

Report-back on Racial Integration School Choice and Ethnic Segregation

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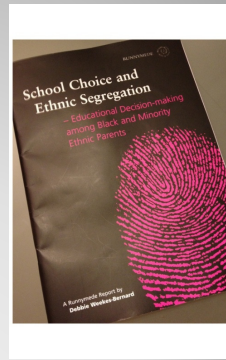
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About Runnymede

- A registered charity funded by donations.
- Generate intelligence for a multi-ethnic society through research, network building, leading debate, and policy engagement.
- www.runnymedetrust.org

A report on "School Choice and Ethnic Segregation –

Educational Decision making among Black and Minority Ethnic Parents" (2007)



To explore:

- schools that BME students attended
- the factors affecting BME parents' choice of schools
 - 1) Socio-economic status
 - 2) Reputation
 - 3) Faith
 - 4) Ethnic mix
- the reasons given by parents for their choices of schools and whether or not these reasons related to number of BME students studied in those schools

Background:

- Education White Paper – Higher Standards, Better School for All 2005, and Education and Inspections Act 2006 laid out the Choice Policies in education
- Proposed to increase choice in order for parents and children to access good schools and high-quality education that would positively benefit minority ethnic and poorer families

Major initiatives of the 2006 Act:

- Required local authorities to promote choice and diversity when carrying out duties in relation to the provision of school places
- Gave parents more say in the provision of schools in their areas
- Gave local authorities a duty to support parents to express a preference for a particular school
- Strengthened the Code of Practice on admissions
- Increased autonomy for schools in terms of staff employment, admission arrangement, ownership of assets

Expected benefits to parents and children:

- Larger number of good schools to choose from and larger number of available places in popular schools due to increased competition between schools
- School expansion or the formation of new schools due to parental involvement
- More likely for pupils to succeed and do well due to chance to receive high- quality education

The research:

- 6 primary schools 3 authorities:
 - 1) Northtown
(8.1% are BME, largest group is Pakistani)
 - 2) Easttown
(27.2% are BME, largest group is Pakistani)
 - 3) Innertown (27% are BME)
(27% are BME, largest group is Bangladeshi)

- 82 parents of Year 6 students were interviewed

- Ethnic background:

Ethnic Background (self-categorized)	No.
Pakistani	21
Black Caribbean	20
Muslims *including Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali	14
Bangladeshi	12
African	5
Asian or British Asian	4
Others *including Indian, Caribbean Indian, Black British	6
TOTAL	82

- Socio-economic background:

41.5% from low-income groups
22% from middle-income groups

- 17 teaching staff and 68 Year 6 students were also interviewed

- Online survey with 95 parents and teachers
- Analysis of existing data eg. BME student and resident populations

The finding:

- Not all groups benefit equally from the choice policies in education
- Parents tended to downgrade their choices for children upon secondary transfer
- Choices \neq Preferences
- Choices were affected by multiple factors
- Parents lack of understanding about the new policies, found admission process difficult
- The choice within current system allowed segregation in schools to occur

Choice Factors 1: Socio-economic status

- Parents from low-income families, recent migrants from Somalia, Pakistan or Bangladesh generally chose local schools
- Choices were based on ease of travel, familial connection, size of families and safety of children

Choice Factor 2: Faith

- Preference for locality would be overridden by faith-orientated concerns (eg. Desiring single-sex school)
- Muslim parents saw faith as an integral part of their and their children's identity.
- Many African parents access to faith-based secondary schools was not achievable.

Choice Factor 3: Reputation

- Parents both low-income and middle-income families had similar perceptions about " Good" and "Bad" schooling
- Locality would often outweigh reputation for low-income parents

Choice Factor 4: Ethnic mix

- Some parents sought schools where BME students formed a distinctive majority to avoid racist bullying
- Avoidance of specific peer group reflected knowledge of and familiarity with what the young people and their families represented
- Commitment of staff from Black/Asian majority schools was low

A Brief Look on General HK Education System

Primary One and Secondary One Admission System

- P1 allocation:
 - International / ESF / Private / DSS
 - Government and Subsidies Schools
 - 50% Discretionary Place (The Point System)
 - 50% Central Allocation
- S1 allocation:
 - Pre-Secondary One examination: decided school banding
 - Internal Examinations for the purpose of SSPA
 - Random number

Primary One and Secondary One Admission System

- Conclusion: Tertiary education chance bound by:
 - Resources of student
 - Family background
 - School result
 - Luck

Chinese Language Subject & Medium of Instruction

- Chinese as a subject: Plight of EM student - family support, language environment, Indo-European languages, etc.
- DSE compulsory, GCSE
- Medium of instruction:
 - CMI in primary school ->
 - lower their school result in subject like Mathematics, GE ->
 - affect Internal Examinations for the purpose of SSPA

Designated School Policy

- Before 2004 - EM is not allowed to study in mainstream school
- 2004 - now: Designated school with 300K-600K subsidies annually, from 9 to 30 schools
- Designated school - mostly in lower banding, with low EMI secondary school and university entrance rate.

Comparing HK system to UK system – Any way out?

Banding System & Student Selection

- Acknowledge the "school banding", accept "designated school = low banding school"
- Student selection: a admission system with more equal, fair and allow class liquidity.

From Minorities' Issue to Public Issue

- Eyes of government: only 5% of overall population
- Do not have enough voice among public media

Barriers to Exercise Real Choice What NGO could do?

- Knowledge on Education System
- Hidden agenda in education system: trend, strategy of school selection, etc.
- HK citizen identity and willingness to integration

