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On November 7, 1978, voters of the State of Washington passed Initiative Measure 350, an “antibusing” statute,1 which would prohibit the assignment of public school students to any school other than the one nearest, or next nearest, their residence.2 The Seattle School District subsequently brought suit in the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington seeking to enjoin implementation of the initiative

1. The term “antibusing statute,” as used throughout this note, refers to any statute that impedes the racial integration of public school students through a restriction on the transportation or assignment of public school students. See generally North Carolina State Bd. of Educ. v. Swann, 402 U.S. 43, 44 n.1 (1971) (statute provided: “No student shall be assigned or compelled to attend any school on account of race, creed, color or national origin, or for the purpose of creating a balance or ratio of race, religion or national origins. Involuntary bussing of students in contravention of this article is prohibited and public funds shall not be used for any such bussing.”); Lee v. Nyquist, 318 F. Supp. 710, 712 (W.D.N.Y. 1970), aff’d, 402 U.S. 935 (1971) (statute stated: “[N]o student shall be assigned or compelled to attend any school on account of race . . . .”).

2. Initiative Measure 350, as adopted by the voters of Washington, provides:

   Section 1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, after the effective date of this act no school board, school district, educational service district board, educational service district, or county committee, nor the superintendent of public instruction, nor the state board of education, nor any of their respective employees, agents or delegates shall directly or indirectly require any student to attend a school other than the school which is geographically nearest or next nearest the student’s place of residence within the school district of his or her residence and which offers the course of study pursued by such student, except in the following instances:

   (1) If a student requires special education, care or guidance, he may be assigned and transported to the school offering courses and facilities for such special education, care or guidance;

   (2) If there are health or safety hazards, either natural or man made, or physical barriers or obstacles, either natural or man made, between the student’s place of residence and the nearest or next nearest school; or

   (3) If the school nearest or next nearest to his place of residence is unfit or inadequate because of overcrowding, unsafe conditions or lack of physical facilities.

   Sec. 2. In every such instance where a student is assigned and transported to a school other than the one nearest his place of residence, he shall be assigned and transported to the next geographically nearest school with the necessary and applicable courses and facilities within the school district of his or her residence.

   Sec. 3. For purposes of section 1 of this act, “indirectly require any student to attend a school other than the school which is geographically nearest or next nearest the student’s place of residence within the school district of his or her residence and which offers the course of study pursued by such student” includes, but is not limited to, implementing, continuing, pursuing, maintaining or operating any plan involving (1) the redefining of attendance zones; (2) feeder schools; (3) the re-organization of the grade structure of the schools; (4) the pairing of schools; (5) the merging of schools; (6) the clustering of schools; or (7) any other combination of grade restructuring, pairing, merging or clustering: PROVIDED, That nothing in this

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on the ground that the measure would re-segregate Seattle public schools in violation of the fourteenth amendment. The district court ruled in favor of the Seattle School District, holding that the initiative was passed with discriminatory intent, that it improperly prohibited mandatory busing only when used to achieve racial balance, and that it improperly restricted the ability of local school boards to eliminate illegal segregation.

This note analyzes the district court's opinion in Seattle School District No. 1 v. Washington in the context of current doctrines in the field of school desegregation and concludes that the protected status previously accorded to the neighborhood concept will be substantially undermined if the Seattle decision is upheld on appeal.

I. BACKGROUND

The earliest school desegregation cases to reach the United States Supreme Court challenged the constitutionality of racially segregated school districts within which minority students were prohibited by law from attending majority-race schools. The cases generally arose out of southern
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school districts, where opposition to racial integration in education was pronounced.8 The Supreme Court, beginning with its decision in Brown v. Board of Education,9 has held that the maintenance of such school systems violates the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment.10

Unlike southern school segregation, racial imbalance in public schools in northern school districts was generally not required by state law.11 Nevertheless, in many instances racial segregation in public schools outside the South was the result of a deliberate policy of discrimination by state officials.12 The Supreme Court, in the first case before it to challenge nonstatutory public school segregation, chose not to extend its holding in Brown to apply to all school segregation.13 Instead, the Court adopted a more limited approach and held that only segregation brought about intentionally by state officials violates the fourteenth amendment.14 The Court thus established, for constitutional purposes, the existence of two distinct forms of segregation: de jure, which results from the intentionally discriminatory acts of state officials; and de facto, which occurs as a result of conduct which cannot be traced to public officials acting with discriminatory intent.15 Whereas de jure segregation violates the

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10. Id. at 493.
11. See SEGREGATION AND THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT IN THE STATES (B. Reams & P. Wilson, ed. 1975) (survey of state laws prior to the decision in Brown v. Board of Educ.). The survey indicates that at the time of the Brown decision, 17 of 37 states surveyed required or permitted segregated schools as a matter of state law. The 17 states comprised the Confederate South (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia), as well as Delaware, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and West Virginia. Eight states (California, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island) repealed statutory authority to segregate schools prior to 1953. The 12 remaining states surveyed had never required or permitted segregation in public schools as a matter of state law: Connecticut, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon, Vermont, and Wisconsin.
15. “We emphasize that the differentiating factor between de jure segregation and so-called de facto segregation . . . is purpose or intent to segregate.” Id. at 208 (emphasis in original).

With regard to the creation of racially segregated school districts in the United States, Justice Powell has indicated his view that:
fourteenth amendment and must be eliminated "root and branch," de facto segregation does not constitute a proper basis for finding a violation of the equal protection clause of the fourteenth amendment.

Where it has been established that public school segregation violates the fourteenth amendment, school officials are under a constitutional duty to eliminate the illegal condition. While school officials retain some flexibility in devising desegregation plans, the methods adopted must be effective in swiftly rectifying the violation. In many circumstances this has required the imposition of some degree of mandatory busing of public school students. Accordingly, every antibusing statute enacted within a school district containing de jure segregation has been struck down as improperly impeding the elimination of illegal segregation.

In the only such case to reach the United States Supreme Court, *North Carolina State Board of Education v. Swann*, 402 U.S. 43 (1971), the Court rejected an antibusing statute because it failed to provide adequate resources to effectuate desegregation. The Court held that "the individual right of equal access to Negro and white schools extends beyond the school yard to the streets of the community and the homes of its children." *Id.* at 54. The Court further noted that antibusing legislation "must be designed to cure the illegal condition and is not remedial legislation aimed at other social problems.

The "magnet" effect, which assumes that segregated schools cause an increase in the segregation of the surrounding neighborhood, is a doubtful approximation of the reality of urban demographic patterns. Moreover, the presumption that a school board which has intentionally segregated students in one area has also caused all the segregation in the rest of the district is often incorrect. Demographic shifts which increase segregation often have no connection with the conduct of the school board. In *Pasadena City Bd. of Educ. v. Spangler*, 427 U.S. 424 (1976), the Court recognized such random shifts over a period of one year; they could be much greater over a longer time span. Urban economic deterioration may result in a large loss of white population in a city; neighborhoods rise and fall as highways are constructed and as industrial and commercial patterns change. *Id.* at 403-404 (footnotes omitted). But see Dimond, *School Segregation in the North: There is But One Constitution*, 7 HARV. C.R.-C.L. L. REV. 1, 11 (1972) ("[I]t is only a half truth to suggest that school authorities are not responsible for housing patterns . . . .")

19. *Id.* at 439.
We likewise conclude that an absolute prohibition against transportation of students assigned on the basis of race, "or for the purpose of creating a balance or ratio," will similarly hamper the ability of local authorities to effectively remedy constitutional violations. As noted in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Bd. of Educ.*, 402 U.S. 1 (1971), supra at 29, . . . bus transportation has long been an integral part of all public educational systems, and it is unlikely that a truly effective remedy could be devised without continued reliance upon it.

*Id.* at 46.
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*Board of Education v. Swann*, the Court invalidated a North Carolina antibusing statute enacted after North Carolina schools were under a federal court order to desegregate. The Supreme Court’s invalidation of the North Carolina statute rested solely on the basis of that statute’s interference with the elimination of de jure segregation.

Whether an antibusing statute violates the constitution in a school district which has not been found to contain de jure segregation is a question left open by *Swann* and raised by the passage of Initiative Measure 350 in Washington.

II. THE COURT’S REASONING

A. *The Application of Hunter v. Erickson*

As its initial basis for holding Initiative Measure 350 unconstitutional, the district court in *Seattle* relied on the Supreme Court’s decision in *Hunter v. Erickson*. In *Hunter*, voters in Akron, Ohio, passed a city charter amendment requiring all ordinances pertaining to the regulation of real property transactions on the basis of “race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry” to be submitted to the voters of Akron for majority approval. The Supreme Court found the amendment unconstitutional.

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23. Id. at 45–46.
24. The Court stated: The legislation before us flatly forbids assignment of any student on account of race or for the purpose of creating a racial balance or ratio in the schools. The prohibition is absolute, and it would inescapably operate to obstruct the remedies granted by the District Court in the *Swann* case. But more important the statute exploits an apparently neutral form to control school assignment plans by directing that they be “color blind”; that requirement, against the background of segregation, would render illusory the promise of *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) . . . . Just as the race of students must be considered in determining whether a constitutional violation has occurred, so also must race be considered in formulating a remedy. To forbid, at this stage, all assignments made on the basis of race would deprive school authorities of the one tool absolutely essential to fulfillment of their constitutional obligation to eliminate existing dual school systems.

Id.

26. 393 U.S. at 387. The amendment to Akron City Charter § 137 provided:

Any ordinance enacted by the Council of the City of Akron which regulates the use, sale,
because it procedurally disadvantaged "those who would benefit from the laws barring racial, religious, or ancestral discriminations as against those who would bar other discriminations." 27

The Seattle court noted that Hunter had been applied by a federal district court in Lee v. Nyquist28 to a New York antibusing statute that explicitly prohibited the assignment of students to any school "on account of race . . . or for the purpose of achieving equality in attendance . . . of persons of one or more particular races." 29 The Lee court found the New York statute impermissible under Hunter because it treated "educational matters involving racial criteria differently from other educational matters," 30 and thus made it "more difficult to deal with racial imbalance in the public schools." 31

From Hunter and Lee, the Seattle court extracted the principle that the fourteenth amendment prohibits mandatory student assignments to public schools for nonracial reasons unless such assignments are also permitted for racial reasons. 32 The district court concluded that Initiative Measure 350 falls within this prohibition by implicitly prohibiting mandatory student assignments only for racial purposes. 33

B. The Existence of Discriminatory Intent

The Seattle court predicated its holding that Initiative Measure 350 is

advertisement, transfer, listing assignment, lease, sublease or financing of real property of any kind or of any interest therein on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry must first be approved by a majority of the electors voting on the question at a regular or general election before said ordinance shall be effective. Any such ordinance in effect at the time of the adoption of this section shall cease to be effective until approved by the electors as provided herein.

Id. 27. Id. at 391.
29. Id. at 712. Section 3201(2) of the New York statute provided in pertinent part:
2. Except with the express approval of a board of education having jurisdiction, a majority of the members of such board having been elected, no student shall be assigned or compelled to attend any school on account of race, creed, color or national origin, or for the purpose of achieving equality in attendance or increased attendance or reduced attendance, at any school, of persons of one or more particular races, creeds, colors, or national origins; and no school district, school zone or attendance unit, by whatever name known, shall be established, reorganized or maintained for any such purpose, provided that nothing contained in this section shall prevent the assignment of a pupil in the manner requested or authorized by his parents or guardian . . . .

Id. 30. Id. at 719.
31. Id.
32. 473 F. Supp. at 1012.
33. Id. at 1013.
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unconstitutional on the additional ground that the measure was passed with discriminatory intent on the part of Washington voters. The court was admittedly unable to determine the subjective intent of the voters, for "the secret ballot raises an impenetrable barrier" to the ascertainment of the electorate's intent. Nevertheless, it inferred that the intent behind the measure's enactment was discriminatory by applying the factors delineated by the Supreme Court in Village of Arlington Heights v. Metropolitan Housing Development Corporation.

In Arlington Heights, the Supreme Court indicated that the following criteria are relevant in ascertaining discriminatory intent: disproportionate impact; procedural and substantive departures from the normal decision-making sequence; and legislative and administrative history of the challenged action. In applying the Arlington Heights factors to Initiative Measure 350, the Seattle court found initially that implementation of the measure would have a disproportionate impact upon racial minorities because racially segregated schools are disproportionately harmful to minority students. Additionally, the court considered the enactment of Initiative Measure 350 a marked departure from the procedural norm because a statewide initiative was used to repeal an administrative decision of a local school board. Finally, the court reviewed the historical background of Initiative Measure 350 and decided that the "thought of a statewide initiative" was triggered by the Seattle School Board's adopt-

34. Id. at 1016.
35. Id. at 1014.
36. 429 U.S. 252 (1977). The Seattle court also relied on Personnel Administrator of Massachusetts v. Feeney, 442 U.S. 256 (1979), involving a challenge under the equal protection clause to the constitutionality of a Massachusetts law granting civil service employment preference to military veterans. 473 F. Supp. at 1014. The Supreme Court in Feeney held that the differential impact of the statute on women was insufficient to establish the discriminatory intent necessary to find a constitutional violation under Washington v. Davis, 426 U.S. 229 (1976), and Arlington Heights. 442 U.S. at 275-81.
37. 429 U.S. at 267-68.
38. 473 F. Supp. at 1015. The court did not, however, differentiate between de jure and de facto segregation in concluding that segregation is disproportionately harmful to minority students.

It appears from the evidence that the overall education of students in a school system suffers when the schools of that system are racially imbalanced, that the greater the imbalance the greater the impairment and that there is a disproportionate impact upon the education of minority children when their schools are racially imbalanced.

Id.
39. Id. at 1016. The Seattle court stated:

In the adoption of Initiative 350 there was a marked departure from the procedural norm in that an administrative decision of a subordinate local unit of government, the Seattle School Board, was overridden in a statewide initiative by voters, a great number of whom were entirely unaffected by that plan and who could not conceivably be affected by any plan for the mandatory assignment of students for racial balancing purposes.

Id. In contrast to the Supreme Court's analysis in Arlington Heights, the Seattle court failed to estab-
tion of a desegregation plan requiring mandatory busing. These findings led the court to conclude that the Washington electorate intended to discriminate against minority students by enacting Initiative Measure 350.

C. The Over-Inclusiveness of Initiative Measure 350

As a final basis for holding Initiative Measure 350 invalid, the Seattle court decided that the initiative would unconstitutionally restrict the ability of local school boards to eliminate de jure segregation if such segregation exists in Washington. The court did not, however, make any findings of fact with regard to the existence of such segregation.

III. ANALYSIS

The district court’s opinion in Seattle is significant both in its extension of Hunter v. Erickson to antibusing statutes enacted within de facto segregated school districts and in its finding that racially imbalanced schools have a disproportionate impact on minority students. The application of Hunter may effectively foreclose further attempts to enact antibusing statutes in segregated school districts. Furthermore, the finding that minority students are disproportionately affected by segregated schools, without distinguishing between de jure and de facto segregation, raises questions over the continued vitality of this distinction. With respect to both the extension of Hunter and the finding of disproportionate impact, however,
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analytical weaknesses in the district court's opinion suggest that the court's rationale may be modified on appeal.

The application of Hunter to Initiative Measure 350 poses several difficulties. In Hunter, the voters of Akron were attempting to inject the criterion of race into an otherwise neutral legislative process. The voters of Washington, by passing Initiative Measure 350, were attempting to remove race as a factor in the assignment of students to public schools. Furthermore, in Hunter the city charter amendment implicitly classified Akron citizens by race, and subjected minorities to a different, and more burdensome, procedure to enact legislation. Initiative Measure 350, by contrast, would have categorically precluded consideration of race in student assignments to nonneighborhood schools, since it does not classify students according to race.

In addition to the theoretical difficulties of applying Hunter to Initiative Measure 350, the practicality of the rule adopted by the Seattle court is also questionable. Initiative Measure 350 permits nonneighborhood student assignments only for reasons of safety and special education. The
Seattle court found it improper, under Hunter, to permit such nonneighborhood assignments while concomitantly prohibiting nonneighborhood student assignments for racial balancing purposes. Under the analysis adopted by the court, Hunter can thus be complied with in either of two ways: by allowing students to be assigned to nonneighborhood schools for racial reasons; or by prohibiting all nonneighborhood student assignments. To the extent that the Seattle court’s opinion encourages the latter position, it forecloses the use of busing for the legitimate purposes of facilitating safety and special education.

Unlike the district court’s improper reliance on Hunter, the finding that Initiative Measure 350 was passed with discriminatory intent is within traditional equal protection analysis applicable to school desegregation cases. Given the difficulty of obtaining direct evidence regarding the subjective intent of Washington voters in passing the initiative, the court looked to the Arlington Heights factors to discern the intent of the Washington electorate. The Seattle court’s application of those factors, however, and its resulting conclusion, render acceptance of its analysis doubtful.

According to the Supreme Court, the essential distinction between de jure and de facto segregation is the existence of an intent to discriminate. Although the Court has approved of the application of its analysis in Arlington Heights to school desegregation cases, it has rejected a finding of discriminatory intent from the maintenance of a racially imbalanced neighborhood school system. If the distinction between de jure and de facto segregation is to remain viable, inferences of discriminatory

52. See note 31 and accompanying text supra.
54. See note 35 and accompanying text supra.
55. See note 37 and accompanying text supra.
56. 473 F. Supp. at 1014–16.
57. See note 15 and accompanying text supra.
60. Cisneros v. Corpus Christi School Dist., 467 F.2d 142 (5th Cir. 1972), cert. denied, 413 U.S. 920 (1973), had been thought to support the proposition that a state may not impose a neighborhood school policy upon a residentially segregated school district. See, eg., Opinion of the Justices, 363 Mass. 899, 298 N.E.2d 840, 845 (1973). In Cisneros, however, the court made no finding of discriminatory intent and stated:
Discriminatory motive and purpose, while they may reinforce a finding of effective segregation, are not necessary ingredients of constitutional violations in the field of public education. We therefore hold that the racial and ethnic segregation that exists in the Corpus Christi school
intent from actions related to the maintenance of a neighborhood school system is unconstitutional—not de facto, not de jure, but unconstitutional.

In United States v. Texas Educ. Agency (Austin Independent School Dist.), 532 F.2d 380 (5th Cir. 1976), vacated, 429 U.S. 990 (1976) (mem.), the court attempted to reconcile its holding (neighborhood school system operated in a school district containing racially segregated housing pattern constitutes de jure segregation) with that in Cisneros by stating that Cisneros actually involved the use of a “foreseeable consequence” intent test. 532 F.2d at 388. The Supreme Court vacated the decision and remanded it for reconsideration in light of Washington v. Davis, 426 U.S. 229 (1976). Austin Independent School Dist. v. United States, 429 U.S. 990 (1976) (mem.). A number of commentators have taken the position that the Supreme Court thereby rejected the use of a foreseeable consequence intent test in school desegregation cases. See Note, 86 Yale L.J. 317, 332 (1976). Cf. Note, 28 Case W. Res. L. Rev. 119, 141 (1977) (“Possibly there is an implication that finding intent under the tort standard may not be adequate to find the unconstitutional intent.”). On remand, however, the court of appeals interpreted the Supreme Court’s disapproval of its prior decision to extend only to the inference of discriminatory intent from official actions taken to maintain a neighborhood school policy, not to the inference of discriminatory intent under the foreseeable consequence test:

We are well aware that some official actions on which a plaintiff hinges an allegation of unconstitutional discrimination have historically been motivated by racially and ethnically neutral bona fide concerns, such as the desire to have children attend the school closest to their home, and no showing is made that those concerns were actually subordinate to, or a subterfuge for, unconstitutional discrimination. In those circumstances, that a discriminatory result was the natural and foreseeable consequence of the actions is insufficient to infuse the challenged acts with the type of discriminatory intent required by Washington v. Davis and Arlington Heights. . . . There is language in our Austin I opinion that official discriminatory intent adequate to support a finding of de jure segregation could be inferred solely from the school board’s use of a neighborhood school policy for student assignment. To the extent that Austin II can be so read, it is inconsistent with Washington v. Davis and Arlington Heights. The Supreme Court recognized this ambiguity in vacating our decision and remanding the case to us.

United States v. Texas Educ. Agency (Austin Independent School Dist.), 564 F.2d 162, 168–69 (1977), cert. denied, 443 U.S. 915 (1978). The court then applied a foreseeable consequence intent test and found a discriminatory intent on the basis of actions unrelated to the operation of a racially neutral neighborhood school policy. Id. at 171–74 (school authorities “maintained the segregated identity of the schools through the use of dual-overlapping attendance zones, student assignment policies, teacher assignment policies, school site selection, and gerrymandering.”).

The validity of a foreseeable consequence intent test to ascertain discriminatory intent in the field of public education has not been resolved by the Supreme Court. Although the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals appears to have rejected the test, see Soria v. Oxnard School Dist. Bd. of Trustees, 488 F.2d 579, 585 (9th Cir. 1973), cert. denied, 416 U.S. 951 (1974) and Johnson v. San Francisco Unified School Dist., 500 F.2d 349, 351–52 (9th Cir. 1974), other circuits have adopted it. See e.g., United States v. Texas Educ. Agency (Austin Independent School Dist.), 564 F.2d 162, 168 (1977), cert. denied, 443 U.S. 915 (1978); Oliver v. Michigan State Bd. of Educ., 508 F.2d 178 (6th Cir. 1974); Hart v. Community School Bd. of Educ., 512 F.2d 37 (2d Cir. 1975). The utility of the test has been questioned. See Note, 86 Yale L.J. 317 (1976):

In fact, the interpretation of intent as foreseeability amounts to a proscription of all racial imbalance in public schools. Where any racial imbalance exists in a school district, the failure to adopt policies that alleviate the imbalance necessarily maintains and perpetuates the imbalance. Such a result is clearly natural and foreseeable. Thus any school authority that tolerates racially imbalanced schools would be held to have acted with segregative intent under the foreseeability test.

Since the foreseeability test disapproves all racial imbalance, it destroys the distinction between [sic] de facto and de jure segregation—the distinction “segreagative intent” was to have defined.
should not be permitted. The Seattle court nonetheless inferred discriminatory intent on the part of the Washington electorate in enacting Initiative Measure 350 solely on the basis of such actions.

To ascertain the intent of Washington voters, the district court examined the Arlington Heights factors of disproportionate impact, procedural departure from the normal decision-making process, and historical background. The court first determined that racially imbalanced schools disproportionately affect the education of minority students. The court

Id. at 329–30.

There is language in Personnel Administrator of Massachusetts v. Feeney, 442 U.S. 256 (1979) that suggests the Court requires more than foreseeability:

"Discriminatory purpose," however, implies more than intent as volition or intent as awareness of consequences. See United Jewish Organizations v. Carey, 430 U.S. 144, 179 (concurring opinion). It implies that the decisionmaker, in this case a state legislature, selected or reaffirmed a particular course of action at least in part "because of," not merely "in spite of," its adverse effects upon an identifiable group.

442 U.S. at 279 (footnotes omitted).

60. De facto segregation, where it exists, occurs primarily, if not exclusively, as a result of student assignments to neighborhood schools. See Farley, Residential Segregation and Its Implications for School Integration, 39 LAW & CONTEMP. PROB. 164 (1975):

The northern city districts . . . show a moderate relationship between residential and school segregation. Where neighborhoods are highly segregated, schools tend also to be highly segregated . . . . Those school districts where the degree of school segregation is much less than was predicted on the basis of their level of residential segregation are districts which put massive integration plans into operation, curtailing the extent to which the neighborhood school concept of pupil assignment was used.

Id. at 187. To infer discriminatory intent from the adoption or operation of a neighborhood school policy is thus tantamount to inferring discriminatory intent directly from the existence of de facto segregated schools.

61. See notes 38–41 and accompanying text supra.

62. See note 38 and accompanying text supra. The Seattle court cited no authority for its conclusion that racially imbalanced schools are, from the fact of segregation alone, disproportionately harmful to minority students. The existing authority on the subject is divided. See, e.g., Note, Reading the Mind of the School Board: Segregative Intent and the De Facto/De Jure Distinction, 86 YALE L.J. 317 (1976), wherein the author states:

One important ground for retaining the distinction between permissible and impermissible racial imbalance may well be the perception that some instances of racial imbalance do not impose significant harms. Where the racial imbalance produces no harm, or where remedying minimal harms would entail massive desegregation costs, a finding of a constitutional violation seems less justifiable.

Id. at 346 (footnotes omitted). See also Goodman, De Facto School Segregation: A Constitutional And Empirical Analysis, 60 CAL. L. REV. 275, 366 (1972) (contentions that de facto segregation adversely affects school children "depend on factual generalizations to which neither intuition nor empirical studies provide confident answers"). But see Weinberg, The Relationship Between School Desegregation and Academic Achievement: A Review of the Research, 39 LAW & CONTEMP. PROB. 241 (1975) (concluding that desegregation has a positive effect on minority achievement levels). Cf. Crain & Mahard, Desegregation and Black Achievement: A Review of the Research, 42 LAW & CONTEMP. PROB. 17, 24 (1978) (of 73 studies analyzed, 40 show a correlation between desegregation and improved academic performance by black students, while 12 studies indicate that desegregation has a negative effect on black achievement levels).
concluded that since implementation of Initiative Measure 350 would result in racially imbalanced schools, the initiative necessarily had a disproportionate impact. According to the Seattle court, however, such a disproportionate impact is inherent in all de facto segregated school districts.

The Seattle court also found that a procedural departure occurred because of the use of a statewide initiative to override an "administrative" decision of a local school board, and that the initiative's historical background included a "series of lawsuits and a recall election, the objective of which was to prevent the racial balancing of Seattle schools by means of mandatory student assignments." Neither finding, without more, establishes that a racially discriminatory intent was predominant over an intent to preserve a racially neutral neighborhood school policy.

At least one commentator has observed that a finding that racial imbalance is itself harmful to minority students could provide a basis for invalidating de facto segregation as violative of the fourteenth amendment. See Goodman, De Facto Segregation: A Constitutional And Empirical Analysis, 60 CAL. L. REV. 275 (1972):

Though Brown left the legal issue of de facto segregation undecided, it may have gone far toward foreclosing a critical factual issue. In finding that "[s]eparated educational facilities are inherently unequal" and separation of the races in school "has a detrimental effect upon the colored children," the Court may have supplied the central empirical premise for the argument that de facto segregation amounts to a constitutional denial of equal educational opportunity. Although Brown dealt with state-imposed separation of Negro students solely because of their race, the same retarding and demoralizing effects upon black children might be found in a de facto segregated school in a Northern ghetto.

Id. at 278-79 (footnotes omitted).

63. 473 F. Supp. at 1015.

64. The court's finding that racially imbalanced schools result in a disproportionate impact on minority students was not confined to de jure segregated schools, but extended to all segregated schools. See note 38 supra. See also, 473 F. Supp. at 1001 (Finding of Fact 3.2): "The term 'racial imbalance' in a school is used to mean a disproportionately high minority enrollment in a particular school in relation to districtwide minority student population."

65. See note 39 and accompanying text supra. Although the court characterized the Seattle School Board's decision to implement a mandatory busing plan as an administrative decision, the question of whether students should be assigned to neighborhood schools appears to be a matter of legislative policy because it is of general concern to the state's citizens—particularly since the Board's adoption of the mandatory busing plan was an abandonment of the traditional neighborhood school policy in Seattle. See 473 F. Supp. at 1009 (Finding of Fact 7.28) ("It is clear from the location of school buildings and the attendance lines drawn around those buildings that the Seattle School District has traditionally adhered to a policy of the assignment of children to their neighborhood schools.").


67. With respect to the finding of a procedural departure, the court failed to indicate the connection between the particular departure and proof of discriminatory intent. The court noted that:

In the adoption of Initiative 350 there was a marked departure from the procedural norm in that an administrative decision of a subordinate local unit of government, the Seattle School Board, was overridden in a statewide initiative by voters, a great number of whom were entirely unaffected by that plan and who could not conceivably be affected by any plan for the mandatory assignment of students for racial balancing purposes.
theless, the district court inferred the existence of a racially discriminatory intent. Not only does such an inference place directly into question the continued vitality of the neighborhood school concept, but, to the extent that de facto segregation in public schools is attributable to the assignment of students to neighborhood schools, it destroys the distinction between de jure and de facto segregation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The district court's opinion in Seattle School District No. 1 v. Washington is fundamentally unsound in its application of Hunter v. Erickson to the prohibition of busing for racial balancing purposes and in its infer-

473 F. Supp. at 1016. The court did not offer any explanation for its assumption that persons within Washington who would be unaffected by the Seattle School Board's mandatory busing plan would thereby be likely to be motivated by a racially discriminatory purpose in voting for the initiative. The court even noted in Finding of Fact 7.30 that "[m]any parents and voters who support neighborhood schools do so in a sincere belief in the value of neighborhood schools irrespective of the racial distribution of the students attending those schools." 473 F. Supp. at 1009. Nevertheless, the court apparently assumed that any procedural departure ipso facto manifests a discriminatory intent.

In finding that the historical background of Initiative Measure 350 supported an inference of discriminatory intent, the Seattle court relied on the fact that a series of lawsuits and a recall election preceded the initiative. See note 39 and accompanying text supra. Yet, the court did not find that the lawsuits or election were themselves a result of a racially discriminatory intent. In its Finding of Fact 6.1, the court found that ten lawsuits were filed in the eight-year period prior to the enactment of Initiative Measure 350. 473 F. Supp. at 1005-06. Four of the suits sought increased integration in Seattle schools. Two actions sought to have the neighborhood school policy declared a matter of right. One suit concerned the recall of school board members who had voted in favor of mandatory busing. Finally, three actions challenged the Seattle School Board's adoption in 1978 of a mandatory busing plan. The latter actions were brought by members of Citizens for Voluntary Integration Committee (CIVIC), the organization that proposed Initiative Measure 350. The district court found that CIVIC acted "legally and responsibly in its advocacy of Initiative 350" and that it did not direct "its appeals to the racial biases of the voters." 473 F. Supp. at 1009. Nevertheless, without explaining the relevance of such private actions to the question of intent, the court inferred from the fact of the lawsuits that the Washington electorate must have been motivated by a discriminatory intent in its adoption of Initiative Measure 350.

In other school desegregation cases in which a discriminatory intent has been inferred, courts have based the inference on official actions, which, independent of the neighborhood school policy, manifested a racially discriminatory intent. For example, in Arthur v. Nyquist, 573 F.2d 134 (2d Cir. 1978), the court focused on specific actions that produced an increase in segregation over what would have occurred under the neutral operation of the neighborhood school plan. In explaining its finding of discriminatory intent, the court relied on the following evidence:

(1) The redistricting of a high school attendance zone to exclude whites and produce a virtually all black student population;

(2) The operation of a foreign language transfer program which was used to manipulate the racial composition of a high school by permitting white students to transfer to predominately white schools;

(3) The drawing of an attendance zone for a new school which resulted in a 99% black student body;

(4) The use of "optional areas" to permit white students to attend predominately white schools;

(5) The use of racially discriminatory admission policies of vocational schools;
ence of discriminatory intent solely from the decision to maintain a neighborhood school policy. *Hunter v. Erickson*’s prohibition against restructur-ting the political process to create a procedural barrier to minority interests is irrelevant to the decision of a state’s citizens to maintain a traditional neighborhood school policy. Furthermore, to infer discriminatory intent solely from such a decision erodes the distinction between de facto and de jure segregation. If that distinction is to remain viable, the *Seattle* court’s decision should be remanded with instructions to deter-
mine intent on the basis of actions independent of the neighborhood school policy.

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(6) The recruitment and assignment of staff members on a racially biased basis. 573 F.2d at 144. Similarly, in Reed v. Rhodes, 607 F.2d 714 (6th Cir. 1979), the court, in the face of a school board’s claim that segregation resulted from a racially neutral neighborhood school policy, based its finding of discriminatory intent on the following evidence:

1. Segregation of faculty;
2. Site selection and construction of new schools;
3. School board cooperation in segregated housing;
4. Segregation of black students within predominately white schools;
5. Use of optional zones, boundary changes, special transfers, private rental facilities and portable classrooms.

607 F.2d at 723–34. See also United States v. School Dist. of Omaha, 565 F.2d 127, 128 (8th Cir. 1977) (discriminatory intent found, notwithstanding neighborhood school system, because of segregated faculty assignment, student transfer policy that permitted 30% of white students assigned to predominately black elementary schools to transfer to white schools, use of optional attendance zones to manipulate racial balance, school construction resulting in segregated student population, and acquiescence in deterioration of a predominately black high school); United States v. Texas Educ. Agency (Austin Independent School Dist.), 564 F.2d 162 (1977), *cert. denied*, 443 U.S. 915 (1978) (note 59 supra); Note, 44 Geo. WASH. L. REV. 775 (1976):

In those cases where the evidence has established that a school board deviated from its neighborhood school plan and the pattern of deviations could only be explained as having been prompted by racial considerations, any resulting segregation has been deemed impermissible de jure segregation. For example, evidence of the gerrymandering of attendance zone lines and the initiation of transfer policies to facilitate individual segregative choices is frequently produced at trial to demonstrate that deviations from neighborhood plans were designed to create or perpetuate segregated schools.

*Id.* at 777 (footnotes omitted).