing that academic achievement among low-income students improves dramatically when they attend schools that are made up of at least 50 percent middle-class students (Kahlenberg, 2001).

Given the high cost failing schools impose on urban communities it is surprising that more neighborhood revitalization strategies do not incorporate
an educational component. Recently, however, a few research institutions and nonprofit organizations have begun advocating for cooperation between community development practitioners—the professionals of the neighborhood revitalization sphere—and educational leaders. These guides outline the established practices from a few real-world examples of community development efforts that have included an educational component.

One of the leading voices on school-centered community development efforts has been Enterprise Community Partners. In 2007, the organization wrote a comprehensive guide to “school-centered community revitalization,” calling on professions from both the fields of education and community development to explore mutually beneficial strategies. Enterprise’s report examines case studies of school-centered community revitalization in eight low-income communities from St. Paul, Minnesota to Baltimore, Maryland. The case studies highlighted alternative arrangements for an educational approach to community development and reported on the relative success of each case.

Among the communities highlighted in the study, redevelopment efforts were initiated by a variety of parties, from philanthropic foundations, to community groups and private developers. Strategies also varied widely. In the case of the city of East Lake, outside of Atlanta, Georgia, a community foundation sponsored the development of a 550-home, mixed-income community that was centered around a newly built charter school. In St. Paul, Minnesota, an area foundation partnered with a community school and a local YMCA to provide a full-range of supportive services for students and their families (Khadduri, 2007). These two examples serve as
outlines for two common approaches employed by those who seek to improve neighborhoods by improving schools.

According to Enterprise’s report, successful school-centered community development encompasses more than academics, incorporating five core elements:

- Improvement of one or more schools in a neighborhood
- Housing that is safe, affordable and attractive to families with children
- High quality child-care and early education programs
- Affordable health services for children
- Workforce and economic development programs (Khadduri, 2007)

Another important perspective comes from Harvard Professor Mark Warren. In his 2005 article, “Communities and Schools: A New View of Urban Education Reform,” Warren outlines three approaches for collaboration between public schools and community-based organizations:

- The service approach--in which parents or a community group partner to provide a range of supportive “wrap-around” social services aimed at improving academic performance. Examples include free health and dental care, nutritional and material assistance, after school programs and other services that can help assure children arrive at the classroom mentally, physically and emotionally prepared to learn.
- The development approach--in which parents or a community organization develop a new charter or private school from the ground up.
• The organizing approach—in which parents and community groups develop a political coalition to either assert control of school functions or to pressure higher political powers to channel more resources to a particular school or schools.

Community initiatives can contribute to school improvement in a number of ways, according to Warren’s research. In the first case, they can improve the housing, economic and health positions of students so that children come to school better able to learn. In the second case, efforts can foster parental and community participation in the education of children and the work of the schools. Third, community organizing efforts can help transform the school culture to hold educators and other community leaders responsible for school performance. Finally, efforts can help build a political constituency for public education and help deliver greater resources to the schools, addressing the profound inequalities urban schools face (Warren, 2005).

To elaborate on these models, community schools—or full-service schools—are public schools that also provide a full range of services, including, adult education, ESL classes, family support services, healthcare and after school programming. Warren offers the example of Newark, New Jersey’s Quitman Street School, a 90-percent-poverty, largely African-American elementary school, which was “adopted” by the Prudential Foundation in 1996. A nonprofit organization was developed to serve as an umbrella group for five different family and youth agencies. The school, for example, offers after-school programming that continues until 9 p.m. on many nights, during which students can get help with their homework and participate in
programs related to arts, theater, computer, chorus, drill team, sports or other recreational activities. The school also operates a full-service health clinic, supported by the Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey, at almost no cost to the family (Warren, 2005).

The development model, on the other hand, focuses on the creation of new, public, charter schools, usually around a certain set of values. One such example is Camino Nuevo Charter Academy in Los Angeles. Camino Nuevo was begun by a resident of the predominately immigrant, impoverished neighborhood in Los Angeles in coordination with nonprofit community organization Pueblo Nuevo Development. The school, the first of many developed under the Camino Nuevo name, gave parents an alternative to busing outside of the neighborhood. The school was founded with a mission of social justice and has made parental involvement a central focus. Despite its popularity among parents, however, academic gains, measured by test results, have been mixed (Warren, 2005).

The organizing model, on the other hand, focuses on building power for social and political change through relationship-building, leadership development and public action. One example is the Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA), a largely immigrant neighborhood located on the West Side of Chicago. In response to overcrowded schools, LSNA launched a campaign to get the city to build annexes to five neighborhood elementary schools and two new middle schools, using methods adopted from legendary Chicago community organizer Saul Alinsky.

The school has focused on developing leadership and a sense of agency among parents and the community. School leaders began a parent mentor program
and hired parents to work two hours a day in the classroom supporting teachers. Parents were also invited to attend leadership development workshops. The association also launched a program with Chicago State to train mothers to become ESL teachers and ran a literacy ambassador program, where teachers visit parents and children in their homes. This strategy helped address a core problem of household poverty while increasing parental involvement in the school (Warren, 2005).

Another framework for understanding the connection between community development and education comes from Connie Chung, a colleague of Mark Warren’s at Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies. In her, “Connecting Public Schools to Community Development,” Chung argues that public schools offer natural partnerships to community development organizations.

Another important perspective on the topic is found in a real world example from Chicago. Jacqueline Edelberg and Susan Kurtland’s “How to Walk to School” tells the story of a team of parents in a gentrifying neighborhood in Chicago who banded together to turn around a nearby struggling public school with the goal of enrolling their children. Edelberg and a core group of eight women, who were part of a childcare cooperative, spent one year redecorating, reforming and marketing a failing neighborhood school to other middle-class families.

Through their heroic volunteer efforts, the school was the site of a remarkable turnaround. They recruited some of the finest cultural institutions in the metro area to hold after-school enrichment classes at the school. They enlisted local artists to adorn the walls with elaborate murals and other artwork. Working with the principal, they helped improve oversight of underperforming teachers and radically changed the
professional atmosphere. In addition, the parents group raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from private sources to rehabilitate the school’s science lab and build a new playground.

Parent activists’ efforts led directly to the return of the neighborhood’s middle-class families to Nettelhorst. The school’s story was held up as a national model on Oprah and Friends and was honored with the Dimon Distinguished Community School’s Award, making it one of the top ten community schools in the state of Illinois. Also important, the school was able to maintain diversity levels that exceeded its original composition and succeed while maintaining a relatively poor student body. About 40 percent of the school’s students come from below the poverty line (Edelberg, 2009).

In summary, school centered community development strategies can be divided into three basic categories: development, as in the case of Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, the service approach as exemplified by Nettlehorst, or community organizing, such as in Chicago’s Logan Square Neighborhood.

These are summarized in greater detail in Table I.
Table I: Summary of School-Centered Neighborhood Revitalization Strategies

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<th>Description</th>
<th>Real World Example</th>
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<td>Development</td>
<td>A new charter or private school is developed from the ground up by parents and other concerned parties</td>
<td>Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, Los Angeles (Near West Intergenerational School, Cleveland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>A range of wrap-around social and extracurricular services are provided to students to help improve academic performance.</td>
<td>Nettlehorst (Public) School, Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Organizing</td>
<td>Parents and neighborhood residents engage in political organizing to secure greater resources for, or greater control of, a local school.</td>
<td>Logan Square Neighborhood, Chicago</td>
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The Case in Cleveland

These national examples offer some hope for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, which has struggled for decades under conditions of extreme poverty, segregation and chronic budget shortfalls. CMSD serves just over 50,000 students at 114 schools across the city of Cleveland. Its student body is 70 percent African American, and 11 percent Hispanic (CMSD Academic Transformation Plan, 2010). Reflecting the demographics of the city of Cleveland at large, students in the school
district overwhelmingly come from poor households. According to Eric Gordon, the district’s Chief Academic Officer, every school in the district has at least a 60 percent poverty rate. According to the Ohio Department of Education, the district’s median household income was $22,605 during the 2009-2010 school year.

For the 2009-2010 academic year, CMSD’s state report card score improved to the level of “continuous improvement,” the equivalent of a “C score.” For years is had hovered between “Continuous Improvement” and “Academic Emergency,” the state equivalent of a failing grade. Overall, almost half of the district’s schools received an “academic emergency” rating during the 2008-2009 year (CMSD Academic Transformation Plan, 2010). In addition, the district has been plagued by abysmal graduation rates. At last count, for the 2008-2009 school year, only 54 percent of the district’s students earned diplomas, according to the Ohio Department of Education.

In response, CMSD’s CEO Eugene Sanders unveiled an “Academic Transformation Plan” in early 2010. The goal was to ensure that “all students graduate ready to compete in the 21st Century.” By the 2014-2015 school year, the district aspires to have every school earn a rating of “Continuous Improvement” or higher and for at least 50% of Cleveland’s schools to be rated “Excellent (A)” or “Effective (B).” The $70 million plan also included the controversial mandate to close 18 schools, as a result of rapid student losses to suburban districts and public charter schools.

Figure 1 shows the spatial distribution of Cleveland Metropolitan Schools and their corresponding State Report Card rating.
As you can see, the district’s high-performing schools, rated “Excellent (A)” or “Effective (B)” tended to be located on the periphery of the city limits. This reflects the pattern of outward shifts in population and wealth that continues beyond city borders.

However, in the past two decades, the city of Cleveland has seen new investment in several neighborhoods located in the central and “Near West” portions of the city.
This is illustrated in Figure 2. Though it is based on now outdated 2000 census data, the map shows incomes in Downtown Cleveland, Ohio City, Tremont,
and to a lesser extent, the Detroit Shoreway, are greater than the central city area at large.

As a result of hard-fought community development victories in these slowly gentrifying neighborhoods, they now reflect income levels comparable to those on the periphery of the city, and in many households, those of the suburbs. School quality in these neighborhoods, however, has not matched this trend. This pattern is examined more thoroughly in the original research portion of this paper.
CHAPTER II

EXPERIMENTAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

There is no rigorous study of how school quality affects residential choices for middle-class residents of Near West and Downtown Cleveland known to the author. It is generally assumed in the community, however, that these neighborhoods are occupied largely by young professionals, empty nesters, gays, or other populations which do not have school-aged children. If this assumption is true, it follows that poor school quality is hurting neighborhood revitalization efforts in Near West and Downtown Cleveland by increasing residential turnover, as young professionals begin families and move to the suburbs, or by deterring potential residents with the perception of poor quality education choices.

Real Estate Analysis Design

To investigate that assumption, Cuyahoga County real estate transactions were examined over a four-year period from 2005-2009. The investigation focused only on
families that have the means to move to a suburban municipality, or “residents of choice,” as they are commonly referred to in the city of Cleveland. As such, I looked exclusively at home sales for houses valued at more than $100,000. The investigation focused on Cleveland’s “emerging neighborhoods:” Ohio City, Tremont, Detroit Shoreway and Downtown Cleveland. Then, using records from the Cuyahoga County Auditor, I attempted to match the names on a list of sellers of homes valued at more than $100,000 within the four neighborhoods, to the names of buyers, who purchased homes elsewhere in the county during a period shortly before or after. For example, Williams, Simon A. sold a home in Clinton Ave. in the Detroit Shoreway in 2005. The same year, Williams, Simon J. and Virginia purchased a home in Shaker Heights—a match.

Admittedly, this research method has some limitations. For instance, I was only able to track residential mobility within the county. Near West and Downtown residents who moved outside the county or outside the region were not included in the analysis. In addition, names were sometimes difficult to match. For example, looking at the first set of data, an original seller is listed as Tetzleaf, David J & Klauminzer, J. The next entry has a buyer name of Tetzlaf, David. In these cases, I tried to use my best judgment to determine which cases were true matches and which cases appeared to be distinct buyers and sellers. Also, it was impossible to determine, from these data, whether the sellers were the primary occupants of the home or whether they were investors who rented the home to others. In order to help eliminate this distorting effect, I did not include sellers of multiple homes over the four-year period in the analysis.
Real Estate Data Analysis Findings

A total of 541 houses sold for more than $100,000 in Ohio City, Detroit Shoreway, Tremont and Downtown, during the four-year period between 2005 and 2009. Of that total, I was only able to match only 56. Nevertheless, an interesting pattern emerged. In 13 of these cases, the home seller moved within the four neighborhoods that are the subject of this study. In 6 cases, they moved to another neighborhood in Cleveland. So, in total, more than a third stayed within the city of Cleveland.

The remaining 37 families relocated to suburban municipalities. It is notable that Cleveland’s “inner-ring” suburbs were some of the biggest beneficiaries of this migration. The top three destinations for Near West and Downtown Cleveland home sellers were Rocky River (7 households), Lakewood (6 households) and Westlake (4). Shaker Heights (3) and Brecksville (2) followed. The remaining cases were scattered throughout the county, mainly in the “outer-ring” suburbs. Each of the following suburbs gained one household from the study group: Cleveland Heights, Olmstead Falls, Valleyview, Garfield Heights, Lyndhurst, Strongsville, University Heights, Moreland Hills, Bratenahl, North Royalton, and Strongsville.

A map of the general outward pattern is shown in Figure 3.
The real estate analysis data, though admittedly limited, could be used to support the hypothesis that school quality is driving residents out of Cleveland’s
emerging neighborhoods. The top choices for residential relocation among the study neighborhoods, on the whole, demonstrated better academic achievement records that the city of Cleveland, including, Rocky River (Excellent with Distinction, the equivalent of an A+); Lakewood (Continuous Improvement, C); Westlake (Excellent); Shaker Heights (Effective); and Brecksville (Excellent).

Of course one could argue, other factors, such as yard size or crime rates, likely contributed to this trend. However, the fact that the study group began as relatively wealthy city homeowners indicates, at least initially, some appreciation for the amenities of the city, as does the popularity of “inner-ring” suburbs as a relocation choice. Certainly however, more information is needed to determine why middle-class residents continue to leave the city of Cleveland.

Survey Research Design

To help explain this phenomenon, I conducted a survey of 271 individuals from these four neighborhoods to gather information about how the local school system influenced their residential choices. Surveys were distributed through neighborhood block club listserves maintained by local community development corporations and through informal social connections between neighbors. As such, the survey was not random and the result should not be generalized to reflect an unbiased cross-section of the local population. For example, because the survey was distributed through neighborhood block clubs in three neighborhoods, it likely over-samples “neighborhood activists.” In addition, we encouraged survey takers to
forward the survey to friends and neighbors living within the four neighborhoods. As a result, the diversity of respondents was likely diminished. On the other hand, this method proved to be very effective for reaching the neighborhood’s wealthier residents—which was the group most relevant to the study question. Although imperfect, the lack of alternative data on this subject should make the results interesting to the local school system and relevant community organizations.

Prior to embarking on the process, the survey tool and procedures were reviewed and approved by Cleveland State University’s Institutional Research Board. (For a closer look at the survey language, see Appendix A.)

Survey Research Findings

Respondents were fairly evenly split between the four neighborhoods, with downtown representing a somewhat smaller share of the whole. (Downtown residents were more difficult to reach because they are not connected through a network of block clubs.)
Table II: Neighborhood Identification Among Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detroit Shoreway</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio City</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tremont</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 265
skipped question 6

General Demographic Responses

Because the sample is not random, respondents tended to be much wealthier than the median household income for the city. This is not altogether disappointing because the purpose of this study was to gain insight into the choices made by those whose incomes are high enough that they could chose to live in a suburban municipality.

As you can see in Figure 4, the largest percentage of respondents fell into the $50-75,000 household income range, followed by the two next highest income categories. The results overall were skewed to the high end of the income distribution. This is in contrast to the overall income level in these neighborhoods,
which remains low. According to data from the 2000 Census, the median household income in Ohio City was $20,340; Detroit Shoreway was $21,138; Tremont was $21,496 and Downtown was $26,161 (NEO CANDO).

Figure 4: Annual Household Income Among Survey Respondents

The relatively high income of respondents was consistent with their education levels. A majority of respondents reported holding advanced degrees, following by bachelor’s degrees. Almost 93 percent of respondents reported they held at least a bachelor’s degree, with a majority (51 percent) reporting they had received an advanced degree. This is markedly different from the city as a whole, where at the
time of the latest census, only 11.4 percent of the population reported having a bachelor’s degree or higher. Educational attainment levels for survey participants were also anomalous compared with the study neighborhoods’ populations more generally. According to Census data, the percentage of the population with at least a bachelor’s degree for each neighborhoods was: Detroit-Shoreway 12 percent, Downtown 31 percent, Ohio City 15 percent, Tremont 17 percent (NEO CANDO).

**Figure 5: Educational Attainment Among Survey Respondents**

Respondents were also much less likely to be part of a minority group than the city as a whole. The city of Cleveland was 41 percent White and 51 percent Black at the time of the last census. However, it should be noted, that the city has traditionally
been racially divided, with the white population more prevalent on the west side and the black population on the east. At the time of the 2000 Census, Detroit Shoreway was 67 percent white, Downtown was 38 percent white, Ohio City was 58 percent white and Tremont was 65 percent white (NEO CANDO). Figure 6 shows the distribution of respondents’ racial background.

**Figure 6: Survey Respondents’ Racial Heritage**

![Pie chart showing racial heritage distribution]

**Responses from Parents**

On the matter of children, the plurality of respondents reported they had “not reached the stage in their life” for having children, followed by “I don’t plan to have
children,” and “my children are grown.” A combined total of 23 percent of respondents, however, reported that they had children, either school age or younger.

Table III: Presence of Children Among Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, my household’s children are grown</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I haven’t reached that stage in my life</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I do not plan to have children</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, my children haven’t reached school age</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 262

skipped question 9

As Table 6 demonstrates, a combined total of 77 percent of survey respondents are childless. This is meaningful for a few reasons. First, the high-income, well-educated group of city residents who made up the majority of survey respondents are, by and large, not parents. You might extrapolate that Cleveland’s “residents of choice,” by extension, childless. Given this result, one might argue that improving school quality is not the answer to reviving these neighborhoods. On the other hand, a combined total of 62 percent of respondents said they either have
children or “haven’t reached the stage in their life for children.” So a majority of “residents of choice” in these neighborhoods are either parents or prospective parents.

Additionally, the relative lack of parents, among survey respondents, may indicate that these neighborhoods have a difficult time attracting this group as a result of poor school quality. Parents may be under-represented in this survey because they have already “voted with their feet,” and moved to suburban districts. The cost of the loss of these potential residents to the neighborhood is no doubt high, although this study will not make an attempt to measure that effect.

Table IV: Grade Level of Respondents’ Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-2</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>48.1%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question 27
skipped question 244

Only 27 of the 31 people with school-aged children completed the next portion of the survey. Although 31 survey respondents reported being parents, it was not required that they answer every survey question and some choose to skip certain
questions for reasons that are unclear. Among the 27 respondents, children were generally older. You will also notice from the percentage totals, that many parents had more than one child at a different stage in his or her education.

On the topic of what type of school neighborhood parents send their children, more than 64 percent of the 28 respondents reported sending their children to a private school. Other respondents were split between public (CMSD) schools—18 percent—and charter schools—14 percent. Respondents listed 18 different schools their children currently attend. The most common responses were Urban Community School, Old Brooklyn Community School, St. Ignatius, Hawken and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

Table V: School Type Among Parent Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What type of school do your children attend?</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer Options</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public (CMSD) school</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private School</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Charter School</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home School</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>answered question</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>skipped question</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responses from Private School Parents (n = 18)

Among the 18 parents who reported their children were attending private schools, 78 percent of responded that they would rate the school overall as excellent. The remaining 22 percent rated the school overall as “good.” In nearly every category, private school parents rated their school as “very positive” with the exception of affordability, which was considered a very negative factor. Private schools, interestingly, also rated relatively lower on peer environment, with 56 percent of parents reporting it was “very positive,” followed by 28 percent reporting it was “somewhat positive.” (See Fig. 7)
Responses from Charter School Parents (n = 4)

The four charter school parents who responded to the survey school were divided equally between “excellent” and “good” in their school quality assessments. Three of the charter school parents rated the school as “very positive” on the issues of academic rigor and safety. The lowest ratings for charter school parents went to extracurricular offerings and physical facilities.
Among the five parents of children attending Cleveland Metropolitan School District who completed the survey, the majority (3) reported the school was “excellent” overall. The other two responses, were split between “good” and “poor.” Ratings on particular aspects of CMSD schools varied widely. A plurality (2) reported that teacher quality was “very positive.” However, a majority (3) reported that extracurricular offerings were “somewhat negative.” Survey respondents with children in the public school system reported enrollment in the following schools:

**Figure 9: School Appraisal Among CMSD Parents**

A total of 107 people who took the survey reported that “they had not reached the stage in their life” for having children. Among these respondents, more than 35 percent reported they were likely to move to a suburban district when they had children of school age. Another 30 percent of respondents reported they were “not sure” whether they would remain in the neighborhood or move to a suburban district.
when and if they had school-aged children. Twenty-five percent of respondents reported they would “stay in the neighborhood pursuing another educational offering (home school, charter, private, religious, etc.)” The remaining 9 percent said they would stay in the neighborhood and send their children to a public school.

Figure 10: Survey Respondents’ Future Residential Plans

Respondents said that if they would leave the city they would move to a variety of places within and outside of the county and the metro region. The most popular responses were Rocky River, Lakewood, Westlake, Solon, Chagrin Falls, Cleveland Heights, Brecksville, Bay Village and Avon/Avon Lake. Interestingly, 7.5
percent of respondents said they would leave the Cleveland metro area entirely, faced with the proposition of moving.

When asked what would most influence childless residents to stay in the neighborhood upon having children, the most popular response (50 percent) was an “excellent” or “effective” public school in the neighborhood. The second-highest rated response (15 percent) was a “strong, convenient” private school.

Figure 11: Preferred Educational Option for Survey Respondents

When asked about their opinion of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, a plurality of young childless residents rated the district as “very negative”
on the issues of “academic rigor” and “peer environment.” The district’s highest ratings were on “extracurricular offerings” and “teacher quality,” where a plurality of respondents offered a neutral rating. Interestingly, only a single respondent rated the district as “very positive” in any category. This is discordant with the relatively high marks offered by the few parents with children at CMSD schools who responded to the survey and demonstrates just how severe the district’s image problem is.

Figure 12: Prospective Parents’ Appraisal of CMSD
Responses from Parents of Young Children

Seventeen people who responded to the survey reported having young children who have not reached school age. Among that group, 53 percent said they planned to stay in the neighborhood and pursue an educational offering outside the public school system when their children reach school age. Another 24 percent reported they were planning to move to a suburban district. About 18 percent reported they were unsure what they would do when the time for school arrived. About 6 percent reported they would stay in the neighborhood, sending their child to a public school.
A plurality of parents of young parents (38 percent) said a “excellent” or “effective” public neighborhood school would most influence them to stay in the neighborhood, followed by “a strong, tuition-free charter school (31 percent), a “strong, public magnet school” (19 percent), and a “strong, convenient private school” (13 percent).

Parents with young children rated the public school system similarly to childless residents in terms of individual characteristics. They also responded to similarly to what they would miss most about their neighborhood if they moved.
Discussion

To recap, the survey reached 271 residents of the four study neighborhoods. Those surveyed were far wealthier and better educated that the city’s general population as well as the population of the neighborhoods more specifically. This was a consequence of the non-random way the survey was conducted, drawing the sample using block club list serves provided by local community development corporations as well as through social contacts. However, as noted earlier, this was not an entirely unfavorable outcome, as the intent of the study was to draw conclusions about Cleveland’s “residents of choice,” or city residents with the financial means to live in a suburban location. In addition, survey respondents were far less likely to be part of a racial minority group than the city population and the neighborhood populations.

Survey respondents indicated that they valued urban amenities. Respondents were asked to identify which neighborhood characteristics influenced their decision to live in the city. Figure 14 shows that the majority of residents rated the city highly on cultural amenities, housing quality, commuting distance, community atmosphere and affordability. Most respondents reported crime was a slightly or somewhat negative factor. Residents’ responses for city services centered around “no impact.” A plurality of respondents reported that school quality had “no impact” however the next highest response was “very negative.”
A plurality of respondents (38.7 percent) reported if they did leave their neighborhood, they would miss the “community atmosphere” most, followed by “cultural amenities” (25 percent) and “ease of commute” 15 percent.
It is notable that the most valued neighborhood characteristics, “community atmosphere,” “cultural amenities,” and “ease of commute,” are not easily replicated in a suburban setting.

Among the respondents who are parents of school age children, more than 64 percent reported their children are enrolled in private schools. Private school parents indicated they were satisfied with the educational product, with some variance on the topic of “peer environment.” Overwhelmingly, however, private school parents reported affordability was a “very negative” factor in the arrangement.

There were few responses from CMSD and charter school parents. It was interesting, however, that parents of CMSD students generally rated the schools
highly. On the other hand, the district received roundly negative ratings from those who did not have children enrolled in a CMSD school. This seems to indicate that the district has an image problem at least as profound as its academic struggles.

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (88 percent) reported they do not have school age children. In addition, among respondents who are prospective parents or parents of young children, a majority (65.5 percent) said they would either move to a suburban district or they “weren’t sure” whether they would move, should they have children that reach school age. The fact that these two groups made up a majority (51 percent) of survey respondents overall indicates that the stakes are high for school performance in Cleveland’s emerging neighborhoods. Furthermore, these findings bare out the earlier real estate data analysis, which showed a general out-migration pattern among middle-class residents of the study neighborhoods.

However, among this population, almost 50 percent indicated an “excellent” or “effective” public neighborhood school could most influence them to remain in the city. Notably, these residents did not seem to insist that the entire district perform laudably, only the neighborhood school. Another 50 percent indicated a “strong, tuition free public charter school,” or a “strong, convenient private school,” or even a “strong magnet school with a regional draw,” could influence them to stay in the city.

Taken together, these results represent a significant opportunity for the city of Cleveland and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Not insignificant numbers of middle-class, highly educated individuals have chosen to make their homes in Near West and Downtown Cleveland, despite many other options being available to them. They report being attracted to the city because of a variety of amenities that are not
available in suburban localities. If the city wants to retain these residents, however, it will need to make available some high-quality educational opportunities.

If the Cleveland Metropolitan School District were to make a strategic investment in this area, it could help preserve property values that would have a beneficial effect, district wide. Although it seems harsh to prioritize the families who are not the neediest from an economic perspective, residents with a wide variety of choices are the most likely to leave the district if it cannot compete with alternative offerings. Furthermore, in these neighborhoods with growing middle-class populations, the district has the best chance to create economically integrated schools that Kahlenberg convincingly argued are so critical to academic performance for low-income students.

Survey Conclusions

A total of 62 percent of the 124 people surveyed who either had young children or had not reached the stage in their life for having children reported they would move to a suburban district or they “weren’t sure” whether they would move to a suburban district upon having children. If all of these people did chose to leave the city next year, they would take a taxable income of about $7 million with them, based on a rough average the respondents’ annual income. Could the survey results be generalized to reflect the wider middle-class population in these four neighborhoods, the cost to the city would likely be multiplied many times. In this way, we can imagine how costly poorly performing schools are to the city of Cleveland and its
school system. This also has obvious implications for the health of the four neighborhoods examined.

The vast majority of respondents reported they would remain in the city given the presence of an “excellent or effective” neighborhood public school. However, the majority of respondents rated CMSD negatively in nearly every category, demonstrating just how much the district needs to improve in order to serve middle-class residents. A very small minority (9 percent) of survey respondents reported they were planning to stay in the neighborhood and send their children to a public school. Moving to a suburban district was considered a more likely alternative for most neighborhood residents than sending their children to a private or charter school, although the alternative of a highly performing private or charter school, could influence a portion residents to remain in the city, the survey suggested.

Although the results of this survey are not generalizable, they certainly provide indications of neighborhood residents’ thoughts on and relationship with the local school system. The results make a strong case for incorporating school improvement strategies into the larger neighborhood revitalization strategy.

The next section provides an example of a community effort in Near West Cleveland that attempts to address this issue.
Ohio City resident Molly Wimbiscus, 32, and her neighbors have a dream for their neighborhood. It revolves around a safe, nurturing school, with high academic standards, where parents can walk with their children each morning.

It’s an ordinary enough desire for a parent, but this vision has proved illusive for many Ohio City residents, part of a tradeoff many have made when they exchange the amenities of city life for the suburban standard around the time their children enter school.

Wimbiscus and roughly 20 Ohio City families, however, are obstinate. They’ve given their dream a name—the Near West Intergenerational School—and they forged preliminary agreements with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and The Intergenerational School to make it a reality. Perhaps most importantly, the group recently received a $50,000 planning grant from the state of Ohio to formally begin the process of developing a new school for Near West Cleveland.

Their goal is to open a publicly funded charter school—sponsored by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District but operated by the staff of The Intergenerational School—by fall 2011. The Near West Intergenerational School would combine the innovative teaching methods that have proved successful at TIS with the amenities and flavor of Ohio City.

“That’s part of the drive,” said Wimbiscus, a psychiatry fellow at the Cleveland Clinic, “we have such a rich social and cultural fabric that’s unique. (We
want) to be able to capitalize on that and to have the children sort of understand where they are and be part of it” (Wimbiscus, 2010).

The preliminary plan is to start an independent charter school with grades K-2 in a yet-to-be-determined location by fall 2011. Before the vision can truly take shape, however, they will need to secure two additional $125,000 grants for implementation, finalize their agreement with TIS and find a suitable location. Still, proponents of the new school have come a long way in a short time and there is growing excitement about their progress. “It’s not just a pipe dream anymore,” said Martha Loughridge, one of the original group of parents working on behalf of the charter school (Wimbiscus, 2010).

The idea for a new school for Ohio City arose out of a friendship between a group of young neighborhood families who had been meeting regularly to share childcare duties as part of a babysitting cooperative. The families’ concern about the local public school system was an ongoing subject of discussion as well as distress, said Loughridge (Wimbiscus, 2010).

On one occasion, the babysitting co-op invited speakers from the Intergenerational School, a well regarded, east-side charter school that has received the state’s highest academic rating four years running. The conversation began discussions about a similar school for the west side. “It just lit a fire,” Loughridge said. “We were like, ‘We want this.’”

Many of the co-op’s children were on a waiting list to attend Urban Community School, a top-ranked, city private school on nearby Lorain Avenue. But
funding cuts forced Urban Community School to cut a preschool class just in time to leave out a few co-op families last fall.

For Co-op parents, the possibility of receiving notification that a child wouldn’t be admitted was a source of stress. “We’re all terrified to get our letters,” said Wimbiscus.

The situation was critical for families like Wimbiscus’. She and her husband, Joel, have two young children. The oldest, Will, is 4-and-1/2 and began kindergarten this fall. He was one of the lucky ones that were admitted to Urban Community School this fall—a huge relief for the family. The public schools surrounding the Wimbiscus’ 1870 Victorian home almost uniformly receive the state’s lowest ratings for academic achievement.

In different circumstances, the family might have chosen to relocate to a suburban community, draining the Cleveland Metropolitan School District of desperately needed tax revenues and signaling another defeat for economic diversity in an increasingly poverty-stricken city. “The families that are involved (with the co-op) are in sort of a privileged financial position and we have the option of leaving,” Wimbiscus said. “We didn’t want to see that happen.”

In November of 2009, the group began working to develop an alternative. The first step was discussing a partnership with The Intergenerational School. Under the tentative agreement they have now forged, TIS would apply its developmental learning model to the Near West Intergenerational School while maintaining the east side location. Like their east side counterparts at TIS, Near West students would be
advanced through the curriculum based on demonstrated mastery of the required skills, rather than arbitrarily based on their age or social development.

The model has been an outstanding success for TIS. Intergenerational is the only charter school—out of more than 300 in the state—to have received an “excellent” state rating for four consecutive years. It is recognized as one of Ohio’s “Schools of Promise” for closing the achievement gap between poor minority students and wealthier, white students.

Organizers hope that the Near West Intergenerational School—like the school on which it’s modeled—will develop partnerships with local retirement communities whose residents can offer positive mentorship to students. In addition, co-op parents have laid out a curriculum plan that is based on civic engagement, sustainability, cultural fluency and life-long learning.

They are also intent on bringing the neighborhood into the classroom. One suggestion has been to incorporate the composting facilities at the West Side Market into science lessons. Another proposal has been to establish “walking buses,” or large groups of students with a parent leader that walk to school in a group.

Little by little, the dream has been coalescing, bringing in new followers, becoming more real. Proponents of the Near West Intergenerational School won a major victory in March when the Cleveland Board of Education voted to adopt the Superintendent Eugene Sander’s Academic Transformation Plan. This was a critical development because the plan reversed the district’s often-adversarial relationship with charter schools.
Eric Gordon, CMSD’s chief academic officer, pledged his support for the group’s plan at a public meeting held in February, saying “we are absolutely willing to partner with highly effective charter schools. We don’t want people moving out of Cleveland to seek a better opportunity.”

The Near West group has secured a non-legally-binding sponsorship agreement with the district, in which the CMSD will monitor and assist the Near West Intergenerational School, but not be directly involved with curriculum or staffing issues.

“The relationship with the district, I see it as very positive,” said Wimbiscus. “And it all has to do with the Transformation Plan.”

Though Wimbiscus and the Near West School group have made positive steps there are many issues yet to be resolved. They have forged preliminary agreements with the district and The Intergenerational School, but they haven’t yet entered into a legally-binding contract with either entity. And there is still the matter of the grants.

Nevertheless, the group is energized. They’ve recruited a small legion of volunteers to help with fundraising and other essential tasks. The effort has attracted mostly neighborhood parents, but also teachers and those without children. They also recently received a small grant—$3,000—from Cleveland Collectivo, a group of like-minded friends and neighbors that make grants to exciting projects in Cleveland.

After so many months of frantic work, there is still much to do. The school group is seeking a facility and negotiating with TIS and Breakthrough Charter Schools. The group is hopeful, but cautiously so. “Things are in our favor,” said Wimbiscus. “But a lot of it, it’s a tenuous position to be in.”
CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The results of this research have indicated that improving educational offerings in Near West and Downtown Cleveland is critical to retaining middle-class residents. Interestingly, failing to improve the city school system could also have a negative effect on the Cleveland region more widely, as 7 percent of the young adults surveyed reported that they were likely to leave the metro area entirely, if the school situation prompted a move.

Given the national strategies for improving schools with neighborhoods, we can see that many strategies are already at work within the city of Cleveland. In the Detroit Shoreway, neighborhood residents have begun planning a school improvement campaign based on the Chicago-Nettlehurst example—“the service approach.” Another, more developed campaign underway in Ohio City, as outlined in the case study, is an example of the “development approach” to school-centered neighborhood revitalization. A further example of this approach can be found in the newly formed International School at Cleveland State University, a CMSD public
magnet school, which will offer downtown residents a high-quality educational alternative.

This research project demonstrates that efforts like these are essential to sustaining neighborhood revitalization efforts in Ohio City, Detroit Shoreway, Tremont and Downtown. Should such efforts be successful, the public school system will benefit from preserved property tax revenues, whether those children enroll in CMSD or not. If this effort helps to develop a critical mass of middle class residents in central Cleveland again, someday in the future, a community based improvement strategy for the neighborhood public schools will be more feasible. Until this occurs, these neighborhoods will likely never be truly middle-class in nature and will continue to suffer the loss of residents to the suburbs.

This study brings to light several additional questions of interest. First, what percentage of those who moved from the city of Cleveland were motivated by the schools? The answer could be found through a simple phone survey. Also, how do low-income and minority residents, who were under-sampled in this survey, feel about the local school system and to what extent does it influence their residential decisions to the extent that alternative are available? Volunteers from the Near West Intergenerational School are planning to do further outreach with this population as part of their planning for the development of the school. Furthermore, the study could be broadened to look at the city of Cleveland as a whole. What percentage of each neighborhood is made up of residents of choice? How does this correspond to the educational offerings available, whether they are public, private or charter? If the
steps taken in the study were repeated on a broader scale, it would allow the district to proceed strategically in a more holistic way.
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Ohio.
APPENDIX

Survey Language

Education-Community Development Survey

This survey is intended to gather information about how school quality affects residential choice for residents in central and near-west Cleveland’s “emerging neighborhoods.” It is being conducted as part of a research project by Angie Schmitt, a graduate student at Cleveland State University’s Levin College of Urban Affairs, with help from representatives of the Near West School group and local community development organizations. The results will help inform urban redevelopment efforts and school improvement initiatives in Ohio City, Detroit Shoreway, Tremont and downtown Cleveland.

Informed Consent Statement: The survey should take five to 10 minutes to complete. This survey is being conducted anonymously. No identifying data is being collected. Participation is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without penalty; if you do so, your answers will be discarded. For more information contact Angie Schmitt at 216-875-9939 or Dr. Brian Mikelbank, Associate Professor of Urban Studies, at 216-875-9980.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Cleveland State University Institutional Review Board at 216-687-3630. By proceeding, you are indicating that you consent to participate in this survey under the conditions outlined above.

1. In what neighborhood do you live?
   a. Detroit Shoreway
   b. Ohio City
   c. Downtown
   d. Tremont
   e. Other

2. What is your annual household income?
   a. Less than $10,000
   b. $10,000-14,999
   c. $14-24,999
   d. $25-34,999
   e. $35-49,999
   f. $50-74,999
   g. $75-99,999
   h. $100-149,999
   i. $150-199,999
j. $200,000 and above

3. What is your racial heritage (circle all that apply)?
   a. White
   b. African-American
   c. Latino
   d. Asian
   e. Native American
   f. Other: (please write in) __________________________________

4. What language is primarily spoken at home?
   a. Only English
   b. Spanish
   c. Mandarin
   d. Burmese
   e. Vietnamese
   f. African languages
   g. Polish, Russian or other Slavic languages
   h. Hindi or Urdu
   j. Other (please write in)___________________________________

5. Which best describes your own educational attainment?
   a. Less than 8th grade
   b. Some high school
   c. High school degree
   d. G.E.D.
   e. Some college
   f. Associate’s degree
   g. Bachelor’s degree
   h. Master’s/professional degree or Ph.D.

6. What was your personal elementary academic experience?
   a. Public school in suburban district
   b. Public school in urban district
   c. Private school (religious)
   d. Private school (independent)
   e. Home school
   f. Charter school
   g. Public magnet
   h. Other

7. What was your personal high school academic experience?
   a. Public school in suburban district
   b. Public school in urban district
   c. Private school (religious)
   d. Private school (independent)
e. Home school
f. Charter school
g. Public magnet
h. Other

8. What are the three most important aspects of a school for your family?
   a. Safety
   b. Academic quality
   c. Distance from home
   d. Student to teacher ratio
   e. Educational model
   f. Parental involvement
   g. Facility
   h. Extracurricular activities
   i. Other students
   j. Transportation to school
   k. Cost
   l. Other language instruction
   m. Supportive services

9. When considering living in Cleveland, which of these had an effect on your decision? Please mark positive impact, negative impact, or no impact.

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<th>Negative</th>
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<th>Positive</th>
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<td>City Services</td>
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</table>

10. Do you have any school aged children? (If no, skip to question 20)
    a. Yes
    b. No, my household’s children are grown
    c. No, I haven’t reached that stage in my life
    d. No, I have chosen not to have a family
    e. No, my children haven’t reached school age
    f. Other (explain) _________________________
11. In what grade is/are your child/children? (circle all that apply)
   a. K-2
   b. 3-5
   c. 6-8
   d. 9-12

12. If you have children, how many do you have and what are their ages?
   Child 1 Age: __________
   Child 2 Age: __________
   Child 3 Age: __________
   Child 4 Age: __________
   Child 5 Age: __________
   Child 6 Age: __________
   Child 7 Age: __________
   Child 8 Age: __________
   Child 9 Age: __________

13. If you have school aged children, where do you send them for school? (Please write in the school name and circle the appropriate category.)
   School Name:
   a. Public (CMSD) school
   b. Private School
   c. Public Charter School
   d. Home School
   e. Other

14. If your child attends a Cleveland Metropolitan School District school, how would you rate the experience?
   i. Excellent
   j. Good
   k. Average
   l. Poor
   m. Unacceptable

15. As a parent with a child in the district, what is your opinion of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District’s performance based on the following criteria?

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<th>Bad</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<td>Academic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
16. If you send your child to a state-sponsored charter school, how would you rate the experience?
   a. Excellent
   b. Good
   c. Average
   d. Poor
   e. Unacceptable

17. If you are the parent of a child at a public charter school, how would you rate the school based on the following criteria?

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<td>Environment</td>
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</table>

18. If your child attends a private school, how would you rate the experience?
   f. Excellent
   g. Good
19. If you are the parent of a child at a private school, how would you rate the school based on the following criteria?

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STOP! The following questions are for those who do not have school-aged children. If you have school-aged children and have completed the questions above, you have completed your portion of the survey. Thank you for participating!

20. If you do not have children, but plan to someday, or if your children have not reached school age, which of the following is most likely?

a. I will move to a suburban school district
b. I will stay in the neighborhood, sending children to public school
c. I will stay in the neighborhood, pursuing another educational option (home school, private, charter, religious, etc.)
d. Not sure

21. If you plan to leave the city, where would you likely move? (Write in answer)

22. What type of educational offering could most influence you to stay in the city of Cleveland?
   a. An “excellent” or “effective” public school in the neighborhood
   b. A strong, public magnet school, with a special focus and regional draw
   c. A strong, tuition-free charter school
   d. A strong, convenient private school
   e. Open enrollment policies with other school districts
   f. Small, targeted improvements in the current public schools
   g. None of the above
   h. Other (please explain)

23. How far is too far to travel for a quality school?
   a. More than 2 miles
   b. 3-5 miles
   c. 6-10 miles
   d. 10-20 miles
   e. 20 miles or farther

24. If you moved, what would you miss most about your current neighborhood?
   a. Neighbors
   b. Cultural Amenities
   c. Community Atmosphere
   d. Ease of Commute
   e. Housing Cost
   f. Housing Quality
   g. Other (write in below)

25. As an observer, who does not have children in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, what is your opinion of the district’s performance based on the following criteria?

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**Thank you for participating!**