



The History of Project U-S

50th Anniversary Edition



June 1963 - November 2015

Coordinated by



Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program

“Mission Statement”

The purpose of the Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program (“Program”) has been established by New York State law and the regulations of the State Education Department (SED). The purpose is:

“To voluntarily decrease racial isolation, deconcentrate poverty and enhance opportunities for students in the Rochester City School District and in the suburban districts of the Greater Rochester Area.”

In order to accomplish this mission, pupils residing in the participating districts may apply for transfer from the Rochester City School District to suburban school districts or from suburban districts to the Rochester City School District through the Program.



*New York State Education Law Section 3602 (36);
SED 8 NYCRR Section 175.24*

The History of Project U-S

June 1963

In the midst of a series of racial disturbances, New York State Commissioner of Education, James Allen, issues a directive asking every school district in the state to answer two questions:

1. What is the status of racial imbalance in your school?
2. What are you going to do about it?

Most districts reply that there is “no racial imbalance” and therefore, “no problem.” One enlightened school district, however, the Rochester suburb of West Irondequoit, sees the situation quite differently. Because their district has practically no minority students at all, they feel that their students are being deprived of meaningful opportunities to interact with children of other cultures.

August 1963

The Rochester Board of Education adopts a policy resolution stating that it believes “improved racial balance in the schools will contribute to a more favorable climate for increasing pupil motivation and achievement” and directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop plans during the 1963-64 school year which would reduce significant racial imbalance in schools.

September 1963

The Board of Education submits a report to the Commissioner of Education entitled “Racial Imbalance in the Rochester Public Schools.”

November 1963

The first Trans-Urban Exchange between social studies classes of Madison High School, 50.2% black student population, and Marshall High School, one non-white student, takes place. It is instituted by Madison Social Studies Department Head Norman N. Gross. Similar exchanges between East Irondequoit and Brighton suburbs follow, as well as “live in” exchanges with families from RCSD to Penfield.

June 1964

Suburban Brighton School District No. 1 invites 25 elementary pupils from inner city to attend summer school in Brighton. Twenty-five pupils from School No. 19 do so.

July 1964

At a special meeting of the West Irondequoit School Board, Dr. Joseph Cole raises a question as to whether; space permitting, underprivileged pupils might be brought into the district on some form of tuition basis.

October 1964

West Irondequoit Superintendent of Schools, Earle Heimer, invites Herman Goldberg, Superintendent of Schools of the City of Rochester, to discuss “What can you do to get city children to our schools?”

November 1964

The West Irondequoit School District Board of Education discusses its responsibility in carrying out the directives of State Commissioner of Education, James Allen, toward reduction of racial imbalance and the improvement of educational opportunities for the culturally disadvantaged.

February 1965

The West Irondequoit School Board unanimously passes the following motion: “RESOLVED, that the Board of Education supports the authorized exploratory action taken on February 1, 1965, by President Stettner with Mr. Herman Goldberg, Superintendent of the City of Rochester Public Schools, and endorses the concept of the West Irondequoit Central School District serving as a receiving school system for pupils from the Rochester City School District.”

March 1965

The West Irondequoit School Board discusses the May 12th meeting. The meeting is to be co-sponsored by the Council on Race and Religion and the University of Rochester. It is decided that it would be advisable to hold a series of meetings to acquaint teachers and community leaders with the Board’s plan to have the district serve as a receiving school for children from the City of Rochester.

The Board unanimously adopts the following resolution proposed by Dr. Cole:

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, an educational program with the highest ideals cannot be static in the face of changing educational needs and methods, expanding areas of knowledge, and shifting social values; and

WHEREAS, such an educational program must fulfill its obligation to prepare children for life in a democratic society and to enable them to meet one of the great needs of that society, improvement in interracial and intercultural relations; and

WHEREAS, the racial and cultural makeup of West Irondequoit, which is generally that of white families with above-average economic background, does not provide the environment and opportunities for such intercultural experiences.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Education of Central School District No. 3, Town of Irondequoit; accept an obligation to provide for our children opportunities to become better acquainted with the several races and cultures of the greater Rochester community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, to implement this policy the Board of Education encourages the administrative and teaching staff to develop:

1. Curriculum materials that contain historical, anthropological, and cultural information regarding the contributions of the Negro and other minority groups.
2. A program of exchange visits with the Rochester Public Schools in areas of mutual interest, i.e.; musical performances, art projects, social events, sports days, drama productions and other such activities.
3. And in particular, a program that will permit West Irondequoit School District to serve as a receiving school for pupils currently enrolled in racially imbalanced schools in Rochester.

At an adjourned meeting of the Board, Mr. Eric Stettner, Board President, describes to eleven members of the Irondequoit Teachers Association Executive Committee, the events that led to the adoption by the board on March 23, 1965, of a policy for educational enrichment in inter-cultural relations. He reads the policy statement and outlines the Board's plans for its implementation. The ITA representatives present indicate enthusiasm for and support of the Board's action.

June 1965

Brighton summer school program continues, with 35 pupils from School No. 19. PTA of both schools provides funds.

September 1965

On invitation from the West Irondequoit Central School District, 24 first grade pupils transfer from School No. 19 to West Irondequoit. (Funds are provided from State Education Department and Title 1, Elementary and Secondary Education Act Program (ESEA)).

March 1966

Rochester Board of Education reaffirms its policy to reduce social and racial imbalance.

June 1966

Brighton summer school program continues, with 42 pupils from School No. 19. Brockport (New York) Campus School of State University College invites 75 elementary pupils from the inner city and 75 pupils from the Brockport area to attend summer school together. Suburban Penfield Central School District invites 30 elementary pupils from inner city to attend summer school.

July 1966

Staff is appointed for Project UNIQUE (United Now for Integrated Quality Urban Suburban Education), created under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Program. Dr. Elliot S. Shapiro, a nationally known educator, is named project director.

July 1966

Norman N. Gross is appointed Administrator of the Urban Suburban Program (PROJECT US), one of the nine components of Project UNIQUE. Its major objective is "the reduction of minority group isolation" in Monroe County, including the City School District of Rochester.

September 1966

Harley School, a private suburban day school, invites six inner city elementary children to attend Harley for the entire school year. Brockport invites 32 elementary pupils to attend regular day school program. Brighton invites 57 elementary pupils to attend regular day school program. West Irondequoit program continues, with 49 pupils from city schools in grades 1 and 2.

February 1967

Student Union for Integrated Education (SUIE) is formed by black and white, urban and suburban, public and non-public school students to press for a reduction in racial isolation in Monroe County.

June 1967

Invitations are received from Brighton, Brockport and Penfield to continue the elementary/summer school transfer programs, with numbers increased to 75 pupils to be sent to each of these schools. Invitation is received from suburban Pittsford Central School District for 50 elementary and 50 secondary inner city children to Pittsford summer schools. Invitation is received from Greece School District to send 100 inner city elementary children to summer school. Invitation is received from Webster School District to send 100 inner city elementary children to summer school.

September 1967

Invitation is received from Brockport to continue day school program for inner city children, with number increased from 32 to 80. West Irondequoit increases program from 49 to 64 children. St. Jerome School in East Rochester becomes the first suburban parochial school to participate in the Urban-Suburban Transfer Program. St. Thomas the Apostle in West Irondequoit also initiates a program. Invitation is received from Brighton to continue day school program for 57 inner city children. World of Inquiry School opens with 130 children in attendance. This is an alternative school, located in the city, which offers education in an open setting. Forty white suburban students voluntarily attend.

December 1967

Brighton Central School District's Board of Education reiterates its position on racial balance, stating its belief "that quality integrated education should be a major goal of the public schools and a concern of all Americans."

January 1968

Urban-Suburban Saturday Art Enrichment Program with West Irondequoit is started.

February 1968

Quality Education Now, a group of 100 urban suburban educators and parents, is formed.

September 1968

Suburban programs continue to expand with Penfield, Pittsford, and Wheatland-Chili taking 99 city children into their classrooms.

A number of non-public schools also join the program.

October 1968

Three-year West Irondequoit study of bussing program is completed by independent researchers. The study concludes that “inner-city blacks have benefited from the experience” and “the integrated whites learn more because the blacks are there.”

June 1969

Pittsford doubles number of inner city students to 100. Wheatland-Chili doubles number of inner city students to 28. West Irondequoit and parochial schools also increase number of inner city students. Number of Rochester pupils participating in voluntary transfer plans increase to more than 3,000.

July 1969

Rochester is singled out by Federal Government as one of five school systems that has made progress in desegregation. (Planning Educational Change – How Five School Systems Desegregated, Volume IV, U.S. Government Printing Office, FS5.238:38013.)

February 1970

Rochester School Board pledges its continued support for the voluntary programs.

March 1971

It is announced that an additional 107 inner city school children will be voluntarily bussed to suburban schools next fall as a result of a \$310,000 grant received by six Monroe County School Districts.

February 1972

Final evaluation report of PROJECT US by Genesee Valley School Development Association indicates that 73 percent of the parents of children participating in the program feel that it should “be made a permanent and regular part of the school district program.”

February 1973

Penfield School Board decides to accept up to eight inner city pupils in exchange for Penfield district pupils attending the World of Inquiry School in the city.

June 1973

Federal grant of nearly \$1.7 million dollars is received by West Irondequoit School District, which will permit practically doubling the number of minority students that will be able to transfer to suburban schools next fall (to approximately 700)

1974

Mrs. Irene Marrero becomes Community Liaison and serves until her retirement in 1996. Mrs. Marrero served as a volunteer when the program first got its start prior to becoming a staff member.

May 1974

Six Rochester minority parents file suit in Washington, D.C., in an attempt to force the Federal Government to provide money for the endangered Urban Suburban Transfer Program (PROJECT US).

August 1974

An unexpected \$500,000 grant is negotiated directly with Department of Health, Education and Welfare officials in Washington. This makes it possible for PROJECT US and the Metropolitan World of Inquiry School to continue.

April 1975

All Parents Together sponsors panel program on voluntary integration participation. The panel consists of high school students, parents, and teachers involved in the Urban-Suburban Transfer Program.

August 1975

Project Administrator Norman N. Gross announces that the Urban-Suburban Transfer Program will operate this fall, but at sharply reduced levels due to a \$1.3 million budget cut.

March 1976

New York State Legislature's final budget report recommends restoring \$300,000 in 1976-77 budget to pay for the Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program.

June 1976

PROJECT US Program Administrator Norman N. Gross announces that program will receive \$861,000 grant from HEW, which is less than half of \$1.8 million requested. Gross says the money will allow approximately 800 minority students to attend school in six suburban districts – and will make possible the merger of the Metropolitan World of Inquiry School and the Brockport Campus School.

January 1977

New York State Governor Hugh Carey's proposed budget as announced does not include any funding for the Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program, which relies on the state to pay for transportation.

March 1977

New York State Legislature includes \$300,000 in budget for transportation of students in the Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program.

May 1977

Pittsford School Board votes to extend PROJECT US to grades 10, 11 and 12.

June 1977

\$1.2 million grant award for Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program is announced at recognition dinner for its original students who have started with the program 1965, have just graduated from Irondequoit High School. Project Director says new grant will provide opportunities for hundreds of additional children to participate.

June 1978

\$1.086 million is received under the Emergency School Aid Act, Title VII, for the 78-79 school year. (\$2.214 million had been requested under the Special Projects Category.)

March 1979

The Webster School Board, by vote of 4-1, turns down a proposal to join Project US and enroll 25 urban children their schools. (A Board appointed committee had previously approved the proposal.)

June 1979

\$2.214 million is requested; Project US receives \$1.7 million under Title VII, Emergency School Aid Act, Special Project Category.

September 1979

Forty-one suburban students begin attending city schools in the Operation Enrichment magnet school program.

May 1980

Project US launches suburban-wide direct mail campaign, which successfully enlists over 150 suburban non-minority children to attend urban “enrichment” schools. (Over 400 students applied to enter the program, but the Rochester City School District was unable to satisfy all the requests for placement.)

October 1980

Project US Program Administrator, Norman N. Gross, announces that \$1.77 million is received under Title VI, Emergency School Aid Act, Basic Grants Category for the 80-81 school year. (A five-year Grant had been requested.)

December 1981

Grant received from Daisy Marquis-Jones Foundation for “A Two-Way Program For Reduction of Minority Group Isolation Through Environmental Education.” Activities sponsored under this program include: Student exchanges between selected City schools and the participating suburban schools and the Diocesan schools, visits to historic sites and cultural centers of the city and county.

June 1982

Dr. Norman Gross retires. Dr. Gross saw the Urban-Suburban Program established and led the Program through its difficult years.

September 1982

Monroe #1 BOCES becomes Local Education Agency for the Urban-Suburban Program. Districts assume financial responsibility for the Urban-Suburban Program.

Funding from Marie D. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation enable the Graduate School of Education and Human Development of the University of Rochester, and Urban-Suburban Program to jointly sponsor a national conference, *“Toward Increased Voluntary Interdistrict Integration in New York State.”* Professor Gary Orfield, Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago was principal speaker. Dr. Guilbert C. Hentaschke and Dr. William T. Lowe, University of Rochester submits a report based on the conference.

May 1983

Dr. Hap Mtivier, SUNY Brockport, Dr. Linda Sheive, Syracuse University and Urban-Suburban Program sponsor leadership workshop for Urban-Suburban Parents, made possible by New York State “Block Grant” funds.

September and January 1985-1986

Dr. William Parker, Vice-Chancellor for Minority Affairs, University of Kentucky conducts workshops for parents and students of West Irondequoit, Brighton and Pittsford.

June 1986

Urban-Suburban Program celebrates 20th Anniversary at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. The celebration is commemorated with the establishment of the Urban-Suburban Scholarship Award. The Reidman Corporation of Rochester through the auspices of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce donated \$3,000 to cover two award years.

Nazareth College offers a scholarship of \$2,000 per year to a senior who proposes to enter the teaching profession beginning September 1986, and an additional amount each year until there are four Urban-Suburban students receiving scholarships at Nazareth College.

Announcement of the Norman Gross annual award to a student who most nearly exemplifies those characteristics, which uniquely exhibit Norman Gross' life: A passion for justice, courage, faith in our youth and optimism.

Announcement of the first annual Norman Gross award to a staff member who in his/her dealings with Urban-Suburban students, demonstrates courage, patience and abiding faith in our youth.

June 1987

Dr. George C. Simmons retires. Dr. Simmons served as program director from 1982 to 1987.

July 1989

Mrs. Tawanda Johnson joins the Urban-Suburban Program as Administrative Assistant.

December 1994

Mrs. Evelyn M. Scott retires. Mrs. Scott served as program director from 1987 to 1994.

June 1995

Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program 30th Anniversary held at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. Dr. Walter Cooper, New York State Regent is Honorary Chairperson of the celebration and keynote speaker. Special recognition given to Dr. Norman N. Gross, Dr. George C. Simmons, and Mrs. Evelyn M. Scott.

December 1996

Ms. Marlene Allen becomes Community Liaison and serves until her retirement in 2012.

September 1998

Lawsuit filed in the United State District Court, Western District of New York: Laurie A. Brewer and Jodie Foster parents/guardians of Jessica L. Haak, a minor, v. (against) the West Irondequoit Central School District, the Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program, and Monroe Number One Board of Cooperative Education Services. Plaintiffs argued that denial of Jessica's transfer request to attend West Irondequoit School District on the basis of race violated her right to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment.

October 2000

United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit: Concluded the United State District Court, Western District of New York judgement should be reversed. *"A compelling state interest can be found in a program that has as its objective the reduction of racial isolation and what appears to be de facto segregation."*

October 2000

Urban-Suburban Governance Board establishes a sub-committee to identify strategies for recruiting minority teachers to suburban school districts.

January 2001

Approximately 20 representatives from local colleges, Monroe County school districts, Monroe County School Board Association, and teacher unions attend a brainstorming session on minority teacher recruitment.

April 2001

Urban-Suburban Program offers the first Annual Program-Wide Parent Conference. Speakers include Dr. Cedric Alexander, Rochester Police Department, Father Larry Tracey, and Dr. Iris Banister.

May 2001

The first Annual Think About Teaching Conference is held at Nazareth College. The goal of the conference was to encourage students who are underrepresented in the education field to consider careers in education. Over 300 minority students from all over Monroe County attended the conference.

August 2002

Fairport Central School District Board of Education begins discussing diversity at their summer workshops.

February 2003

Dr. William Cala, Superintendent, Fairport Central School District, Ms. Theresa J. Woodson, Program Director, and Mr. Adam Urbanski, President, Rochester Teachers Association, appear on WXXI television, “Need To Know” program. Topic: “Does the Urban-Suburban Program Still Have Relevance?”

April 2003

Fairport Central School District Board of Education, administrators, Urban-Suburban Program staff, parents and students take part in a Community Information Meeting discussing pros and cons of participating in the Urban-Suburban Program.

August 2003

Fairport Central School District Board of Education officially adopts resolution to participate in the Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program beginning September 2003, thus becoming the first new suburban district to join the program in thirty-five years.

September 2003

Fairport Central School District invites twelve Rochester City students to attend school in Fairport.

June 2005

Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program 40th Anniversary held at Logan's Party House. Honorary Chairpersons: Maggie Brooks, Monroe County Executive and William A. Johnson, Jr., Mayor City of Rochester. Mistress and Master of Ceremony: Charlotte Clark, WHAM TV-13 and Kenneth "Tiny" Glover, Pittsford Alumni. Speakers: Mr. Jeffrey B. Crane, Superintendent, West Irondequoit School District. Mrs. Iris Banister, Principal, Charter School of Science & Technology, Dr. Richard Mace, former Superintendent, Penfield School District, and Dr. William Cala, Superintendent, Fairport School District. Theme: "*Building the Community One Student at a Time.*"

July 2006

Honeoye Falls Lima Central School District considers participating in Urban-Suburban Program.

September 2006

The Urban-Suburban Alumni Association is established.

June 2007

United States Supreme Court decision rejects voluntary integration plans in Seattle, Washington and Louisville, Kentucky. Integration plans in both cities were designed to address racial segregation by allowing consideration of students' race in making assignments. The decision did not, however, signal the end of voluntary integration plans across the country. The Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program Governance Board remains committed to voluntarily reducing racial isolation in their respective suburban school districts.

August 2009

Hilton Central School District considers participating in Urban-Suburban Program.

May 2010

Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program 1st Annual Award Ceremony held at Calkins Road Middle School in Pittsford. The purpose of the Award Ceremony is to recognize and honor the academic accomplishments of program students, grades 6-12. The categories recognized include Special Service, Principal's Award, Academic Excellence, Academic Achievement, Core Honor Awards, Perfect Attendance, Scholarships and the graduating seniors.

June 2010

Churchville Chili Central School District considers participating in Urban-Suburban Program.

May 2012

Miss Jessica Lewis, former Program graduate (West Irondequoit, Class of 2003) is appointed Community Liaison.

October 2012

Urban-Suburban Alumni Association reactivated with Leticia Astacio, Ebony Miller, Keisha Arnold and Alexandria Curry as board members.

March 2013

First Annual Youth Leadership Summit sponsored by the Alumni Association.

August 2014

Urban-Suburban Program joins Facebook.

September 2014

First Annual Senior Night held for Program graduates and their parents. The purpose of Senior Night is to provide pertinent information about the college going process and to hear from a panel of alumni who speak to topics such as the college application process, Higher Educational Opportunity Program/Financial Aid, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, SUNY colleges vs. private colleges and the Urban-Suburban scholarship application process.

October 2014

50th anniversary yearlong celebration begins with a kick off breakfast at Irondequoit High School where the program got its start. Program asks all families to pledge \$50 for program scholarship fund in celebration of 50 years of service.

East Rochester Union Free School District considers participating in Urban-Suburban Program.

Miss Jessica Lewis is appointed Communications Specialist.

November 2014

Mrs. Felicia Smith is appointed the Program's Community Liaison.

Spencerport Central School District considers participating in Urban-Suburban Program.

February 24, 2015

Spencerport Central School District Board of Education unanimously votes to adopt the Urban-Suburban Program, effective September 2015.

March 17, 2015

East Irondequoit Central School District Board of Education unanimously votes to adopt the Urban-Suburban Program, effective September 2015.

March 24, 2015

East Rochester and Hilton Central School Districts' Boards of Education unanimously vote to adopt the Urban-Suburban Program effective September 2015.

April 15, 2015

Kendall Central School District Board of Education votes to adopt the Urban-Suburban Program effective September 2015.

April 25, 2015

Program hosts inaugural 3 on 3 basketball tournament to support scholarship fund.

June 3, 2015

Governance Board approves extended mission statement “To voluntarily decrease racial isolation, deconcentrate poverty and enhance opportunities for students in the Rochester City School District and in the suburban districts of the Greater Rochester Area.”

June 12-13, 2015

50th anniversary includes a two-day weekend celebration with a commemorative gala, alumni post gala event and a family picnic. Gala speakers include Dr. Walter Cooper, former NYS Regent and gala co-chair; Jennifer Leonard, CEO of Community Foundation and gala co-chair; Dr. Alice Young, Program pioneer; Kirk Holmes, member of the original 24 participants; and Quinisha Anderson, Penfield alumna and Alumni Association President.

September 2015

On invitation from the East Irondequoit Central School District, eight students are accepted as educational residents via the Urban-Suburban Program. Likewise, East Rochester accepts 16 students; Hilton accepts eight students; Kendall accepts two students; and Spencerport accepts 17 students.

November 2015

Webster Central School District Board of Education unanimously votes to adopt the Urban-Suburban Program, effective September 2016.

January 2016

The Urban-Suburban Program is featured on PBS Newshour in a segment entitled *Chasing the Dream*. This segment chronicled the program’s history, recent growth, and provided commentary from program participants, staff, and partners.

TaShonda Jefferson is appointed Community Liaison, replacing Jessica Lewis.

April 2016

The Urban-Suburban Program is recognized by Causewave Community Partners at its Annual Awards Ceremony. The Program received the W.B. Potter Founder’s Award for its service to the community and being “a results-oriented collaborative that both fills a community need and serves as a role model for other partnerships.”



The Urban-Suburban Program

Monroe #1 BOCES

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Rochester, New York 14625

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

12 months a year, including

all school recesses and summer vacation

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