

University of Missouri – St. Louis

The Graduate School Announcement

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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The Missouri Student Transfer Program

Date: April 18, 2017

Time: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Place: UMSL TLC Conference Room 1

Abstract

In 1993, the state of Missouri passed the Outstanding Schools Act. This law was created as a means to ensure that “all children will have quality educational opportunities, regardless of where in Missouri they live.” Section 167.131 of this law states that an unaccredited district must pay the tuition and transportation cost for students who attend an accredited school in the same or adjoining district. This portion of the law became known as the Student Transfer Program.

The Riverview Gardens School District (RGSD) was one of three unaccredited school districts in the state of Missouri in 2013. With close to 6,000 students (96.9% Black), RGSD, located in St. Louis, Missouri, was forced to implement this program. The majority of media reports focused on the political, financial, and school perspectives of the Student Transfer Program, neglecting the personal family stories in the process. In addition to providing a voice for the neglected family perspectives, this dissertation is accompanied by a feature-length documentary film. Together, the dissertation and documentary complement one another by highlighting personal experiences and stories of those who have been impacted by this program.

The unique experiences and perspectives of these participants are based on the decisions that they made, related to the Student Transfer Program. One of the participants (Jennifer) decided to keep her children enrolled in RGSD following implementation of the Student Transfer Program. Another participant (Michelle) decided to exercise her right to transfer her children from RGSD and enroll them in an accredited school district, at the expense of RGSD. The final participant (Tiffany) initially decided to transfer her children from RGSD to an accredited school district, but later that same year returned to RGSD.

Defense of Dissertation Committee

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