Tomorrow's Public Education
Transformational Community Schools
Advancing the Community Schools model:
Increasing its democratization while enabling its decolonization

"For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change." ~ Audre Lorde

Summary

This broad analysis, with recommendations and commentary, is an attempt to reason with supporters of today's Community Schools model about a conceptualization of its advanced form, Transformational Community Schools (TCS). Read more at http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Transformational-Community-Schools.pdf. TCS seek to further democratize, as well as decolonize, the current concept. What this looks like is presented here.

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<< Democratization: Transformational Community Schools >>

To the extent that charter schools/Innovation schools have boards that are selected not elected, to the same extent our very own Community Schools concept must counter that image and policy. *TCS is that counter-narrative.*

So, to the extent TCS is proposed as an even more democratic option to the Community School model, an authentic and fully democratized TCS becomes an even better option to charters and Innovations for families. This is true for those who see TCS as democracy's laboratory, democracy's finishing school, preparing students for critical citizenship.

Indy's TCS will be under the auspices of the IPS school board; and, this is a situation where we will be dealing with the fox that's guarding the charter and Innovation hen house. Nonetheless, we have to put forth a concept that is democratic via school/community board elections.

Local School Councils

What is being proposed here is that each TCS has a Local School Council (LSC): 4 parents, 2 community members, 1 non-teacher representative (e. g., school secretary, janitor, food service worker), 2 teachers, 1 student, and the principal.

Each is selected the first year. The 2nd-year members, except the principal, are chosen through community-wide/school-wide elections which then take place every 2 years.

The LSC hires/fires the principal, and has say over the school's budgets, policies, and curriculum. See Chicago's LSC program: https://www.cps.edu/about/local-school-councils/.

To iterate, we who critique charters/Innovation schools for not being democratic, must provide an advanced democratic school example.

Student Councils

As well, to the extent charters/Innovations have no viable student councils, TCS will have student councils. The UK has had them for years in every elementary, middle school, and high school: https://home.smartschoolcouncils.org.uk/.

Here each TCS will ask: **What can our student do to help run their school?** TCS staff and students can be put in contact with staff/students in UK schools.

TCS will recognize the Global Human Rights of Children

TCS will recognize the global human rights of its students. Although the US is 1 of 3 out of 197 countries not signing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), TCS will organize to prepare, over time, a TCS version of the UNCRC.

It will be recognized by TCS staff, faculty, administration, and board, validating that each student has global human rights and so each student will know they have global human rights which are recognized by their community, peers, and school adults.

- https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-rights/united-nations-convention-of-the-rights-of-the-child.
- https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/educating-children-in-a-socially-toxic-environment.

Civic Literacy: Education for Critical Citizenship and IDOE's civics standards

Cui bono? Who benefits when TCS students do not learn the American political system and how it works by being able to practice citizenship in their own public schools? This will take analyzing and adapting IDOE's middle school civics standards.

In light of this, grade 6-12 TCS students will be taught how to community organize. To enrich community activism, TCS curriculum will combine rites of passage and citizenship education.

Literacy and numeracy are each fundamental for participation in our community, but so is the knowledge and capacity of citizens to make sense of their democratic society. Since the democratic way of life is built upon opportunities to learn what it is about and practice how it might be led, civic literacy is the capacity of students to experience democracy. Analyze this: Civic Literacy: Education for Critical Citizenship.

1st Amendment Schools: Helping students be active citizens in their schools

The notion students should learn more about the Bill of Rights and the First Amendment is not new. What is new is education where student actually practice, in their classrooms and schools, the 5 Freedoms: speech, assembly, press, religion, and petition for grievances. See information here: First Amendment Schools. TCS will be First Amendment schools.

<< Decolonization of the Community Schools concept >>

Not a lot is here because it's already explained above in the paper: http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Transformational-Community-Schools.pdf. In summary then, in order to promote sustainability via self-sufficiency and self-reliance, those professionals and providers who work in a community school, will from the beginning of their employment, strive to work themselves out of a job by finding someone in the school or community to eventually take their place. This way the community school stays truly community-driven.

Naptown's colonial mindset

"For a span of my memory this has been a city of opposing wills, two faces firmly set toward different directions—one covertly determined to maintain the status quo, to continually block any access to power, or to parity; **the other advocating an active morality and its right to inclusion as an equal entity rather than a colonized one** [emphasis added]. This has been a city of perpetual confrontation, however cloaked, between the powerless and those who influence, control, and engineer the city's movement in the inexorable and often ruthless march toward greatness."   ~ Mari Evans on Indianapolis, *Clarity as Concept*

A model to follow: Roses in Concrete Community School in Oakland, CA

Fortunately, there is a challenge to the inherent colonial mindset of Naptown; it is the Roses in Concrete Community School that is located in Oakland, CA. Learn more here: https://vimeo.com/123746757?gclid=Cj0KCQjwvLOTBhCJARIsACVldV0ZboFqH7YaHlFXrnifPg 70gNuFWaeaH4HuOgJvQQ0urBJ-eatV9M0aAokMEALw_wcB.

Here is an analysis of the school: "Seeding Transformation for Seven Generations: A Case Study of Roses in Concrete Community School." See even more here: https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9sh0f94h.

Decolonizing Special Education, Pt. I Special Education and charters

It is well known and discussed that charter schools, in particular, have important issues (https://in.chalkbeat.org/2019/3/22/21107116/these-charter-schools-could-soon-turn-to-ips-for-help-with-special-education) with meeting the needs of special education students and their families. Thus, charters are seen as unwelcoming. Yet, this is most likely not because charter school people dislike special ed children and their families. You see, in the business/market-driven atmosphere of charters, it's just not "profitable" to get involved.

So, to the extent that charter schools are not welcoming to special ed students and their families, to that same extent TCS will be particularly welcoming. In fact, TCS will take this to the next level and decolonize the concept of special education.

What is mentioned here will be basically easy to understand for us Hoosiers because in 1907 Indiana passed the world's first eugenics law practically legalizing white supremacy. What the eugenics law did was to basically make it legal to sterilize the "unfit." The law also promoted the propagation of the "fit." What this did was to create the world of "normalcy."   It followed then that normalcy created "disability" and the "differon" and consequently special education.

Decolonizing Special Education, Pt. II There is no disability without normalcy

"The problem's not the student with learning disabilities; it's the way normalcy is constructed to create the 'problem' of the learning disabled child."

> ~ reworded from L. Davis, "Constructing Normalcy"

What TCS will do to decolonize this eugenics concept of disability is take the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and advance it to a Strength-Based Learning Plan (S-BLP). Here normalcy (aka, standardization) would not be the only goal of the plan; self-actualization will also be the purpose of the S-BLP.

Special ed students would be helped to meet state standards for their age/grade level, working on what they need to do to make them "normal" by IEP standards. Under the S-BLP concept, differences would be the norm. Here, special ed students would also develop their strengths: what makes them unique, using their talents, interests, and passions--that in many cases are not a part of the IDOE curriculum or standards.

Learn more of the details here: "In 1907 Hoosiers legalized normalcy. In 2017 Hoosiers discredited and abounded normalcy": http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/In-1907-Hoosiers-legalized-normalcy-In-2017-Hoosiers-discredited-and-abandoned-normalcy.pdf.

Also, see how normalizing difference is a way to reduce violence as it validates the differon, self-actualization and social-actualization, and helps meet our human need for recognition: http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/bullying-and-the-differon-accepting-difference-as-a-way-to-reduce-violence.pdf.

Transformational Community Schools: Places to contest/eradicate inequalities

TCSs will combine student voice with community change and empowerment:

- 5 Strategies to Integrate Civil Discourse and Civic Action in Schools
https://www.ascd.org/blogs/5-strategies-to-integrate-civil-discourse-and-civic-action-in-schools/
- From community service to community change: Urban students transforming their neighborhoods
http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Serve-the-community-or-change-the-community.pdf
- Student voice or student action? Important decisions for our Indianapolis schools and neighborhoods
http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Student-voice-or-student-action-in-Indianapolis.pdf

An anti-poverty curriculum: Getting out of poverty or getting rid of it

In general, many community schools are located in pockets of poverty: urban economic deserts. The term food desert is not used here because food deserts are actually economic deserts.

Currently, many schools located in these economic deserts are under the influence of the "going to college culture," a culture that inherently avoids discussions around poverty. *Here the students are engineered to think the purpose of their school is to get them out of poverty instead of getting rid of poverty*:

- http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Poverty-Rising-out-of-poverty-or-getting-rid-of-it.pdf.
- Moving beyond structural determinism: Urban schools as places to contest and eradicate inequalities
http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Urban-schools-as-sites-to-contest-inequalities.pdf
- A comprehensive vision for urban school transformation
http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/BLPI-Urban-school-transformation-A-comprehensive-vision.pdf.

Read about the limitations of a "college going" culture: a middle-class ideology which ignores poverty and the other pertinent problems many IPS students face constantly in their neighborhoods:

- http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-limitations-of-a-going-to-college-culture-in-schools-A-middle-class-ideology-which-ignores-poverty.pdf.

How the anti-poverty curriculum will work

TCS will be sites for social-economic justice. Instead of TCS classrooms having various college pennants over their door ways as a means to get students to go to college, these entrances will

have the words of the various social toxins students, their families and neighborhoods face on a daily basis: unemployment, housing, mental health, police relations, gangs, poverty, child care: https://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Urban-conditions-and-social-toxins-chart-From-radical-healing-to-wellness.pdf.

Each classroom will be the center of efforts to study and come up with solutions to the community problem for which their classroom is responsible. Students will use all the higher order thinking skills, meets state standards, and be prepared for career, college, and critical citizenship--all while solving community problems.

This is generational. At the end of the school year when students have to go to a different home room or grade level, students new to the situation will start the nest semester where the other students left off in their work. *Now students know why what they're learning and doing is so important: the long-range goal is to eradicate the social toxins from their community.*
- https://www.kodable.com/learn/problem-solving-skills-for-kids/
- https://www.edutopia.org/practice/real-world-problem-solving-project-based-solutions
- https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/problem-solving-techniques

What's a high quality education for TCS students? An education for liberation
What is a high quality education for students at TCS located in our multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-linguistic society? This internationally recognized paper explains what this means: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317098285_What_is_a_high_quality_education_for_urban_students_Education_for_Liberation_Education_as_the_practice_of_freedom. As of April 2022, the analysis with commentary has some 764 reads from 49 countries plus the US.

An education for liberation and school discipline
Not all school discipline issues extend from oppositional behavior. Disruptive behavior can be resistance to colonization--assimilation into the mainstream: http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Reexamining-Resistance-as-Oppositional-Behavior-The-Nation-of-Islam-and-the-Creation-of-a-Black-Achievement-Ideology.pdf.

"Why would marginalized students be discipline problems in schools trying to liberate them?"

Also, it's vital to appreciate just what TCS have to do to work for both disengaged students and critically conscious teachers. Read: http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Resisters-Rejectors-and-Ridas-How-to-make-urban-schools-work-for-disengaged-students-and-critically-conscious-teachers.pdf.

Adding the political to the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of the whole African American child
This counter-narrative to the Charter/Innovation school model asserts that schools are political sites. Going to school for some students is a political act—truly, an existential act.

Standardized testing and the concept of disability are political concepts and have nothing to do with education. These two concepts simply sort and rank students based on normalcy.

Thus, TCS will advance the whole child concept by adding political to the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive needs of the whole Black American child. See: [The Black & Latino Policy Institute Report: The 3rd Annual Indiana Whole Child Summit](#).

The current educational politics of "grit" shows courage and resolve are vital, yet [students must have the power of agency too](#). Grit can hide systems of power rather than the transformational and disruptive potential of agency needed to navigate systemic barriers while also critiquing them. Therefore, TCS will dismantle ideologies that suggest merit and hard work will always lead to success. TCS students will not just put up with, but practice eradicating social toxins.

Critical Self-awareness: Ethnic studies and academic and social success

It's hard to advance academically and socially in education if you don't know who you are. Ethnic Studies is a 1-semester IDOE history /sociology course emphasizing the perspectives of minority groups while allowing students from all backgrounds to better understand and appreciate how race, culture and ethnicity, and identity contribute to their experiences. See:

- https://in.chalkbeat.org/2018/8/8/21105458/how-indiana-s-new-approach-to-ethnic-studies-goes-beyond-slavery-and-stereotypes. See more on Black studies, also labor studies:
- https://thehistoricjourney.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/THJ-10-09-17-pgs-1-36.pdf,
- https://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/SEW-CTF-Keeping-urban-students-in-school-Adding-a-history-of-labor-course-to-the-curriculum.pdf.

TCS's teaching will be culturally relevant and sustaining, and include hip hop

If TCS are to have culturally competent teachers, curriculum, and pedagogy, then along with Indy's African American, Latino, white urban working-class cultures, global youth culture (bka "hip hop") must become one of the cultures taken into account in the school and classroom. Learn more here: [Cultural Competency: Global youth culture](#).

View the [hip hop version of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs](#).

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy: http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Culturally-Sustaining-Pedagogy-Advancing-culturally-relevant-teaching.pdf

Literacy at TCS: Learning how to read is a political act

Whether it's admitted or not, our public schools are political sites. With IPS under the sway of neo-liberal corporate reform (privatization), education has a business-economic purpose to create workers. Its purpose is not self-discovery or critical citizenship. IPS high schools are career-oriented. There's no sustainability, social justice, or anti-poverty high schools.

"Whoever controls the schools controls the future."   ~ Anonymous

Thus, IPS has 2 types of education, one for the working class and one for the powerful:

1. *Domesticating Education*: Leads to functional literacy, the kind that makes a person productive and dependable, but not troublesome. One learns to be a "good worker": wear the

company uniform properly, be to work on time, get along to get ahead, follow directions, and work hard to maintain their employer's profits.

2. *Empowering Education*: Leads to powerful literacy, the kind leading to power/authority. This enables one to know how to think for oneself. It helps to understand how the system works, how to critique and change it, and how to acquire power and authority in it

What is needed is making the purpose of literacy political for students on the margins. In fact, for African Americans, learning how to read is an existential act, and act of survival.

The book, *Literacy with an Attitude: Educating Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laS1y4f_U2E) by Patrick Finn sees literacy as a political act. Here's what he says, "Literacy is a powerful right of citizenship." See more here: [Literacy with an Attitude: Educating working-class children in their own self-interest](.).

Literacy with an Attitude: Powerful, Functional, Critical, and Media Literacies

Powerful literacy leads to positions of power and authority. This is the type of empowering education and critical literacy skills the children of upper- and middle-class people receive.

Functional literacy is what working-class students get: the mere ability to meet the reading and writing demands daily life.

Critical literacy is the ability to read texts in an active, reflective manner in order to better understand power, inequality, and injustice in human relation-ships. Here songs, novels, conversations, pictures, movies, etc. are also considered texts: http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/What-is-critical-literacy.pdf.

Media literacy can be defined as: how to read and write text; how to give and receive communications in all forms of the arts; how to discern, appreciate, and critique all forms of the arts, and commercial and political advertisements, and government communications including laws, policy, legislative and public events; how to evaluate teachers and how they teach; how to research and evaluate political, economic, social-cultural issues; and, how to present arguments and debate a variety of issues with other community members and elected officials: [Media Literacy as the 4th R: Engaging all students](.).

The question of rigor vs. vigor for TCS Black American students: Which of the two approaches is more academically appropriate and culturally relevant?

Charters are known for being market-driven, and thus competitive. In doing so, charters emphasize rigor—rigorous curriculum, study habits, testing schemes, etc. Yet, according to educator Augusta Mann, vigor is more culturally relevant to her, "Nine Recurring African American Cultural Themes": http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Contrasting-the-relevance-of-rigor-vs.-vigor-to-African-American-cultural-themes.pdf. The themes can also apply to family/community-oriented Latino and poor white communities which are not as individualistically-oriented as the American white middle class.

Why mandatory school uniforms won't improve IPS and student voice will

Since 2007, IPS requires school uniforms. Charters require them. The case for uniforms centers on behavior and grades. Most township schools do not want uniforms. Why? Are township district students smarter and less oppositional?

Oddly, the success of IPS and charters can depend on following the research; yet, when it comes to school uniforms, there is no high quality peer–reviewed research supporting school uniforms. Now, there is lots and lots of anecdotal evidence, but no consistent research showing that when a student wears a uniform, their attendance and grades, and behavior improve. So, the question is what's really behind the IPS and the charter policy requiring students to have to wear a "costume" in order to get a free public education?

Perhaps it's because urban legends say school uniforms benefit the bottom line for districts and charters: the test scores and, dropout and grad rates of mainly urban districts with a majority of under-served students.

Requiring students to wear uniforms in fact can behaviorally, socially, and politically cleanse a district or charter of those students and families who most likely are nonconformist, and/or who are more likely to question authority.

If this is not enough, compulsory school uniforms reflect the dominator, not the partnership model of human sustainability.

All societies are patterned on either a dominator model—in which human hierarchies are ultimately backed by force or threat of force—or a partnership model, with variations in between.

A partnership with youth, not a one-way coercive top-down mandatory school uniform policy, reflects this enlightened and forward-looking global perspective in "School Uniforms: A 20th century response to 21st century challenges, Why mandatory school uniforms won't improve IPS and student voice will." Critique: [School Uniforms A 20th century response to 21st century challenges: Why mandatory school uniforms won't improve IPS and student voice will](#).

"School Uniforms" asserts that compulsory school uniforms take the place of relationships. *If teachers and administration had authentic relationships with students, uniforms would not be needed to control whatever the adults think uniforms control.*

Student voice and authentic relationships are examples of a public school district or a charter that enables the great shift needed to sustain our society. This is a great shift:
- from competition to cooperation;
- from domination to democracy;
- from growth to sustainability; and,
- from assimilation to self-actualization.

As a counter-narrative to IPS and charter policies, TCS will not require students to wear a uniform in order to get a free public education. TCS will instead follow the guidelines in "School Uniforms" and involve all students in school climate/governance via a pedagogy of recognition: http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Validating-the-experiences-of-urban-students-A-Pedagogy-of-Recognition.pdf.
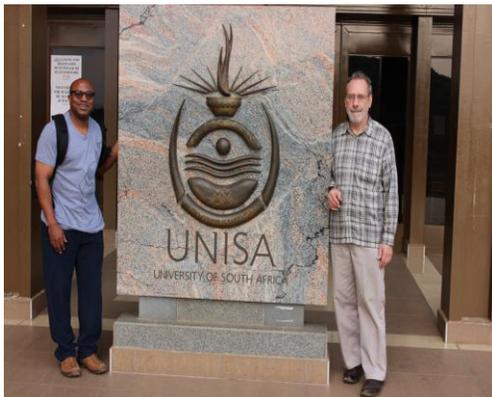

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Here is the link to the proposal for the Transformational Community Schools presentation given during the 2013 Community Schools Conference in Cincinnati.

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May 20, 2022

Resources
http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Resources-John-H.-Loflin-02.24.21-3rd-Annual-Indiana-Whole-Child-Summit.pdf

The above photo shows Jose Manuel Evans, president of the Black & Latino Policy Institute, and John Harris Loflin, the institute's director of education and youth issues, standing at the entrance to the University of South Africa. John has presented on 6 continents on issues around alternative, democratic, and urban education. Here's the link to "The 'Super Six' Urban Education Fundamentals" a presentation he gave during the First Annual South African International Conference on Education sponsored by the African Academic Research Forum (AARF) in Pretoria, SA, 09.23.2014: https://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Super-6-Urban-Education-Fundamentals.pdf.