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The problem – People "Vote" with their Feet

- Politicians draw school boundaries. People then vote with their feet. This results in "spatial sorting".
- Poor people get the worst schools, but so does anyone who lives near them. The system actually creates the concentrated poverty and blight that we see in almost all major cities.
- Spatial sorting creates sprawl, long commutes, higher CO_2 emissions and air pollution.

Model Solutions

Vermont's Tuitioning System

- 93 school districts have no public school. Students have tuition paid to other districts or to independent schools.
- Tuitioning increases property values – particularly relative to districts with weak schools.

The Edgewood Experiment

- A privately funded tuitioning program increased residential and commercial property values, even though a small minority of children used them.

Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA)

- OCSA is located in downtown Santa Ana, California. It is the only charter school in the state to be funded specifically as an urban infrastructure project.
- Families move into Santa Ana after students are accepted.
- A blighted urban core was revitalized.
- Crime dropped

Franklin Academy (Wake Forest, NC)

- "It Makes a Village: Residential Relocation after Charter School Admission " *Real Estate Economics*
- The school is a remarkably strong attractor of families -- stronger than any study has found jobs to be.

SweetBay – University Academy and Academy Park

- A Florida master-planned community built on charter school access.

What should policymakers do?

- School assignment lines divide people and create concentrated poverty. Stop using them.
- Don't blame the school systems/administrators, they didn't create the problem.
- Don't ask school systems/administrators to solve the problem. They can't.
- If you want families who care about education to live in an area, give them choices outside the assignment-based systems. Most will be happy with assigned schools, but they need to know that they won't be trapped there if it isn't working for their child.