SHAPING A NEW SUBURBAN REALITY: A SCHOOL DISTRICT'S RESPONSE

TO ITS CHANGING STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC

by

Katie McConnell, MS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The University of Houston-Clear Lake

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE

DECEMBER, 2016

SHAPING A NEW SUBURBAN REALITY: A SCHOOL DISTRICT'S RESPONSE

TO ITS CHANGING STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC

by

Katie McConnell

APPROVED BY

_____
Michele Kahn, PhD, Chair

_____
Denise McDonald, EdD, Committee Member

_____
Shanna Graves, PhD, Committee Member

_____
Lisa Jones, EdD, Committee Member

RECEIVED BY THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION:

_____
Joan Y. Pedro, PhD, Associate Dean

_____
Mark D. Shermis, PhD, Dean

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

From the onset of this program, there has been no question that this was going to be a challenge like no other I have faced. As was clearly articulated by a classmate on the first night of course work, "Doctor school ain't no joke." I can say now, with absolute certainty, that truer words have never been spoken. While it has been a challenge, the lessons that have come from coursework and the experience itself have not been lost. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge some of those who have supported me through all of this learning.

First, to my parents--thank you. From my earliest memories, you have always told me I could do whatever I set my mind to. I think it is fair to say that none of us thought this is what I would set my mind to…but I couldn't be happier that I did! Although I might not have always been the easiest to handle, from my younger years through this experience, I hope this is proof you both can breathe easy knowing you have done your job and done it well.

Secondly, to my friends--thank you and I'm sorry I've ignored so many of you for so long! I couldn't have surrounded myself with a more supportive, tolerant, and entertaining group of people. The decision to start program sprang from an experience that shook all of us to our core. Together, we weathered that storm and together we have survived this experience. It would not have been possible without plenty of laughter, porch sessions, and the occasional shenanigans. It is my promise that response to invites

will be yes from here on; unless there's something I don't want to do, then the answer will still be no.

This research would not have been possible without the support and guidance of my committee. Although the topic evolved rather substantially from where it began, thanks to each of you for believing there was a story to be told here and guiding the process to arrive at what I believe to be interesting results. Additionally, I could not have asked for better participants in the study. Thanks to each of you for your willingness to turn back the hands of time and reflect on the past, and trusting me to tell your story. Your thoughtful insight exceeded my wildest expectations.

And lastly, to the community in the study that raised me as a child and as a professional, taught me tolerance and acceptance, and empowers me to this day--stay proud.

ABSTRACT

SHAPING A NEW SUBURBAN REALITY: A SCHOOL DISTRICT'S RESPONSE

TO ITS CHANGING STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC

Katie McConnell
University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2016

Dissertation Chair: Michele Kahn, PhD

Despite historical patterns of racial homogeneity, the composition of suburban areas and

their schools are changing throughout the United States. This fact presents major

challenges to the suburban schools charged with educating all students, including those

that do not fit a suburban stereotype. This study focuses on one suburban community in

Texas that experienced a significant change in racial and socio-economic demographics

in the 1970s and 1980s. The research sought to understand how the change was

experienced by different members of the school community, including school personnel,

students, and community members.

Using qualitative data collected through interviews with various members of the school community, a critical ethnography analysis was conducted. Based on normative, subjective, and objective claims made by the participants, the researcher made inferences on the participants' statements to reconstruct them in to truth, identity, and subjective claims. These reconstructed claims allowed major trends to emerge. The trends that emerged include understanding the how and why of the demographic change, privilege, geography, the desire to maintain control, fear and safety, high school determinations, families, and gangs. The inclusion of *Personal Asides*, based on the researcher's experiences being raised in the area and later as an employee of the district, were included as a narrative process to enhance the methodology and as an additional data source.

As more districts across the country are facing such trends, taking a deeper look as to how such changes were experienced by different members of one educational community underscores the difficulty of such a transition and the necessity to be proactive and responsive to the needs of the community. Recommendations made based on the results suggest that consideration must be given equity within our school system to ensure that as more minority students move to suburban areas, we cannot perpetuate systems that have for many years failed too many minority students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The demographic composition of the United States is changing. According to data from the United States Census Bureau (2011), the current demographic breakdown of the United States is as follows: 62.1% non-Hispanic White, 17.4% Hispanic, 13.2% non-Hispanic Black, and 7.3% Non-Hispanic Other. The United States Census Bureau projects that by 2050 the population of the United States will be 46.6% non-Hispanic White, 28% Hispanic, 13% Black, and 12.4% Non-Hispanic other. While this stands to cause many challenges nation-wide, Texas' demographics already closely mirrors the 2050 projections, according to the 2010 Census.

Diverse ethnic and racial groups face unique challenges both within the school system and upon exit of the school system. According to survey results from the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (2014), which included 97,000 public schools, representing 49 million students, Black and Hispanic students have less access to advanced mathematics and science courses and are more likely to be taught by first-year teachers than White students. Another challenge includes the inequity of discipline procedures: Black students were expelled at rates three times higher than White students; Black females are suspended at rates higher than all other girls and most boys; one in four boys of color with a disability received an out-of-school suspension; and one in five minority girls with disabilities received out of school suspensions (U.S. Department of

Education, 2014). These experiences can impact students in many ways, including the completion of requirements for a high school diploma. Data from the 2013-2104 school year in Texas, as presented in the Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2013-2014 Report (2015), shows that within the four year cohort graduating in 2014, the state had an average graduation rate of 88.3%. White students graduated at a rate above the state average at 93%; whereas, Black students graduated at a rate of 84.2% and Hispanic students graduated at a rate of 85.5%.

Upon completion of high school, Black students are more likely to attend a two-year college, go to school part time, and take remedial classes (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2011). The U.S. Department of Education (2013) reported that of the students that entered college in 2005, 62% of White students, 51% of Hispanic students, and 40% of Black students earned a degree within six years.

These same trends of inequality can be seen through financial realities across the country. According to the Survey of Consumer Finances from the Federal Reserve Board (2013), minority families earn approximately 65% of White families, with White families earning an average of $56,600 and non-White families earning an average of $37,100. White families also maintain six times the net worth of minority families (Federal Reserve Board, 2013). The U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (2011) indicates that throughout the U.S., 15% of the total population live at or below the federal poverty line. In Texas, 17.5% of the total population lives at or below the federal poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). When broken down by race, 15.9% of Whites, 26.2% of Hispanics, and 24.9% of Blacks in Texas live at or below the poverty line. Educational attainment correlates with levels of poverty in Texas across all races: 4% of those with a

bachelor's degree, 10% of those with some college or an associate's degree, 15% of those with a high school diploma (or equivalent), and 29% of those with less than a high school diploma live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

Since the 1970s, there has been a gradual decline of White families in large metropolitan areas because they are moving to suburbs or small cities (Orfield & Lee, 2005). This trend, often times referred to as "White flight" is commonly attributed to suburban developments, causing inner cities to become concentrated areas of poverty and minorities and the suburbs are comprised of homogeneous (White) populations, taking money, jobs, and key resources from the inner city (Keith, 1996; Orfield & Lee, 2005; Ward & O'Sullivan, 2006). Schools in suburbs have historically been homogeneous in their populations, serving a majority of White, middle-class families (Holme, Diem & Welton, 2014).

Despite historical patterns of homogeneity, the composition of suburban areas are changing. As we prepare as a nation to face continuing changes in the demographic make-up of our country and our schools, special attention must be paid to the effectiveness of our school systems and how they will meet the changing need of students. A central tenant of American civilization is that schooling is an avenue for social betterment (Rury, 2005). With a long history of failing policy and practice to meet the needs of our minority students, we continue to see an achievement gap that falls along racial and socio-economic lines. Many schools districts beyond major urban areas will continue to be faced with serving a growing number of minority students as our suburbs continue to expand and diversify.

Suburban and urban sectors of the education system are drastically different due to resources, teacher attrition rate, and lack of parental support (Wright, 2012). As school districts transition from urban to suburban, it is necessary to take these factors in to consideration. Peiser (2001) asserts that sprawl, or rapid often times unplanned rapid urban growth, is a complex, multi-faceted problem requiring multi-faceted solutions. The transition in schools is just one of the many factors that must be considered.

The need to act upon this reality will be critical for the continued success of our students. There are many communities that have already undergone such changes and can serve as examples as to how to address a changing demographic. One such community, Amity, is located in the southwest area of Houston, Texas. The now bustling community of Amity, Texas had humble beginnings as a rice farming and ranching community in the late 19th century. Throughout its history, the community transitioned from an agrarian farming and ranching community to a booming suburb of Houston in the 1970s and the community is now identified, through legislation passed in the Texas legislature in 2007, as the 'International District.' On its website, the school district itself proudly boasts that among the more than 45,000 students in the district, nearly all cultures are represented with more than 80 languages and dialects spoken.

The expansion and diversification of the suburban student demographics continues to be a phenomenon facing many suburban school districts around the country. According to Fry (2009), the student population in suburban schools not only increased by 3.4 million students between 1994 and 2009, 99% of this expansion is attributed to the enrollment of minority students. This study explored the specific growth and diversity that occurred in the Amity area and, more specifically, in the Amity Independent School

District (AISD) and identify ways in which the school district addressed the change in its growing and diversifying student demographic. In order to understand the sweeping impacts of growth and diversification in Amity, it is necessary to understand from a historical point of the view the development of this hard-working, resilient community.

A Historical Look

The community was originally established just a few months after the beginning of the Civil War on August 16, 1861. Originally occupying 1,250 acres of land, 15 miles southwest of a major metropolitan city, the land changed hands several times throughout its early days yet the various owners worked with one another to promote the development, with an early focus on transportation outlet infrastructure (Davis, 1991).

The first noted settlers to the area were Dr. and Mrs. Smith, who moved to the area in 1894 (Davis, 1991). Mrs. Smith requested and was granted postal service for the area in 1895; as the postmistress, her name was used to avoid confusion with other, similar names (Davis, 1991). Dr. Smith's nephews soon joined the family and were the first farmers in the community.

The first two-room school house soon opened in the community in 1896 for White students; a one room school house was also opened the same year for the Black children whose parents worked for two of the major ranchers in the community (Davis, 1991). School district officials supported the Black students through a liaison that relayed the needs of the students to the district officials. The designated liaison had 12 children of his on that attended the Black school.

The Great Flood of 1899 and the hurricane of 1900 devastated the community. While many stayed following the flood, 24 of the 30 families in the community departed

after the 1900 hurricane destroyed the corn and cotton crops (Lane, 2014). Following the

devastation, one of the original land owners sought to rebuild the community. Using his

previous knowledge of farming, he began raising rice. The success of the rice farming

enticed many of those who left following the Hurricane of 1900 to return by 1904 and the

community again flourished as a result of the hard work and resiliency of the residents

(Lane, 2014). Soon daily train service was in place for passengers, as well as the

shipment of agricultural products. Rice was the prominent cash crop until 1915 when

cotton became more of a necessity with the onset of World War I (Davis, 1991).

The school district was formally established in 1906 (Market Locator and

Associates, 1972). The schools were contained to a traditional two room school house

until 1911, when it expanded to a three story brick structure on an adjoining plot of land.

The son of one of the Board of Trustee members identified this new building as the big

start for future the schools, noting that the schools grew from three teachers to seven total

faculty members between 1911 and 1919 (Davis, 1991).

By 1914, the community had a population of 150 which it maintained through the

1950s, with several fluctuations through the years (Davis, 1991). In 1917, under Special

Law 551, the community and the schools changed their names to Amity and the Amity

Independent School District, to honor its first postmistress (Davis, 1991; Market Locator

and Associates, 1972).

The Modern Era

An Economic Evaluation of the Greater Amity Area was prepared for the Greater Amity

Chamber of Commerce in August of 1972 by Market Locator and Associates. At this

time, Amity was experiencing significant growth and rapid expansion. Between 1950

and 1970, the population of the Greater Amity Area increased from 1,048 to 20,438, an increase of 1,850.19% (Market Locator and Associates, 1972). The Greater Amity area maintained a nearly 98% White population. Market Locator and Associates (1972) reported that the population of the Greater Amity area was expected to nearly double to 40,301 by 1975. Additionally, The City Planning Commission (1967) estimated the population of the Greater Amity area would be 102,000 in 1990. Construction of the Amity campuses that exist today began with financing from bond issues in the early 1960s.

In the 1972-1973 school year, Amity ISD had seven schools in operation and a staff of nearly 600 (Market Locator and Associates, 1972). At the time, Market Locator and Associates (1972) also noted that enrollment in Amity ISD schools was increasing by approximately 50% each year. The County Tax Research Association indicated that from 1967-1971, Amity ISD had consistently higher spending per pupil and better student-to-teacher ratios than its largest neighboring district. The district was embracing a middle structure (grades six through eight) for the first time in the 1972-1973 school year and had high school vocational programs, including wood and metal shop, auto mechanics, cosmetology, and building trades.

In 1977, a large, nationwide industrial services company bought a tract of land and moved in to the community. To support this facility and the overall population growth, many apartments were soon constructed (Amity ISD, 2014). More than half of the housing units in the area were built between 1970 and 1979 and another quarter of the housing units built between 1980 and 1989 (City of Houston, 2014). With 77% of

housing units built in just twenty years, the time as a typical suburban school district was short lived as the community continued to grow and become more diverse.

Since its inception, Amity has been a community rooted in a strong commitment to the area. With present day schools named after prominent community members of the past, the history of the community continues to exude a sense of reverence towards those original and early inhabitants. Additionally, there is a sense of resilience and community. As the community has evolved as result of nationwide legislation, economic expansion/opportunities, and the overall expansion of the adjacent city, there is a unique opportunity to trace the changes from a once agrarian community to one that is now classified by the Texas Education Agency (2013) as a major suburban district.

Need for the Study

With a history rich in tradition and strong sense of community, often times attributed to the resilience of the original inhabitants, the face of the Amity community and Amity ISD experienced significant changes through the latter portion of the 20th century. In addition to an economic shift from agrarian to a bustling commercial economy, the community also experienced a significant shift in demographics. This continues to be the situation in many communities and school districts surrounding in the area.

In 2006-2007, 41% of students educated in suburban schools were non-White (Fry, 2009). According to the Census Bureau statistics (2011), Texas had five areas, including Midland, Austin, Odessa, Houston, and San Antonio that were among the top twenty nationwide that had the largest percentage change in demographics between 2010 and 2014. The Census Bureau (2011) statistics also indicate four areas in Texas that had

the largest numeric changes in demographics nationwide: Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin/Round Rock, and San Antonio/New Braunfels. Understanding how one community experienced the change in student demographics can provide insights for other communities facing such a change, locally, on the state level, and nationwide.

Purpose of the Study

Throughout the nine counties comprising the major metropolitan area, there are more than 60 independent and municipal school districts. As the demographics of the nation, state and city continue to change, so do the student populations being served. This study focused on the demographic shift in Amity ISD during the peak of its transition between 1980 and 1990. Through a description of the demographic shift among students and staff as well as an analysis of school district's response to the shifts, a clear picture of the transition was painted. Through the analysis, a resource for the community was created, allowing districts currently experiencing a demographic transition or those on the cusp of a transition, the opportunity to see steps taken to address such a shift as well as the impact of the shifts and decisions.

Research Questions

The driving research question behind this study were, in what ways did the demographic change in Amity ISD impact the educational community? With participants in the study engaging with the demographic changes in different ways, as students, school personnel, and community stakeholders, the researcher seeks to identify ways in which they experienced the change, ways the change impacted their participation in the school community and within the larger community. Additionally, responses to the change were examined.

Definitions

Demographic Change- The term demographic change is most commonly used to refer to

shifts in population structure that have emerged in many industrialized nations (IDEAS

2020, n.d.)

Educational Community- The educational community, often time referred to as the

school community, refers to the various individuals, groups, businesses, and institutions

that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school and its community—i.e.,

the neighborhoods and municipalities served by the school (The Glossary of Education

Reform, 2014).

Major Urban District- A district is classified as major urban if: (a) it is located in a

county with a population of at least 840,000; (b) its enrollment is the largest in the county

or at least 75 percent of the largest district enrollment in the county; and (c) at least 35

percent of enrolled students are economically disadvantaged. A student is reported as

economically disadvantaged if he or she is eligible for free or reduced-price meals under

the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Program (Texas Education Agency,

2013).

Major Suburban District- A district is classified as major suburban if: (a) it does not meet

the criteria for classification as major urban; (b) it is contiguous to a major urban district;

and (c) its enrollment is at least three percent that of the contiguous major urban district

or at least 4,500 students. A district also is classified as major suburban if: (a) it does not

meet the criteria for classification as major urban; (b) it is not contiguous to a major

urban district; (c) it is located in the same county as a major urban district; and (d) its

enrollment is at least 15 percent that of the nearest major urban district in the county or at least 4,500 students (Texas Education Agency, 2013).

Summary

The Amity community and Amity ISD experienced a significant demographic shift between 1980 and 1990, after a rapid suburbanization process. This shift imposed a transition in many aspects of the community, in particular the school district. The shift of this district to a major suburban district required significant attention from the school district to address both the growth in the student population as well as the diversification of the population. Due to the major challenges faced in the diversification of schools, the goal of this research is to identify the specifics of the changes that occurred in the district and how those within the district experienced those changes. The findings could serve as a potential resource for districts facing similar transitions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study seeks to examine the impact of a significant demographic change and

the impact on the educational community. In order to gain a broader perspective of the

causes of such changes and how they impact communities, historical consideration was

be given to identify causes of such changes. This chapter will identify patterns of living

as well as how the school systems were desegregated, student performance, and the

current research that is available as it pertains to schools and districts that have

experienced significant demographic changes.

Patterns of Living

In the late 19th century and early 20th centuries, families in the United States lived

in either rural or urban settings (Ward & O'Sullivan, 2006). Many farmers moved to

cities in hopes of a better quality of life because of higher paying jobs and better

education for their children (Ward & O'Sullivan, 2006). Since the mid-1980s, the world

has become increasingly urbanized, with half of the planet's population living in cities by

2008 (Copeland, Tietjen-Smith, Waller, & Waller, 2008). Within the United States,

Hodgkinson (2003) found that half of the population lives in suburbs, one fourth live in

cities, and the other one fourth live in small towns and rural areas.

As urban areas are growing, so are the outlying suburban areas. The suburbs of the modern era are no longer the homogenous, White communities of the past. Enrollment in suburban schools is growing at a significant rate, growing to more than 12 million students nationwide in 2006, which is approximately one-fourth of all public school students across the country (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012). According to a 2008 study by Orfield and Frankenberg, half of minority students in large metropolitan areas now attend suburban schools. Additionally, there are more low-income families living in suburbs (16.5%) than in large metropolitan areas (13.5%) (Brookings Institute, 2012). Suburban school districts no longer fit the suburban stereotype of homogeneous, affluent havens (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012). Additionally, a nationwide average shows that White students attended schools that were 9% Black, while Black students attended schools that were 48% Black, indicating a large difference in average Black student density nationally (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2012).

Historical Impetuses

There have been several events throughout the course of modern history that can be directly tied to the patterns of living throughout the United States, as well as the face of the public education system. As early as the end of World War I, middle class families began moving out of the inner city to new suburbs, surrounding the urban area due to their increased income and perceived improvement in the quality of life (Euchner & McGovern, 2003).

Following WWII, the involvement of the federal government in educational affairs of states increased (Ward & O'Sullivan, 2006). With many young men and women returning from the war, the beginning of the "baby boom", and a greater need for

more skilled workers, there was substantial need to pay adequate attention to the educational needs of the country. There was a growing importance attached to formal education, both as a matter of public policy and as a private concern and race became an overriding issue in the nation's large, urban school districts (Rury, 2005). Education became a major source of economic productivity immediately following World War II (Rury, 2005).

As part of the G.I. Bill of Rights created by President Roosevelt in 1944, more veterans returning from WWII, predominately White males, obtained higher education (Mettler & Welch, 2004). With this higher education, the returning servicemen had access to higher paying jobs and in turn raised the expectations for and access to quality education for their children (Mettler & Welch, 2004). Programs offered through the Veterans Administration and Federal Housing Authority made the suburbs a more appealing option to new families (Rury, 2005). As a result, many of these families moved to the suburban areas. Tax policies in the 1940s and 1950s made it easier to purchase housing, for all families.

According to Ward and O'Sullivan (2006), with an increase in moves to suburban locations, known as suburban or White flight, meant that inner cities became concentrated areas of poverty and minorities. When people moved to the suburbs, they took jobs, resources, and money from the inner city (Keith, 1996). Cities became populated with poorer residents, mostly minorities, who did not have the resources to make the moves outside of the city to access the resources available (Ward & O'Sullivan, 2006). By 1960, when the population of the suburbs first exceeded those of cities, less than 5% of suburbanites were African Americans (Goldsmith & Blakely, 1992).

The color lines between urban and suburban areas continued to be clear. According to the US Department of Housing (2007), The Fair Housing Act, as Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968, "…prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental and financing of dwellings based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin" (US Department of Housing, 2007, "The FAIR HOUSING ACT," para. 1). Yet, for many years, redlining, discriminatory mortgage-lending practices, lack of access to credit, and lower incomes have blocked the homeownership path for African Americans while creating and reinforcing communities segregated by race (Shapiro, Meschede & Osoro, 2013). Although homeownership rates have increased for people of color, African Americans remain the most racially segregated population in the nation, in reference to Whites (Powell, 2009). According to the National Fair Housing Alliance (2009), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and state and local agencies continue to experience a large number of housing discrimination complaints annually and the number of complaints continues to increase each year. There were more than two million cases of housing discrimination in 2013 ("White America," 2015). The Fair Housing Act has increased the freedom of choice for homebuyers but has not necessarily helped produce integrated neighborhoods or addressed segregated living patterns (Powell, 2009).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 restricted discrimination in all institutions receiving federal aid, including schools, and authorized the Justice Department to sue on behalf of minorities if discrimination occurred. According to Orfield and Lee (2005), the civil rights movement was never about simply sitting next to Whites, it was about equalizing opportunity. Although schools had been ordered to be desegregated by the landmark Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka Kansas in 1954, after years of ground work

16

laid by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, many areas

remained segregated. While the ruling required the desegregation of schools, and as a

nation the United States was embarking on a historic movement, there was no framework

of law to support the changes and the changes that would be required (Frankenberg &

Orfield, 2012). As a result, the country remains largely segregated. The composition of

our schools nationwide can be seen in Table 1 below. The average White student attends

school with 72.5% White students; whereas, the average Black and Latino student attends

schools with approximately 65% Black and Latino students (Orfield, Frankenberg, Ee, &

Kuscera, 2014).

Table 1

Racial Composition of Schools Attended by the Average Student of Each Race, 2011-12

| Percent Race in | Racial Composition of School Attendance by Average: | | | |
Each School	White Student	Black Student	Asian Student	Latino Student
% White	72.5%	27.6%	38.8%	25.1%
% Black	8.3%	48.8%	10.7%	10.9%
% Asian	3.9%	3.6%	24.5%	4.7%
% Latino	11.8%	17.1%	22.1%	56.8%
% Other	3.5%	2.9%	3.8%	2.5%

The federal government passed Tile I of the Elementary and Secondary Education

Act (ESEA) of 1965, as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty, to help address the

growing needs of the inner cities and provide aid to schools with large populations of

disadvantaged students (Ward & O'Sullivan, 2006). To date, this remains one of the

most comprehensive federal education bills (Rury, 2005). According to the ESEA, the

purpose of this Title I is to, "…ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant

opportunity to obtain high quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on

challenging State academic assessments" (ESEA, 1965, STATEMENT OF PURPOSE,

para. 1). Compensatory programs like Head Start were developed as a result of Title I of the ESEA. Title I, in particular, addressed the problems of inequality by implicitly acknowledging the importance of equity in education funding (Rury, 2005).

Head Start is a program that has continued to yield positive results. With more than $8.5 billion allocated annually from the federal government in 2014, Head Start served more than 900,000 children. An Impact Study released in 2010 by the US Department of Health and Human Services, focused on the impact Head Start had on children's cognitive development, social-emotional development, receipt of health care services, and parenting practices. It found that there was a fade out effect in cognitive achievement by first grade for three and four year olds, yet for the three year olds in the program there was a positive impact on social-emotional development that carried past first grade (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2010). Statistically significant findings show an increase in health care coverage, leading to a health status nearly equivalent to children in the general population and a positive impact on parenting for three year olds (Puma et al., 2010). Additional research has been conducted from a cost benefit analysis stand point. Head Start has proven to pass a benefit-cost test for long term benefits (Ludwig & Phillips, 2007).

In 2001, President Bush reauthorized the ESEA, known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). When NCLB was issued, President Bush explicitly stated that NCLB could end the soft racism of low expectations (Bush, 2002). After centuries of discrimination and segregation, there continues to be residue of belief that African Americans and other children of color cannot succeed (Rothman, 2001). When young people believe that society does not expect them to succeed, or when they themselves

believe they cannot succeed, they do poorly in school (Steele, 1997).While the intention of the NCLB was to strengthen Title I accountability, many schools in impoverished neighborhoods find it challenging to meet annual improvement goals and affluent schools struggle to address achievement gaps in the performance of critical subgroups, including minority students or the learning disabled (Rury, 2005).

Student Outcomes

While much of the federal legislation passed has focused on urban areas, the diversity of the typical urban area is now reaching suburbs. It is necessary, then, to consider how this diversity is not only impacting student outcomes in the targeted urban areas but also in the suburbs.

There remains a significant and persistent inequality in the achievement of students by race (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012). There is a higher percentage of students of color in poverty households. Children from prosperous neighborhoods tend to perform better on standardized tests than those students from households in poverty (Rury, 2005). Student outcomes when comparing the performance of students in suburban settings and those students in urban settings are represented by significant achievement and graduation rates gaps, with many students in urban settings coming from a lower socio-economic status (Ward & O'Sullivan, 2006). Students in an urban setting scored at least 20 percentile points lower than nonurban students in reading, mathematics, and science (Olson & Jerald, 1998). Numerous studies have also shown how students in urban schools have a greater likelihood of encountering violence, early involvement with drugs, higher rates of absenteeism, and higher incidents of classroom misconduct (Cook,

Gottfedson & Na, 2010; Finn & Servoss, 2015; Henry, Knight, & Thornberry, 2012; Lorsen & Skiba, 2010; Myers, 2012;).

The inequality in student achievement has consequences for students as they exit school and enter the workforce. A comparison of unemployment rates and median weekly earnings based on information from the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics find that those with less than a high school diploma have a 10.7% unemployment rate and median weekly earnings of $475. Those with a bachelor's degree or higher; however, have only a 3.9% unemployment rate and median weekly earnings of $1,189. Balfanz and Legters (2004) found that half of schools where minority populations are the majority of the student population had dropout rates over 40%. As schools and communities continue to change and evolve in their student demographic, it is the responsibility of schools to provide the vehicle in which all students can traverse the path to social betterment.

Diversification of Schools

The diversification of schools does not come easy and presents major challenges (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014; Evans, 2007). The majority of today's teachers, both preservice and in-service teachers and candidates, are middle class, female, White, raised in the suburbs or small towns and have limited contact with those culturally different from themselves (Howey, 2006). Ingersoll and Mays (2011) found that 41% of all elementary and secondary students were minorities but only 16.5% of all elementary and secondary teachers were minorities. Over the past two decades, minorities have entered teaching at higher rates than White teachers but minority teachers also have left schools at higher rates (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton & Frietas, 2010; Ingersoll & Mays, 2011).

Teachers of color are more likely than Whites to work and remain in "hard-to-staff" urban schools with high proportions of students from low-income and minority communities (Achinstein et al., 2010).

Since the integration of schools in the late 1950s, following the landmark Supreme Court decision of Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, schools have experienced demographic change (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014). As was the case following the desegregation of schools, current school demographic change often positions a predominantly White teaching corps with a large number of minority students with whom they have had little experience and who perceive little support or resources to effectively meet the need of the students (Evans, 2007; Frankenberg, 2012). The complicated dynamics of race relations are inevitable and continue to influence both the experiences of the general population, the American education system, as well as all those involved (Evans, 2007). Eighty-five percent of White Americans in the early 1960s believed that Black children were able to get an education as good as a White student; at the peak of desegregation there was an obvious gap in perception due to the difference in experiences ("White America," 2015). Such a gap remains because being White, and the historical privilege that comes with it, means never having to know the reality of those who live and experience a different reality ("White America," 2015).

Local Response to Desegregation

Despite the mandates by federal legislation, many states and local districts filed lawsuits against the desegregation mandates from the federal government following the Brown vs. Board of Education decision. The Houston Independent School District (HISD), a neighboring school district to Amity ISD, was one of these districts. In order to

deepen the understanding and the context of the community, it is important to understand what was happening in the much larger, adjacent district.

In an oral history compiled by the Houston Public Library in 2008, Gene Locke, a lawyer, civil rights activist, political leader, and a self-proclaimed product of the Jim Crow South, describes some of the issues that arose from both the Brown vs. the Board of Education decision and the Civil Rights act of 1964 in the Houston area. He explains that there was a notion that by simply opening the doors, Black students would find their way in, despite the fact that they had been kept apart because of law, custom, political power, and economic repression for many years (Locke, 2008). He asserts that it was as though the community, in Houston and nationwide, was to act as though nothing in the past had happened, and that through opening the doors, everything would be fine (Locke, 2008).

As part of the same oral history project, former Superintendent Billy Reagan of the HISD, beginning in 1974, recounts steps taken by HISD to desegregate schools. He identifies that it was not until 1968 that HISD received a direct court order to desegregate schools, after multiple court cases and appeals. While bussing the students from their neighborhood campuses to different campuses was the primary solution to desegregating the schools, the court order also mandated faculties have an equal number of Black and White teachers at each school which lead to the destabilization of each and every school in the district (Reagan, 2008). HISD, then and still the largest district in the area, did not receive full approval from the United States Justice Department as a school district that was fully 'unitary', as required under the law, until the early 1990s (Reagan, 2008).

Changing Faces of Suburban Schools

Historically, suburban schools have been homogeneous in their populations, serving a majority of White, middle class families (Dreier, Mollenkopf & Swanstorm, 2004; Holme et al., 2014). These White, middle class families seek a suburban education to insulate themselves from urban problems and "hoard" opportunities, both in terms of resources and social networks (Rury & Saatcioglu, 2011). However, homogeneity is no longer reality as student populations have mirrored national residential shifts across the country, with an 82% increase in minority students enrolled in suburban schools in the past 20 years (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Fry, 2009). Fry (2009) identifies that as a result of the rapid growth of minority students and the flat rate of growth among White students, just over 10% (287 of 2,808) suburban school districts have become majority-minority districts.

Studies conducted by various researchers have demonstrated the significant growth of culturally, linguistically, and racially diverse students in suburban schools (Caldas & Bankston III, 2001; Evans, 2007; Huyser, Boerman-Cornell, & Dober, 2011; Shodavaram, Jones, Weaver, Marquez & Ensle, 2009). Fry (2011) found that between 1990 and 2010, the proportion of White suburbanites declined from 81% to 65%. Additionally, Hispanic populations in suburbs have more than doubled from 8% to 17% and African Americans living in the suburbs have increased to 10%, making the suburbs home to a majority of African Americans and Hispanics (Fry, 2011). Latinos are now the largest group of minority students and account for most of the growth in suburbia in many regions, including New England and major parts of the south (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012).

In addition to the cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity brought to suburban schools, the schools are also now faced with an increasing proportion of students from low-income families (Orfield & Frankenberg, 2008). According to the Children's Defense Fund (2010), the number of low-income students in suburban schools has more than doubled in the past 35 years. According to the same research, there are now almost as many low income children living in suburban areas as there are living in urban areas.

As the demographics of an area changes, schools often undergo demographic changes more rapidly than the neighborhoods in which they are located because the first residents moving in to a previously White community are young families of color in search of better educational opportunities for their children (Orfield, 2002). These areas often have older housing and residents that no longer have children in the school systems, allowing the new residents to quickly compromise a majority of students in the schools (Orfield, 2002). Additionally, as schools become more integrated, White families often leave schools to enroll in either private schools or other suburban schools (Caldas & Bankston, 2001).

In addition to the movement of White families from suburban schools, it is also necessary to note that through time, changes in leadership, and policy reversals, there has been a recent increase in the segregation of schools in the South and West (Orfield & Lee, 2005). Close to 90% of White students attend schools that are at least half White; whereas, 77% of Latinos and 73% of Black students attend majority-minority schools (Orfield & Lee, 2005).

The Current Research

As expected, recent literature on shifts in suburban demographics includes an identification of increased diversity and a decrease in White populations (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014). The current literature, however, has not fully explored how suburban district leaders are responding to such changes nor examined the factors that shape their response (Holme et al., 2014). Additionally, there has only been minimal attention focused on what suburban schools can or should consider when faced with a changing school population (Evans, 2007). However, there are a few reviews of historical documents on the school and district level (Evans, 2007), interviews (Holme et al., 2014), and focus groups (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014; Holme et al., 2014).

Diarrassouba and Johnson (2014) conducted a case study in West Michigan, in an area that had experienced significant demographic changes in the past three decades. They identified that national, state, local, and district level decision makers are increasingly making decisions based on demographic change. Training for teachers and support staff were modified, a newcomer center for English learners was created, support systems were generated for culturally and linguistically different students through a community/school district partnership, and partnering with a local academic institution. Ishimaru (2013) highlighted inclusive policies and practices on behalf of districts that require adjustments to curricula and professional development for staff and leadership, as well as the connection of diverse parents to more diverse school personnel. Modifications to hiring practices were also identified through the hiring of new minority teachers and administration as well as offering professional development that addresses social issues, both within the school and curricula.

Evans (2007) conducted a multi-site case study to examine three large suburban schools and their policy and procedural response to an increase in African American students, specifically examining the beliefs, actions, and decisions made by school personnel that occurred relative to the demographic change. Through her work, Evans (2007) identified that as schools undergo demographic change, the power and political struggle about how schools will be defined, for what purpose, and in whose interest becomes more complex and contentious. While Evans did not find any significant modifications to how teachers on these three campuses were teaching, she did find that there were modifications to what was being taught. The research also revealed the influence of faculty belief systems on faculty efficacy as well as the impact of the school's history/prior identity.

The influence of a teacher's beliefs can be found in research from Watson (2011) who studied how teachers perceived behaviors, values, and beliefs of students directly correlated to the satisfaction of their teaching placement. Based on the findings, Evans recommends comprehensive approaches to curriculum and instruction, staffing, professional development, support services, and other areas of schooling to ensure flexibility as other shifts occur.

Holme et al. (2014) conducted a study in which they considered the technical, normative, and political responses of a school district in the metropolitan San Antonio area that has recently experienced a rapid demographic change. The research found that there was a substantial amount of attention and modification of technical aspects, in particular in the area of curriculum and instruction. These technical changes included the hiring of instructional specialists, the incorporation of professional development that

included topics such as differentiated instruction, and close tracking of student data. There was limited political response to any of the technical changes; however, when it was necessary to redraw school boundaries and attendance zones, an abundance of feedback was given by White, upper-class families who perceived their positions in the community to be compromised by some of the proposed changes.

Realities for School Districts

With no new major civil rights or urban policy initiatives since the 1970s, it is the schools' responsibility to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students in historically White suburban schools (Holme et al., 2014). Suburban school districts will also assume a larger responsibility for educating students of color, an expectation that has historically been the responsibility of urban school districts nationwide (Evans, 2007). Diarrassouba and Johnson (2014) assert that as a result of the influx of more diverse learners, district and school level leaders cannot remain unresponsive. Schools play an important role in shaping the educational experiences of "new" arrivals to suburbs with the control they maintain in setting organizational priorities, the allocation of resources, and the establishment of student assignment policies (Holme et al., 2014). Despite this increase in responsibility, such rapid racial change still means that this more diverse student population can enter schools that are not ready, willing, or able to effectively address their academic and social needs (Haberman, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Summary

The patterns of living in the United States have long been dictated by federal policy and court decisions. The demographic composition of many neighborhoods is

now changing, including the diversification of many suburbs. As the population of areas

change, so does the population of the schools. There is currently limited research on how

school leaders at the local, state, and federal level are addressing such change. It is noted,

however, that these changes must be addressed in order to meet the needs of all students

in our public schools.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact a significant demographic change had on a school district and the educational community. The school district is now a large urban district southwest of a major metropolitan city in Texas. Participants in the study included those that were a part of the educational community at the time the demographic change occurred as students, school personnel, and community stakeholders. Each participant was interviewed in order to understand the demographic change through their perspective, how it impacted their experience within the schools, and the impact of the experiences on the community. This chapter includes the background of the study, the setting and sample selection, research design, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, and limitations of this study.

Background of the Study

The community to be studied had a long agrarian history beginning in the late 1890s. The community experienced trials and tribulations and the population remained the same for a large portion of the 1900s. As late as the 1970s, the area was still more pastureland than developed acreage. Beginning in the 1970s it became a bustling suburb of one of the largest cities in the country. The suburb, located on the southwest side of a major metropolitan area was annexed, by the city in 1977. Many changes soon came

about, including a rapidly growing and diversifying population. More than twenty schools were opened over the course of 20 years.

Research Design

In order to examine the impact of the demographic shift on the educational community, the study carried out was a qualitative, exploratory case study. As Flick, von Kardoff, and Steinke (2004) identify, a qualitative investigation should be focused on a subject that is special. A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit (Merriam, 1988; Schwadt, 1994). Merriam (1988) clarifies that nonexperimental research, or descriptive research is undertaken when description and explanation (rather than a prediction based on cause and effect) are sought, when the causes of behavior cannot be manipulated or are too embedded to be extracted from the study. Merriam (1988) also identifies that the decision to engage in such a study is because the researcher is interested in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing. In this study, the case being examined was the suburban school district that experienced significant demographic changes.

In the seminal work, *The Art of Case Study Research* (1995), the author Robert E. Stake, defines a case study as the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case and coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. In this situation, the educational community is the case being studied. The case study is popular in education and tends to focus on people and programs (Johnson & Christensen, 2012; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1998). A case study should focus on phenomenon within a particular group, event, or program, process, or institution as identified by the researcher (Litchman, 2011; Merriam, 1998). The phenomenon studied was the impact of the

demographic change on the suburban school district. The primary focus of the researcher is to understand the single case (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In focusing on a clearly identified case, the researcher can develop an in-depth understanding of it (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

As part of the original research design, archival data from the school district was going to be used as the source of the descriptive portion of the case study. Upon submission of the data request to the school district, it became evident that the data was going to be both time and cost prohibitive. Alternative solutions to the cost factor were explored by the researcher but the researcher and school district were not able to meet a reasonable agreement. Therefore, the exploratory data was the primary source of data for the study.

Exploratory data was collected in the form of interviews with the members of the educational community being studied. Constant comparative was identified as the initial methodology, with an anticipation of triangulating the archival and exploratory data to draw conclusions and develop an in depth understanding as to how a shift in demographics impacted an educational community.

However, while constant comparative was identified as the initial methodology, the researcher identified a need to change data analysis methodologies upon completion of the third interview analysis. The data that was being collected through the interviews was with rich in details and narrative structure. Individually, the participants had unique perspectives that were perceived by the researcher to be diluted in through the constant comparative analysis. Collectively, the researcher identified sentiments that were not being effectively captured through the constant comparative analysis.

The sentiments that were perceived as diluted by the researcher extended across multiple emotions and beliefs that were articulated by the participants. Throughout multiple interviews, for example, participants cried while recounting different events. Some of the emotions were triggered by personal events that occurred during the time of the study, including the death of a peer to gang violence, the struggles of a family working to make ends meet in a trying financial time, and pride felt by living in a community that provided an idyllic location to raise a family. Other displays of emotion occurred out of what the researcher perceived to be intense personal struggles to maintain a the status of a school system that was evolving in to something that could not persist based on the personal beliefs of the participants, or from events that had substantial impact on participants, like the influence of their family on their upbringing.

Through the analysis of field notes, continued constant comparative analysis, and discussion with a Peer Debriefer, it was agreed that different analysis approach was necessary to encapsulate these sentiments. Based on the information presented by the participants and the perceived underlying issues by the researcher, a critical ethnography approach was discussed, explored, and adopted. Critical ethnography, by the very nature of being 'critical', has a concern for social inequalities and a desire for positive social change and includes a focus on social theories including the nature of social structure, power, culture, and human agency (Carspecken, 1996). Research findings in a critical ethnography represent the researcher's interpretations of participants' interpretations of and negotiations with their experiences (Goodman, 1989). Each of these issues presented themselves very organically throughout the interview process and deserved the attention to be explored more.

Another key piece of critical ethnography is the role the researcher plays. The role of a researcher conducting a critical ethnography is to speak on behalf of the participants, not just to retell a story but to seek to connect meanings of the meanings to broader social structures like power and control (Pfohl & Gordon, 1986). Critical ethnographers seek more than just a recount of an event that reinforce social structures (Thomas, 1993). The researcher in this study was a product of the community being studied, as a student and professional and therefore was able to provide supplemental insights into some of the underlying social structures. A Peer Debriefer was used to mitigate potential biases as much as possible yet there were often times an inclination by the researcher that what was being articulated and what they meant were not aligned; the researcher knew this because of their history in the community. The critical ethnography approach allowed the researcher to take the statements made by the participants, make inferences on their meaning, and connect to social structures when appropriate. An in depth description of the implementation of the adopted data analysis is included in the forthcoming Data Analysis Procedure section.

Setting and Participant Selection

The setting for this study was a large urban district in Texas. A convenient sampling method was used to recruit participants for interviews. Each participant recruited was a members of the educational community when the demographic change occurred in the school district. Participants targeted for interviews included school personnel, students, and other members of the community. No participants were currently engaged in the school district; however, some may still live and/or work in the community but not in the school district. Participants were ensured anonymity through

the use of pseudonyms and the masking of identifiable information. In addition to receiving information from a variety of stakeholders, every effort was made through the use of the convenient sampling method to include participants of different races.

Limitations

The use of a convenient sample for interview participants is one limitation of the study. The convenient sample makes the generalization of the study to the population more difficult (Heppner & Heppner, 2004). Another limitation of the study is the number of interviews being conducted to cover various aspects of the educational community. The responses were limited in scope based on targeted questions and the experience of the participant and the fact that events being studied occurred nearly 40 years ago, also potentially impacting the generalizability of the study.

Additionally, this study used data from one school district in a large urban area in Texas because of the significant transition in student population that occurred within that district. This study is still highly generalizable to other districts in the area because of the continued growth and diversification of the region.

Instruments

Interview protocols were developed by the researcher. A different protocol was used with each group of interviewees: students (See Appendix A – Student Interview Protocol), school personnel (See Appendix B – School Personnel Interview Protocol), and community members (See Appendix C – Community Member Interview Protocol). Peer Debriefer were used prior to beginning the interview process to ensure the data being requested in the interview would answer the desired research question. Modifications to interview protocols were made prior to any interviews being conducted.

Data Collection Procedures

Approval from the University of Houston-Clear Lake's Committee for the

Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) was obtained prior to beginning any data

collection. Exploratory data was collected through the use of interviews with members of

the educational community at the time the demographic changes occurred. Members of

the educational community interviewed included teachers, students, administrators,

parents, and community members. Interviews were conducted within one semester.

There were no incentives offered to participants of the study.

Interviews

Potential participants were contacted and the study was thoroughly explained to

them. Those willing to participate were asked to sign a consent form prior to

participating in a semi-structured interview. Face-to-face interviews with consenting

participants were scheduled at a location agreeable to the participants and conducted

individually with participants to gain a deeper understanding of the participants'

experience and perspectives. In the event a face-to-face interview could be conducted,

and the participant was agreeable, a phone interview was scheduled, via phone.

Interviews included open-ended questions and lasted for approximately one hour. An

audio recording was taken of each of the interviews. The audio recordings were

transcribed and transcriptions were used for the data analysis. Participants can choose to

leave the study at any time.

Archival Data

The original study included historical data to be requested and received from the

school district. Data requests were submitted to the school district being studied,

following procedures as established by the district. The submission of data requests took

place following the approval of the proposal. Data being requested from the district

included minutes from school board meeting and student demographic data during the

time being studied. Upon submission of the data request to the school district, however,

it became evident that the data was going to be both time and cost prohibitive.

Alternative solutions to the cost factor were explored but the researcher and school

district were not able to meet a reasonable agreement. For this reason, the archival data

was not included in the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

As noted in the Research Design section, constant comparative was identified as

the initial methodology. Data analysis began upon completion of the first interview.

Upon completing the third analysis, however, the researcher identified a need to change

data analysis methodologies due to the determination that a substantial amount of

meaningful data was being lost through the constant comparative analysis. Through the

analysis of field notes, continued constant comparative analysis, and discussion with a

Peer Debriefer, it was agreed that different analysis approach was necessary to better

represent the experiences and perceptions of the participants through the demographic

change in their educational community. A critical ethnography approach was adopted.

Critical ethnography has a concern for social inequalities and a desire for positive social

change and includes a focus on social theories including the nature of social structure,

power, culture, and human agency (Carspecken, 1996). Additionally, because of the

researcher's connectedness with the community, a critical ethnography approach allowed

for them to speak on behalf of the participants, not just to retell a story but to seek to

connect meanings of the meanings to broader social structures like power and control (Pfohl & Gordon, 1986).

In order to conduct the critical ethnography analysis, the researcher used the transcription of interviews to identify and code normative, objective, and subjective statements made by each of the participants in their interviews. According to Carspecken (1996), normative statements do not just identify what is considered to be "normal behavior," or what is acceptable, within one a particular setting or cultural group but rather what produces "normal behavior." When articulated, normative statements often sound like rules but they are actual behaviors that are understood and only sound like rules when articulated. Objective statements that, once understood, can be determined as either true or false based on multiple points of access to understanding (Carspecken, 1996). Subjective statements, on the other hand, recognize certain emotions, desires, intentions, and levels of awareness articulated, although the articulations only representations of the feelings (Carspecken, 1996). Low level coding, requiring minimal concept development, was used first. In conjunction with the low level coding, field notes were introduced. This allowed the researcher to begin to organize baseline findings.

Field notes were taken during each individual interview and immediately following the interview, if necessary. The field notes provided supplemental details to the interview experience. The audio recordings captured the actual conversations but the field notes were used to record items that could not be fully captured in the audio. The items captured in field notes included physical and emotional reactions of participants or

the notation of other events that were occurring congruently at the time being discussed that were not mentioned by participants but were known by the researcher.

Based on the statements provided by the participants coded using the low level codes and field notes collected by the researcher, high level coding was then used. The high level coding allowed the researcher to begin to draw inferences on the participants' statements. These inferences were then reconstructed in to them in to truth and identity claims. The high and low level codes were then grouped in to larger categories. Based on the larger categories, eight major themes emerged. Based on the themes, the narrative that presents the analysis begins with themes that build the context around the demographic change occurred, according to the participants. Once the context of the change was established, the themes are presented in an order that reflect their frequency of occurrence among the participant responses.

A Peer Debriefer was used in each phase of the analysis to assess the accuracy of the statements, inferences, and reconstruction of claims. The Peer Debriefer also monitored for biases of the researcher.

Validity

To ensure validity within the interview protocol, Peer Debriefers were used prior to conducting any interviews to ensure the questions presented would provide the information desired to answer the research question. Input from Peer Debriefers was used to modify the interview protocol as necessary. Interviews were conducted face-to-face and via phone. Audio recordings were taken. Audio recordings were then be transcribed verbatim. Member checks were also conducted with interviewees, as needed, following the transcription for clarification on behalf of the researcher. Member checks

included a request for reactions, correction, or further insight (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Validity within the data analysis process was conducted through member checks with participants of the interviews. Peer Debriefers were employed at each phase of the data analysis process. Data was also triangulated between interviews and with field notes throughout the data analysis process to increase internal validity.

Personal Biography

The researcher was a student in the school district being studied when the demographic change being explored occurred. Upon completion of her undergraduate degree, the researcher returned to the school district and served in various roles including teacher, curriculum specialist, and administrator. The researcher no longer serves in the district nor directly in the public education field but has used the experiences obtained during more than a decade of service to the district being explored to drive their current efforts in research and advocacy on the state and national level. As a product of the school district being examined during the time being examined, the researcher clearly acknowledges that her personal and professional experiences could impact the study in ways that might not be known.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures were in place to ensure the protection of the participants. The researcher gained approval from the University of Houston-Clear Lake's CPHS) prior to the collection of archival data and the conduction of the interviews. In order to ensure the ethical procurement of the exploratory data through the interviews, participants were informed of all aspects of the study and asked for informed consent (See Appendix D –

Informed Consent Form). Participant Consent Forms were collected from each of the

interview participants prior to each of the interviews. Within the Informed Consent form,

anonymity was ensured. Anonymity was maintained through the assignment of

pseudonyms to the school district and schools, members participating in interviews, and

any additional data that could compromise anonymity, for example street names or

specific community members. The use of pseudonyms began in Chapter I. Participants

were not current employees of the district at the time the interviews are conducted. All

data was secured in the researcher's office. Once the study is complete, the committee

chairperson will maintain the data for five years, meeting the requirements as established

by the CPHS Guidelines. Once the deadline is met, then all data files will be destroyed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In the following chapter, the researcher presents the data analysis of this qualitative

research design. The data analysis was conducted on data derived from seven interviews

conducted with seven separate consenting participants. The semi-structured interviews

consisted of a myriad of questions intended to answer the original questions:

a) In what ways did the demographic change impact the educational

community?

b) How did the participants experience the demographic change?

c) How did the change impact their participation in the school and larger

community?

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data discussion begins with the researcher's personal biography.

Growing up in the community during the time beings studied, it was agreed upon by Peer

Debriefers that this unique perspective was a necessary and meaningful addition to the

other data collected. The personal biography is followed by a brief personal biography of

each of the participants. This builds a context of their role in the community and their

personal life circumstances. The most substantial presentation of data is that of the major

themes identified across the interviews.

Data Collection

The data source includes transcripts from seven interviews conducted and field notes. In order to identify participants for the interviews, a convenient sampling of participants was pursued. Each of the participants was first contacted via email; the email contained a brief overview of the study and a request for consent. Meetings were then set up where an informed consent was signed and interviews conducted. Of the seven interviews, six were conducted face-to-face and one was conducted via telephone. Informed Consent was received via regular mail for the participant in which had a phone interview. A copy of the Informed Consent form is located in Appendix D.

The participants that consented to participation possessed a number of roles in the community. Table 2 includes a summary of the demographics of the participants.

Table 2

Interview Participant Race, Gender, and Role in the Community

Participant (Pseudonym)	Race	Gender	Role
Becky	Black	Female	Student
Kelly	White	Female	Student
Dixie	White	Female	School Personnel
Gwen	White	Female	School Personnel
Kathy	Black	Female	Student
Waylon	White	Male	Community Member
Whitney	Asian	Female	Community Member

Each interview was recorded and transcribed for analysis. See Appendix A Student Interview Protocol, Appendix B for School Personnel Interview Protocol, and Appendix C for Community Member Interview Guide. Appendix E provides examples of interview transcripts.

Participants showed a great willingness to engage in the study and freely discuss their feelings. Each of the participants expressed emotion at different points in the interview process, either crying or becoming visibly emotional while recounting their experiences. One participant made reference to having only discussed some of the feelings and perceptions she experienced at the time with her husband.

Data Analysis

As discussed in Chapter III, upon completion of the first three interviews and analysis, it was identified by the researcher that the proposed methodology was causing a significant amount of meaningful data to be deemed unusable. At that time, the decision was made to transition to a critical ethnography analysis. The original data analysis is included in Appendix F. It shows the statements from the research transcripts that were lifted and coded for themes.

In order to conduct the critical ethnography analysis, the researcher used the transcriptions of interviews to identify and code normative, objective, and subjective statements made by each of the participants in their interviews. Low level coding, requiring minimal concept development, was used in conjunction with field notes. The field notes provided supplemental details to the interview experience, including physical and emotional reactions of participants and the notation of other events that were occurring congruently at the time being discussed that were not mentioned by participants

but were known by the researcher. This first phase of analysis allowed the researcher to begin to organize baseline findings.

Based on the low level codes and field notes, high level coding was then conducted. The high level coding allowed the researcher to begin to draw inferences on the participants' statements and were then reconstructed into truth and identity claims. The high and low level codes were then grouped in to larger categories. Based on the larger categories, eight major themes emerged. A Peer Debriefer was used in each phase of the analysis to assess the accuracy of the statements, inferences, and reconstruction of claims. The Peer Debriefer also monitored for biases of the researcher.

Researcher Biography

Throughout the course of this research endeavor, I have been asked countless times "why this topic?" Yes, it was the neighborhood that I grew up in. Yes, it was the school district in which I began my teaching career. But for those listening with a critical ear, they always perceived more to be below the surface. After extended bouts of discussion and rhetoric, the underlying truth was revealed. This was not a passive attempt to shine the light on any significant missteps and failures of a community. This was not a cry for help for a community that continues to struggle to be the face of one of the most diverse communities in the state of Texas. Instead, it is intended to be just the opposite. It is intended to tell the story of a unique community that was radically transformed from a typical, White middle class suburban neighborhood to a multicultural haven, littered with poverty, and a school district that remains the crowning glory to this day. To tell this unique and sometimes harrowing history, the voices of those that lived the change were the only viable source for a true history to be presented; the first story of which is mine…

Like many families across the country in the early to mid-1970s, I had a family that reached the elite status of middle class as a direct result of sacrifices made by my parents. After volunteering for the draft for the Vietnam War, my dad left my mom, then just his fiancée, to serve our country for three years. Unlike many at the time, he returned home as promised and they began their life together. She worked a clerical job for a large oil company and he went to school on the G.I. Bill to earn a degree in education. Times were not easy, as he was forced to work side jobs, like umpiring little league games, while he completed his degree. It was not long before he graduated and began his first teaching position within a large urban school district. While nearly a decade after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, his first day as an educator left him in a very precarious position: Cross the picket line of striking teachers that were protesting the bussing of minority students to their upper-middle class campus or take a stand to keep the minority students out. He chose the latter. He is able to identify that as a pivotal moment both in his professional life and the life he was working tirelessly to build for his family. Knowing he would never be rich, he wanted his children to receive a high quality education where they could learn to think and act for themselves.

After several years, he and my mother were able to save enough money to purchase a 'starter home' in an up and coming suburban neighborhood. With a toddler and a new baby on the way, they began paving the way for our childhood. They wanted schools that would empower us, neighbors that would help raise us, and a broader community that would keep a watchful eye to ensure we, as well as all of the kids of all of the parents with similar goals, stayed on course.

Following in my brother's footsteps of two years prior, I began kindergarten in 1982. As a confident five year old that had learned the basics from my mother that made the selfless sacrifice to stay home with us, I entered kindergarten in the class of Mrs. Hamilton, who also happened to live across the street. Surrounded by peers from summers at the neighborhood pool and the school carnivals of our older siblings, we began our academic journeys.

I continued with the same group of students through 5th grade. With the exception of two Black students, one Asian student, and one Hispanic student, we all looked just like the stereotypical picture of suburbia. We had the same teachers, played in the same sports, attended the same churches, and pursued life with the same delight of the typical middle class family.

Upon entering middle school, however, we encountered different faces. There were faces that were unfamiliar and looked different from most us. The zones of the middle school stretched beyond our neighborhood and, unbeknownst to me, life for many was very different from that which I had become accustomed. Sixth grade presented opportunities to adjust to the new school environment in terms of increased responsibility, a more rigorous and differentiated curriculum, and opportunities to come into myself. Much of the year was spent acclimating not only to the new academic environment but also the groups that were different from me. I was always curious about those that were different than me. They wore different clothes, listened to different music, and many exhibited a level of rebellion to the norm that I had never experienced among my group of like-minded peers.

One of the most eye opening experiences was at my volleyball game in seventh grade. We had the opportunity to play at a campus in a neighborhood, less than two miles, away. Riding there, I did not notice a difference. It was a street we traveled on a regular basis; however, upon entering the gym and seeing our opponents, the difference in the two schools was painstakingly obvious. Our team was comprised of 16 girls: nine White, two Black, three Hispanic, one Asian, and one Native American. Our opponents were comprised of 12 girls: nine Black, two Hispanic, and one White. Beyond their skin tones, there were other differences. Our parents had come to the game to support us and they had a police officer stationed next to the bleachers on their side. There were swarms of students in the stands, most of whom were Black, with a small number of "home team" parents there to watch the game. The students chanted, cheered, and carried on many loud conversations. I recall watching our parents watch the game. They did not engage in their usual conversations with one another nor cheer for our team as they always did. They sat in silence. A look of discomfort was evident on each of their faces. We played the match and quickly loaded the bus to return to our campus.

I do not remember who won that game. What I do remember was the silent ride home, the fear that consumed all of us, and my immediate recognition that the world outside of my little tribe was very different. I was going to have learn to understand, embrace, and acclimate to the wider world around me. My little bubble would not last forever.

Throughout seventh and eighth grade, and playing volleyball, basketball, and running track, I saw many of the same faces, season after season, year after year. Despite the differences that I was easily able to identify in our appearances, attitudes, and general

reverence for the sports we were playing, I made an effort to befriend these opponents on and off the court in anticipation of what our high school future would hold. When it was game time, we were focused but friendly gestures like returning balls or setting up their starting blocks on the track when it was not game time allowed for a certain level of friendship and respect to develop. Due to the nature of our high school zoning, or lack thereof as discussed in detail in Theme 6, I knew it was highly probable many of us would end up playing together by the time we reached high school. If we were going to be teammates, we needed a certain level of trust and collegiality.

After three years of navigating the complex social structure of the middle school environment, it was time to enter high school. By the luck of the draw, I was drawn to attend Payton High School. Some of my closest friends from my elementary would be attending Payton too. Many families from the original neighborhood had decided to either move from the neighborhood or attend private schools because the area was no longer the pristine, suburban community it once was. The schools were dealing with significant discipline issues, crime on the streets had increased, and the once pristine neighborhood now had many run down homes. Many of my friends from different sports outside of school would also be attending Payton. I entered the campus of nearly 5,000 students with a core group of friends and many other 'friends' that were a result of my strategic relationship building in middle school.

The friendships I built on the court and field were important to me for several reasons. First, I knew I would continue to see many of these same players on the field and court. I would be playing with some and against others. Winning was as important to me as it is to any athlete. These relationships allowed for an upper-hand within the

team structure and with the opponents. Knowing what motivated people or antagonized people allowed for an additional dimension in game time strategy. Additionally, I also recognized that the diversity I was seeing on the other campuses was a reality that would soon be my daily reality.

Such racial diversity was not something with which I was familiar nor particularly comfortable. I was uncomfortable due to the unfamiliarity. If it was going to be my reality, I knew I had to find a way to understand and fit it. Based on experiences I observed through my father's role as a football coach at a pretentious college preparatory high school, I witnessed firsthand how different racial and financial status could impact how students and families were received among their peers. At the time, the school where he worked had very few Black students. The Black athletes that he did have, and their parents, were always treated as outsiders. I never understood why they were treated differently but I could just feel the angst, in particular among the parents. There was not hate or disrespect, just a different level of reverence. Previously, the differences were not necessarily my reality, I was just a casual outsider myself but I knew I would soon be immersed in something completely different

I soon realized those diverse friendships were going to be something that I was going to need to continue to invest in. Knowing that I had been raised well, even the best of parents could not always control what I was going to say. I perceived a significant threat that my willingness to express an opinion at any point in time, regardless of the audience, could lead to trouble. The teammates I had provided easy access to the different stereotypical groups of students I used my connections and made friends with whoever I could. I successfully passed with the jocks, the nerds, the head bangers, the

kickers, the crips, the bloods and other groups of students. I had my core group of friends, many of whom I had either grown up with or played sports outside of school with, but I also had friends or acquaintances that I made out of a perceived necessity I never got close enough to know too much about some of the other groups but I always knew just enough to stay out of harm's way.

Similar to my experience in middle school, I largely wanted to learn about the intricacies of these different subcultures, the gangs in particular. At this point, my personal safety was a significant motivator. With the external changes I had seen in the community, I knew the daily life as a student sharing hallways, cafeterias, and locker rooms with some of the same students that were causing trouble externally could potentially see the same trouble within the confines of our school. I sincerely believed if I understood the subcultures, especially the gangs, I could efficiently navigate through them. It was also simply interesting to me. The gangs had substantial control and influence on everyone and everything, whether we knew it or not. I could identify it based on simple daily rituals, like which restroom to use between classes or where to sit in the cafeteria. Some students who were not as aware, or chose to ignore the invisible power structures, often times were either verbally or physically reminded why they should or should not do something by those in control. I needed to understand how they obtained such power. I wanted to understand what my young friends found so inviting about a potential life of crime, knowing that incarceration was a prominent reality. I knew this was not a path that would be acceptable in my family yet I was intrigued that it was acceptable in so many families. I needed to understand how someone raised half a

mile from me could have such disregard for the school, community, and the people living in it.

Through my experiences growing up, I met some incredible people. I lived through a community changing and attribute many of my personal skills today to those experiences I had so long ago. I valued it enough that I returned to the community to teach right after college and continued there for 14 years. When I tell stories of my past, people are often caught off guard by some of the experiences I've had. But the experiences are mine and have made me who I am today. This dissertation has allowed the opportunity for me not only tell a piece of my story and the community I love but also tell the story of others that lived and worked in the community as it experienced such a drastic change. I believe the willingness to tell the story by each and every participant interviewed can be attributed to a similar feeling of pride in the community and a desire to recognize the overcoming of many obstacles.

Participant Biographies

The next section provides a brief biography of each of the participants based on information shared during interviews. This personal information will help to understand the experiences and perspectives of each of the participants as the demographics in the community changed.

Kathy

The daughter of a working cowboy Kathy, a student at the time, and her family moved to the area as a result of a job offered to her father. He was to work on a ranch in the area that was owned by a local landman. When they moved to the area, they were the only Black family on the ranch as well as in the broader community. She reflected fondly on

many of the firsts she experienced, some typical of the student experience and others unique to being one of the few Black students throughout elementary, middle, and high school.

Like many during the time, they family experienced significant hardships as a result of the oil bust in the early 1980s. Her family was forced to relocate from the sprawling ranch on the northern side of the district to an apartment located in the southern part of the district. At that time, she was able to recall the significant differences both in the housing and ethnic composition of this area of the district. She was active in the school community, participating in many organizations. The influences of popular culture, with specific reference to the rap culture and gangs, brought about many ongoing changes in the district.

Waylon

An active community member, this White male participant moved his family to the area to secure a shorter commute to work in the petrochemical industry. His participation in the community was catapulted by the joining of a church. With the encouragement and support of one of his fellow church members, he assumed his first voluntary role in the district. The role was part of a committee working to support the district as they sought accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This role lead to other opportunities including being elected to the school board. He raised his family in the community, with both of his children attending school in the district. He still owns his home in the area where one of his grandchildren lives to this day.

As a self-identified member of the "good ol' boys" that were living and working in the community and district, this participant offers a distinct perspective on the broader

community as well as describes some of the technical challenges the district faced during different phases of significant growth and change. These technical challenges included the community being incorporated by the city and the necessity to start accepting funding from the federal government to support the program in the district. Attributing the success of the district to consistently keeping students at the center of the decision making process, he believes this one of the main reasons the district continues to experience success and has a strong reputation for academic excellence to this day.

Kelly

The youngest of 16 children, this White participant, then a student, moved to the Amity area with her family after her dad got a job in 1981. When their home was purchased, she distinctly recalls the pristine neighborhood and its surroundings, located in the south-central area of the community. From her perspective, things in her neighborhood changed quickly and she and her family were soon among a small handful of White families in the neighborhood. The option to leave was discussed but due to financial strains, they were forced to stay in the area. She identified a sense of helplessness in being "thrown into these different cultures" and therefore having to acclimate to some of the different social norms.

While her parents and their home served as a safe haven for many of the youth in the neighborhood, they could not protect all of them. She offered firsthand accounts of gangs, drugs, and violence in the schools, on the school grounds outside of school hours, and throughout the neighborhood and surrounding areas. She and one of her brothers, who was just one year older and in the same grade, were athletes that found themselves accepted and protected by both the Hispanic and Black students that were the majority by

the time they were in middle school. Many of these relationships established in the early

years of being the minority in the student population carry on to this day.

Becky

Raised in a highly supportive home by two college educated parents, Becky, a student at

the time, spent her entire academic career on the west side of the district. Her parents

emphasized the importance of a good education through their on-going prioritization of

school work and grades that were either an A or B and provided ample opportunities for

her to have experiences beyond school including being active in their church,

volunteering to help the community, participating in youth athletic leagues, and traveling

as a family. The area, described as upper middle class by several of the participants, was

part of the feeder pattern that attended what was referred to many as "All White" Middle

School. She grew up surrounded and fully accepted by white peers, not realizing that she

herself was not White until a group of Black students were bussed to "All White." As a

result of the ridicule she received from her new Black classmates, she realized not only

that she was not White but that color mattered to many. With strong parental support, she

acknowledges that she was sheltered from a lot of the world, including the fact that race

mattered to many, but she also was taught to maintain a certain level of what she

describes as middle class standards, which in their view included respecting others and

their belongings, resolving conflict in a non-violent manner, and accepting others for who

they are, seeing beyond color lines.

Becky was exposed to the wider community through her participation in

community sports associations and her older sister's participation in extracurricular

activities. She identified strongly with her peers and felt accepted by the broader White

community in high school. Elected homecoming queen by the student body during her senior year in high school and her ability to see beyond color lines outweighed the negative stigma of not always associating with, dressing like, speaking like, or carrying herself like many of the other Black students in her school.

Whitney

As an entrepreneur, Whitney moved to the area where her father had long held a family grocery store to open her first dance studio. She moved to the area and opened the studio for two main reasons: It was affordable and had a population that she believed was ready for such an investment. As a Vietnamese immigrant in a community, she recalls the business lessons taught to her by those currently working in the community. They sought to protect their investments but provide opportunities for their own children.

The students at her studio were taught in an encouraging and supportive environment, requiring commitments from both the students themselves and their families, including regular, prompt attendance, attentiveness during class to ensure practice at home aligned with instruction during class, and etiquette training. Her ultimate goal was to prepare students for life, not just dance. She regularly collaborated with school district to offer opportunities to students that might not have the opportunity to attend her studio through clinics taught on campuses and choreographing for the high school drill teams. After years of support from families and the broader community, she made the decision to leave the community only at the time when she perceived the safety of her dancers and their families to be at risk in their location.

Dixie

Dixie, a White woman, spent the vast majority of her three decade career as an educator in Amity ISD. Due to her willingness to accept new challenges and desire to grow professionally, she held a number of positions from teacher to campus and district level administrator. After the district experienced significant changes, her desire and abilities to serve those most in need were highly relied upon by the district, namely through her appointment as the first principal of the first "all Black" campus but also through her roles leading one of the large newly diversifying high school and the appointment to her role as Assistant Superintendent. Identifying a sense of "always being behind the eight ball," or at a disadvantage, because the changes were so drastic and occurred so rapidly, she made effort to meet the needs of students, parents, teachers, and administrators alike.

The foundations of her personal beliefs that all students deserve a quality education and preemptive professional development for herself and her teachers were challenged at times because of her willingness to accept the transformation in the community and make modifications or change long standing practices. As part of her on-going professional development, she relied heavily on insight and counsel from her colleagues to help guide her.

Gwen

Gwen, a White, school administrator believed in the importance of families in the educational experience. Gwen held multiple roles in the district, including a teacher and campus and district level administrator. Her candid responses to interview questions highlighted her passion, academic knowledge, and cultural privilege. Although the "good ol' boy" system was outwardly acknowledged by some, she never explicitly identified it;

yet her beliefs and actions, as will be explored throughout the themes, were those of an insider to this leadership style. She commented that some of what was discussed in the interview, including certain decisions that she made, she had only shared with her husband.

She held a campus leadership role when the significant demographic changes in the district began. With no such precedent in the community or within her professional schema, she resorted to following her intuition and using all the resources she had available. As the demographic changes in the community continued and she assumed a leadership role on the district level, she made decisions that impacted a large number of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. She relied heavily on the counsel of colleagues and various parent groups but often times found herself having to make contentious decisions that could not be unanimously agreed upon. Again, with no precedent, she aimed to keep what she thought was best for students at the forefront of the process.

Introduction to Themes

Following the data analysis from the participant interviews, the answers to the three original research questions emerged in to eight major themes: Understanding the How and Why, Privilege, Geography, Maintaining Control, Fear and Safety, the Luck of the Draw, Family, and Gangs. The eight themes will be explored in depth in the forthcoming sections, through highlights of participant interviews and personal asides from the researcher to support the development of each theme.

Theme 1: Understanding the How and Why

Only about 15 miles from the major urban area, the community remained largely undeveloped until the 1970s. Once development began, it was still another extended period of time until the racial diversification began. Historical records account for many of the changes but the descriptions from the participants in the study paint a much more personal and insightful perspective of how and why the rapid and drastic changes occurred in the community.

It was necessary to build a large amount of schools to meet the growing population in the community. Table 3 shows the number elementary, intermediate, middle, and high school opened in five year increments. Prior to the years in the table, there was one elementary, one middle, and one high school in the district. According to Gwen, the decision was made in the early 1990s to begin building intermediate schools. These intermediate schools served students in fifth and sixth grades, removing fifth grades from elementary schools and sixth grade from middle schools. This modification to the structure of the schools was made to provide a more cost effective way to manage continued overcrowding in elementary and middle schools.

Table 3

Number of Elementary, Intermediate, Middle and High Schools Added by Year

Years	Elementary Schools	Intermediate Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Total Schools
1964-1969	2				2
1970-1974	4		2	1	7
1975-1979	3		1	1	5
1980-1984	5		2		7
1985-1989	3				3
1990-1994	2	1	1		4
1995-1999	3	2		1	6
2000-2004	1	2		1	4
2005-2010	1			1	2
Total Schools	24	5	6	5	40

Growth

Through his interview, Waylon, an active community member, described the initial

growth of the district using the terms development and redevelopment/urbanization.

> …pretty much the initial growth of Amity, the initial development, was kind of a
>
> suburban growth, pretty much all White community, pretty homogeneous. But
>
> then as we saw the late 70s and early 80s, that growth, that redevelopment -- we
>
> saw the -- what I call the urbanization of Amity begin.

Kelly, then a student, and her family also moved to the city from across the state because, "…my dad found a job in [the city] and it was like you know [the city] was building at the time and it was the best place to live." After a few years in a nearby community, her family made the decision to move to Amity. She recalls,

> …then there was this great land, there were these beautiful houses that were being built and the neighborhood is called Amity Oaks, and behind Counter Elementary was horse pastures and it was just this, this beautiful urban rural mix of a place to be.

Dixie, an educator at the time, described the growth in the school district as a result of the "oil babies." Several large oil companies moved to the area and brought with them a need for schools, starter homes, and apartments for those that would be employed by them. The initial growth was promising but the oil bust in the early 1980s had an impact on many.

> Then when the oil bust came in the early 80s many of those apartments were empty because no one needed them anymore because people had lost their jobs. And many of those starter homes the folks foreclosed on them, walked away from them. So there was a huge amount of places to live that were not filled. And so what happened was the people that owned those dropped prices, did all kinds of things to get people to come and rent for them and therefore a different population moved in to those open housing areas. So it went from young professionals to people that had less money to spend on doing things. So a different income bracket of people were then able to move into that area.

Kathy, a student at the time, recalls that her family was negatively impacted by the oil bust. She remembers her father losing his job working on the ranch that was owned by one of the high level executives at one of the oil companies, causing their family to have to relocate within the community. Many others faced similar choices.

Initially, growth was a result of a booming economy in the broader community. When the economy took a downward turn, the smaller community was also impacted. This downturn slowed the growth of the community but was a catalyst to the diversification of the community. The insight provided by the participants describes how the changes impacted them personally both for those that lived in the community and the school personnel that were being faced with a changing student demographic.

The Bus and the Boat

Similar to the reasons for growth, the diversification of the community was impacted by changes in the broader adjacent city as well as worldwide events. Access to the community was increased through the addition of public transportation routes to the growing community. Additionally, the large metropolitan area was the second stop for many refugees leaving war torn Vietnam following the fall of Saigon in 1975 (Exiting Vietnam, 2008).

The second wave of growth and development, as identified by Waylon, can be attributed to what Gwen referred to as "The Bus and the Boat." When referring to "the bus," Gwen was referring to the area receiving public transportation (bus service) through the Metropolitan Transit Authority. Dixie recounts, "...those bus lines coming out again allowed a different type of population to come in that didn't necessarily have personal transportation." Prior to this point, the community did not exhibit a need for public

transportation as they were a professional, working class majority with the financial means to provide their own transportation. The changing population, exhibited a need that was previously not there. Bus service had previously only run within the confines of the inner city. While the exact date of service to the area is unknown, an article in the city newspaper indicates the first large transit center was built in the area in 1981.

As the bus service extended in the community, Waylon recalls the number of apartment complexes increasing as well. Even as a student, Becky can recall the expansion of the public transportation to her neighborhood. "On the west side of Amity, Metro had not come out on that side of Amity all those years. And once they built those apartments, boy, Metro had a line that came all the way to Highway 8." In addition to the arrival of the bus line, Becky also recalls the impact of the bus line, "I mean, it was a drastic vivid change once the Metro line started coming." The changes she identified included the expansion of thoroughfares, increased traffic, and the building of more apartments. These apartments, as was noted by multiple participants, had residents that were largely minorities.

Following the initial expansion of Metro bus lines to the community, controversy surrounding the expansion continued for many years. As late as the mid-1990s, there are records of both school district leaders and local residents speaking out against the continued expansion of the Metro lines. Arguments presented included a resident expressing concern about the busses using residential streets as part of their route. One school leader expressed concern about the impact the route would have on the daily operations of her campus, including cars lining up in the streets to drop off and pick up students. The neighborhood did not have the infrastructure to allow for passing lanes

which would slow process and compromise the safety of families leaving school (Feldstein, 1996).

Following the initial development and redevelopment, Waylon also identifies an additional redevelopment. "Then there was what I call a distinct development, redevelopment, third development or second redevelopment with the Asian community." This redevelopment with the Asian community is what Gwen referred to as "the boat."

Now, we began probably in '78 or '79 to get children, I'm going to say off the boat, I don't know what else too -- from Vietnam, you know, southeast Asia, Cambodia, Vietnam -- a lot of Vietnamese children came in. And I remember that so clearly because they would come in without birth certificates, you didn't know how old they were, nothing -- but I always said, now open your mouth and let me look at your teeth.

The reference to "let me look at your teeth" was based on her experiences with horses. She noted that to tell a horses age, you look at their teeth. She believed she could do the same with students based on how many baby teeth they had lost or how their molars were growing in.

The presence of the Asian students in the schools obviously presented school administrators with challenges they had not faced before. Language barriers with Hispanic students were more easily addressed with a wider population of Hispanics in the area. However, that would not remain the case for long, as Waylon recalls the Asian community's desires and plans to settle in the Amity community.

I don't remember what year it was but I was, I don't know, whether it was the Lions Club or Chamber, but there was a handful of Asian guys had come over,

some were Vietnamese, some were, let's see, maybe one from Singapore,

Chinese, Vietnamese, maybe – but they as a small group and they said were

going, in ten years, were going to buy all the property on 3rd Avenue or from

Highway 5 out to Highway 8, and they pretty well accomplished that.

Kathy also recalls the expansion of the Asian community while she was younger.

That population was growing exponentially, in the 80s. And, honestly, I don't

even know when that started, you know, it was like all of a sudden, boom, it was

Asia Town, and the street signs, you know, were changed and all the languages,

all the different languages existed.

With the influx of immigrants to the community and the access provided through

public transportation, the community continued to grow and diversify. These additions

began to change the face of a once homogenous community.

Theme 2: Privilege

It has been noted repeatedly that the community had a long history of being

comprised of a predominately White population. With this population comes the social

system of White privilege. Wise (2011) simply defines White privilege as the fact that

relative to persons of color, Whites receive certain advantages that are rarely offset by

factors like class, gender, or sexual orientation. These advantages, as discussed by

McIntosh (1989), are compared to, "an invisible weightless knapsack of special

provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (p.30).

Additionally, White privilege has been called the other side of racism; by taking this

approach, one is able to see who benefits from racism and how they benefit (Rothenberg,

2011).

As part of the discussion on privilege, it is important to take in to consideration existing customs, rules, and expectations of the community. The focus of the study has been racial diversification but as was identified in the previous section, the socio-economic status of community members changed as the community faced an economic downturn and the community became more accessible to individuals with a lower socio-economic status. Commonly held norms of those in the community were referenced by participants in response to the different interview questions. The standards articulated and implied are similar across the participants, regardless of the role they played at the time and are aligned with White, middle-class expectations, including how students should behave in school and social settings, who should be in positions of leadership, and the role parents should play in the life of their children. It was identified that those entering the community with a different set of customs, rules, and expectations should conform to the expectations of the existing majority. The need for those entering to conform can be attributed to a deficit perspective taken by the participants based on their differences. Gorski (2011) asserts that deficit perspectives occur when educators approach students based upon their perceptions of the students' weaknesses rather than their strengths. In this study, the deficit perspectives of participants can been seen through their actions, or inaction in certain scenarios, as well as their beliefs. Potential strengths or opportunities that the newest members of the community could offer were not mentioned by participants.

Throughout the interview process, there were assertions of privilege made by each of the participants, some of which exemplify the social system of White privilege. There were certain statements of privilege that appeared in multiple interviews, others were

more personal and specific to the individuals and their experiences. Each of these will be explored in the section below, including the good ol' boy system of decision making and leadership and the influence of being a community insider. While Waylon explicitly identified the good ol' boy system, many of the experiences shared by Dixie and Gwen can also be attributed to a good ol' boy style of leadership; many of their actions and experiences would not have been possible if the good ol' boys were not in leadership roles. The concept of being a community insider was explicitly identified by Kathy, Becky, and Kelly.

Good Ol' Boys

Good ol' boys is a term often used to describe southern, White men and their mode of operating. The good ol' boys often possess conservative views and display loyalty to those within their peer group and an underlying intolerance for those outside of their group. Any good ol' boy system, for those on the inside, can prove to provide ample opportunity and access to privilege that otherwise might not be accessible. For those not within the confines of an established system, infiltrating and working within the parameters of the system, and the privileges associated with it, can prove to be challenging.

     Waylon. Waylon's rise to a leadership role in the district was a direct result of the good ol' boy system. At the time, the district was run by a majority of White men, with several White women in leadership roles on campus. The representation of any minority population on a leadership level, either male or female, was minimal. Waylon had a friend and fellow church member on the school board. When the board was charged with creating a philosophy for the district to obtain accreditation, they developed

a committee of community members to participate in the exercise. As one of the few that

took an active role in the committee, Waylon realized he better start keeping a closer eye

on what was going on in the district because he did not perceive others to be as invested.

I found that out of that 21-member committee that there were probably only about

six or seven at most that would throw an idea out. Everybody else, you know was,

all followers, which is kind of typical of a group. And I was expecting more

interaction than that, and so after we got that drafted and the board adopted what

we drafted, I decided that I better start paying more attention to what was going

on in the district.

As a result of the work on the committee, he was soon approached by a different

school board member to run for a seat that was recently vacated on the school board.

Waylon agreed, under the pretense that the colleague that approached him to run would

do most of the work. His colleague did indeed complete most of the work in the election

and Waylon was elected.

After a reelection the following year, he decided not to run again at the end of his

term. There were others, however, that also decided not to run. With the possibility of

four of the seven positions being assumed by new community members, he was

encouraged to run again by his colleagues that were unsure of what these new candidates

would contribute to the existing structure. Just a few days prior to the filing deadline,

Waylon submitted the necessary paperwork to run, making total of four candidates

running for the position he currently held. By the time filing deadline arrived, the other

three candidates for the position had withdrawn. One of the candidates that withdrew, a

Black man that was a professor at a local Historically Black University and whose wife

was a teacher in the district discussed with Waylon his decision to run again. According to Waylon, the withdrawn candidate stated, "I know why you came back and decided to run. You don't want a black guy to get elected." Waylon responded by insisting that was not the case but if that was the story the withdrawn candidate was going to tell, he could not stop him. In the end, Waylon ran again and was elected again, maintaining the integrity of the good ol' boy network that was in place and ensuring the district remained on course with the desires of the network. In addition to the continuation of the good ol' boy system, this situation, whether accurately recounted or not, indicates that there was both a perceived need to maintain control, which will be explored in the following section, as well as the perceived racial apprehensions from both the Black candidate and the White majority.

This inability to effectively work within the established system and do exactly as the school board wanted was the case in a series of superintendents that came into the district in the early phases of growth and diversification. The district experienced three superintendents in three years. After the third superintendent was let go by the School Board, they conducted a national search. They were able to find an experienced superintendent to bring in. Waylon noted, he was very competent and had strong management skills, despite being a "Yankee." He and his family moved to the area from the Northeast; his wife was originally from Texas which, according to Waylon, mitigated the "Yankee" factor and he was widely accepted by most. This superintendent stayed in the district for seven years. There were several school board members that attempted to have him fired as well but they were unsuccessful and eventually resigned from the school board. Waylon was asked to identify the reasons for the turnovers during this

time. He was able to attribute it explicitly to the 'good ol' boy' style of leadership presumed by the board of which he was a part.

> Things didn't go their [the School Board's] way, well they, you know, got enough votes, you know, get four disgruntled out of the seven and you can fire somebody, no big deal. So anyway, but it was kind of a truest sense good ol' boy system from the board, and when the superintendent didn't do exactly like they wanted, well, that was it.

Waylon's involvement in and perpetuation of the good ol' system show how he was able to thrive in the environment. His connectivity in the broader community through his church membership and civic organizations enabled him to be a highly influential member of the school system and exposed some of the underlying racial apprehension that was present.

Dixie. Dixie was the first principal at the first campus within the district to have student population that had a majority of students who were minorities. Working with such a different student population than she and many of the teachers were accustomed to, "there was a need to modify teaching styles, management styles, and people skills with families and children." Some teachers were willing and able to manage the change in student demographics. "We had many, many teachers that had an adversity to working with low income minority children if they had never done it and they did not want to do it." This lack of interest or willingness was likely the result of the deficit view that the teachers had of the incoming students and families. For these teachers, Dixie would work with the district level administration to facilitate a transfer, usually to one of the campuses on the western side of the district, where they could work with a population

that responded better to their teaching style. Dixie mentioned that professional development would have been helpful for leaders and teachers to equip them with additional skills but the transfer process was addressed the problem more quickly. The facilitation of these transfers suggests that the good ol' boys at the administration building empathized with the teachers' concerns about working with a different student population. Not yet aware of how drastically the district would continue to change, the good ol' boys engaged in a transfer process that was a surface level solution to the problems teachers were facing without providing opportunities for professional growth and development. Additionally, there was no recognition of the bias and inequities such a policy promoted among the staff and student population.

After many years in the district, Dixie obtained a position in the administration building. Despite being very comfortable and content in the administrative position she had long desired and had only been in for two years, she recalled being called to the superintendent's office the day after graduation on her campus. He presented her with a job description for the role of Assistant Superintendent and informed her that this was the position he would like for her to hold for the upcoming school year. Dixie had neither applied for the position nor was she particularly interested in it. He permitted her the opportunity to speak to one of her colleagues about the role, which he had consulted previously, and allowed her the weekend to consider it. She accepted the position, knowing that, "I mean it's one of those things where if you don't say yes you're probably never going to get another opportunity like that again in your life." Based on her success in the role, she was the right fit for the position; however, the intricacies of such a promotion were a direct result of her ability to thrive in the good ol' boys system. She

was able to make changes without significant impact on the systems in place, upholding the reputation of the district. She displayed an ability and willingness to adhere to the expectations set by those in higher positions and maintain them.

Dixie was able to effectively navigate the good ol' boy system. Her ability to facilitate transfers for teachers who were uncomfortable in the changing environment and her promotion within the administrative ranks signify both the presences of the system and her effective navigation of the system. Had she responded differently by providing additional professional development for teachers to meet the changing needs of students, for example, it would have been contradictory to the identified course of the good ol' boy system who was not yet accepting of the changes. While she did navigate the system effectively, there was minimal recognition of the growing inequities across the district.

Gwen. Gwen shared several examples of the good ol' boy system, in particular in terms of decisions she was making for the district. Like Dixie, she did not expressly articulate that the good ol' boy system was the source of her empowerment for making these decisions. One of the most impactful examples presented by Gwen was the manipulation of elementary campus zones to maintain a predominately White majority within the student population. "I tried to always make sure that the majority, 55% were white children, Caucasian. And why did I do that? Because they set the standard." Based on her own experiences, she believed that Black students and families did not value education as their White counterparts largely because, "if you went to a Black school it was just 'helter skelter'" or in a state of disarray that was less productive and safe than the suburban setting in which she served. She used this belief in the heighten value of education by White students and families to dictate her decision making. She

admittedly, made these decisions without providing the rationale or receiving consent from her peers or higher administrators within the district.

Gwen believed there was a need to make modifications to meet the needs of students. She identified working with teachers and students while they were all learning how to deal with their new situation.

> We did not know -- all I knew and believed in is that you had to get where the kid was. I mean, wherever that youngster is, wherever he's functioning, you get at that point and you start building. And at the right level that he or she needs. I mean, you know, as you grow, though, it just varies per kid.

Her efforts, including the manipulation of boundary lines was an attempt on her behalf to compensate for certain inequities she perceived while maneuvering through the good ol' boy system. Her attempts to "get to where the kid was" in this scenario was built on the foundation of a deficit perceptions of Black students and families, allowing her to make changes but not recognizing the larger inequities and biases that were impacting the situation.

Another example was her voluntary, temporary relocation from the Administration Building to a campus. This campus was identified by several participants as the first 'Black campus' in the district. The campus principal, although a seasoned veteran in the district, was having a difficult time managing the challenges facing not only a largely Black campus but also a campus with a predominantly lower socio-economic status of students. Having anticipated such a challenge on this campus, based on her personal beliefs, Gwen shut down her office at the Administration Building and relocated to the campus for six weeks to offer support to the principal.   While there, she

served as a sounding board for the principal and helped in making decisions in regards to the general operating of the school. She was an extra set of eyes and ears that aided in identifying needs and implementing changes. Good ol' boys are known to look out and support their fellow good ol boys'. The privilege of being part of the good ol' boy system allowed for such support. Another person, not on the inside, likely would not have received this level of intense support, as the good ol' boys would be looking out for themselves.

Through the experiences of Waylon, Dixie, and Gwen, the pervasiveness of the good ol' boy system is evident. Their experiences highlighted opportunities and access that would not have been present had they not functioned within the confines of the system. The identification of their effective functionality within the good ol' system is not intended to persuade judgment on their professional integrity, the successfulness in their roles as leaders, or their personal belief system; instead, it highlights the pervasiveness of the system.

Personal Aside

As a student, I can recall both Dixie and Gwen and the respect that they eared on the campuses they served. The close relationships they built with students and families were powerful. Years later, Dixie was the Assistant Superintendent that I interviewed with for my first administrative position in the district. Even as a professional, well-trained, adult, she instilled in me confidence and encouragement that I would be successful in any position I held within the district. Now, nearly four decades after the fact, it is interesting to consider that she was navigating all of these intricacies for her students. Upon initial analysis of the data, I was surprised at the manner in which she offered transfers. It

appeared that she was just moving teachers to not have to address the needs of "those kids." Upon further reflection and putting more of the pieces together, I have conceived a different line of thinking. "Those kids" were "her kids," just like me and my peers had been many years ago. If there was a teacher that was unwilling or unable to meet their needs, she did not want them because her kids deserved the best. There was never a doubt in my mind that she would do anything possible for her students and the transferring of teachers is another example. What she achieved within the limitations of the leadership style in place are now even more appreciated.

The Insiders

Being insiders also proved to have certain elements of privilege for the students in the district. To those outside of the community, many of the statements made by the participants would likely identify them as outsiders. In this community, having a sense of pride and accepting the ways of the community, regardless of race, creed, or color proved to make one an insider.

 Kathy. Kathy recalls that while being one of very few Black students she always "just fit in." She acknowledges that was not always the case for some of the families, especially minority families, moving into the community.

> But, you know, maybe if they had been better received, somehow, and I don't
>
> know – I don't know that they were just horribly received either, you know. I
>
> didn't have that experience of moving in. I was already here. I can only speak
>
> from what I was told, and some of it my mind was oh you just – just fit in, you
>
> know, just fit in. But, that wasn't, I guess, so easy to do. I always seemed to fit in

somehow. And I guess it just was because it was just how I had already grown up. I'd already known people.

Interestingly, Kathy and her family moved from one side of the district to the other prior to beginning in middle school. From her point of view, although she moved from one side of the community to the other, she was still an insider because she and her family had been in the community for a long time. She acknowledges that there was a difference in the neighborhoods, including more apartments and more people of color, she had to start from ground zero in building a new friend circle, yet this did not identify her as an outsider.

Becky. Like Kathy, Becky grew up as one of the few Black students that attended her elementary and middle schools. During her first year in middle school, her privilege as an insider became very clear to her. At that time, Becky was unexpectedly exposed to students that, for the first time, looked like her. Although these students looked like her, she perceived that they were very different. Having been raised in a home where the assessment of a person was rooted in their actions and mind, not their color, she was surprised to see students who looked like her yet acted very differently.

> I would say their clothing was different, the way they carried themselves where it would be, like, they wanted to make sure everything they said, everybody heard them, whereas, you know -- I grew up as, everybody didn't need to know your conversation or hear your conversation, so you whisper or you keep your voices low. Also they just didn't -- and also didn't take care of other people's things like it was their own which was a shocker for me because we were always taught you don't -- if it's not yours you treat it with respect like it was yours.

At the end of that year, the students returned either to their home campus or the new campus and those students that were native to the campus "got their campus back." Although seemingly apologetic about making such a statement, Becky clarified, "That probably doesn't even sound right. But it was like the original kids that lived in the area were the ones that were at [our school], not kids that had to be bussed from the other side."

Kelly. Kelly's experiences were somewhat different. While part of the White majority in elementary school, she recalls transitioning to middle school where as a White student, she was in the minority. Like Becky, she recalls growing up in a home where her parents raised them with the values they had grown up with, which included not seeing color nor judging people for what they looked like.   There was some admission of having to assimilate to the majority culture while in middle school, through things like her clothing and music choice, but because she was willing and able to assimilate, the transition to high school was not difficult. Even in middle school though, she recognized that she was not like everyone else.

> And then when I got to high school I think I had already formed those kind of relationships with people outside of my ethnicity that I just continued those relationships with people in high school. Even though high school was a little bit more of a melting pot, I felt like Whites were still a minority but I felt like I had such a strong foundation with the people that I had gone to school with and I had already established that relationship of being cool or down or whatever you want to call it that I didn't really have to prove myself again in high school, it just kinda transitioned into high school.

Becky and Kathy both had experiences as insiders where they identified the differences in outsiders and how outsiders were treated. Kelly's experience was different because while she was an insider, she was in the racial minority in the community but part of the majority of the wider population. She assimilated to some of the social norms of her peers, including the clothes she wore, her hair styles, and the music to which she listened. She maintained an insider status and never felt isolated for being different due to her history in the community.

Theme 3: Geography

Different neighborhoods were the predominant divider throughout the community. Through the interviews, however, the differences in geography were largely used to define and describe areas. The identification of areas included the west side and the east side by several of the participants. Throughout the country, east sides of cities have historically been the poorer side of the city (Zambonini, 2010). As a result of the Industrial Revolution, factories were built largely on the eastern side of towns to allow for the wind currents to blow exhaust and pollutants away from the city as opposed to into the city. Many wealthier individuals sought to leave the inner cities to avoid the unpleasantness brought about by the new industries that included the blue collar or working class of workers that were coming in, crowds, noise and air pollution. Because many of the industries were housed on the eastern side of cities, expansion was often times targeted westward (Zambonini, 2010).

This trend was largely seen in the larger urban area adjacent to Amity. The community of this study also experienced such a discrepancy in the east versus west side. One of the largest differences identified was in housing. The east side of the community,

closer to the city, had a large number of apartment homes and single family dwellings were limited. According to Waylon, the former school board member and active member in local civic clubs, these apartments were originally built and occupied by young professionals working in the oil business. When the oil bust happened in the early 1980s, these young professionals left the area. Waylon also stated that the developers were looking to maintain occupancy so they lowered the rental rates. In doing, this allowed suburban access to individuals and families with lower incomes.

The west side of the community was dominated by single family dwellings. Areas on the eastern side of the community had single family dwellings but also a large number of apartments. Becky identified that when apartments came to her side of the community, the west side, her parents perceived this as a negative impact on the community that would bring down their property value and make the neighborhood unsafe . Despite the apartments, Kathy pointed out that, most White families were located where the majority of houses were, which was on the west side.

In addition to the types of housing, Becky also made statements about the differences in establishments in each of the respective areas. She identified the east side as having lower end establishments like corner stores, laundromats, and fast food restaurants; whereas, on the west side of the district, she was exposed to higher-end grocery stores and sit-down restaurants.

Theme 4: Maintaining Control

After nearly a century being a racially homogenous community, there was a sense by the participants that there was a need to maintain different elements of control once the diversification began. They were unable to control the changes that were occurring in

the community around them but their reactions to changes indicate an ongoing effort to maintain control. These reactions will be explored more in depth in this section. Like other conclusions drawn, several of the participants expressly articulated these feelings to maintain control where others implied it through their words and actions. These actions had different levels of influence and, in an effort to maintain the community as it once was, did not recognize possible bias or inequities that their actions would cause or propagate

Waylon

Waylon originally engaged with the school district while they were going through an accreditation process, which served as a catalyst for his service on the school board. One of the major tasks he recalled taking on as part of the school board was the development of an operational manual. This was a project commissioned by the superintendent at the time. As discussed in the "Privilege" section, there was some dissension between the school board members and a series of superintendents that were hired then fired by the school board. The root of the dissension, as identified by Waylon, was twofold. The district was bringing in candidates from outside of the community to assume leadership roles was the first identified concern. The second concern was that the board did not have clear understanding of their role in leadership. "They [the school board] didn't understand policy versus administration. And, there is a clear line of demarcation there." The development of the operational manual helped in establishing processes within the school district. Based on the nature of those creating the policies, it also ensured that their interests, those of the good ol' boys, would continue to be served, with minimal

recognition of the changing needs of students or implementation plans to support the changing needs of students

Kathy, Becky, and Kelly

The district attempted to maintain a certain level of control within the schools and on the school premises. These efforts were identified by the three former student participants. While they recalled the specific actions taken, the actions are indicative of direct policy actions to maintain the established norms.

Kathy, Becky, and Kelly all recalled an increased police presence on campuses and in neighborhoods. There was also the addition of internal controls like wearing of student identification cards and the suspension of privileges like being able to leave high school campuses during lunch. Kelly also discussed at length the barbed wire that was placed on the tennis courts on the campus by her house. Through the interview, she explored an interesting flow of consciousness: was the barbed wire intended to keep people in the tennis courts or out of the courts? Either way, the district was forced to assert their power and install the deterrent due to the on-going issues with unauthorized use of the facility, in particular unauthorized use that that lead to criminal activity, such as trespassing and vandalism. Kelly described her elementary experience as "wholesome," yet the steps required by the school district appeared in stark contrast to that description; the actions suggested a need and desire to make others conform to the standards set by those in control. Those in control, the aforementioned good ol' boys, were slow in accepting the demographic changes and took action to maintain what the community had been, a White, middle class suburb, as opposed to what the community

was becoming, which was a more diverse, both racially and socio-economically, reflection of the adjacent urban center.

Gwen

Gwen also took significant steps to maintain her idea of a long standing tradition of high expectations through control of the student population. Students of different racial backgrounds were coming into the schools from the larger urban district adjacent to the community, predominantly on the east side, and Gwen perceived a need to control the ethnic composition of those schools, ensuring the White population was a majority and standards high.

> So I think we're enriched by cultural diversity. But it -- my concern as with almost everybody is how do you accommodate people from a different culture and yet keep your standards high. Now, I'm gonna tell you, the Chinese that came in, no problem. I mean, it was easier then. Their standards were sometimes higher than ours.

In order to do keep the standards high, Gwen manipulated school zone lines. She did this over several years with the support of a parent council. Gwen acknowledged there were times when parents pushed back and she would, in turn, back away from a proposed boundary change. However, bbased on statements made by both Gwen and Dixie that the minority parents were not actively involved in the schools, it is probable that the parents that were serving as counsel to the district leader making the decision were either of the White majority that had previously exalted total control of the district or they were the minority parents, like Becky and Kathy's, that had adopted and were highly functional within the confines of the expectations established by the majority.

With the support of the parent council, the established expectations were replicated and perpetuated. Again, based on her deficit perspective of the value of education in Black schools and families, Gwen took steps to respond to the perceived needs of the White students who she identified as setting the standards while, inadvertently, creating biases and inequities for the Black students and families moving in to the schools.

Dixie

Another step taken by the district was the implementation of a district-wide discipline management program. The program adopted was the Boys Town program that trained teachers how to manage behavior through relationship building and the explicit teaching of social skills. The social skills included topics like how to disagree, how to accept no as an answer, and how to request something. Dixie attributed the addition of this program to the increase in student mobility. This program was intended to have students and parents familiar with the process and procedures of the campuses to make their transition between campuses easier. This increased familiarity with processes and procedures was expected to decrease disruptions to the school and learning environment that were previously established.

This program, through the scripted teaching of social skills was another way of requiring conformity within the long standing expectations based on the White, middle class that at one time filled the schools and who remained in positions of leadership. The skills taught provided step by step instructions on how to approach different situations. The skill of how to accept no for an answer, for example, was comprised of four steps: look at the person, say "ok," stay calm, and if you disagree, ask later. For students entering the schools that were previously in environments where such steps were not the

standard, it provided the opportunity to clearly understand what the expectations were. However, such steps inadvertently negated the students' previous experiences and the expectations they entered with and forced them to conform if they were to be successful. The example of how to accept no for an answer also directly contradicts norms of other cultures that were entering the schools. In many Asian cultures, for example, it is considered a sign of disrespect to engage in extended eye contact. This is another example how efforts to maintain control inadvertently created biases and inequities that did not allow for the intended goals to be achieved.

Dixie's experiences on the east side of the district also led her to take steps to maintain continuity within her individual campus. Her students largely lived in apartment complexes and moved on a regular basis in pursuit of housing that was more affordable. Sometimes families would move within the school zone but many times they moved out of the school zone and the school district. In order to help maintain some of the consistency, Dixie describes distributing fliers to her parents that indicated which apartments they could move into and remain on the same campus.

All of the participants, with the exception of Whitney, made reference to efforts to maintain control of the long existing expectations in the community and school system. The establishment of a district level operations manual, the manipulation of school boundaries, increased controls on campuses, and a district-wide behavior management program suggest an attempt to maintain control of certain elements of the school environment while the changes in the broader community were out of their control.

Theme 5: Fear and Safety

Two sides of the same coin

Throughout the interview process, each of the participants made reference to fear. Fear was triggered both by the unknown trajectory of the community and its inhabitants as well as the clear and present danger facing the inhabitants in the community. Initially, when the community began to grow, the emotion of fear was not as prevalent. However, when the racial demographics began to change, fear surfaced and infiltrated the community. Actions taken were a directly motivated by fear of the unknown and dangers the community was experiencing. In either situation, fear was something that was a regular emotion in the community.

Fear of the Unknown

Gwen identified fear in parents as the racial and cultural demographics of the community changed. She believed the parents saw the influx of new groups into the district as a threat.

> I'll tell you, the big fear of parents as I heard them, they were afraid that cultures that came in that did not have the same value system, that didn't value education as highly as they did, would indeed in the long run change the situation, change the school. That was the fear.

> This fear triggered many families to move away from the community. Gwen

identified one neighborhood in particular that had predominantly middle to upper middle class families and how that neighborhood saw many families leave. "White flight," or the desire to live in a homogenous, White, middle-class area, is what brought many families to the community originally. Once the demographics were no longer similar to

the original demographics desired, "white flight" took place again, moving families to suburban areas further out that maintained that level of homogeneity.

Kelly provided the counter perspective of those that moved. Although leaving the area was considered, her parents had invested all of the money they had saved into their home and were not able to leave, despite the fear of the unknown and clear and present danger around her. Like many, the fear of the unknown was a question as to how the community would continue to evolve and how it could impact them, like presenting them with dangerous situations, how the value of their home would be impacted, and how the community could continue to appear less well kept. The clear and present danger was already a regular concern, including their safety at school, out in the neighborhood, and even within their own home.

Becky's experiences with fear fell somewhere in between those of the perceived fear and the clear and present danger. Acknowledging that her parents made every attempt to keep her sheltered from the broader community, her parents took certain precautions and required certain actions from her and her older sister. These actions included only taking certain routes, which Becky admittedly strayed from once she got older and was able to drive herself. The routes traveled with her family included staying on one of the main three thoroughfares in the community that ran from east to west, with no shortcuts through residential neighborhoods. When she was traveling alone, she was expected to travel out of the way to use a major thoroughfare that was just outside of the boundaries of the community. She admits to having to break some of these rules when she was taking friends home from school or when she just wanted to hang out with some of her friends. She was also expected to only go places with a group of friends instead of

by herself. Becky's parents believed that she would be safer if she was not by herself.

A perceived fear was also the catalyst for Whitney to move her dance studio out of the community. After many years in the same location, the space in the center next to her was converted into a rap recording studio.

You should see these big guys with their underwear showing, their bling, and my little ballerinas walking up the same stairs. That was when it was time for me to move 'cause it was a safety issue, the fact that, you know, just the energy was not what I wanted.

Fear of what was happening as well as fear of the unknown was articulated by multiple participants. It caused many to leave the area or to consider leaving the area. Here, the reactions to fear have been discussed. Future discussions will examine some of the incidents that occurred to or around the participants that caused such fear to manifest.

Clear and Present Danger

Fears were presented by participants based on their personal experiences and the experiences of those around them. Kelly told several accounts of incidents that occurred while she was growing up, largely from middle school on. She never articulated the emotion of fear but clear assumptions can be made that there was fear based on the nature of the incidents. She recalled an incident where the house next door to her family's home was "shot up" and her close friend and fellow cheerleader that lived there was killed. A teammate and close friend of her brother's was shot, "his body was riddled with bullets and he was paralyzed from the waist down," at the young age of 15.

There were other incidents where Kelly found herself in danger. At one point, she was playing on the tennis courts on the middle school campus near her home and a man

tried to abduct her. Her only escape route was to jump the fence that had a protective

barrier of barbed wire on top, as discussed in Theme 4: Maintaining Control, and run

home. Another incident occurred on the campus when she and several of her brothers

were training at the track at the same middle school.

> ...we were inside the track training, this was my summer before high school, and
>
> some guys rolled up in a car and it was obvious they were in a gang. They were
>
> wearing a particular color and they had their guns out and they basically were
>
> there for some kind of initiation. And we were on the other side of the track far
>
> enough where they could shoot to get to us but they were coming in the track and
>
> my brothers threw me and my niece over the fence and we had to climb over the
>
> barbed wire and then they jumped over the fence and we ran all the way to the
>
> bowling alley as they were shooting at us.

Becky also had experience with gang violence. She recalls one of her sister's

classmates being shot by a gang. Despite being two years apart in grade, Kelly and

Becky both began experiencing the changes upon entering middle school. Kelly lived

centrally in the district and Becky lived on the west side. By their accounts, it took about

two years for the changes that lead to fear to reach her.

This obvious threat of danger lead to fear within the community but also within

the confines of the school. Becky recalls many fights within the school. Although she

did not explicitly identify the response by the school district, she did note how many

privileges, like the ability to leave campus were revoked by the time she was in high

school. Beck, Kelly, and Kathy each identified increased police presence on campuses.

It can be inferred that the police presence was there to both prevent and respond to

situations like fights.

Students in the community faced danger both in the community and within the school setting. As mentioned, while some families opted to move out of the community, many stayed and were forced to face to the dangers. The response of the school district can be seen through the safety measures, including working to secure the campus through external means, like barbed wire, and an increased police presence on campus.

Theme 6: Luck of the Draw

From its earliest days as a rural farming community, the one room schoolhouse was located in the center of the community. The initial expansion of the schools remained largely centralized, all located at the same intersection as the Administration Building. When the second high school opened its doors in the fall of 1975, adding a single grade level a year, it shared a building with the existing high school, separated only by a courtyard and bus drive. The second high school moved out of the original high school and into a new building in January of 1982. The new high school was located on the same plot of land, on the opposite side of the block.

Students had always been zoned to specific elementary and middle schools, with neighborhoods largely serving as the zoning boundaries. Each middle school would draw from several elementary schools and all of the middle schools fed into the high schools. As the population grew and diversified, district leaders made the decision to manipulate some of the elementary boundaries to ensure that none of the campuses, in particular those on the east side that were predominately apartments, became campuses where the majority of the students were minorities. Those manipulations, completed by Gwen, were done with the self-identified best of intentions. These intentions included

minimizing the perceived extra stress to campuses and principals that were impacted by a large number of low income and minority students.

Despite the efforts to have more control over the demographic makeup of the elementary schools, the students were still feeding into the middle schools and high schools that Gwen identified were too large to control with the manipulation of boundaries. Because of the high school's proximity to one another, the school district was forced to explore equitable ways to separate the students into the different schools.

A random "draw" or lottery system was the solution to the issue. Each year, campus leaders and members of the eighth grade student councils would go to the Administration Building to carry out the random draw that would determine the high school the student would attend. A card for each student was randomly placed in one of two boxes, either Payton High School or Dickerson High School. With certain transfer options in place for students with older siblings that might have attended one of the high schools, this is how the location for students' secondary education was determined.

Personal Aside

As a student, I can recall this being an exciting time. Would I be drawn for the high school my brother was drawn for but did not attend? Would I be drawn for the school that I knew many of my friends from other middle schools would be attending because they had older siblings there? Was I going to be separated from some of my best friends with whom I had attended Kindergarten-eighth grade? Did I need to start buying blue and white or black and gold clothes? It was a pivotal day in my life as a student.

I was fortunate. I was drawn for the campus I desired as were many of my close friends. For those who did not end up on the campus they desired, the process was very

upsetting. Despite the fact the campus offered similar opportunities, there are very few things that are more important than friendship for an eighth grade. Being separated from those friends they had grown up with was obviously very upsetting.

As a researcher, this methodology of determination, while fair in as much as it was random and each campus had similar structures and opportunities, it appears as a discrepancy between the values of the community and actions of the school district. As was discussed in the literature review, motivation for relocation to the suburbs is often driven by the desire for a better education. Urban areas tend to have a larger minority population and the White, middle class seek to separate themselves from the minority population and hoard opportunities. Through this random assignment, however, the suburban experience many families had sought were compromised. They were faced with the diversity many attempted to avoid.

Additionally, as the community demographics began to change, a clear distinction between the two sides of the community was established. References were made by the participants to "the other side," "the west side," "the east side," and "my side." These students from the more western neighborhoods in the district were particularly impacted as they had not experienced such diversity.

Theme 7: Family

Parents play a pivotal role in the lives of students. The participants recognized the role that families played in the community as it changed. In five of the seven interviews there was noteworthy mention of families and their response to the changes in the community.

Waylon talked at length about the positive impact the familial feel throughout the community had on the upbringing of his children. He made a parallel with the small town in Louisiana that he grew up in. He believed the community had the same small town feel, despite being in one of the largest cities in the state, where extended families were near and took an active role in raising the children. Neighbors, teachers, and other community members were also invested in helping to raise one each other's children. He remarked, "I probably give myself more credit than I deserve, but I am kind of proud of the opportunity we had to live and kind of grow our family there."

When asked simply to identify her roles and the years she was in the district, Gwen described the first campus she worked on when she began in 1969.

It was a little rural schools and the best parents on earth. I mean, a lot of them probably didn't have higher education degrees but they were just wonderful, so supportive, and you couldn't have asked for a better place to teach.

As the population changed, Gwen identified efforts to engage parents in decision-making processes for the district. She had a committee comprised of parents that she relied upon.

Once the demographic changes occurred, both Becky and Kelly's parents were compelled to lend support to their children's peers who were either struggling or had not been taught the expectation they deemed appropriate. This teaching of certain expectations was done with good intentions yet it disregarded what they had previously been taught or experienced, similar to the behavior management program adopted by the school district. Kelly recalled a friend whose mother was "an actual crackhead," both using and selling drugs. In sixth grade, her friend was forced to begin working on the

weekends selling the newspaper on the corner to have enough money to support his three younger siblings since their mother was not in a condition to do so. Each day on his way home from selling newspapers, he would stop by Kelly's house where her mom would make sure he got a shower and a good meal before returning home to take care of the other siblings.

Kelly identified that that many of the community resources, like neighborhood parks, were removed or restricted because to an increase in drug use, violence, and vandalism. Her parents opted to offer support in a way that would help many of the kids in the neighborhood; they installed a basketball goal on their driveway. Appearing as a small gesture it had a big impact on their neighborhood. Kelly recalls there being 40-50 kids on their driveway each day playing basketball afterschool. When some of the others in the neighborhood questioned her parent's decision, her mom let her concern for the broader community be known. Kelly recounts her mom's perspective.

> She said if we want our society to be better, these kids need something to do. If me giving them this basketball goal and letting them drink out of my water hose keeps them off the streets from selling drugs or from shooting somebody or gang banging then they can beat up my pavement all they want.

Becky also recalled teachable moments she and her parents had with her peers. Becky's parents provided an upbringing for her that allowed for both opportunities to have meaningful life experiences and experiences to the broader world outside of their community. They also enforced an element of shelter, guarding her from experiences that they thought might have a negative impact on her, like seeing the prostitutes that were known to work in certain areas or spending time with a friend whose brother was a

known gang member. Her parents made sure she and her sister were involved in a variety of activities, had opportunities to travel and experience different parts of the world, and were in touch with their Black heritage. Her parents expected the friends Becky brought to their home to maintain a certain level of behavior as well. When Becky's friends were not meeting their standards of behavior, she recalls her parents sitting them down and telling them the way they were expected to act. Her parents did not do so in a begrudging manner but rather approached it as an opportunity to teach them something they had not been taught at home.

Becky recalls being in high school and having to "check" some of her friends she believed were being disrespectful in a restaurant by being loud and not speaking to the servers in the way she had been taught. She had to inform them that their behavior for that setting was inappropriate and that they needed to be respectful of the servers and the establishment because the servers were actually there to help them. Like the stance taken by her parents, Becky stated she did not begrudge her peers for the perceived misbehavior but she wanted to help them correct it. Similar to the beliefs expressed by the school personnel, Becky and her parents perceived these students from a deficit perspective.

Personal Aside

The family unit served as the root for many of the participants, building a strong connection to the community. Each of the student participants had older siblings that attended the Amity schools prior to them. Becky had a sister that was two school years ahead, Kathy had a sister that was three school years ahead, and Kelly had 10 (of 16) older brothers and sisters that had attended the Amity schools before her.   Additionally,

Waylon made note that not only did his children attend schools in the district so did his grandchildren and currently his great grandchildren attend the schools.

Because of the strong connections to the community several participants or their family members, returned to the district after completing their college degrees to work in the district. Kathy's sister bought a home in the area, taught in the district for several years, and her daughter attended school there for several years. Kathy considered teaching in the district but opted to pursue a different career choice. Becky returned to the district to teach for several years as well and her daughter attended school there. One of Kelly's brothers returned to the district to teach and coach for an extended period of time. As was noted previously, upon completion of college, I too returned to the district and served for many years as a teacher, instructional leader, and administrator.

Theme 8: Gangs

Street gangs came to the area in the mid-1980s. Participants identified several of the larger gangs that were present in the community as well as the impact these gangs had on the community. Because the gangs had not always been in the community, their presence and impact was noticeable. Gangs can be related to the previous theme of Families, as they provided for many students and community members the familial connection many were missing in their homes.

Specific gangs that were present in the community that were identified by the participants included the Amity Gangsters, the Black Followers, the Swat Wild Cholos, and BVE (Bristle Valley East, a neighborhood in the community). The Amity Gangsters were predominately comprised of Black students and community members and associated with the West Coast Crips, wearing blue to signal their affiliation. The rivals

of the Amity Gangsters were the Black Followers. The Black Followers were affiliated

with West Coast Bloods and were predominately comprised of Black students and

community members.   The Amity Gangsters and the Black Followers were largely

focused on maintaining power in the community. The conflicts between the two groups

were frequent and often times violent. Both groups also engaged in regular crime like

vandalism, robbery, and assault.

The Swat Wild Cholos were the first and most prominent Hispanic gang in the

area. Recognizable by their black bandanas, they left their mark around the community

with regular graffiti 'tags' that was a simple sCw or SWC. Their initiation process was

one of urban legends, with new members being forced to endure extended periods of

physical and sexual violence. BVE was the predominately Vietnamese gang.   They were

largely territorial, with a focus on the Vietnamese area in the community, and fought to

keep all other gangs out.

With their arrival, there was substantial change throughout the community. Kelly

recalls the arrival of the gangs in her neighborhood.

> And they made it known. I mean they were spray painting all over the
>
> neighborhood, they were fighting all the time. That's when the drugs started to
>
> come into the neighborhood. You got kids even that I was going to school were
>
> selling drugs.

Based on the influence of family on Kelly's life, she provided an explanation as to

why she believes the gangs became so prolific so quickly.

> And their basic needs weren't being met at home so they weren't given the love
>
> they need at home so then here comes a guy who is not even old enough to be

their father but who is a high school dropout himself who's the head of a gang who says hey man don't you want to feel loved?

She had several close friends that were in gangs. They had their need to feel loved and connected met by their fellow gang members. The gang served as an outside familial support system to compensate for what they were not receiving in their homes. The gang membership had tragic results for a couple of her friends, including being shot and ending up incarcerated.

Kathy had a different perspective of gangs within the area. Taking in to consideration the rise and influence of rap culture throughout the country and the stronghold gangs had on the east coast and west coast at this time, she believed that the gangs in Amity were merely replicas of what was going on elsewhere. This theory was admittedly developed as a result of information she learned from her boyfriend who moved from Amity to Los Angeles. She said, "He would say that's silly of them to do that because it's very serious out here and you know that's just for play out there, but over time it's – it really increased – the gang activity did."

Although Kathy maintained her belief in their inauthenticity she also recalls how quickly the gang culture expanded and the trouble they caused in the community. The gangs gained momentum through rapid growth and continued to cause problems for the community. As Kelly noted above, many kids were able to find a place where they felt valued and fit in to a larger family type unit. They developed the gang culture as their identity which often times led to a general disregard for the community norms that had long been established.

Whitney also recalls the gangs. She too took a broader look at the Asian culture, Vietnamese people in particular, as they were acclimating to the American culture. As was noted by Kathy and Waylon, the Vietnamese established a strong presence in a particular section of the community that included street signs written in both English and Vietnamese. "The later and later, boat people that came over, you know, did not come over with the same tools, you know, education and economic tools that the first wave of Vietnamese refugees had." Whitney noted that many of these later generations of "boat people" had spent extensive periods of time in refugee camps were their basic needs had hardly been met. Despite that fact that the culture valued education and had a strong work ethic, they also wanted the younger generations to become "Americanized." This was likely an attempt at building more opportunities after the extensive hardships they had faced in fleeing their home country. In becoming more "Americanized" Whitney recalls their gang activity.

> So the thing that I found to be sad is that there was a point when the Vietnamese gang situation became an issue. I don't know if you remember that. It became territorial, it became -- you know, you started seeing -- instead of the bookworm Asian with the pocket protector it became the edgy urban New Age looking, you know, punk hairdo Asians that were just really too cool for school.

Personal Aside

I experienced gangs as they became a very influential reality in the community. In middle school, they were something that I had heard rumors of but had never experienced firsthand. There were rumors that several of my classmates and friends were "Cholos," or members of the Hispanic gang the Swat Wild Cholos, but it was not something that

had a substantial impact on my educational experience. I had seen the graffiti tags around the community but I had no direct exposure.

Upon entering high school gangs were a very present reality. Many of my classmates and teammates had some gang affiliation and their culture and influence was always of great interest to me. They were intricately woven bodies of power, with secret yet clear organizational structures and circles of influence. My interest in the gang culture included not only a need to befriend as many different gang members in as many different gangs as possible to ensure my own personal safety, as they were at times terrorizing the community with their drive by shootings, assaults, and robberies, but also to catalog when new members were initiated, anticipate changes in rank when members left campus (because of a move, to attend a district alternative campus, or when they became incarcerated), and who was maintaining local control. The gang in control was of particular importance because it would impact daily routines like which hallways to take to class, where to sit in the cafeteria, and who I could be seen with outside of school. Through my ongoing observations and collection of information, I was able to avoid multiple compromising situations. While their unseen power dictated certain aspects of my daily life, my independent personality was not conducive to engaging in gang activity. Unfortunately, I saw many fall victim to the pressures of gang participation as well as gang violence.

Summary of Findings

The answers to the three original research questions emerged in to eight major themes following the data analysis: Understanding the How and Why, Privilege, Geography, Maintaining Control, Fear and Safety, the Luck of the Draw, Family, and

Gangs. The first theme, Understanding the How and Why, was identified by the

participants as a result of several factors. The community experienced large growth due

to promising suburban opportunities, including job opportunities and quality schools.

The growth continued and diversification began as a result of an economic downturn (the

oil bust of the early 1980s), city bus service beginning to serve the area, and an influx of

refugees from Vietnam.

Privilege was another theme that emerged. The presence and prominence of a

good ol' boy system of leadership had substantial impact on the running of the school

system. Explicitly identified by one of the participants, the good ol' boy systems allowed

ample access to control and opportunity for those who were privileged to be a part of the

system. Similar to the good ol' boy system of leadership, student participants also

perceived a system of privilege. Their privilege was not based on the color or

socioeconomic status but rather on being an insider in the community. The influence of

privilege prevented some, in particular the school leadership from being able to recognize

the biases and inequities that were by products of their privilege.

The geography of the community was another theme that emerged. Following the

trends of many developments following the Industrial Revolution, this community was

bisected into an east and west side. The east side had a large concentration of apartments

and more of a transient population, moving from apartment to apartment in the area, and

in turn, school to school. The west side was comprised predominately of single family

dwellings where families established roots and stayed in the homes they purchased for

longer periods of time. The east side became predominately minority and was known to

be less safe, compared to the west side where the population remained largely White as the community historically had been.

The growth and diversification of the community triggered a need to maintain control within the community. The leadership relied on the aforementioned good ol' boy system to maintain control of the school board and leadership positions. Additionally, leaders in the schools took steps to maintain control through the development of district level operations manual, the manipulation of school boundaries, increased controls on campuses, and a district wide behavior management program. Similar to the influence of privilege, the steps taken by the participants to maintain control exposed a lack of recognition of the changing demographics and often times generated biases and inequities in the community as they attempted to move forward.

Fear and Safety was another theme that emerged. There was fear of what was happening in the community as well as fear of the unknown that caused many to leave the area or to at least consider leaving the area. Students faced danger in the community and within the school setting, with an increase of gang violence and fighting. As a result of these dangers, the school district implemented certain safety measures, including working to secure the campus and an increased police presence on campus.

It was necessary to identify an equitable way to separate students to attend the two different high schools due to the fact there were no natural neighborhood boundaries similar to those that supported the elementary and middle school efforts. The solution identified by the district was a lottery type "draw" separating students. This process, while appearing to be a contradiction of community norms, dictated the course of

students' secondary education and provided for an equitable merging of East and West Sides of the district.

Family was another theme that emerged. Participants that were students identified the role and influence their parents had not only on them but also on their friends and the broader community as it grew and diversified. With the "best parents on Earth" identified by Gwen at the beginning of her career, sentiments were echoed in the pride that was taken in raising child in the community. At times, the perceived deficit views of those students and families coming in to the community presented by parents were echoed by the students. Strong family units helped to root the participants in the community and feel a strong sense of connectedness, resulting in the participants and/or family members returning to the community to live and/or work following the completion of college.

Gangs, the final theme that emerged, also had substantial influence on the community and schools as the demographics changed; they remain prevalent today. News stories and documentaries addressing gang violence in the schools and wider community have been released as recently as 2014. With an interesting connection to the Family theme, gangs served as the family for many students and community members, providing them a sense of belonging and feeling of connectedness. Although one participant perceived the gangs to merely be replicas of what was going on elsewhere and a product of the rap culture, they still had a significant influence on the community.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND FINDINGS

This chapter provides a summary of the study of a suburban school district that

experienced a significant change in demographics, the impact this change had on the

educational community, and how different members of the educational community

experienced the change. Following the summary, limitations of the study will be

identified and discussed. This chapter concludes with implications the findings from the

study will have on theory, research, and practice for educators facing a similar

demographic changed in their districts.

Statement of Problem

According to the Census Bureau statistics (2011), Texas had five areas, including

Midland, Austin, Odessa, Houston, and San Antonio, among the top twenty nationwide

that had the largest percentage change in demographics between 2000 and 2010. The

Census Bureau (2011) statistics also indicate four areas in Texas that had the largest

numeric changes in demographics nationwide: Houston, Dallas/Fort Worth,

Austin/Round Rock, and San Antonio/New Braunfels. Understanding how one

community faced the change in student demographics can provide insights for other communities facing such a change locally, on the state level, and nationwide.

Summary of the Findings

This study examined the experiences and perceptions of individuals in a majority White suburban community that experienced a significant shift in demographics between the late 1970s and mid-1990s. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with consenting participants to collect qualitative data. The participants held different roles within the educational community and represented different races to gain as much perspective as possible. In addition to the data collected and analyzed through the participant interviews, the researcher also included *Personal Asides* in multiple themes. These *Personal Asides* allowed for the researcher to include her personal experiences and perspective of the change in the community while growing up since she lived there and experienced the demographic shift as a student in the schools. The researcher acknowledges the potential bias including her own experiences; therefore, a Peer Debriefer analysis process was conducted to identify potential foregone conclusions. The *Personal Asides* as a narrative process has been used to enhance the methodology and is tentatively included as an additional data source.

The interviews and *Personal Asides* sought to answer the following research questions.

d) In what ways did the demographic change impact the educational community?

e) How did the participants experience the demographic change?

f)   How did the change impact their participation in the school and larger

community?

Initial data analysis, conducted using the methodology proposed in Chapter IV, resulted in a significant loss of meaningful and influential data. The necessity to provide an accurate, in-depth, and comprehensive analysis of the data required a change to the methodological approach. A critical ethnography approach was adopted as well as narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) for my own *Personal Asides*. Using this combination of methodologies, eight major themes emerged in the data, answering the research questions:

- Family;

- Fear and Safety;

- Gangs;

- Geography;

- Luck of the Draw;

- Maintaining Control;

- Privilege; and

- Understanding the How and Why;

As highlighted through the data presented and analyzed in Chapter IV, an understanding of how and why the community changed was evident. The community soon became bifurcated in to two distinct areas, with the west side of the district remaining predominately White and homogenous while the east side of the district reflected a more racially diverse population of a lower socio-economic status. Privilege

and the desire to maintain control across the community influenced decisions and actions taken by the community, individual community members, and the school district. This privilege was exercised and the desire to maintain control was triggered by fear and a desire to do what those in control perceived was best for the students. The efforts, unfortunately, often times lead to the exacerbation of inequities. Despite all of the changes, participants reported that the strong influence of families supported children. For some, the lack of a family structure was desired but not a reality in their home. Many of those students sought that familial support through gangs. The qualitative data, aggregated in to eight themes, represents the unique experiences and perspectives of each of the participants.

Limitations of the Study

The data collected provided in depth information based on the experiences of the participants. Although efforts were made to include a diverse participant pool, the participants only represented Black, White, and Asian perspectives. Additionally, the participant pool was limited based on the access to participants. The limitation was a result of the inability to access participants representing different roles in the community as well as access to participants that were currently employed by the district.

Another limitation was the inability to access quantitative data from the school district. Although the data requested were available, including information from School Board Meetings and student enrollment information (including demographics), the district did not have the ability to disseminate the information in a manner that was cost effective and within a reasonable time frame. Multiple communications were exchanged

between the researcher and the school district but a reasonable solution could not be reached.

The researcher's experiences in the district, both as a student and later as an employee provided a unique lens to the data analysis. In order to temper any unexpected biases, *Personal Asides* were included throughout the study to identify the researcher's experiences and potential biases. These *Personal Asides* allowed the researcher the opportunity to include her own experiences, which openly showed how she was impacted and brought to light biases she might bring to the study.

The last limitation was the fact this study focused on only one community and school district. With the continued change in the student population across the city, state, and country, it is still the belief of the researcher that the findings here can be generalized to other districts based on the richness of data collected and in depth data analysis that was completed.

Contributions to the Literature

This study contributes to the literature by examining the experiences and perceptions of individuals in a majority White suburban community that experienced a significant shift in demographics. This study included participants that represented different facets of the educational community, including students, school leaders, and community members. Their experiences provide a unique insight in to how the change impacted the different groups.

The study supported prior research in the development of suburban communities. White, middle class families seek a suburban education to insulate themselves from urban problems and "hoard" opportunities, both in terms of resources and social networks

(Rury & Saatcioglu, 2011). This opportunity "hoarding" was highlighted in this study by community members expressing the desires for a highly reputable school system, with a strong sense of community in a location that was convenient to employment opportunities.

A large amount of the current quantitative research on this topic focuses the data that demonstrates demographic changes are occurring in suburban communities (Huyser, Boerman-Cornell, & Dober, 2011; Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Fry, 2011). As is often seen in communities, when schools become more integrated, White families often leave schools to enroll in either private schools or other suburban schools (Caldas & Bankston, 2001). This study found similar trends, with several of the participants making reference to families leaving the community or being interested in leaving yet being unable to due to financial limitations.

With the influx of more diverse learners, district and campus level leaders cannot remain unresponsive (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014). The current literature seeks to explore school districts' responses to demographic changes in suburban communities, including modified or additional programs around teacher hiring and professional development, student programs, curriculum and instruction, and technical or operational changes. (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014; Diem, Welton, Frankenberg, & Jellison, 2016; Evans, 2007; Tyler, Frankenberg, & Ayscue, 2016). The findings from this study show that school leaders in Amity chose to make many similar changes. The changes identified in this study were largely operational in nature, including the manipulation of boundary lines and the transfer processes for teachers. There was discussion of the need

for additional professional development but there were no explicit changes to the professional development offerings or structure identified.

The issue of the manipulation of boundary lines is a significant finding and contribution. The willingness of the participant to discuss is perceived by the researcher to be a rare occurrence, especially given her rationale which was to maintain a White majority on campuses because the White students set the standard for the other students. This suggests the influence of personal biases in district level decision making and the need for calculated checks and balances to ensure that certain biases do not go unquestioned.

This study is unique in its focus on the personal experiences and perceptions of the participants. When facing change, feelings about the process can help or disrupt the process (Hall & Hord, 2011). One participant made reference to having only discussed some of the feelings and perceptions she experienced at the time with her husband. Participants expressed emotion at different points in the interview process while recounting their experiences. Through the collection and consideration of feelings and perceptions of those that have experienced such a shift, future changes in other communities can potentially be more easily navigated.

Additionally, each of the participant groups offered distinct contributions to the literature. Within the school leadership perspective, this study provides unique insight into the decision making process within the confines of the long standing leadership style and the influence of leaders' personal beliefs. Initially, the leaders in the area were slow to respond to the changes. Once they did respond, many of the changes implemented were regulatory and suggest efforts to keep the schools as they historically had been

despite the changes in demographics. The personal experiences of students identify

experiences that could potentially impact learning and student outcomes. These

experiences included events like being shot at, providing meals for a peer that otherwise

might not have eaten due to his family situation, and being provoked by students based

on racial and economic differences. The contributions of community members'

perspectives and experiences show how such changes impact the broader community and

opportunities for collaboration that is mutually beneficial to the schools and the

community members. Whitney, for example, collaborated with the schools to provide

dance instruction for students that otherwise would not have had the opportunity to

receive such instruction.

Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

This trend in changing suburban demographics is an ever-growing reality in

school districts across the country. The findings of this study will provide educators and

communities facing similar shifts in demographics with insight as to how such changes

impact different stakeholders in the educational community and provide a baseline of

actions to support their districts as they experience such changes.

The implications presented will be framed using the construct of Equity Literacy.

Equity Literacy is an approach for creating and sustaining and equitable classroom and

school environments that prepare educators with the skills and dispositions that enable

them to recognize, respond to, and redress subtle and not-so subtle inequities that hamper

student engagement (Gorski, 2013).

Within Equity Literacy, there are four abilities and multiple principles identified

to help educators achieve a more equitable learning environment for all students and

children. The first ability is the ability to recognize biases and inequities. This requires that the educators notice biases in materials, interactions, and school policies. Additionally, educators should know and teach about how notable field experts have advocated for just (or unjust) actions or policies. Lastly, within the recognition ability is the rejection of deficit views as the source of outcomes for students and families.

Once educators are able to recognize the biases and inequities, the second ability is the ability to respond to them in the short term. This requires skills and knowledge to effectively intervene when biases arise. Educators should develop in students the ability to analyze these biases and inequities. Furthermore, educators should be able to engage in conversations with colleagues about their concerns. Educators must also be able to redress biases and inequities for the long term. In order to redress these concerns, there is a need to advocate against inequitable school practices, distinguish between the celebration of diversity and equity, and teach about relevant issues of inequity and bias.

The final ability within Equity Literacy is the ability to create and sustain a bias free and equitable learning environment. This is achieved through the establishment of high expectations for all students, the consideration of resources when executing routine tasks like the assignments of homework and family communication, and the development of a school and classroom environment where students are able to express themselves openly and honestly. This final ability of Equity Literacy requires substantial commitment from the entire educational community.

The following sections will identify the need for each of the abilities based on the findings presented in Chapter IV, as well as include steps that can be taken to address each of them in the current school environment. It is important to note that each ability

builds on the previous. If efforts are not made at the onset to train, recruit, and retain educators that are willing to be self-reflective and change agents in this manner, efforts to incorporate the additional abilities will be less effective.

Recognition

One of the driving principles behind Equity Literacy that directly correlates to this study is the necessity of educators to adopt a structural rather than deficit view of educational disparities. In the study, examples were presented of school leaders, students, and community members working to have the more diverse influx of students conform to the existing operational systems in terms of speech, behavior, and familial support. In focusing on the perceived deficits and acting to "fix" the perceived deficits, through actions like the adoption of a behavior management system that explicitly taught social skills, students and families and their experiences were marginalized. The system these families entered was not conducive their wants and needs unless they conformed. Equity Literacy focuses on addressing the larger conditions that disenfranchise students and families rather than "fixing" the students and families. While the school leaders thought they were doing what was best for students, their inability to recognize their own biases that manifested in these deficit views lead to decision making that did not meet the needs of all students. In order to obtain this preliminary of recognition of biases, one suggested implication would be professional development focused on equity literacy. As part of that, the first step of recognition would have to be a substantial focus. It is recognized by the researcher that one of the most common answers to many problems facing educators today is simply professional development. This solution often times leads to a disgruntled response by educators because, again, it is the answer to many

problems facing the current public education system. Yet the responses to questions in this study indicated a clear and definite need. School leaders in the study acknowledged that many of the staff did not possess the professional tools nor a desire to serve diverse student populations. They were accustomed to the type of student they had previously served and many were unable or unwilling to meet the changing needs of students. This was likely a result of a deficit mindset they possessed in terms of students from different races and/or a different socioeconomic status. For those that were willing, there was a shortage of accessible resources and training to help support them, leaving them to rely heavily on their own professional intuition. It was articulated by both Gwen and Waylon in this scenario that the perceived best interest of students remained at the forefront of their decision making. What was not accounted for was the recognition of their own biases in providing for the perceived best interest of students. The unintentional outcomes of the biases and inequities articulated in this study clearly show that this is not a situation that can nor should be left merely to professional discernment, as it does not address the root causes of the issues, like personal bias and systematic oppression.

Professional development should help to bring awareness to and provide adequate skills to address the needs and inequities facing diverse learners and provide opportunities for success for all, beginning with mere recognition. Historically, the broad umbrella used to address the needs of diverse learners is multicultural education and began following the Civil Rights Movement. The goal of multicultural education remains to change educational and societal structures so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in schools (Banks

& Banks, 2009). The continued achievement gap across the United States highlights the (un)intentional biases and cultural privilege that can often times prevent such success from being reached. While well meaning, there is one fatal flaw in the general idea of multicultural education. With a focus on the idea of culture, educators are often times presented with vague and stereotypical notions of culture that do not account for difference within cultures and requires a significant amount of assumption merely based on a single dimension of one's identity (Gorski, 2013). The focus instead should be on equity. Targeted professional development with a focus on Equity Literacy beginning with the ability to recognize biases and inequities, coupled with strategic plans for implementation and measurement, can assist in alleviating some of the individual, societal and institutional discrimination that perpetuate the marginalization of populations.

A common oversight in the implementation of a professional develop plan is the lack of cohesion. Professional development efforts focused on Equity Literacy should engage all levels, in all subjects, and, most importantly, drive all levels of the decision making process from the classroom to the board room. For this reason, professional development should include support personnel, administrators on the campus and district levels, as well as school board members. Each of these positions play an important role as change agents within our schools systems. It must become a part of the philosophy of individual campuses, school districts, and ideally the entire community to reach the most optimal level of respect and success.

It is important to note that while it is also necessary to include content specific professional development, the impact of such trainings content specific training will not

advance our education system further than it is now as we continue to battle institutional and systematic biases. For instance, in Texas, there is currently a discussion around the adoption of a Mexican-American textbook that includes statements like "Mexican-Americans sought to destroy U.S. society" and draws comparisons between White workers and Mexican workers that suggest White workers worked hard and Mexican workers were lazy (Heim, 2016). While it is not likely that this book will be adopted, it is necessary for educators to the have ability recognize, respond to, and advocate for the elimination of such biases as well as enable their students to do so. A heavy focus on content has not reformed our system thus far; continued efforts will yield similar results.

The education system cannot continue to perpetuate this cycle of privilege and bias. In order to break such long standing traditions and practices, we must start by recognizing our own biases and respond to those in a manner that brings about deeper, substantive change. We must work to comprehensively equip our wider educational communities to embrace the realities of the population to give all an equal chance to achieve academically.

Ability to Respond

Merely recognizing bias and inequities with the school system does not eradicate them and lead to a sense of acceptance, value, and respect for all students within the classroom. Although recognition is not easily achieved unless teachers are well trained and are willing to recognize these inequities, educators must be willing to take the necessary steps to respond to them. In particular school districts facing a change in demographics must remain cognizant of different physical and emotional needs of students and respond in a manner that minimizes feelings of marginalization and builds a

sense of acceptance, value and respect. Responding to these needs helps to address some of the inequities on the short term.

One of the most influential psychology theories that has infiltrated the education realm is that of Abraham Maslow. Maslow (1943) stated that people are motivated to achieve certain needs, and that some needs take precedence over others. When one need is fulfilled a person seeks to fulfill the next one. Based on the application of these needs in the educational sphere, a student's basic physiological needs must be met before cognitive needs can be met. Additionally, based on the second tier of Maslow's hierarchy, students need to feel emotionally and physically safe and accepted within the classroom to progress and reach their full potential; students must be shown that they are valued and respected in the classroom and the teacher should create a supportive environment (McLeod, 2014). By addressing these physical and emotional needs in the short term, schools are creating an environment where students' academic pursuits can more effectively be achieved.

Throughout Chapter IV, participants noted experiences where the physical and emotional needs of students were compromised and the responses to these needs. Dixie noted how behaviors within the school were disrupting the learning environment and compromising the safety of students. The response of the district to that situation was to implement a scripted, district wide behavior management plan. A similar response to student misbehavior by the district was recalled by Becky. She identified privileges being revoked because of some of the misbehaviors of her peers while in high school. Kelly noted that she had a close friend whose mother had a substantial substance abuse problem. Kelly's mother responded by providing him a meal on the weekends when he

was on his way home from selling newspapers to earn money for the family. Without the

meal from her mother on the weekends, Kelly believes he would not have had access to a

meal.

These responses identified by the participants, however, failed to take into

consideration their own biases or the broader impact of the responses in to consideration.

Through the implementation of the scripted behavior management plan, for example,

school administrators failed to recognize that requiring students to follow certain steps

that were aligned with their personal expectations could potentially contradictory to some

cultural beliefs of students, like making eye contact with the teacher when accepting no

for an answer. This placed the students in a precarious position to have to choose to

compromise their own beliefs and upbringing or face additional consequences from their

teacher. Facing that decision could leave a student feeling marginalized and not valued

and accepted as a member of the learning environment. In Becky's case, losing

privileges left her with a sense that she was being punished because of the mistakes of

others and her value to the school environment was less than those that were causing

trouble. In both of these instances, the consequences of the response exacerbated the

need to provide a physically and emotionally safe learning environment. Kelly's

example was slightly different. Her mother's response to the young man that needed

food on the weekend was adequate to meet his immediate physiological needs.

Unfortunately, Kelly also noted that he had several siblings that he was responsible for

taking care of. In this situation as well, Kelly's mother's response could have also placed

the young man in a situation of feeling guilty for receiving food his siblings did not have,

compounding the emotional strain he already felt due to his extenuating circumstances with his mother.

As educators, we cannot control the home environments of our students. However, the response to physiological needs and the emotional and physical safety needs of students should be met in policy and practice that adequately recognizes biases and responds in an effective manner. There are many programs in place to support the physiological needs of students in the short term. The National School Lunch Program, for example, has been serving low-cost or free, nutritionally balanced lunches to students since 1946 (US Department of Agriculture, 2016). Without such programs, Kelly's friend likely would have been left to provide for himself during the week for breakfast and lunch as well. As meal programs continue to develop and expand, and school districts face different and expanding student needs, it is important for school districts to pursue the opportunities to provide this basic physiological need for students.

Similar to if a student were hungry, if a student comes to school under stress learning is more difficult. Again, while educators are unable to control the home environment of students, they should work to provide a school and classroom environment that meets the emotional and physical safety needs of students, allowing for learning in the short term. If stressors are exacerbated in the learning environment through the lack of recognition of inequities or biases of educators, like the implementation of the district wide behavior management plan or the revocation of privileges for all students, students will be more prone to disengage due to a sense of marginalization.

Feelings of marginalization and emotions can influence motivation, activation of cognitive resources, learning behavior and consequently, student outcomes (Vogel & Pekrun, 2016). In order for all students to achieve their full potential through the access to educational and other opportunities offered through the school, emotionally and physically safe learning environments with attention to equity are essential. Development of these environments can be advanced through the aforementioned Equity Literacy professional development of school staff focused on the recognitions of biases and inequities as well as the empowerment of educators to effectively respond to these recognitions.

Ability to Redress

Once educators are able to recognize and respond in the short term to identified biases and inequities, there is a need to continue address the issues in the long term. Trends in education tend to be just that, a trend. They often times endure only long enough to engage a small portion of champions and have limited impact on students before the next tends surfaces and is adopted and that which was is forgotten. Through the third ability in Equity Literacy, educators are positioned to not only identify biases and inequities but also equalize opportunities for immediate solutions that have a long term impact through the empowerment of students and families to be able exercise similar abilities. Family engagement is one manner in which educators can work to redress biases and inequities in the long term.

Families were one of the themes that emerged through data analysis and were discussed in depth in Chapter IV. One of the key findings within the theme was a decrease in parental involvement once the demographic change began. When parents

were involved and engaged following the demographic change, like those that served on Gwen's advisory committee when she was modifying school boundaries, it was the same parents that were previously engaged not those that were new to the community. Additionally, the influence of parents and their beliefs played a significant role in the development of identities and beliefs in the students. The identities and beliefs of parents that were transmitted to their children, while rooted in their own experiences and perceptions, often times were framed through a deficit view. This lead students to adopt similar deficit views. Just as the faces and needs of the students are changing in the classroom, there is a need to change the manner in which schools are engaging families to meet their needs.

Families are key in efforts to improve student learning and outcomes, but traditional engagement efforts often disregard the cultural and social resources of non-dominant families (Ishimaru et al., 2016). The engagement of families provides educators the opportunity to engross parents in their efforts and foster in them a sense of equity. It is important to identify that family engagement is much more than just homework help and parent-teacher conferences; it should be approached to erode racism, classism, sexism, and xenophobia and build relationships that are rooted in trust and respect for human dignity (Geller, 2016). In suburban schools where the racial and socio-economic status is changing, it is critical to continue to work to engage all families to erode the long standing norms and build a culture of trust and respect for all members of the school community. With this in mind, the advisory committee that Gwen had should have made a more concerted effort to include those families that were newer to the community and were directly impacted by the changes she was making. Their exclusion

in this situation forced many unnecessary school transfers of parents that were not given the opportunity to participate in decision making that directly impacted their children. Even if the parents were not directly involved in the decision making process, heightened engagement would have empowered them to recognize what was occurring and respond in a manner that could have prevented such unjust changes.

The level of effective engagement needed to result in a return in positive student outcomes requires all stakeholders in the school community to be engaged, with the school leaders setting the tone. One consistent finding in the current research in effective family engagement programs is that principals play a key role in family engagement by believing in the leadership capacity of parents and viewing families as partners in their school community (Quezada, 2016). It is necessary to ensure that principals are able to recognize practices and policies that promote inequity and respond through providing opportunities that are equitable in the short and long term. It can be especially difficult for us, as educators not to immediately recognize the sorts of challenges that students or families face when we never have faced those challenges ourselves (Gorski & Pothini, 2013). The traditional Parent Teacher Association or Organization, for example, may not be the answer to engaging parents as they provide only a superficial level of engagement that does not address the need to modify norms in the school system to provide equitable opportunities for all students and families.

Programs or opportunities offered to parents should be responsive to the needs of parents and should include consideration of basic items like the timing of events and the language in which items are presented. This gives all parents the opportunity to attend and receive information. Without such consideration, certain groups of parents, likely

those that are already marginalized, will not be able to attend. There are many reasons families may not be able to attend that need to be taken in to consideration. Nearly 60% of students in Texas are considered economically disadvantaged (Texas Education Agency, 2015) Based on that information, it is highly probable that many parents are working hourly jobs. To attend an informational meeting about a new program, for example, would cost a parent several hours or possibly an entire day's worth of work and pay. For those families experiencing financial hardships, this could potentially cause additional burdens. A lack of attendance could result in outcomes like placing their student at a disadvantage because they did not receive certain information, feeling marginalized because the school did not take their needs in to consideration, and leading uninformed or biased educators to draw conclusions about parents and their perceived lack of caring that are inaccurate.

Families are a part of every school environment. The ability to meaningfully engage them in a manner that is conducive to their needs and wants, and provides opportunities to for them to acquire knowledge that will transcend the school environment is a step in creating and sustaining a school environment and broader community that is equitable for all students and families. Engaging families in schools also yield greater student outcomes that can, in and of itself, provide greater opportunities for students.

Ability to Create and Sustain

The final of the four abilities of Equity Literacy is the ability to create and sustain a bias-free and equitable learning environment. With parents and families taking a more active role in the development of an Equity Literacy environment through the third ability, the

fourth ability requires taking efforts one step further to ensure that there is a sustainable plan in place. As part of building sustainability, community engagement to provide social services proves to be key to this ability. Gorski (2013) provides many examples of how communities can and should be engaged in the school environment.

> Obviously schools cannot be everything to everybody. But if, at the very least we can identify some of the core needs our most economically vulnerable students, then build relationships with community organizations that can help us address some of their needs, we will put them in a better position to learn to their fullest capabilities.

In this study, the school system had long been a point of pride throughout the community. It is the belief of the researcher that schools maintain this role in many communities throughout the country, especially in suburban communities where families intentionally seek exceptional educational opportunities for their children. For this reason, it is important to involve the community to support the school system, in particular in where the needs of students and their families are changing. This provides all members the opportunity to improve quality of life and equity throughout communities. Engaged communities have the opportunity to recognize and respond to inequities facing students and their families that are likely the result of systematic oppression and biases.

Throughout the interviews, there was limited discussion about community engagement as the demographic change occurred. There was discussion of individuals and parents that were engaged but limited information was received on the role the community played. The examples that were discussed in Chapter IV provide only

surface level solutions that would not contribute to a more equitable learning environment. Kelly recounted incentives at the neighborhood bowling alley that allowed students who received all A's and B's on their report cards to bowl for 25 cents. She and her peers would spend all day there not able to spend additional money on food or arcade games but they were safe, cool, and out of the dangers of the streets where they otherwise would have been. She noted that the owner likely was not making any money but it was something they were able to do for the community. Whitney also discussed her involvement as a business owner to the community. She would teach dance classes and host day long clinics for students at schools, as opposed to her studio, so students who would not otherwise have access to her classes were given an opportunity. These examples, unfortunately, were surface level fixes that did not help to resolve even the most basic of needs in a sustainable manner.

Many traditional, surface level examples of community engagement can still be seen in schools. A common example of one such traditional support is a librarian from the public library visiting a campus to offer sign-up for a library card. This is an example of something done with the best of intentions; however, if families are not aware of the location of a library, does not have transportation, nor understand the wide breadth of services offered by the library, the efforts provide limited impact on students and their families.

Additionally, as many students and parents enter school systems and communities with a lack of understanding or trust in the system, whether they are aware of inequities or biases or not, they must be provided the opportunity to develop a level of trust and understanding. The community must take an equity approach to impact changes beyond

the immediate needs of students and families and work to make broader, systematic

changes. These systematic changes can include things like developing a deeper

understanding of laws and engaging in the voting process. Local leaders have identified

that Latino voters, for example, desire to be respected and engaged on a regular basis, not

just when an election is near (Pfeffer & Sanborn, 2016). Through engagement in the

schools, the desires of voters will grow as they learn more about how they can engage

civically. Efforts must be made to engage the community in a meaningful way that truly

supports the educational community and addresses their needs, in particular on social

services that are sustainable.

Because suburban areas are identified by their proximity to larger cities, there are

a myriad of social service resources available yet often times inaccessible to many in a

lower socio-economic status due to their location in the suburbs. For this reason, there is

a need for schools and districts to access these resources for families in their community.

Many foodbanks currently have mobile units that can be brought to different areas to help

families that are struggling and otherwise might not have access to food to meet minimal

nutritional needs of children. There are countless other mobile programs that can be

accessible to suburban areas, including libraries, health care, and continuing education

opportunities for students and parents. The schools should engage with members of the

wider community to provide these types of services to meet the basic needs of students

and families and enhance future opportunities for them.

Summary

Based on the findings in Chapter IV, there is a need for our current education system to

break long standing traditions and provide equitable opportunities for all students and

families, in particular for groups of students and families that have historically been marginalized. Through an Equity Literacy Approach, this section provides resources for suburban schools that are facing a demographic changed to help ensure that the students entering their campus are provided equal opportunities.

Considerations for Further Study

The data collected from the participants through the interview process were rich and provided a description of their experiences and perceptions. These descriptions provided by the participants showed many similarities, while each distinct group of participants provided unique experiences that were specific to their roles at the time. A more comprehensive study with a broader participant pool should be considered for future research. The addition of more roles within the community and schools as well as the diversity of the participant pool would allow for conclusions to be enriched.

Family engagement has become an important discussion in education. Participants identified that the level of engagement, understanding, and active participation in students' education shifted when the demographics changed. There are ample examples in the literature to highlight a variety of effective family engagement strategies, yet there is no explicit study of communities experiencing this type of change that have adopted an Equity Literacy approach. There are studies on engaging parents in suburban schools, urban schools, elementary schools, secondary schools, and charter schools but there are currently limited studies on meaningful family engagement on schools that are transitioning from a suburban to a more urban environment. A study focusing on schools or districts experiencing such changes and how the needs of all families are being met through a focus on Equity Literacy would empower school leaders

facing such change with knowledge of effective and ineffective strategies to engage families and have a positive impact on student and familial outcomes.

As the study shows, there was an effort by the long standing majority to maintain control in the community, specifically within the school system. Although modifications were gradually made throughout the transition with the intent of maintaining control, a comprehensive plan to meet the needs of changing student and community demographics was not discussed. An informative and influential future course of study could include the comprehensive compilation of responses of districts to changing demographics, encompassing all elements of the school community, including measurement of impacts.

Conclusion

The interviews conducted in the study provided abundant and rich data about the experiences and perceptions of the participants as they experienced significant demographics changes in their community. Each of the participants displayed a great willingness to discuss their experiences in depth and offered candid responses throughout the interview process. The stories told at times were difficult to hear, with each participant sharing they did their absolute best to accommodate what was going on around them that was out of their control. Acknowledging that the demographic changes were significant and the impact was profound, they each in their own way expressed the lasting impacts the experiences during that time had on them. These are changes and experiences facing many across the country. It is necessary for educators and policy makers alike, in Texas and around the country, to expect, accept, and plan for these changes and structure our public schools in a manner that best serves all children, regardless of race or socio-economic status.

By 2050, the United States Census Bureau (2009) projects that the population of the United States will be 46.6% non-Hispanic White, 28% Hispanic, 13% Black, and 12.4% Non-Hispanic other. According to the 2010 Census, Texas' demographics already closely mirrors the 2050 projections for the country. In addition to the racial/ethnic makeup of Texas, it is also important to consider the socio-economic makeup of those in poverty; 17.5% of the total population lives at or below the federal poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). When the poverty statistics are broken down by race, 15.9% of Whites, 26.2% of Hispanics, and 24.9% of Blacks in Texas live at or below the poverty line.

Suburban school enrollment continues to grow at a significant rate, with more than half of the population living in suburban communities (Hodgkinson, 2003). One-fourth of all public school students across the country are enrolled in suburban schools (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012). As these suburban areas continue to grow, their demographics will change. An 82% increase in minority students enrolled in suburban schools has already been measured in the past 20 years (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Fry, 2009).

The diversification of schools does not come easy and presents major challenges (Diarrassouba & Johnson, 2014; Evans, 2007). It is the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population of students in historically White suburban schools (Holme et al., 2014). Unfortunately, there continues to be an easily identifiable achievement gap that falls along racial and socio-economic lines throughout the United States. A clear example of this is the graduation rate in Texas. In 2014, the state had an average graduation rate of 88.3% with White students graduating at rate of 93%, whereas,

Black students graduated at a rate of 84.2% and Hispanic students graduated at a rate of 85.5%.

The community in this study was ahead of the national curve with regard to the diversification of their suburban schools. They were faced with rapid and significant changes that could not have been anticipated. Fortunately, communities facing these types of changes can now take significant steps to both prepare for and embrace such inevitable changes and work to address the issues by providing more than a surface level fix. Each person involved in the school system has the opportunity to serve as a change agent. This is a role that should be assumed with great sense of obligation and work to address the systematic oppression and bias that has plagued our educational system since its inception. While these types of changes are unquestionably intimidating and challenging as was highlighted by the participants in the study and the current literature, they also provide great opportunity for growth and improvement.

There is no question that our schools system is broken. Our schools are perpetuating long standing norms and continue to fail too many of our children. It is necessary to take action to meet the needs of our students. We must empower students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community member to meaningfully engage in difficult conversations, self-reflection, and actions that will allow for the momentous reform that is needed. Monies can be allocated to build the grandest of football stadiums and incorporate the most modern technologies but until the manner in which we are structuring our systems and delivering instruction is comprehensively overhauled, we will continue to see the same discrepancies in student outcomes along clear racial and socio-economic lines.

As educators, it is necessary to continue to be mindful of the biases and inequities that have gotten us to the point we are now. We must make concerted efforts to be mindful of our students, their needs, and opportunities to ensure that each student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and meet their highest potential. One participant lovingly described the community in the study in one simple word: Camelot. All of our students, regardless of their race, socio-economic status, or zip code deserve an educational experience that is of Camelot-esque peacefulness and enlightenment.

References

Achinstein, B., Ogawa, R. T., Sexton, D., & Freitas, C. (2010). Retaining teachers of color: A pressing problem and a potential strategy for "hard-to-staff" schools. *Review of Educational Research*, *80*(1), 71-107.

Balfanz, R., & Legters, N. (2004). *Locating the Dropout Crisis. Which High Schools Produce the Nation's Dropouts? Where Are They Located? Who Attends Them?* Baltimore, MD: Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, John Hopkins University, Report 70.

Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. M. (Eds.) (2009). *Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives*. New Jersey: Wiley.

Brookings Institute (2012). *2012 Annual Report.* Retrieved from http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/About/Content/annualreport/2012annualreport .pdf

Bush, G. (2002, January 8). *No Child Left Behind Becoming a Law.* Hamilton, OH. Retrieved from https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020108-1.html

Caldas, S. J., & Bankston III, C. L. (2001). East Baton Rouge, School Desegregation, and White Flight. *Research in the Schools*, *8*(2), 21-32.

Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. New York: Routledge.

Children's Defense Fund. (2010). *State of America's children.* Washington DC.

City of Houston. (2014). *Alief Super Neighborhood Resource Assessment.* Planning and Development Department. Houston, TX.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. New Jersey: Wiley.

Cook, P. J., Gottfredson, D. C., & Na, C. (2010). School crime control and prevention. *Crime and Justice*, *39*(1), 313-440.

Copeland, M., Tietjen-Smith, T., Waller, L. R., & Waller, S. K. (2008). Urban versus rural: part-time enrollment. *The Community College Enterprise*, *14*(1), 67.

Davis, S. (1991). *History of Dairy (Alief), Texas*. Houston, Texas: Alief 130th Anniversary Celebration Commission.

Demographic Change [Def. 1]. In *Ideas 202,* Retrieved November 8, 2015 from http://www.ideen2020.de/en/176/.

Diarrassouba, N., & Johnson, S. (2014). Responding to demographic change: What do suburban district leaders need to know? *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*. *9*(1). Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1024107.pdf

Diem, S., Welton, A. D., Frankenberg, E., & Jellison Holme, J. (2016). Racial diversity in the suburbs: how race-neutral responses to demographic change perpetuate inequity in suburban school districts. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *19*(4), 731-762.

Dreier, P., Mollenkopf, J. H., & Swanstrom, T. (2004). *Place matters: Metropolitics for the twenty-first century*. University Press of Kansas.

Educational Community [Def. 1]. (2014). In *The Glossary of Education Reform,* Retrieved November 8, 2015 from http://edglossary.org/educational-community/.

Euchner, C. C., & McGovern, S. J. (2003). *Urban Policy Reconsidered: Dialogues on the Problems and Prospects of American Cities*. New York: Routledge.

Evans, A. E. (2007). Changing faces. Suburban school response to demographic change. *Education and Urban Society 39*(3), 315-348.

Exit Vietnam: Photo shows Vietnamese transformation [Editorial]. (2008, August 8). *The Houston Chronicle.* Retrieved from http://www.chron.com/opinion/editorials/article/Exit-Vietnam-Photo-shows-Vietnamese-1602951.php

Feldstein, D. (1996, September 20). Some residents want to turn away new bus route. *The Houston Chronicle*, p 30.

Finn, J. D., & Servoss, T. J. (2015). Misbehavior, suspensions, and security measures in high school: Racial/ethnic and gender differences. *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*, *5*(2), 11.

Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., & Steinke, I. (Eds.). (2004). *A companion to qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Frankenberg, E., & Orfield, G. (Eds.). (2012). *The resegregation of suburban schools: A hidden crisis in American education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Fry, R. (2009). *The rapid growth and changing complexion of suburban public schools*. Pew Hispanic Center.

Geller, J. D. (2016). Ensuring That Family Engagement Initiatives Are Successful, Sustainable, and Scalable. *Bringing Transformative Family Engagement to Scale: Implementation Lessons from Federal i3 Grants*, 2.

The Glossary of Educational Reform (2014). *Educational Community.* Retrieved from

    http://edglossary.org/educational-community/

Goldsmith, W., & Blakely, E. (1992). *Separate so-cieties: Poverty and inequality in US*

    cities. Temple University Press: Philadelphia.

Goldring, R., Gary, L. & Bitterman, A. 2013. Characteristics of Public and Private

    Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States: Results from the

    2011-2012 Schools and Staffing Survey, National Center for Education Statistics.

    Retrieved from https://goo.gl/pSb15S.

Goodman, G. (1989). Critical ethnography in education: Origins, current status, and new

    directions. *Review of Educational Research, 59*(3), 249-270.

Gorski, P. C. (2011). Unlearning deficit ideology and the scornful gaze: Thoughts on

    authenticating the class discourse in education. *Counterpoints*, *402*, 152-173.

Gorski, P.C. (2013). *Reaching students in poverty: Strategies for erasing the*

    opportunity gap. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gorski, P. C., & Pothini, S. G. (2013). *Case studies on diversity and social justice*

    education. New York: Routledge.

Haberman, M. (1994). Preparing teachers for the real world of urban schools.

    Educational Forum, 58(2)*,* 162-168.

Hall, G. E., & Hord, S. M. (2011). *Implementing change: Patterns, principles, and*

    potholes (3rd ed). Boston: Pearson.

Hartas, D. (Ed.). (2015). *Educational research and inquiry: Qualitative and quantitative*

    approaches. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Heim, J. (2016, July 18). Proposed Texas textbook describes Mexican-Americans as
 'lazy,' new coalition works to block it. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from
 https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2016/07/18/proposed-texas-
 textbook-describes-mexican-americans-as-lazy-new-coalition-works-to-block-it/

Henry, K. L., Knight, K. E., & Thornberry, T. P. (2012). School disengagement as a
 predictor of dropout, delinquency, and problem substance use during adolescence
 and early adulthood. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, *41*(2), 156-166.

Heppner, P. P., & Heppner, M. J. (2004). *Writing and publishing your thesis,*
 dissertation, and research: A guide for students in the helping professions.
 Thomson/Brooks/Cole: Belmont, CA.

Holme, J. J., Diem, S., & Welton, A. (2014). Suburban School Districts and
 Demographic Change the Technical, Normative, and Political Dimensions of
 Response. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(1), 34-66.

Hodgkinson, H. (2003). *Leaving too many children behind*. Washington, DC: Institute
 of Educational Leadership. Retrieved from http://www.
 iel.org/pubs/manychildren.pdf.

Huyser, M., Boerman-Cornell, B., & DeBoer, K. (2011). Christian schools and
 demographic change: Two case studies. *Journal of Research on Christian*
 Education, *20*(1), 4-27.

IDEAS 2020. *Demographic Change*. Retrieved from http://www.ideen2020.de/en/176/

Ishimaru, A. (2013). From heroes to organizers: Principals and education organizing in
 urban school reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 49*(1), 3-51.

Ishimaru, A. M., Torres, K. E., Salvador, J. E., Lott, J., Williams, D. M. C., & Tran, C. (2016). Reinforcing Deficit, Journeying Toward Equity Cultural Brokering in Family Engagement Initiatives. *American Educational Research Journal*, *53(4),* 850-882.

Johnson, B., & Christensen, L. (2012). *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Keith, N. Z. (1996). Can Urban School Reform and Community Development Be Joined? The Potential of Community Schools. *Education and Urban Society*, *28*(2), 237-268.

National School Lunch Program. (August, 2016). Retrieved from http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). What we can learn from multicultural education research. *Educational leadership*, *51*(8), 22-26.

Lane, C. (2014, November 24). The Changing Face of Houston-Alief. *Houston Press*. Retrieved from http://www.houstonpress.com/arts/the-changing-face-of-houston-alief-6379420

Lichtman, M. (2011). *Understanding and evaluating qualitative educational research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Locke, G. (2008, July 31). Interview by David Goldstein [Video file]. Houston Public Library Oral History Project. Retrieved from http://digital.houstonlibrary.org/cdm/ref/collection/oralhistory/id/81

Losen, J. & Skiba, R. (2010). Suspended education: Urban middle schools in crisis. UCLA: The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles. Retrieved from: https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8fh0s5dv

Ludwig, J., & Phillips, D. A. (2007). *The benefits and costs of Head Start*. National Bureau of Economic Research.

Market Locator and Associates. (August 1972). *An economic evaluation of the greater Alief area.* Houston, TX.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, *50*(4), 370-396.

McIntosh, P. (1989). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom Magazine,* 10-12.

McLeod, S. A. (2014). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Retrieved from www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from" Case Study Research in Education."* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Mettler, S., & Welch, E. (2004). Civic generation: Policy feedback effects of the GI Bill on political involvement over the life course. *British Journal of Political Science*, *34*(3), 497-518.

Myers, K. A. (2012). *School violence and its effects on academic achievement among eighth graders* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from

http://libproxy.uhcl.edu:5255/docview/305336737?pq-origsite=summon

Olson, L., & Jerald, J. (1998). Quality counts: The achievement gap. *Education Week*, *17*(17), 10-13.

Orfield, G.; & Frankenberg, E. (2008). *The last have become first: Rural and small town America lead the way on desegregation*. Los Angeles: The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles. Retrieved from:

http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5062t6qs

Orfield, G., Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., & Kuscera, J. (2014). *Brown at 60: Great progress, a long retreat and an uncertain future*. Los Angeles: The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles. Retrieved from:

https://civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/k-12-education/integration-and-diversity/brown-at-60-great-progress-a-long-retreat-and-an-uncertain-future/Brown-at-60-051814.pdf

Orfield, G., & Lee, C. (2005). *Why segregation matters: Poverty and educational inequality*. Los Angeles: The Civil Rights Project / Proyecto Derechos Civiles. Retrieved from: http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4xr8z4wb

Orfield, M. (2002). *American metropolitics: A comparative national study of social separation and sprawl*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Peiser, R. (2001). Decomposing urban sprawl. *The Town Planning Review*, *72*(3), 275-298.

Pfeffer, R., & Sanborn, R. (2016, September 30). Si votan: Texas Latino politicians' perspectives on engaging Latino voters in the electoral process. *Journal of Family Strengths, 16*(1), 1-27.

Pfohl, S., & Gordon, A. (1986). Criminological displacements: A sociological deconstruction. *Social Problems*, *33*(6), 94-113.

Powell, J. A. (2009). Reflections on the Past, Looking to the Future: The Fair Housing Act at 40. *Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law*, *18*(2)145-168.

Puma, M., Bell, S., Cook, R., Heid, C., Shapiro, G., Broene, P., & Spier, E. (2010). Head Start Impact Study. Final Report. *Administration for Children & Families*.

Quezada, M. S. (2016). Strengthening relationships with families in the school community: Do school leaders make a difference? *Voices in Urban Education, 44,* 23-32.

Reagan, B. (2008, June 12). Interview by David Goldstein [Video file]. Houston Public Library Oral History Project. Retrieved from http://digital.houstonlibrary.org/cdm/ref/collection/oralhistory/id/82

Rothman, R. (2001). Closing the achievement gap: How schools are making it happen. *The Journal of the Annedberg Challenge*, *5*(2), 1-11.

Rothenberg, P. S. (2011). White privilege: Essential readings on the other side of Racism (4th ed). New York: Worth Publishers.

Rury, J. L. (2005). *Urban education in the United States: A historical reader*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Rury, J. L., & Saatcioglu, A. (2011). Suburban advantage: Opportunity hoarding and secondary attainment in the postwar metropolitan North. *American Journal of Education*, *117*(3), 307-342.

Shapiro, T., Meschede, T., & Osoro, S. (2013). *The roots of the widening racial wealth gap: Explaining the Black-White economic divide.* Waltham, MA: Institute on Assets and Social Policy.

Shodavaram, M. P., Jones, L. A., Weaver, L. R., Márquez, J. A., & Ensle, A. L. (2009). Education of Non-European Ancestry Immigrant Students in Suburban High Schools. *Multicultural Education*, *16*(3), 29-36.

Schwadt, T. A. (1994). Constructivist, interpretive approaches to human inquiry. N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.): *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 118-137). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Steele, C. M. (1997). A threat in the air: how stereotypes shape intellectual identity and performance. *American psychologist*, *52*(6), 613.

Texas Education Agency (2015). *Secondary School Completion and Dropouts in Texas Public Schools 2013-14.* Retrieved from http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/DropComp_2013-14.pdf

Texas Education Agency (2015). *Texas Academic Progress Report: 2014-2015 State Performance.* Retrieved from https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2015/state.pdf

Texas Education Agency. (2013). Retrieved July, 4, 2016, from

    http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/analyze/1314/level.html

Thomas, J. (1993). Doing critical ethnography. Q*ualitative Research Methods Series*, *26*.

    New Bury Park: Sage.

Tyler, A. C., Frankenberg, E., & Ayscue, J. B. (2016). Race and Place: How Suburban

    Schools Respond to Increasing Racial Diversity. *Peabody Journal of Education*,

    Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/publications/pubs-

    cps.html

U.S. Census Bureau. (2009). *National Population Projections.* Retrieved from

    https://www.census.gov/cps/data/

U.S. Census Bureau (2011). *Population distribution and change: 2000 to 2010.*

    Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-01.pdf

U.S. Census Bureau. (2013). *Current Population Survey.* Retrieved from

    https://www.census.gov/cps/data/

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Services (2016). *National School*

    Lunch Program. Retrieved from http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-

    lunch-program-nslp

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (2014). *Civil Rights Data*

    Collection. Data Snapshot: School Discipline. Retrieved from

    http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics (2013). *The*

    Condition of Education. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013037.pdf

US Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics (2013).

    Enrollment and Percentage Distribution of Enrollment in Public Elementary and

    Secondary Schools, by Race/Ethnicity and Region: Selected Years, Fall 1995

    through Fall 2023. Retrieved from

    http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cge.asp

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics (2014). *Public*

    High School Four-Year on Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates:

    School Years 2010– 11 and 2011–12 Retrieved from

    http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2014/2014391.pdf

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2007). *The Fair Housing Act.*

    Retrieved from

    http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_o

    pp/progdesc/title8

Vogel, E., & Pekrun, R. (2016). *Handbook of Human and Social Conditions in*

    Assessment. Brown, G., & Harris, L. (Eds.). New York: Routledge.

Ward, P., & O'Sullivan, M. (2006). The contexts of urban settings. *Journal of Teaching*

    in Physical Education. 25, 348-362.

Watson, D. (2011). "Urban, but not too urban": Unpacking teachers' desires to teach

    urban students. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *62*(1), 23-34.

Welcome to Alief ISD. (2014, July 30). Retrieved July 4, 2015, from

    http://www.aliefisd.net/site_res_view_template.aspx?id=a9589cd6-6f34-46a9-

    a7aa-018b79580a98

'White America' does not understand the racial realities of America [Video file]. (May

    2015). Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEnFr5JW7hY.

Wise, T. (2011). *White like me: Reflections on race from a privileged son*. Berkeley, CA:

    Soft Skull Press.

Wright, W. (2012). *The disparities between urban and suburban American education*

    systems: A comparative analysis using social closure theory. Retrieved from

    http://www.ncurproceedings.org/ojs/index.php/NCUR2012/article/view/627

Zambonini, D. (2010). Why are the east of cities usually poorer? *The Januarist: Past vs*

    present. Retrieved from http://www.thejanuarist.com/why-are-the-east-of-cities-

    usually-poorer/

APPENDIX A

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

- What years did you attend school in Amity ISD?

- What schools did you attend in Amity ISD?

- What brought your family to the Amity area?

- During your time in Amity, what changes, if any, did you notice?

- In what ways, if any, did the demographic change impact your experiences as a student?

- What changes, if any, do you recall, regarding the school curriculum and instruction, extracurricular activities, and/or rules and regulations during your time in Amity ISD?

- Is there anything you would change about your schooling experience?

APPENDIX B

SCHOOL PERSONNEL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

- When did you begin working in Amity ISD? How long did you work in the district?

- What brought you to Amity ISD?

- Briefly identify the position/s you held while working in the district.

- During your time in Amity, the district experienced significant demographic changes. Describe the changes.

- How did the demographic changes impact the school community?

- What changes, if any, were made by the school/district to address the demographic change?

- What changes, if any, do you think the school/districts should have made while the demographic change was occurring?

- What advice would you offer schools and districts currently facing a demographic shift?

APPENDIX C

COMMUNITY MEMBER PROTOCOL

- What role did you play in the Amity community during the 1980s?

- What brought you/your organization to the community?

- What role did your organization or business play in the community?

- During the 1980s, the Alief community experienced a significant demographic change. Describe the change.

- In what ways, if any, did the demographic change impact the community?

- In what ways, if any, did the community respond to the demographic change?

- Did your organization or business collaborate with the school district in any way? Did the school district collaborate with businesses and other community organizations in any way? If so, how?

- What have some of the long term impacts of the demographic changed had on the community?

- What advice would you offer to other communities facing such a change?

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent Form

You are being asked to participate in the research project described below. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, or you may decide to stop your participation at any time. Should you refuse to participate in the study or should you withdraw your consent and stop participation in the study, your decision will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you may be otherwise entitled. You are being asked to read the information below carefully, and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether or not to participate.

Title: Shaping a New Suburban Reality: A School District's Response to Its Changing Student Demographic

Principal Investigator(s): Katie McConnell, MS

Faculty Sponsor: Michelle Kahn, Ph.D.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this research is to identify the ways in which the educational community was impacted and its response to a significant demographic change in the student (and surrounding community) population.

PROCEDURES
The research procedures are as follows: The researcher will conduct individual interviews with individuals that lived, worked, and/or attended school in the area when the significant transition in the population occurred. Participants will be asked to reflect on their experiences and identify impacts throughout the community.

EXPECTED DURATION
The total anticipated time commitment will be approximately 2 hours. Interviews will take approximately one hour. Following the interviews, the researcher will share data analysis to ensure the participant's perspective is accurately represented.

RISKS OF PARTICIPATION
   There is limited risk in the research. Participants will remain anonymous through an
   assigned pseudonym. It will require to the participant to recall information from 25+
   years ago.

BENEFITS TO THE SUBJECT
There is no direct benefit received from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigator(s) better understand how the demographic change impacted the school community and can answer questions for other communities facing similar changes at the present time.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your study records. The data collected from the study will be used for educational and publication purposes, however, you will not be identified by name. For federal audit purposes, the participant's documentation for this research project will be maintained and safeguarded by the researcher for a minimum of three years after completion of the study. After that time, the participant's documentation may be destroyed.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

There is no financial compensation to be offered for participation in the study.

INVESTIGATOR'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW PARTICIPANT

The investigator has the right to withdraw you from this study at any time.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

The investigator has offered to answer all your questions. If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the Principal Investigator, Kate McConnell, MS., at phone number 281-235-2147 or by email at Katie.mcconnell11@gmail.com

SIGNATURES:

Your signature below acknowledges your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you. By signing the form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

The purpose of this study, procedures to be followed, and explanation of risks or benefits have been explained to you. You have been allowed to ask questions and your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You have been told who to contact if you have additional questions. You have read this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate as a subject in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Principal Investigator or Student Researcher/Faculty Sponsor. You will be given a copy of the consent form you have signed.

Subject's printed name:_____

Signature of Subject: _____

Date: _____

Using language that is understandable and appropriate, I have discussed this project and the items listed above with the subject.

Printed name and title: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UHCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281-283-3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. (FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE # FWA00004068)

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT TRANSCRIPTS

Dixie

Q: Absolutely. So can you just I guess start by kind of telling me from your perspective identify some of the specific changes that you saw and any, you know what's been interesting in talking to different people is some of the how and why. It's also been interesting some of it is factual and some of it is urban legend.

A: I might give you an opinion and if it's an opinion I'll tell you it's an opinion.

Q: Got it.

A: What I see as I went through the district from being a teacher in fall of 1976 to leaving in June of 2004 the things that I saw, I saw two major shifts going on. First was tremendous growth. Second was a change in the dynamics of the person of the population and who we were serving, who are client was. But the change in the population was not only a change in ethnicity but it was also a change in income levels in the people, in the children that we served and the families that we served. And because of those changes teachers had to change the way they approached children and families. Now let me talk about the growth first, okay?

Q: Uh-huh (yes)

A: Because lots of districts go through that growth thing. Our growth started in the 70s with the oil boon. And when that happened in our area many starter homes were built and many apartment complexes were built. Then when the oil bust came in the early 80s many of those apartments were empty because no one needed them anymore because people had lost their jobs. And many of those starter homes the folks foreclosed on them, walked away from them. So there was a huge amount of places to live that were not filled. And so what happened was the people that owned those dropped prices, did all kinds of things to get people to come and rent for them and therefore a different population moved in to those open housing areas. So it went from young professionals to people that had less money to spend on doing things. So a different income bracket of people were then able to move into that area. And then the second thing that happened was the bus lines moved further out into the suburbs because in the 70s it was considered to be suburban and when I left in the early 2000s they really were what I used to call soft urban. They weren't really in the center of the city but they were definitely an urban population. So I used to call them soft urban.

Q: I like that expression soft urban.

A: Yeah. So but that bus, those bus lines coming out again allowed a different type of population to come in that didn't necessarily have personal transportation. So

because of that growth that was both for a while because of young professional income type population and then turned into more lower income minority population we saw huge growth. Sometimes we would build two schools in one year, two elementary schools in one year which meant we were able to house an additional 2,000 children. The year that we opened up the ninth grade centers we opened up two ninth grade centers at a time which housed about 3,000 children. So you can see there was huge growth going on every year. And I mean every year. When I was in the administration building there was rarely a year we didn't open a new building. And that is incredible in a school district. You know some school districts build a new elementary school every 15-20 years and maybe never have to build a new high school. You know?

Q: Right.

A: But then we went from two high schools, added two ninth grade centers, then two more high schools. I mean it was just huge in opening schools. When that is cross the board it was high schools, middle schools, we went to a whole intermediate concept to pull off fifth and sixth graders that would help both the elementary' crowding problem and the middle school crowding problem and certainly opened elementary schools, we opened kindergarten additions, we opened pre-K additions tremendous growth across the board. And that alone is very difficult for patrons and it's very difficult for teachers because your population shifts all the time. you don't have the same kids from year to year to year at your school because school boundaries are changing, the other thing that happened with the type of population that was moving in is that they were a more mobile population because of income concern so they moved from apartment building to apartment building based on where they could get better deals for their families. So that's very different from like it was in the zone you attended where everybody lived in a home and most of them lived there for more than a year, you know, more than two years, more than three years, more than ten years to places where some of our schools only had apartments that fed them like ▮▮▮▮ had no houses at first that fed them.

Q: That's what I was just thinking. I was wondering over there by your other school if there were any houses at all or whether they're all apartments.

A: After they changed boundaries once—I was there for four years we changed boundaries every single year.

Becky

A: We moved in 1981. I had just turned one, and we moved because it was actually closer to my mom's job. She had been driving for a long distance in order to get to work so my dad decided that it was time to move to get her closer to work.

Q: So during that time when you were in ███, going your span of your academic career as a youngster, what changes did you -- what demographic changes did you notice, if any?

A: Well, I didn't really notice demographic changes until I was in middle school. I can recall vividly my 6th grade year when -- I guess there was a school that had too many students and so they --

Q: Do you know what school that was specifically?

A: It was ███, ███ Middle School. And they had to separate some of those between all the middle schools so those students got bussed over to ███████. And I really saw it back then because ████████ -- █████ students actually were -- mostly all of the ones that came to ███████ were black like me so they looked like me. But actually, I grew up on the opposite side of the district with student, you know, friends -- all my friends were white, and so that was a first for me. That color was even brought up and, you know, the demographic changes or the difference in demographics on one side of the district compared to the other -- actually came up. It was my 6th grade year, and it was a big shocker. It was a big shocker just because my family didn't raise us as seeing color, it was more about the person and that, and the mind, and the individual rather than what they look like or the color of their skin. But once students got bussed from █████ to ███████ it was a culture shock for me, a big culture shock, just because I'd never been around so many.

Q: And what was the -- when those students were bused over, what difference -- you said you saw that they looked like you, but what difference did you see in the students other than the fact that they looked like you?

A: I would say their clothing was different, the way they carried themselves where it would be, like, they wanted to make sure everything they said, everybody heard them, whereas, you know -- I grew up as, everybody didn't need to know your conversation or hear your conversation, so you whisper or you keep your voices low. Also they just didn't -- and also didn't take care of other people's things like it was their own which was a shocker for me because we were always taught you don't -- if it's not yours you treat it with respect like it was yours.

Q: So what about -- so you noticed that initial change in middle school. What about as you progressed through middle school and through high school?

A: Well, right after 6th grade -- you know, after 6th grade all of the students who were bussed over they went back to ██ so it was kind of like we got ████ back, I'll say that. Oops. That probably doesn't even sound right. But it was like the original kids that lived in the area were the ones that were at ████, not kids that had to be bussed from the other side. But then it hit home again I guess toward my 8th grade year because they built another middle school which was right up the street, but then they also -- there was this big plot of land, I remember it so vividly like it was yesterday. But anyway --

Q: It wasn't. 1998 was not yesterday -- or 1994.

A: Yeah, you're right, it wasn't yesterday. But there was this big plot of land where growing up it was nothing but trees and woods and trees and a lot of woods. And then one day they cleared it out and it was wide open space, and then they built apartments on the land which was right across the street from the new middle school. And the middle school was the new -- you know, it, had all the new technology at that time, everybody had TVs in the class room, they had computers, and at that time fancy computers for 1994 which, you know, were still big boxes. But they had those and we didn't at our school. But the apartments that they built were government-owned so it was your long income, low --

Q: Socioeconomic?

A: Thanks. Individuals moved in which brought -- whereas on that side of the district it was known to be your upper class, middle class individuals who lived on that side of the district where I lived --

Q: So just to be clear, that side of the district is the west side of the district?

A: Yes, yes, which is where I -- the only part I knew 'cause I'd been there since I was one. So, once they built those apartments I just remember my parents saying uh oh, you know. Like, our home value will go down, the value of our home, just the way people treat the things in our area, how things are kept up, how things are maintained, was about to go down just because -- you know, were known to -- if people don't have to pay a large amount of money for things then they don't take care of it as well as people who are paying a large amount of money for things. They were right 'cause once they moved in ████ changed, in my opinion.

A: -- yeah, right. And but when they extended the bus services, then more apartments were built, then the complexion, the redevelopment of Alief took place, and then – and then there was what I call a distinct development, redevelopment, third development or second redevelopment with the Asian community. Kind of re -- kind of along the same lines on that. But --

Q: Can you elaborate on that, I guess the sec -- the first redevelopment, the second phase of development, and how from that initial growth in the 70s that you saw -- that spike of, you know, nearly 15,000 students --

A: Right.

Q: -- in that timeframe to what it looks like then -- when -- towards the end of your time on the school board?

A: Yeah, pretty much the growth through the 70s were -- it was -- it was suburban area – and -- as it developed through the 70s. Pretty much a white flight from Houston. You know those that were more affluent, went North to West – West Memorial. And then ▨▨ had that kind of north ▨▨▨▨ and ▨▨ was south of ▨▨▨. So the more affluent if -- you know if they -- they went -- some went to ▨▨. ▨▨ hadn't developed at that time, well it did develop a lot during the 70s. But the ▨▨▨▨▨ was developing then and still ▨▨ was pretty much starter homes -- certainly was -- and the north of ▨▨▨▨▨ -- ▨▨▨▨ was a little higher priced homes, and of course ▨▨▨▨ a little bit but their still starter homes at the time frame -- their still usually first home buyers or second. And so it was still a --what pretty much an all-white community, except for -- and I recall then the black population, it didn't hardly register. Hispanics were somewhere around -- I want to say twentyish percent, but they weren't clustered they were -- we had --you know -- Hispanics or Mexicans or what that lived around us, and they were just -- it's kind of like when I grew up in north Louisiana, we had two Mexican families in the school, and of course the blacks had their own school, and we thought the Perez's -- we just thought they were different white people who had been out in the sun a little more. But I mean they were white people to us, and they thought of themselves in the same way. But that was a very segregated time in our, in my life --

Q: Especially in --

A: -- especially in the south. And so I only found that the Hispanics were a minority when I got to Texas, and I found they were, you know, generally treated differently as a minority than where I grew up on that. So -- but that's the way ▨▨ was. This twenty or so percent of Mexican-Americans were just your next door neighbor in the community. They weren't clustered and they only started clustering when the apartments came in -- the lower rent. And that's when the -- as that began -- and that was -- that pretty much took place after the 70s -- we

were beginning to see -- that was pretty much in the 80s when that happened. But the -- pretty much the initial growth of ███, the initial development, was kind of a suburban growth, pretty much all white community, pretty homogeneous. But then as we saw the late 70s and early 80s, that growth, that redevelopment -- we saw the -- what I call the urbanization of ███ begin. Where we saw the school district population percent-wise changed. And I think during the 70s we -- we had a clear seventy-something percent white population. Mexican-American took up the -- pretty much the rest. But then by the time we got through the 80s, our white population was down -- probably no more than 10%. It was low -- it was -- but, during the time that I was on the ███ school board when we -- right after -- right before I went on the board they hired a superintendent, a Yankee, they call him a Yankee, ████████. I don't know if you ever met ███ --

Q: No, I haven't --

A: -- ███ was superintendent during the 70s. Actually a good superintendent. But -- Yeah, they had had -- well his wife's family was Corpus, so that was mitigated a little bit. They -- for in -- like for less than three years, they had three superintendents. They had fired, I think, █████████. I don't know if you ever knew ████████, who was principal at one of the middle schools -- anyway, they had went their separate ways. But at any rate, he was fired, and then they hired -- I've forgotten now who they hired -- I think ██████████ who was the president of the board. He resigned from the board, and they hired him as superintendent. And then, pretty quickly fired him. And then they put out -- got a national search and brought ███ in. And that's when my friend came to me wanting me to run for the board because he wanted to get rid of that Yankee that they brought in. He was nothing but trouble.

Q: Uh-huh (yes)

A: You know, hadn't been there but – and so after when I got elected, I mean that was what -- I found this out after I got elected. As soon as I got elected, he and one of the other board members said, okay now, I think we can get a couple more votes, but we got to fire ██████. I said, But why? Anyway, I said, first of all, let me figure out who he is, get acquainted with him, see what his qualifications, and I found out that he was a very competent superintendent, had some management skills about him, and he lasted seven years after three that was there less than a year --

Q: And what do you attribute that turnover to during that time? Was it because of the growth and the rapid expansion?

A: Good old boy system, you know, some board members that thought they should -- they were the administration – things didn't go their way, well they, you know, got enough vote, you know, get four disgruntled out of the seven --seven and you can fire somebody, no big deal. So anyway, but it was kind of a trueist sense good

old boy system from the board, and when the superintendent didn't do exactly like they wanted, well, that was -- that was it. So --

APPENDIX F

ORIGINAL DATA ANALYSIS SNAPSHOT

	School ID	Neighborhood	Economy	Land	Family Structure	Racial ID	Housing	School System	Illicit Activity
███ High School, ██ Middle Schools, ███ Elem	X								
Glen Shadows?		X							
El Paso to ███ because my dad found a job in ███			X						
great land, there were there these beautiful houses				X					
███ Elementary was horse pastures and it was just this, this beautiful urban rural mix of a place to be	X			X					
we lived in that house when I was in pre-K I didn't go to pre-K but that was before pre-K days. That was when your parents taught you					X				
neighborhood is just immaculate		X							
And at that time all of our neighbors I remember were white						X			
Maria and Cedric and they lived up in some apartments off of ███ Road							X		
sixth grade at ██ it was a whole 'nother ballpark. I mean we had police escorts	X							X	
it was basically about five blocks from ███. And we would walk to school. But there was literally a police escort for us at the corner making sure that all the kids could get to school and could get home because the gangs had gotten so bad at that time.								X	
spray painting, fighting, drugs									X
You got kids even that I was going to school were selling drugs.									X
My brother and I were probably two out of five white kids in the entire middle school.		X				X		X	