

VIII. A Preview of Our Future Reports

In this report, we have described the data we collected during 1999–2000 and our major findings, providing a detailed description of the 57 MSAP projects funded in 1998 and the 292 schools in which their programs operate. As we have indicated throughout in sections titled “What We Hope to Learn,” important questions remain unanswered.

During the 2000–01 school year, we will gather additional data, first by reviewing documents made available from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). These include the annual performance reports and the supplemental reports on student achievement that MSAP projects submit to ED. We will conduct another round of interviews with the MSAP Project Directors and will ask them to complete another Project Survey. We will also administer Principal Surveys to the principals of all MSAP schools. We will continue to seek state data to supplement the District Data Request we issued in 1999–2000. We will conduct a second set of visits to the Case Study sites, and this time they will include Teacher Surveys for teachers in both MSAP and comparison schools and student focus groups in some of the schools.

These data will make substantial contributions to our evaluation, particularly the following:

- Enrollment data will help us determine the progress that MSAP targeted schools are making in meeting their desegregation objectives.
- Data on teacher and principal background and demographic characteristics will enable us to compare the principals and teachers in MSAP schools with those in other public schools.
- Case Study data will help us clarify the ways that MSAP is supporting—or failing to support—systemic reform efforts.
- Teacher Surveys in the Case Study projects and our observations in the MSAP and comparison schools in these eight sites will broaden our understanding of innovative practices in MSAP schools.
- Achievement data will help us determine the progress that MSAP schools are making in meeting their desegregation objectives.
- Student-level data in the Case Study districts will permit fine-grained analyses of student achievement in both MSAP and comparison schools.
- Achievement data will also permit us to compare the gains of minority and non-minority students and of both high and low poverty students.
- Information from multiple sources, including grantee documents, Project Director interviews, Project Surveys, Principals Surveys, Case Study observations, and achievement data will help us identify characteristics of magnet schools that seem to account for magnet student achievement gains or losses.
- Project Director and Case Study interviews will extend our understanding of the ways in which districts plan to continue their projects after funding ends in summer 2001. A final set of Project Director interviews, in fall 2001, will enable us to identify whether projects have in fact continued.