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# Opinion

## Segregating Schools Won't Make America Great Again

On Nov. 4, 1952, Dr. Helen Kenyon addressed the Women's Society of Riverside Church in New York City and opined that, "Eleven o'clock Sunday morning is the most segregated hour in America." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. often paraphrased the quote.

Today, sadly, our public schools best reflect Dr. Kenyon's and Dr. King's sentiment as the most segregated place in America.

The rampant re-segregation of American public schools poses a greater threat to the trajectory of America's progress than terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and Russian meddling in our elections. Sixty-two years after *Brown v. Board*, the GAO (Government Accountability Office) reported that from the years 2000-2014, both the percentage of K-12 public schools in high-poverty and the percentage of African American and Hispanic students enrolled in public schools more than doubled, and the percentage of all schools with so-called racial or socioeconomic isolation grew from 9 percent to 16 percent.

Research shows that racial and socioeconomic diversity in our classrooms leads to higher than average test scores, greater college enrollment rates, and the nar-



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rowing of achievement gaps. These gains don't just apply to poor and minority children either — every student benefits from learning and engaging with peers from different

“Today our public schools are more segregated than they were 40 years ago

backgrounds. Despite the evidence, today our public schools are more segregated than they were 40 years ago.

As an advocate for children and families, and as a public servant, who has fought for more resources for students, I believe we must act boldly to save free, high-quality public education for all.

Some of the very leaders tasked with solving the negative effects from school re-segregation offer shortsighted policies that exacerbate racial and economic divisions. The ripple-effect, consequences

of their misguided thinking remains the greatest policy foible of the modern era. Lazy logic behind bad policy feeds a perception that that the achievement gap exists simply, because poor and minority students learn differently than their wealthier, White peers. Rather, it is directly tied to declining enrollment, lower property values, and the dwindling resources available to tackle mounting challenges in the communities that surround underperforming public schools.

The greatest irony is that those promoting harmful education policies use the same language of “giving every child a chance at a high-quality education” to pitch their tax-dollar-poaching and resource-pilfering experiments to desperate parents.

Rather than making public education a number one priority, a Hunger-Games-like competition for vouchers and charter schools leaves parents and students fending for themselves. The families that lose the education lottery end up at schools with increased needs and declining resources.

In Maryland, our Governor's BOOST voucher program set aside \$5 million dollars of public money to help 2,400 families pay for their child's education. Yet, 80 per-

cent of the families receiving these grants had children who were already enrolled in private schools.

Vouchers, whose American roots can be traced back to some Southern states' attempts to avoid integration, perpetuate segregated education and are nothing more than a thinly-veiled attempt to cut off funds to public schools.

It gets even worse. Some communities have simply seceded from the larger school district, as we've seen in Alabama and Tennessee, to keep from integrating their schools. Since 2000, the U.S. Justice Department has released 250 communities from their desegregation orders and consequently facilitated their financial and administrative secession from their school districts.

After all those factors lead to a dip in school performance, students and their communities are stigmatized as “failing.”

Schools close. Quality of life drops; economic prospects dwindle; public safety decreases; and the cycle repeats, so that higher needs populations receive even fewer resources.

Read the rest of this commentary at  
[TheSkanner.com](http://TheSkanner.com)

## Blacks Often Pay Higher Fees for Car Purchases than Whites

It's that time of year again when auto dealers try to make room in their showrooms for next year's models. The seasonal clearance sales that come right before the holidays are just as tempting as ever, beckoning consumers to get that proverbial “new car fever.”

But don't let those shiny new cars blind you from the facts of a major consumer purchase. After mortgages and student loans, auto sales take a big bite out of your pocket and available credit.

A new analysis of car sales data reveals that many consumers are being charged triple-digit mark-ups on purchases that include a lot of questionable add-on products that cost consumers a bundle and reap major profits for dealers.

A new policy analysis by the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC), examined sales and financing practices widely used by car dealers. Aggressive sales of add-on products were frequently offered at inflated prices. Additionally, these same products and services are usually available for consumers to purchase more cheaply on their own. When these items are added to the financing of the vehicle, consumers end up padding



Julianne Malveaux

NNPA  
Columnist

the costs of finance, making the debt more costly than necessary.

After analyzing data on the sale of three million add-on products sold on 1.8 million

“Many consumers are being charged triple-digit mark-ups on purchases that include a lot of questionable add-on products

vehicles from September 2009 through June 2015, these add-on costs were both unreasonably high and varied at the discretion of the dealership as to the price levels that would be charged.

“Our analysis demonstrates the negative consequences of opaque and inconsistent pricing of auto add-on products and the urgent need to bring transparency and consistency to this market,” said John W. Van Alst, the report's primary author and director of NCLC's Working Cars for Working Families Project.

### Here's how the unfair pricing and add-ons occur:

After a consumer settles on a price of a vehicle, he or she is then told to see the finance and insurance (F&I) representative to review terms and sign the purchase. What few consumers know, is that many dealers pay its F&I personnel on a commission basis. Hence, the more costs added to the vehicle purchase, the more these employees earn. Other dealers, according to

consumer secured them independently. To make these products and services appear affordable, the length of the auto loan is often extended to 72 or 84 months—or even longer. The longer the auto loan, the more likely that the consumer is getting a bad deal.

NCLC also cites previous research by the Center for Responsible Lending (CRL) that determined car buyers who financed vehicles at the dealership in 2009 paid \$25.8 billion in interest rate mark-ups. That same study also found that more than half of Black car purchasers (54 percent) were also charged loan kickbacks, compared to only 31 percent of Whites.

In 2014, a CRL consumer survey also found that Black and Latino car buyers purchased more add-on products than other consumers after being told that the additional items were required to finalize the deal. As a result, although consumers of color reported trying more than other consumers to negotiate a fair car deal, they still wound up paying more for their purchases than similarly-situated White consumers.

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