

Geographic Factors in School Choice:
Spatial and Social Accessibility in the Cincinnati Public Schools

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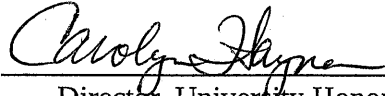
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Abstract

Open enrollment and school choice have been used throughout the United States for decades as a tool for desegregation, and in the Cincinnati, Ohio Public Schools (CPS) since 1973. Scholars have debated the effectiveness and fairness of school choice, but more geographical analysis is needed on the spatial opportunities and constraints that parents face. This paper explores the how geography factors in school choice. What are Cincinnati parents' geographic understandings and preferences including location, transportation, associations and assigned meanings? Using a survey of 25 CPS parents interviews with 11 CPS parents, I explored how these preferences affect parental school choice. CPS parents are particularly concerned with issues of safety, identity, and transportation. The paper concludes by discussing how a better understanding geographical factors in parental school choice may provide a basis for more effective policies to promote racial and socioeconomic equity.