

LOCALIZED SCHOOL DISTRICTING AND A SUBURBAN NEW JERSEY LATINO
COMMUNITY

By

MATTHEW T. TROKAN

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To my grandparents, Klemence (1922-2003) and Kathryn Nowak (1919-2005).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Advanced Placement
CCM	County College of Morris
DPSD	Dover Public School District
DFG	District Factor Group
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
GEPA	Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment
HSPA	High School Proficiency Assessment
K-12	Kindergarten- Grade 12
LAL	Language Arts Literacy
MCOHA	Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NJASK	New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge
NJDOE	New Jersey Department of Education
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SNS	Spanish for Native Speakers
SRA	Special Review Assessment
SRR	Sending/Receiving Relationship
TBE	Transitional Bilingual Education

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New Jersey's school districts are localized to the municipal level and there are over 600 districts throughout the state. My study focused on the Dover Public School District (DPSD), a low-income, predominantly Latino school district located in suburban Morris County. Unlike many similarly low-income school districts throughout the state, the DPSD is excluded from receiving the same high levels of court ordered state aid and educational programming mandates that are afforded to a group of districts known collectively as the Abbott Districts. The district has thus regularly been funded below the average level of per pupil spending for both the state and the Abbott Group.

Nonetheless, Latino students in the DPSD typically outperform Latino students from other similarly low-income (primarily Abbott) school districts on state standardized tests and graduate from high school at rates that are comparable to the state average.

This research evaluates the experience of educational professionals affiliated with the Dover Public School District. Using archival, observational, and interview data, the study identifies some of the unique characteristics of the DPSD and the Dover community that have helped Latino students in the predominantly low-income school

district to achieve success relative to their similarly low-income Latino peers statewide. My study contributes to expanding literature regarding the effects of localized school districting on low-income Latino communities by focusing on the specific case of one district.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Dover, New Jersey is a 2.7 square mile municipality of roughly 18,000 people located thirty-five miles west of Manhattan. The town is situated in the center of suburban Morris County. By road and rail, Dover is well-integrated into the transportation grid of both Morris County and the greater New York City metropolitan area. A point of early settlement and industry in a once largely rural county, Dover looks much like other older suburbs in Northern New Jersey. The town has wooded areas, parks, a downtown commercial district, and industries but is mostly covered by an eclectic mixture of single and multi family, Victorian era, Cape Cod, and split-level homes as well as a few scattered garden apartment complexes and row houses. Like all New Jersey municipalities, Dover has its own corresponding, localized public school system, the Dover Public School District.

A population with a Latino majority and a lower overall socioeconomic status differentiate the town of Dover and its corresponding school district from other communities and school districts of comparable size in Morris County. Though located in the heart of a predominantly middle-class, white county, Dover and its school district have demographics and socioeconomic indicators that more closely resemble those of the state's generally poorer urban areas where Latinos and African-Americans generally constitute the majority. Despite socioeconomic disadvantages similar to those found in New Jersey's urban school districts, as will be demonstrated later in this paper, Latino students in the Dover Public School District consistently outperform socioeconomically comparable Latinos statewide in terms of standardized tests and high school graduation rates. This factor provides a rationale which forms the basis for my study.

The focus of my study is thus threefold and based around three primary research questions. First, the study intends to examine how localized school districting affects the socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic composition of the Dover Public School District. Second, it seeks to determine the effects of localized school funding structures on a predominantly low-income, majority Latino community. Third, the study seeks to investigate localized school districting's influence on the meeting of the educational needs of this community. It seeks to identify specific negative and positive educational consequences that can be attributed the state's municipal-based, localized school districting scheme.

Though focused on a population within the United States, my study is relevant to the field of Latin American Studies as U.S. Latinos are tied to Latin America either through birth or ancestry. Latin America is the closest major world region to the United States and has been the greatest source of new immigrants to this country since the mid twentieth century (Gonzalez, 2000). According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the Latino population of the United States was estimated to be nearly 47 million as of 2008. The nearly 47 million Latinos in the United States thus constitute a population larger than that of each of the individual Latin American countries, with the exceptions of Mexico and Brazil (Central Intelligence Agency, 2009). My study is thus important because the effective inclusion of Latinos into the U.S. educational system and the provision of educational opportunities to Latino youth become increasingly pertinent as the Latino population of the U.S. (and Latino influence on U.S. society) continue to expand.

Population Growth and Demographic Changes in Morris County, 1945 – Present

Morris County's population grew rapidly between the end of World War II and the taking of the 1970 U.S. Census. A predominantly agricultural county with a few scattered industrialized areas until the middle of the twentieth century, Morris County witnessed a massive wave of incoming residents starting in the late 1940s. Following national trends toward suburbanization, families with origins in northeastern New Jersey's urban areas moved west in search of better living conditions in the county's newer suburban developments. The county grew at a rapid pace throughout the 1950s and 1960s reaching a population of 383,454 by the time the 1970 census was conducted. Thus by 1970 the county had more than doubled in population in the twenty years after the 1950 U.S. Census, when its population had been recorded as 164,371. It is important to note that during the generation following World War II, the rapid influx of new residents consisted nearly entirely of urban, middle-class, native-born, non-Latino, white New Jerseyans who had relocated to Morris County's new suburban communities (Prosser & Schwartz, 1977).

According to the United States Census Bureau, Morris County's 39 municipalities had a population of 487,548 persons as of the bureau's most recent estimate from July, 2008. During the 1970s, Morris County's population growth rate slowed significantly after two decades of explosive expansion. Despite the slowing of the pace of population growth since 1970, the county's populace has become increasingly demographically diverse. The greatest contribution to the county's increased diversity has come from Latinos and immigrants from Latin America. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, Latinos accounted for only 4.7% of Morris County's population; by 2000, this figure had climbed

to 7.8% and by the time of a 2008 census estimate, Latinos represented 10.9% of Morris County's population (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2008).

Dover: Morris County's Earliest Latino Settlement

Although the Latino population of Morris County has grown rapidly in recent years, Latinos have had at least a sixty year history in the county, particularly in the town of Dover. Dover served as a major demographic exception to Morris County's primarily white, middle-class population growth during the generation following World War II. Dover had been a focal point of the county's industrial development prior to the Second World War. Following the war, Dover's industries, in need of more workers, began to attract economic migrants from Puerto Rico. This early Puerto Rican Diaspora community started out as a small, marginalized group within Dover (Vazquez-Hernandez and Whalen, 2005).

In the 1950s, Dover's fledgling Puerto Rican community, lacking the financial resources to purchase homes, was settled primarily in inexpensive rental apartments clustered in a few blocks around the town's main thoroughfare, Blackwell Street. This area around Blackwell Street became known locally as the Spanish Barrio. Essentially confined to the Spanish Barrio, the Puerto Rican community in Dover thus remained relatively small until the 1970s. In the 1970s, the foundation of the Spanish-American Credit Union of Dover and a shifting economy allowed Dover Puerto Ricans to finally begin purchasing homes in the town en masse. This in turn allowed the Latino population of the town to expand more rapidly and by 1990 the town had a population that was over 40% Latino (Vazquez-Hernandez and Whalen, 2005).

People of Puerto Rican origin made up nearly all of Dover's early Latino community. From its Puerto Rican roots, the Dover Latino community continued to

expand up to the present day and has diversified in Latin American origins. Latinos became the majority of the town's population sometime during the 1990s and by the recording of the 2000 U.S. Census Dover was 57% Latino (U.S. Census Bureau). Although the Puerto Rican community of Dover remains prominent, Latinos of Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Mexican background, among others, have added to the diversity of Dover's Latino community. Dover Latinos with origins in Colombia now make up the most prominent group (Kugel, 2006).

Dover's demographics are reflected in the municipally based, localized Dover Public School District. As the town's population became increasingly Latino in makeup, so did its corresponding public school district. Nearly 80% of students enrolled in the Dover Public School District were Latino as of the 2008-2009 school year, the most recent for which enrollment data are available. Furthermore, Dover, with 67% of its school population eligible for free or reduced price school lunches, is an overwhelmingly low-income school district as compared to other districts in its county. Overall, across Morris County's other school districts, on average only 11.5% of public school students were Latinos and only 7.2% of all students were eligible for free or reduced price lunches during the 2008-2009 school year (NJDOE, 2009).

New Jersey's Home Rule Tradition

To better understand how a low socioeconomic status (SES), majority Latino school district developed in a predominantly white, middle-class county, it is necessary to briefly examine how New Jersey's state and local governments are structured and financed. New Jersey has 566 municipalities. Each of these 566 municipalities has its own local government. Nearly all municipal governments in New Jersey are responsible for local police and fire protection, trash and recycling collection, and the maintenance

of municipal roads among other services rendered to the community. The functions of local government are largely paid for via the collection of municipal property taxes. Localized control as seen in New Jersey is known throughout the state as home rule. As part of the home rule tradition, each municipality in New Jersey has a corresponding local school district. With few exceptions, each municipality in the state operates its own school district, regardless of the size of the population residing within its borders (Salmore & Salmore, 2008).

Overview

The Dover Public School District receives all public school students from the lowest-income municipality in Morris County. Dover is also the only town in Morris County with a Latino majority resident population. Thus, the Dover Public School District has both the most socioeconomically disadvantaged student population in Morris County, as well as the county's only Latino majority student population. With this distinction, unlike other school districts in Morris County, the public schools in Dover have had to develop to meet the educational needs of a Latino community with diverse strengths that faces unique challenges. Despite the disadvantages of minority and low socioeconomic status, Latino students in Dover typically perform better than socioeconomically similar Latino students on statewide standardized tests and graduate from high school at higher rates. The goal of this research will be to identify factors within the Dover Public School District that may be influential in these outcomes.

Chapter two is divided into two sections and serves as a review of relevant literature. The first section focuses on the issue of localized school districting and how it can affect student demographics, school finance, and control of decisions regarding education within a community. The second section focuses on the treatment of Latino

cultures in U.S. schools. The section begins by identifying an historical trend whereby U.S. schools have viewed Latino cultures from a deficit perspective. This is followed by the addressing of means by which schools seek to engage and include Latino cultures. A specific focus of this section deals with language policy.

The third chapter addresses the methodology used for the study of the Dover Public School District and presents my principal research questions. The fourth chapter presents findings related to socioeconomic status, school funding, and the treatment of Latino cultures within the localized context of the Dover Public School District. This chapter seeks to identify key community characteristics that may have contributed to the relative success of Dover's Latino students in comparison to statewide Latino students of similarly low socioeconomic status. The final chapter summarizes the findings and places them within the context of the literature. It uses them to identify policy recommendations that could be used in improving school funding equity as well as outcomes for low-income Latino students.

CHAPTER 2 LOCALIZED SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND LATINO CULTURES

As described in the introduction, the Dover Public School District (DPSD) is suburban Morris County's only school system with a longstanding Latino majority student population. Socioeconomically, Dover is also by far the least well-off district in the county. The district has three elementary schools, all with roughly 500 students each. It has only one middle school and one high school. For the 2008-2009 school year, Dover Middle School (grades seven and eight) had 461 students, and Dover High School had 856 students enrolled. Throughout the district, roughly 80% of students were Latino and 67% were eligible for free or reduced price school lunches (NJDOE, 2009). In sum, the Dover Public School District is a small, low-SES localized school district serving a predominantly Latino student population. Compared with other districts in Morris County, Dover is of comparable size as far as student population. However, it is demographically and socioeconomically more similar to the large school districts of the state's urban areas. This combination of factors makes Dover a unique school district within the state of New Jersey.

This chapter has two sections. The first part of the chapter focuses on issues related to localized school districting and its interaction with demographic forces and funding mechanisms. The second section addresses means by which schools address the often unique educational needs of Latino students and the wider Latino school community. This section has a particular focus on language policy. Chapter Two serves to build a foundation for understanding how localized school districting interacts with the meeting of the needs of Latino school communities.

Localized School Districting

This section addresses localized school districting and its interaction with socioeconomic and demographic forces. Localized school districting has long been a primary characteristic of K-12 educational systems in the United States. This is particularly true in the Northeast and Midwest, where a preponderance of small, localized school districts has long been the norm. As shown in the introduction, New Jersey, which until recently had tens of tiny, non-operating school districts as well as more school districts than municipalities, seems to take school district localization to an extreme. In fact, the state's maintenance of roughly 600 municipally-based school districts seems to counter national trends since the World War II era that have leaned toward school district consolidation. For example, in 1930 there were "200,000 school districts with 1.5 million citizens sitting on local school boards." Conversely, today there are "twice as many citizens" (as in 1930) and "fewer than 20,000 school districts with a few hundred thousand citizens serving on school boards" (Ayers, Klonsky, & Lyon, 2000, p. 34). Nonetheless, as will be demonstrated, not all regions of the United States have followed the national trend towards school district consolidation.

Demographics

In her article, "Splintering School Districts: Understanding the Link Between Segregation and Fragmentation," Frankenberg (2009) described how school districting can interact with demographic forces to create either segregation or integration along socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural lines. In her study, Frankenberg examined a specific case of localized school districting as found in Birmingham, Alabama and its suburbs, where the school district of the central city is nearly entirely low-income and African-American and certain suburban districts are nearly monolithically white and middle-

class. Frankenberg found that the formation of smaller, localized school districts out of an all-encompassing countywide district in the years following the 1960s Civil Rights Movement had contributed to socioeconomic, cultural, and ethnic segregation among the twelve school districts that constituted the Birmingham area as of 2006. Through the Birmingham case, Frankenberg also found that localized school districting schemes can contribute to municipal and neighborhood boundaries being seen as “a frame of reference” for home seekers. With this frame of reference, certain schools and school districts become associated with defined geographical areas, thus influencing home seekers’ decisions about where to live based on school choice. Under this type of districting scheme, “cost of housing becomes a measure of community wealth” and certain groups become priced out of certain school districts. The ultimate result is that segregation along the lines of socioeconomic status (and very often cultural and ethnic background) takes place as a result of localization (Frankenberg, 2009 p. 898-905).

Bischoff (2008) described the specific case of localized school districting as found in New Jersey stating,

New Jersey epitomizes a fragmented political system with 616 school districts for just 8.5 million residents. In contrast, Florida has only 67 (county-based) school districts for 16 million people. (p. 183).

Much like Frankenberg found in Alabama, Bischoff found the preponderance of localized school districts in New Jersey to be a major contributor to school segregation along socioeconomic and demographic lines. Bischoff thus formulated a similar theory to that of Frankenberg, that school district boundaries

. . . . give access to one of the nation’s most valued services, and they signal other community characteristics, such as property values, that may be associated with school district quality. The quality and reputation of a school district play a large role in formulating this common definition of a

residential area. Consequently, these characteristics are heavily weighted in residential decisions. (Bischoff, 2008 p. 188-189).

Unlike the aforementioned case of Birmingham, Alabama, and its suburbs, however, New Jersey's localized school districting scheme and resultant socioeconomic and demographic segregation did not develop as a response to court-mandated school desegregation. For the most part, municipal boundaries, and thus school district boundaries in New Jersey, had already been set prior to the state's mid-twentieth century urban white flight to the suburbs and the 1960s Civil Rights Movement (Bischoff, 2008).

Funding

As for funding schemes, localized school districting also has the propensity to create great funding inequities unless remedies are sought to create funding parity between school districts. Prior to the 1970s, K-12 school funding was orchestrated almost entirely through local property taxes. Consequently, this very often led to localized school districts that corresponded to areas with wealthier residents being able to afford more for education spending while lower-income districts were shortchanged. However, successful legal challenges about the fairness of such mechanisms has led to an ongoing trend since that decade that has been "accomplished by diverting tax revenues collected locally and pooled into the state's general fund, and then redistributed back to the localities, often on a per student basis" (Ahearn, Kilkenny, & Low, 2009, pp. 1201-1205).

The state of New Jersey represents an unusual case. Traditionally, New Jersey school districts have relied heavily on the collection of municipal property taxes for their funding. With regard to legal challenges questioning the fairness of such funding

schemes as described in the article by Ahearn, Kilkenny and Low (2009), New Jersey has not been an exception. Following the state's massive urban white flight and subsequent suburbanization, great funding disparities developed between the state's lower-income, primarily African-American and Latino urban school districts and its middle and upper income, primarily white suburban districts (Gold, 2007). The first major legal challenge to the state's localized school funding scheme, *Robinson vs. Cahill*, was argued in 1973. In *Robinson*, The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs that the state's localized funding scheme was inherently unfair to lower-income school districts where residents could not afford to be taxed at levels comparable to suburban New Jerseyans. However, the ruling did little to redress funding inequities when the New Jersey legislature failed to designate redistributed funds for low-income districts. Lack of progress regarding the state's school funding scheme led 28 of the state's lowest-income, urban, majority African-American and Latino school districts to file suit in the case of *Abbott vs. Burke* in 1981. Three *Abbott* cases were decided before the landmark *Abbott IV* and *Abbott V* led to the implementation of drastic school funding and programming overhaul mandates that called for redistribution of education funding beginning with the 1997-1998 school year (Gold, 2007).

Much in line with the national trend that Ahearn, Kilkenny and Low (2009) described, the *Abbott* rulings have led to the redistribution of locally collected tax revenues for the benefit of low-income students. Unlike the national trend, this redistribution takes place on a per district basis rather than a per student basis. The main beneficiaries of the *Abbott* rulings have been the primarily low-income, majority

African-American and Latino districts that initially filed suit against the state in 1981. Since the implementation of Abbott funding and programming mandates, these districts, known since the 1997-1998 school year as the Abbott Districts, have reached levels of per student spending greater than those of most of the state's wealthiest school districts (Schrag, 2003; NJDOE, 2009).

School districts in New Jersey are based nearly entirely along the lines of municipality, thus the state's school districting scheme can first be characterized as having large urban school districts that primarily serve students of lower socioeconomic status from minority backgrounds who live in the state's largest cities. Conversely, the school districts of smaller municipalities are more nuanced demographically and socioeconomically. Certain smaller school districts serve middle and upper-middle class, predominantly non-Latino white students, while others have populations that serve more ethnically and socioeconomically diverse populations. What most of the smaller school districts in New Jersey tend to have in common, regardless of ethnic and socioeconomic composition, are smaller student populations and generally smaller schools than their urban counterparts. Almost none of these districts receive the same funding advantages as the aforementioned Abbott Districts. Consequently, lower income districts found outside of the state's principal urbanized areas typically have per pupil spending below the state average. Goertz, Lauver, and Ritter (2001) found that "the *Abbott* decisions did not apply to all New Jersey students, or even to all poor New Jersey students." The authors continued, "because the focus of litigation has been on only the 28 poorest urban (*Abbott*) districts, the fiscal situation facing many other poor

non-Abbott and middle-wealth districts in New Jersey has been largely ignored” (Goertz, Lauver, & Ritter, 2001, p. 283; NJDOE, 2009).

Local Control

Despite funding disadvantages, the typically smaller, non-Abbott, low-income, localized school districts in New Jersey may have certain structural advantages. In a comparison of two different perspectives on local democracy in education, Mintrom found that small, localized districts allow parents and other stakeholders within the community to make decisions that are specific to the needs of the student populations which they serve. The author found this to be much less true of large urban districts which serve much larger communities where individuals are more removed from decision-making processes. Mintrom tempered this with his finding that “Local control can create conditions under which discrimination occurs,” and “excessive reliance on local funding of schools can promote gross inequality in the educational opportunities open to the young” (Mintrom, 2008, p. 332).

A case study by Howley and Howley, (2006) about a small, high-achieving but low-SES school district in the Midwest found small district size and localized control to be a factor in positive outcomes for students. In their research, Howley and Howley noted “persistent findings that small districts confer advantages, especially to low income students” (2006, p. 2) The advantages that they found with smaller school districts were as follows: higher achievement for poor students; a weakened link between poverty and achievement; lower dropout rates; higher rates of participation in school activities; and curriculums that are focused towards the needs of the community (Howley & Howley, 2006).

Furthermore, in their study, Howley and Howley distinguish their case study school district, “Concordia,” as a naturally occurring small school district. Because of localized school districting schemes, the Concordia School District has had a longstanding existence based around one, small, Midwestern community. This distinction is used so as to differentiate Concordia from recent school reform movements that seek to restructure large, urban schools. In making this distinction, Howley and Howley also cited that many of the teachers and faculty in the case study district are themselves from the local community, having attended and graduated from the district’s schools. Through interviews, they found that this factor gave faculty and staff at Concordia a vested interest in the success of the school community, empathy for the students, and longstanding relationships with many of the school families. (Howley & Howley, 2006).

This section described some of the advantages and disadvantages that are conferred by localized school districting schemes. The next section will address how Latino cultures are addressed in U.S. public schools. The section will focus on trends within the U.S. educational system toward the treatment of the cultures of Latinos, programming specified for the needs of Latino students, and the engagement of Latino parents and families in the educational process. Several case studies will be presented so as connect the next section with the concept of school localization.

Addressing Latino Cultures in the Schools

In culturally diverse schools, it has been demonstrated that greater success can be found when the culture of students and their families is embraced and valued by the faculty and staff of the school community. That is, as Nieto (2004) states, “When students’ cultural and linguistic backgrounds are viewed as a strength on which

educators can draw, pedagogy changes to incorporate students' lives." Nieto continues, "this approach is based on the best of educational theory, that is, that individual differences must be taken into account in teaching" (Nieto 2004, p. 146). In other words, in a majority Latino school, as in any other school, it is especially important to take into account the role that cultural and linguistic background have in students' lives and to demonstrate that each is valued by the school community.

Delgado Gaitan (2004) states that, "too often, educators in schools with large ethnic and culturally different groups perceive the situation as a problem because they believe the stereotype – that language or cultural differences interfere with learning" (Delgado Gaitan, 2004 p. 15). Delgado Gaitan describes this view as a deficit model whereby "differences in culture, ethnicity, and social class are viewed as a deficit" (Delgado Gaitan 2004, p 15). According to Flores, who traced the history of the deficit view since the 1920s, the valuing of the linguistic and cultural diversity of Latino students has often been rather elusive in U.S. public schools where the vast majority of teachers have traditionally been non-Latino and from English-speaking backgrounds. Flores described a general trend in the U.S. educational system since the 1920s toward viewing the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Latino students as handicaps and disabilities (2005). Today, even in schools with Latino majorities, very often the vast majority of teachers are not Latino and are often dissimilar from their students with regards to social class and linguistic backgrounds. For example, roughly 90% of the teachers in the United States are non-Latino and white, while 40% of students are from minority groups. Furthermore, over a third of Latino children in the United States live in poverty while most teachers have had lower-middle and middle class upbringings.

Linguistically speaking, most teachers in the United States are monolingual speakers of English while there are nearly 10 million non-native English-speaking students in the U.S. public educational system (Kloosterman, 2003).

Professional Staff

Despite what seems to be an often dichotomous relationship between the cultural, social class, and linguistic background of Latino students and that of the faculty and staff of public school systems, it has been demonstrated that such differences can be bridged. The following case studies demonstrate the practice of culturally and linguistically sensitive professional development tailored to the needs of local Latino communities. The two case studies show the ability of educators from middle-class, non-Latino U.S. cultural backgrounds to move away from a deficit viewpoint of Latinos' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This type of professional development enabled educators to focus instead on the strengths that Latino students and families from their respective school communities possess as a means by which to inform their pedagogy and interactions with Latino parents and caregivers.

In a case study, Garcia, Trumbull, and Rothstein-Fisch (2009) found that with the help of professional development, teachers were able to bridge differences between their own cultural backgrounds and those of their Latino students with the help of a culturally-focused professional development program. The researchers reported the results of a case study of a longitudinal action research project, *The Bridging Cultures Project*, which took place at the early childhood and elementary levels in the greater Los Angeles area. The researchers used a cultural framework of individualism and collectivism. The researchers described the culture of the United States and its public school systems as being "highly individualistic" while that of many Latino families with

students in the greater Los Angeles area schools were deemed to be more “collectivistic.” The researchers noted that no culture is bound to an all-encompassing label and that overlap exists between the value systems of most cultures. The project sought to help elementary-level teachers to better understand the cultural backgrounds, values, and expectations of the Latino families that constituted the majority of their school community (Garcia, Trumbull, & Rothstein-Fisch, 2009).

The teachers who participated in the professional development project all were English/Spanish bilinguals and recognized the importance of language. These same teachers were also determined as having primarily individualistic value systems by the results of a test of their orientations toward problem-solving. Through a program of professional development that helped to make the implicit cultural values of the Latino families whom they served explicit, the educators were able to gain a greater understanding of the cultural backgrounds of their students and developed various collectivist-oriented strategies for working with the strengths possessed by the school families and students.

Colombo (2007) presented a case study of a northeastern school district that implemented a professional development program that focused on helping teachers to better understand the Latino cultures found within their district. In Colombo’s case study of the “Riverdale Public School District,” over twenty percent of students were predominantly low-income Latinos from Spanish-speaking backgrounds. The school professional staff was overwhelmingly middle-class, non-Latino white and from monolingually English backgrounds. Prior to their participation, most teachers who took

part in the program viewed the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of Latino students from a deficit perspective (Colombo, 2007).

The professional development program was facilitated by bilingual, bicultural members of Riverdale's Latino community who were knowledgeable of both the school district and the district's Latino community. The program sought to build empathy among teachers for the experiences of Latino students and their families and demonstrate the strengths of Latino students and families on which teachers could build. One of the major components of the program that Colombo studied addressed language. The workshops had a field experience component where the monolingual English-speaking teachers attended bilingual family literacy programs that were held in the evening at school sites within the Riverdale Public School District. At the literacy nights, the teachers witnessed Latino parents and students as well as other community members engaged in reading activities in both English and Spanish. The teachers, all of whom did not understand Spanish, reported that their inability to communicate in a Spanish-dominant environment helped them to gain greater empathy for ELL students and non-English speaking parents. Furthermore, the teachers reported that witnessing the bilingualism of their Latino students helped them to better see this ability as an advantage, helping them to better focus on the strengths of Riverdale's Latino community (Colombo, 2007).

The aforementioned case studies provided evidence that how language is addressed when working with Latino students and families is of great importance. Many Latino students are from backgrounds where English is not the home language. Roughly 80% of the approximately 4-5 million English Language Learners (ELLs) in the

United States educational system are Latinos from Spanish-speaking backgrounds (Kloosterman, 2003). Being that so many Latino students come from non-English speaking backgrounds, schools' attitudes toward the Spanish language as well as programs utilized for the teaching of English as a second language are both prominent issues concerning the education of Latino students. It will be shown that school language policies are expressed both through curriculum as well as by the manner in which public schools interact with the wider Latino community.

Curriculum and Programming

Ruiz (1988) described three paradigms by which schools in the United States have viewed languages other than English. These three paradigms are: language as a problem, language as a right, and language as a resource. Historically, schools in the United States have often viewed language as a problem, seeking to teach students English as quickly as possible with little regard to the retention and maintenance of the student's native language and cultural background. Conversely, schools that follow the language as right paradigm seek to help students learn English while at the same time allowing the use of students' native languages for communication and instruction. Schools that follow the resource paradigm expand on the right paradigm; seeking to increase students' abilities in their native language and valuing bilingualism (Ruiz, 1988).

Types of ESL and Bilingual Programs

As a result of the 1974 *Lau vs. Nichols* Supreme Court Decision, language accommodations must be made to ensure that the educational needs of ELL students are met through both the acquisition of English and inclusion into the school community (Kloosterman, 2003). The two major categories of programs for these accommodations

can be divided into monolingual English-only programs and bilingual programs that utilize the student's native language. Two-way bilingual programs have a combination of ELLs and native English speakers. These programs utilize both English and the native language of the ELLs fairly equally and seek to develop bilingualism and biliteracy in both languages. Two-way bilingual programs require long-term participation to accomplish their goals and thus "transient populations are not the ideal students for this program" (Minaya-Rowe, 2008 p. 2). Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) provides students with instruction in both their native language and in English. These programs slowly transition students to the use of increasing amounts of English for their eventual placement in monolingually English classrooms (Minaya-Rowe, 2008).

Conversely, monolingual programs utilize only the English language. Among monolingual programs, sheltered English instruction provides students with an environment that focuses on content knowledge. In a sheltered English classroom, all instruction is in English but students are provided accommodations that make the content more comprehensible. English as a Second Language (ESL) provides students with instruction in English speaking and literacy skills. ESL students are generally placed in mainstream, monolingual English classrooms for all other classes, often with no additional support (Minaya-Rowe, 2008).

Programs that utilize a student's native language align with Ruiz's paradigms of language as a right and resource and potentially consider a student's linguistic background as a strength to be utilized in the educational process. In a study that controlled for socioeconomic status, Thomas and Collier (2002) found that ELL students who were educated in quality bilingual environments for a sustained period (at least 4

years) were able to close the standardized test achievement gap with their Native-English speaking peers (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Additionally, the development and maintenance of bilingualism can confer certain life advantages to students. Harlin and Paneque (2006) found that bilingualism allows for greater ability to communicate across cultural lines, greater levels of creativity in cognitive tasks, and greater marketability in seeking employment (Harlin & Paneque, 2006).

Trends in Bilingual Education

Educational policy in each state in the United States is largely dictated by each respective state's department of education. Since the late 1990s, there have been ballot referendums in various states to ban bilingual education programs that utilize students' native languages. In California, the state with the largest ELL population, Proposition 227 effectively banned such bilingual education programs in 1998, limiting ELL students generally to one year of English-language immersion support. Similar anti-bilingual education referendums were likewise passed in Arizona (2000) and Massachusetts (2002). Voters rejected attempts to ban such bilingual education programs in Colorado (2002) and Oregon (2008) (Mora, 2009).

In analyzing recent movements by states to rid their public schools of bilingual education programs, Salazar (2008) found that, "in the current political climate, district language policies and practices privilege English-only instruction" citing a report that showed that "over two-thirds of ELL students are enrolled in English-only programs with no native language support" (Salazar, 2008). Ma also found that nationwide the "trend to limit language support for ELLs to one-year English immersion programs raises significant civil rights problems in light of the existing body of educational research" (Ma, 2009 p. 12). Through work with researchers at the Harvard Civil Rights Project, Ma also

found that there is no ideal, one-size-fits-all program for meeting the educational needs of ELL students and found that schools should be given the discretion to implement programs that are geared toward the needs of their school communities. Furthermore, though researchers with the Civil Rights Project could not identify a single program of instruction that could be deemed most effective above all others for all ELL students, they did agree that a single year of English-only immersion was insufficient for acquiring proficiency in English (Ma, 2002).

Despite nationwide trends that are in opposition to bilingual education, the state of New Jersey stands out as being more supportive toward bilingual education programs. In an article titled “NJ Bucks Tide on Reading for English-Learners,” Zehr (2007) writes that “New Jersey appears to be the only state that has written into its Reading First grant application to the federal government that native-language instruction is required, with some exceptions, for children who arrive at school with no proficiency in English” (p. 1). Unlike the aforementioned states, New Jersey has not faced legislative or voter referendum challenges to bilingual education as it takes place within the state. The state of New Jersey has required the use of bilingual methods in its public schools since 1976. Since 1976, all New Jersey public school districts with twenty or more ELL students who speak the same language must implement a bilingual education program that utilizes the ELL students’ native language. If an overly wide student age range, geographical dispersion of ELLs within a school district, or the unavailability of certified bilingual teachers make the implementation of a bilingual program impossible, the district may apply for a waiver in favor of ESL instruction (Zehr, 2007). Statewide, 72 out of New Jersey’s over 600 school districts had bilingual

programs for the 2008-2009 school year. Nearly all of these school districts had bilingual programs for Spanish-speaking ELLs (NJDOE, 2009).

Spanish for Native Speakers Courses

In addition to bilingual programs that utilize a student's native language in instruction or seek to maintain and further develop academic skills in a student's native language, some schools have implemented Spanish language courses that are geared toward native speakers of Spanish. Known as Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) courses, these classes are typically taken at the upper grades and the collegiate level and can be utilized by both ELL students as well as students of Spanish-speaking Latino heritage with varying degrees of bilingualism between Spanish and English. SNS classes offer students "the opportunities to take Spanish formally in an academic setting in the same way that native-English-speaking students study English language arts." Therefore, most commonly, SNS courses are taken as a means by which to maintain Spanish language abilities, expand one's bilingual range, and also to acquire academic skills in one's heritage language. (Kreeft Peyton, Lewelling, & Winke, 2003, p. 2).

Importantly, SNS courses help to demonstrate that Spanish is a valued language within the school community as they often deal with literature and other matters that are culturally relevant to the background and experiences of Latino students and families. According to Carreira, SNS instruction can help to narrow the achievement gap of Latino students by supporting biliteracy, learning across the curriculum, and bridging home and school cultures. Additionally, Carreira found that SNS courses can help to facilitate better integration of Latino students and families into the U.S. education system by utilizing students' cultural strengths and backgrounds to advance the educational and social needs of Latino youth (Carreira, 2007).

Beyond the Curriculum

The involvement of parents in the educational process through relationships of mutual collaboration, respect, and understanding with school personnel is widely recognized as a key component by which to foster positive outcomes for students (Ramirez, 2003). Because of perceived cultural and linguistic deficits, Latino parents and communities have often been marginalized in their interactions with the school systems which their children attend. This marginalization has often led to Latino families being unable to advocate on behalf of their sons and daughters, a detriment to Latino students (Gonzalez, 2005).

Nonetheless, schools can successfully engage Latino parents and the wider Latino community to build partnerships for creating school environments that are respectful of the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of Latino families. Such schools are able to convey to Latino families that they are valued by the school community and are able to foster productive home-school relationships via mutual collaboration. As Olivos (2009) argues, “collaboration is facilitated when educators understand how they, as school agents, accept a Latino community’s culture, knowledge and power within the school context and how educators align their values and beliefs, as well as school policies and practices” (Olivos, 2009, p. 109).

According to Reyes, Scribner, and Paredes Scribner’s study about high performing Latino schools in the Rio Grande Valley, “in general, school staff, including teachers, administrators, and parent specialists in the high performing Hispanic schools, considered parent involvement an important way to serve the needs of both the school and the children.” In these school communities, parental involvement was viewed as a key ingredient for academic success. Parents saw their involvement as helping to

improve the school environment by “providing role models for the children” and “showing concern for the development of the child.” Likewise, school staff identified the involvement of parents in the school as an element that helped to “increase student achievement, strengthen relationships, create a community environment, and provide parent education” (Reyes, Scribner & Paredes Scribner, 1999 p. 41).

De Gaetano (2007) conducted a study of two majority Latino, predominantly low-income schools in the Northeast that were seeking to cultivate higher levels of parental involvement and engagement. The two schools took part in a program known as the *Cross Cultural Demonstration Project* which sought to foster cross-cultural understanding between home and school. The project sought to accomplish its goals by including parents as volunteers in various instructional capacities in the schools, holding parent forums, and conducting bilingual meetings between parents and school officials. Throughout the process, parents became more aware of the importance of their roles as informal teachers to their children and the importance of their language and culture in the lives of their children. De Gaetano found parents’ increased awareness of the importance of their roles to be helpful in maintaining the involvement of the parents and in increasing the value that school personnel placed on parents’ roles within the school community (De Gaetano, 2007).

Beyond purely home and school partnerships, Riggs and Medina (2005) discussed the value of quality, school-based afterschool programs to the Latino community, in their case study of a Pennsylvania school district with a growing Latino population. The authors found that “increased frequency of exposure to schools, may, in turn decrease apprehension or anxiety that Latino parents feel when approaching

school personnel” (Riggs & Medina, 2005, p. 473). Thus it was evidenced that afterschool programs have the power to serve as an intermediary in connecting Latino parents to the schools that their children attend. Furthermore, the authors found that culturally and linguistically sensitive afterschool programs that are academically-focused have the potential for success in improving academic outcomes for Latino youth via home-school partnerships (Riggs & Medina, 2005).

With the value of parental involvement being evident, the issue then becomes how to gain and maintain the involvement of Latino parents in the school community. Delgado Gaitan (2004) identified key actions for educators and schools to take when they seek to meet the needs of Latino students and families. In identifying these key actions, she acknowledged that “there are many ways to accomplish parent involvement objectives in Latino communities.” Nonetheless, Delgado Gaitan then expressed that there are “three major conditions and objectives” that aid schools in accomplishing parent involvement goals which she labels as “connecting, sharing information, and staying involved” (Delgado Gaitan, 2004, p. xi).

For the “connecting” objective,” Delgado Gaitan stressed several points. First, she noted that schools must reach out to Latino families and learn their cultures. In this outreach, schools need to make sure that parents and families can become comfortable with the culture of the school, which is often very different from what they may be accustomed to if their own experiences with school were in a Latin American country where schools tend to be organized much differently. Furthermore, in making connections, schools must seek to communicate with parents in whichever language they are most comfortable with and make necessary accommodations for parents’

schedules. The “sharing information” objective is focused on the linguistic backgrounds of Latinos and how language must be used as a strength for fostering communication. The “staying involved” objective focuses on how schools can positively acknowledge the cultures of Latino families. By continually making positive acknowledgements of Latino cultures, schools can help Latino families to feel comfortable and welcome in the school setting, therefore fostering their continued involvement in home-school partnerships (Delgado Gaitan, 2004).

Finally, while this section discussed means by which schools can work with Latino students and families, it is important that educators “challenge the belief that there exists just one Latino culture that needs to be understood” (Olivos, 2009, p. 111). In other words, it is important to remember that while many Latinos may share a common linguistic background and certain cultural traits, they should not be viewed as monolithic. According to Olivos, educators instead need to think in terms of plural Latino cultures rather than a singular Latino culture. Furthermore, they must not make assumptions and should instead seek to understand the diverse experiences that make the individual (Olivos, 2009).

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a framework for the study. The literature reviewed here first considered the effects of localized school districting and funding mechanisms. This was followed by a review of pertinent literature regarding language policy and educational programming for Latino students and school communities. In the next chapter, I present the methodology used for studying the interaction of localized school districting and funding mechanisms within the Dover Public School District, a predominantly low-income, majority Latino school community.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Chapter Overview

My field research took place during August and September of 2009. During this period, I conducted ten semi-structured interviews using interview guides approved by the University of Florida's IRB. To conduct the interviews, I traversed Dover and observed four out of five schools in the Dover Public School District as well as the Dover Head Start program and the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs. In addition to field research, I utilized information from websites provided by the Dover Public Schools and other purveyors of educational services in the community. I obtained school data and statistics published by the New Jersey State Department of Education that is made available via the agency's website.

Interviews

I conducted ten semi-structured interviews with current and former educational professionals employed by either the Dover Public School District or local social service agencies that cater to the school district. These professionals represented a range of occupations from teachers, guidance counselors and school administrators, to education coordinators and liaisons for Dover's privately-contracted after-school program. Eight of the ten participants with Dover ties had held multiple roles during their years of service with the school district. The interviews averaged about thirty minutes in length. Interviews where I met with the interviewee during their own personal time lasted longer, while those that took place during field visits were shorter due to work-related constraints. As an additional note, all interviewees that are referenced throughout the rest of this paper are referred to by pseudonyms.

Interview Participants

All of the seven interviewees that were employed (or previously employed) by the Dover Public School District (DPSD) had served in multiple roles within the district. Of this group, five (Alicia Alvarez, Nicholas Avellino, Thomas Laskaris, Nora Lewis, and Karen Maslowski) had started in Dover first as students before returning as teachers. Four out of the five subsequently became guidance counselors or administrators. Each of these interviewees had also attended school in Dover and become employed there during different time periods.

Nicholas Avellino graduated from Dover High School in the late 1960s and became employed there first as a Spanish teacher in the late 1970s and subsequently as an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher. He soon became the Director of Foreign Languages and Bilingual Services (though he typically taught at least one class throughout his career), and finished his career at Dover as an elementary school principal. He was employed directly by the DPSD until his retirement in 2001 (he subsequently worked as a Spanish teacher at a neighboring school district from 2001 until 2006, and has been employed at the County College of Morris (CCM) as an ESL and Spanish professor since then; he also occasionally does educational consulting for Dover.

Karen Maslowski graduated from Dover High School in the early 1970s and returned to Dover to teach in 1979 as both a Spanish teacher and an ESL teacher, eventually succeeding Avellino to take her current position as Director of Foreign Languages and Bilingual Services in 1999. Thomas Laskaris graduated from Dover High School in the early 1980s and returned to the district at the end of the decade as a Social Studies teacher; he is currently a guidance counselor. Alicia Alvarez graduated

from Dover High School in the early 1990s, returned to Dover several years later as a Spanish teacher, and is now also a guidance counselor. Nora Lewis graduated from Dover High School in the late 1990s and returned in the early 2000s first as teacher's aide and later as a special education teacher.

Of the other two interviewees directly employed by the DPSD at some point, (Michelle Rizzo and Deborah Nagelberg), both had held multiple roles within the district. Deborah Nagelberg, a New York City native, taught in Dover from 1979 until 2001, first as a Spanish teacher, later as an ESL teacher, and then as a bilingual teacher. Michelle Rizzo, a native of a neighboring Morris County community, taught at Dover from 1996 until 2001, first as a Social Studies teacher, and subsequently as a Spanish teacher and bilingual Social Studies teacher. Rizzo and Nagelberg are both currently employed at the same neighboring school district (Rizzo as a Spanish teacher and Nagelberg as an ESL teacher).

Three other interviews were conducted with professionals employed by agencies that provide educational services to the Dover community. Jane Ektis, a Dover native, currently serves as the Executive Director of Dover's Head Start Program. Martina Derricks is employed by the Morristown Neighborhood House, an organization based in nearby Morristown that was founded in the 1890s with the purpose of helping newly arrived Italian immigrants to Morris County (the organization's focus has since shifted to Latinos). Five years ago, Neighborhood House partnered with the Dover Public Schools to establish academically-focused and culturally sensitive afterschool programs at all three Dover elementary schools as well as at Dover Middle School. Derricks currently serves as site coordinator at North Dover Elementary School. I also interviewed Julia

Enriquez, the Coordinator of Education for the entire Neighborhood House organization. Though neither of these women are from Dover, both Derricks and Enriquez were raised in Morris County.

Participant Selection

These interviews were all arranged using purposeful sampling (Cresswell, 2005). According to Cresswell (2005), purposeful sampling is a strategy whereby “researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon.” Furthermore, the goal of this sampling strategy is to interview individuals and observe sites that are “information rich” (p. 204). Following Cresswell’s concept of purposeful sampling, the interviewees were not chosen arbitrarily. In arranging the interviews, I sought to speak with individuals in touch with issues confronting the Latino school community of Dover. Avellino and Maslowski were selected because of their experience as supervisors of the Department of World Languages and Bilingual Programs; one or the other has run the department since 1977 (Avellino from 1977-1997 and Maslowski since 1997). Nagelberg and Rizzo were both called upon for the variety of roles which each has undertaken between Spanish and bilingual instruction. Laskaris and Alvarez were chosen because of both their past roles as teachers in the Dover Public School District and their current roles as guidance counselors who serve as intermediaries between parents, teachers, and students. Afterschool coordinators Enriquez and Derricks were chosen for their intermediary roles between parents, students, and teachers.

Organization and Coding

Before I had completed my interviews, I developed a data matrix (found in the appendix section) based on three principal research questions related to localized

school districting's impact on the Dover school community. The first question asked if localized school districting contributes to school segregation. The second question asked how localized school districting affects funding and the final question was concerned with how localized districting affects programming for students and the school community. I then used the data matrix to identify key information from the interviews that would be relevant to the study's research questions. I recorded each of the interviews using a digital recording device and then transcribed the interviews upon completion. Next, I read and reread all of the transcripts to see how each fit into the criteria of the data matrix.

Following transcription and initial review, I coded relevant pieces of the transcripts based on how they fit into the data matrix. I used a color-coding system for this. I used green for interview data related to school funding and finance, blue for educational expectations and outcomes, orange for items related to the treatment of diverse cultures within the localized school community, and pink for the interaction of the wider Dover community within the localized context of the school community. After color-coding the transcripts, I utilized codes to consolidate roughly eighty pages of transcripts into a fourteen page document aligned with the questions I had developed for the data matrix. This consolidated document was used as a guide in my analysis of the data.

Site Visits

Site visits were another important part of the research. I observed Dover's Head Start Program during normal business hours, observing some of the children interacting with their teachers, parents and other Head Start staff. I observed North Dover Elementary School and observed its afterschool program and some of the educational

services provided there. I also observed the complex that includes both East Dover Elementary and Dover Middle School and then visited Dover High School. I observed all of the K-12 schools during after-school hours and was therefore able to witness supplemental homework programs, extracurricular activities, and the interaction of the wider Dover community with the school community.

New Jersey Department of Education Datasets and Websites

Another integral component of the research was examining various records and statistics published by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). The NJDOE publishes a wide variety of records about each of New Jersey's more than 600 school districts. These records are readily accessible and available for download from the NJDOE's website. The NJDOE data allowed me to access information about school funding, per pupil spending, employee salary levels, and free lunch eligibility rates among other financial figures. Furthermore, concerning and student performance measures, I was able to access test scores and graduation rates. I was also able to gain additional insight about programming and community interactions from the websites maintained by the Dover Public Schools, El Primer Paso School, and Morris County Hispanic Affairs. The websites outline some of the educational, academic, and extracurricular programs and opportunities available to the Dover school community.

Chapter Summary

I was able to obtain interviews with people who have had a wide range of experience with the Latino community of the Dover Public School District and make useful field visits to educational sites in Dover. The seven interviewees currently working in the Dover community each have had unique experiences working with the district and represent work experiences with all levels of the pre-K-12 system found

within the confines of the school district. Two of the three former Dover Public Schools employees that were interviewed, Michelle Rizzo and Deborah Nagelberg, currently teach in a neighboring school district and regularly receive former Dover students due to student transience between small suburban Morris County school districts. Nicholas Avellino, as an ESL and Spanish professor at the County College of Morris, also regularly receives students from the Dover community at the post-secondary level and interacts with Dover teachers and administrators through educational consulting work. Participants were chosen by using a purposeful sampling method that sought interviewees based on their expertise and knowledge of Dover's Latino community.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Chapter Overview

This chapter presents findings for the research questions that were presented in the methodology section. The chapter is divided into three major sections. Each section is based on one of the three principal research questions. The final section is related to the last of the three principal research questions and is divided into three thematic subsections.

The Socioeconomics and Demographics of Localized School Districting

The first section of this chapter is devoted to findings related to my first research question. To recall, the first research question asked if localized school districting contributes to segregation based on socioeconomic status and cultural background and if so, how is the school community affected. The following findings shed light on an answer to this research question.

Dover is the only Latino majority community in Morris County and this is reflected in its corresponding localized, municipal-based school district (The map in Figure 4-1 demonstrates Dover's high proportion of Latinos relative to the rest of Morris County). As of the Fall Enrollment Survey conducted by the New Jersey Department of Education for the 2008-2009 school year, each of the three elementary schools in the Dover Public School District had student populations between 85% and 90% Latino. Dover Middle School's enrollment was 76% Latino. Likewise, Dover High School had a Latino student population of 73%. For the entire Dover Public School District, there were a total of 2,914 students, 2,319 of whom were Latino. Thus Latino students

constituted nearly 80% of all students in the Dover Public School District during the 2008-2009 school year (NJDOE, 2009).

During the same school year, all school districts in Morris County combined had a total public school enrollment of 80,297. Thus Dover's 2,914 students constituted only 3.6% of the county's total enrollment. All school districts in the county had a combined Latino enrollment of 9,284 students. Latinos thus constituted 11.5% of Morris County's total public school enrollment. Therefore, the Dover Public School District's 2,319 Latinos accounted for just under 25% of the county's total Latino public school enrollment despite Dover accounting for a much smaller proportion of the county's total enrollment. Furthermore, the DPSD was the only district in Morris County where the vast majority of students were Latino at all grade levels (NJDOE, 2009).

Additionally, 1,934 of the Dover Public School District's 2,914 students (66.5%) enrolled during the 2008-2009 school year were eligible for free or reduced price school lunches. Of this group, 1,442 (49.5% of the total school population) were eligible for free lunches while 492 (17% of the total school population) were eligible for reduced price lunches (NJDOE, 2009). To be eligible for free school lunches, a student's family income cannot exceed 130% of the income level set as the federal poverty line; students with family incomes between 130% and below 185% of the federal poverty line are eligible for reduced price school lunches (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2009). For Morris County as a whole, 7,552 students out of a countywide public school enrollment of 80,297 had eligibility for free or reduced price school lunches. Thus, despite having less than 4% of the County's total public school enrollment, Dover represented nearly

26% of the county's student population that was eligible for free or reduced price school lunches during the last school year for which data is available (NJDOE, 2009).

Additionally, in 1975, the New Jersey Department of Education developed a system to measure the overall socioeconomic status of each of its 611 school districts. This system is known as District Factor Grouping. Under District Factor Grouping, each school district throughout the state is assessed based on a variety of six measures and then assigned to a District Factor Group (DFG). The letter A is assigned to districts with the lowest socioeconomic indicators and the letter J is assigned to those with the highest (districts with socioeconomic indicators between these two extremes are designated B, CD, DE, FG, GH, and I). The socioeconomic factors taken into account when assigning a New Jersey school district to a DFG include: percent of adults without a high school diploma, percent of adults with at least some college education, occupational status, unemployment rate, percent of individuals in poverty, and median family income. Every ten years, the state reassesses the DFG of each of its school districts following the results of the latest national decennial census. The Dover Public School District was reclassified from Group B to Group A following the results of the 2000 U.S. Census (NJDOE, 2009).

Under the state's District Factor Grouping (DFG) system for classifying school districts according to socioeconomic status further demonstrates the DPSD's status as a socioeconomic outlier in Morris County. As of 2009, there were 39 school districts in Morris County classified under the DFG system. Dover is the only school district in the county assigned to District Factor Group A, the lowest group. There are no districts within the county assigned to groups B or CD, the next two lowest groups. Three

districts are members of middle-SES group DE and five are members of group FG. From the three high-SES DFGs, ten Morris County school districts are in group GH, Thirteen districts belong to group I and six are in group J. Overall, 29 out of the 39 DFG-classified Morris County school districts (nearly 75%) belong to the three highest District Factor Groups (NJDOE, 2009). Thus the New Jersey Department of Education's datasets indicate that the Dover Public School District is the only low-SES school district and the only one with a Latino majority student population in Morris County.

When one crosses the municipal border into Dover from a neighboring community it becomes apparent that the demographics of residents have suddenly shifted from one town to the next. Colombian, Ecuadorian, Mexican and Puerto Rican flags can be seen flying in front of homes and businesses and as adornments on vehicles parked on the streets. Along Blackwell Street, Dover's main thoroughfare, restaurants with names like Sabor Latino, Tierras Colombianas, and La Sierra have signs that boast of *comida tradicional*. On the same stretch of street, Casa Puerto Rico (formerly the Aguada Social Club) and Club Colombia cater to the social and cultural needs of Dover Latinos both new and old. From its nondescript warehouse -like headquarters on Bassett Highway, the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs is open for business, providing an array of social services from translators to rideshares for the benefit of Dover Latinos. On various storefronts throughout downtown Dover, fluorescent signs flash *se habla español*. Meanwhile, the Salvation Army, the Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and one of the Catholic churches all have signs that advertise *aprende ingles, horario de clases*. Unlike other Morris County municipalities, this is a distinctly Latino community.

Observations demonstrated that Dover's Latino culture is reflected in its schools, where bilingual signage greets visitors at the schoolhouse doors, "Welcome/*Bienvenidos*." The Spanish language can be heard prominently in the halls. In the Dover Head Start school building, the flags of Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador and Peru can be seen alongside self-portraits of the children. In late September, the North Dover Elementary School had a poster in its lobby that displayed the flags of the world's Spanish-Speaking countries alongside the U.S. flag in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. Reflecting the demographics of the municipality which it serves, the vast majority of the students in the Dover Public School District are Latinos.

The interviewees provided reasoning as to why a majority Latino, predominantly low-income population took hold in Dover whereas the Latino populations of most other communities in Morris County remain relatively small, with none yet approaching a majority of residents. Being that school districts in New Jersey correspond to municipality, all of the interviewed educational professionals expressed similar views that localized school districting as found in New Jersey has contributed to the development of a low-income, majority Latino school district in Dover as well. All of the interviewed participants spoke about Dover's Latino majority as a contrast to other school districts in Morris County. Six of the interviewees (both guidance counselors, the current and former Supervisors of Foreign Language and Bilingual Programs, and the afterschool program employees) also discussed the lower socioeconomic status of Dover and its school district in comparison to the rest of Morris County.

Nicholas Avellino, the retired Foreign Language and Bilingual Programs Supervisor, described Dover as a community that "was always mostly working-class"

and thusly receptive to lower-income populations before lower-income Latinos and Latin American immigrants arrived. Avellino, himself a lifelong Dover resident, described the development of a Latino majority community in Dover as a long term process. The director noted that the Latino population grew in surges during certain time periods, but that overall, the growth of the Dover Latino population has been gradual and steady since the initial arrival of Puerto Rican workers in the late 1940s. The early Puerto Rican community in Dover was followed by people of more diverse Latin American origins, primarily Colombians, Ecuadorians, and Mexicans. The retired supervisor expressed that this gradual process allowed the community and its corresponding school district to adapt themselves to changing demographics over time as they each became increasingly Latino in character. Avellino and the other interviewees discussed features of Dover that have helped the town and its corresponding school district to cultivate reputations as friendly destinations for low-income Latino and Latin American populations. Important themes related to Dover's development as Morris County's only Latino majority municipality and school district were the concepts of availability of services, namely commercial, social, and educational services within the community as well as the availability of affordable housing.

Head Start Director Jane Ektis further commented that Dover has been attractive to Latino residents because of the abundance of social and commercial services that cater to Spanish-dominant Latinos. "Everything that we do here is bilingual. The housing partnership, WIC (Women Infants Children) Hispanic Affairs, all have bilingual services as well, basically all of the community organizations here do, they basically have to." The director added that the town has many businesses that cater to the consumer

needs of the Latino community. “There are so many businesses that specialize in Latin American products with Spanish-speaking staff; the community is just very open.” This observation is further corroborated by former Dover teacher Michelle Rizzo, and Directors Avellino and Maslowski who each described Dover as having an established network of Latino-oriented social services and an economically important base of small Latino-owned businesses that are oriented toward the needs of the community.

An additional component of Dover’s attractiveness to low-income Latino residents was the availability of affordable housing. Guidance Counselor Alvarez commented on the availability of affordably priced rental homes in comparison to nearby communities, “where it’s often just too much money for them, the homes and apartments in nearby towns.” This is further corroborated by former director Avellino and guidance counselor Laskaris who both commented that Dover is a predominantly “blue collar” town with greater availability of affordable housing as compared to other Morris County communities. Additionally, the Dover-based Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs (MCOHA) provides free translation services and interpreters for renters who need to negotiate with non-Spanish-speaking landlords.

Furthermore, former supervisor Avellino expressed that the expansion of Dover’s Latino community over the years was fueled by the town and the school district’s cultivation of reputations as places that are friendly to Latinos relative to other communities in Morris County, stating, “I know a lot of people [Latinos from Dover] who don’t feel comfortable in those other communities.” Avellino expressed that because of the home rule tradition and localized school districting structure that characterize the entire state of New Jersey, Dover has had a much longer history of working with Latinos

which has necessitated being more receptive and responsive to the needs of its Latino residents and students relative to other Morris County municipalities and school districts.

While speaking about one of Dover's neighboring school districts, where he had worked as a consultant, Avellino explained that attempts within that district to introduce educational programming geared toward a growing low-income, Latin American immigrant community had been viewed with suspicion and sometimes hostility. "There everyone wants to be better in money and that kind of thing," Avellino explained. "There's a perception that you have an immigrant community coming in, and you have to take money away from your own kids to spend money on programs for theirs." Avellino continued, "then there's the perception that it may lower standards in the schools, or that schools may be perceived as not as good as they once were. These factors are perceived as big negatives by them." Avellino further explained, "They worry it's going to bring down the prices on their homes. All of that is on the minds of the non-Latino community over there." Avellino identified this hostility as having contributed to the continued growth of a Latino majority in Dover and in its corresponding school district from an already established base.

Localization and Funding

This section is devoted to findings related to my second research question. To recall, the second research question asked how school funding works within the localized context of New Jersey's public school districts and how funding affects the Dover school community. This section first presents archival data about the Dover Public School District's cost per pupil spending relative to averages for the state, Morris County, and socioeconomically-similar districts. Using data from the New Jersey

Department of Education as well as observation and interview data, the manner by which extant school funding mechanisms affect the Dover Public School District's predominantly low-income, Latino majority student population will be addressed.

The New Jersey Department of Education's Comparative Cost Per Pupil Guide revealed that the Dover Public School District is funded at a lower level than both the average and medians for the state of New Jersey as measured by cost per pupil spending. The state had a mean cost per pupil of \$13,601 across all of its K-12 school districts during the 2008-2009 school year. During that same school year, the median cost per pupil for the state's public K-12 school districts was \$12,791. For academic year 2008-2009, cost per pupil in the Dover Public School District was \$11,261. Thus, cost per pupil in Dover was 83% of the state mean and 88% of the median (NJDOE, 2009). Table 4-1 and Figure 4-2 show the lower per pupil spending in Dover as compared to the state mean over the last 5 years (NJDOE, 2005-2009).

Furthermore, Dover's cost per pupil of \$11,261 during the 2008-2009 school year was the lowest of all K-12 school districts in Morris County. Nearly mirroring state means, the county mean for cost per pupil for its K-12 school districts during the 2008-2009 school year was \$13,591. The county median cost per pupil for K-12 school districts was \$12,738. Again, within Morris County, much like as in the state as a whole, Dover's cost per pupil was significantly lower (NJDOE, 2009).

Additionally, during the same school year, cost per pupil in Dover was even lower than the mean for the Abbott Districts, a group of 31 mostly DFG A school districts with whom Dover shares similar socioeconomic disadvantages. Because of funding and programming mandates set in place by the *Abbott IV and V* decisions, mean per pupil

cost for the 31 Abbott Districts was \$16,447, well above the state average. Therefore, Dover's cost per pupil was 68% the mean cost per pupil for the Abbott Districts. Thus, using cost per pupil as a measure, Dover is funded well below the average cost per pupil levels of school districts statewide, nearby Morris County school districts in addition to the socioeconomically similar Abbott Districts (NJDOE, 2009).

Nonetheless, Dover does receive a greater share of its funding from the state than do the other K-12 Morris County school districts. During the 2008-2009 school year, the other fourteen K-12 school districts in Morris County on average received 83% of their school funding from local sources while they only received 13% from the state. Conversely, Dover received 50% of its funds from the state and 41% of its funds from local sources. Dover thus received a much greater proportion of its budget from state funds than the other K-12 school districts in Morris County (NJDOE, 2009).

Still the proportion of funding for cost per pupil that the Dover Public School District received from the state was much lower than what was received by the Abbott Districts. On average the Abbott Districts received 80% from the state and 14% from local sources to fund their cost per pupil expenditures during the 2008-2009 school year. Additionally, Dover does not benefit from the same funding mandates that allow the Abbott Districts to guarantee pre-K for all children who reside within the borders of the district as well as full-day kindergarten, afterschool programs and summer schools (NJDOE, 2009).

The areas outside of each of the Dover Schools that I visited were well-maintained, with clean sidewalks and building exteriors as well as manicured lawns and shrubbery. The interiors of each of the Dover Public Schools were visibly well worn with

outdated color schemes, furniture, and fixtures, as all of the public schools in Dover were built between forty-five and seventy years ago. Nonetheless, each school was well-maintained, clean, and orderly. North Dover Elementary School, East Dover Elementary School and Dover Middle School, all of which were visited directly following the end of the school day, were nearly free of the afterschool debris that is often present in school settings. With all of the public schools in Dover it seemed that pride in ownership was taken.

With the exception of the guidance counselors (who did not discuss the issue of the district's finances but instead focused on the cost of higher education in New Jersey), each of the ten Dover educators that were interviewed expressed the view that the Dover Public School District, as well as affiliated programs like Dover Head Start and Neighborhood House, were underfunded relative to community needs. Some identified how budget cuts over the years have forced the district to make difficult decisions to cut programs. Others expressed dissatisfaction with Dover's exclusion from the Abbott funding and programming mandates despite the district's socioeconomic similarities to the Abbott Districts.

The director of Dover's Head Start, Jane Ektis, identified the Dover Public School District's lack of Abbott designation as having had a particularly negative effect regarding funding for early childhood education in Dover. Ektis explained, "If you earn \$200,000 a year and live in an Abbott District, your child is going to get free preschool." The director continued, "However, since Morris County doesn't have any Abbott Districts we have a lot of very low income children in Dover and they don't get a penny." This has been a detriment to families in Dover, as Ektis further explained, "Because of

this situation, each year we have a waiting list of 50 to 100 families who we can't serve because we don't have enough funding." Furthermore, Ektis noted that Head Start is the only full-day pre-K program in Dover and therefore is often the best option for working parents. These views were further corroborated by elementary school teacher Nora Lewis. Lewis stated that several years ago, the Dover Public School District had implemented its own pre-K program however, "they only go from 8:00 until 10:40 or 12:00 to 2:40. I don't know the exact timing but it's less than 3 hours. I know Head Start is a full day."

Both former Supervisor Avellino and his successor, Supervisor Maslowski expressed that funding is a precarious issue from year to year for the Dover Public School District. According to both supervisors, the precarious nature of funding has negatively affected successful programs. Former Director Avellino described a "golden-era" in the mid 1980s when the district had the "right demographics" for receiving state and federal educational grants. The former director stated, "In the mid '80s if you wrote a grant you would get it, and I don't think I was ever turned down for a grant I wrote during that period, however, it was short-lived." Avellino then recalled a Transitional English Biology and Earth Science curriculum that he felt had been extremely successful after having been developed as a result of a state grant. "The science program had to be removed because after the grant expired we could no longer afford to fund it. The cost of having two teachers in the classroom was too much. This was just one of many cuts." Avellino explained. Maslowski was more general, and described the issue of funding as a major concern for the district each year. "We're not an Abbott District but we're similar to one as far as student demographics. We got some increased

funding already, but that was last year,” Maslowski explained. The supervisor continued, “We’ve had to cut things before; last year the state ordered that we cut cafeteria services in favor of a subcontractor because they were losing money.” Maslowski continued, “We’re kind of up in the air again for this year, we’re worried about the funding once again.”

Both of the former teachers were affected by funding issues while they worked in the Dover Public School District. While teaching bilingual classes at Dover Middle School, former teacher Deborah Nagelberg expressed that toward the end of her tenure in the early 2000s she always had “really big classes” that typically had at least 25 students. Conversely, early in her career as a bilingual teacher, classes typically had 15-18 students. Nagelberg indicated that Dover was unable to afford to hire an additional bilingual instructor as need increased. Furthermore, the other former Dover teacher, Michelle Rizzo, had to resign her position with the Dover Public School District because of personal circumstances that necessitated a greater salary. A wealthier neighboring school district met Rizzo’s need.

Additionally, Julia Enriquez, the director of the Morristown Neighborhood House which provides K-8 afterschool programming for the Dover Public School District expressed that funding is frequently an issue for her organization. “It [funding] never is enough to meet the needs of the community. With the cuts we’ve had lately it’s been a real struggle,” stated Enriquez. According to Enriquez, the recent economic downturn has forced the organization to increasingly rely on private donors as sources of additional funds. Echoing other educational professionals affiliated with the DPSD, Enriquez added that although her organization receives some funding from county,

state, and federal sources that “it’s never enough, but we do as much as we can with what we have.”

This section demonstrated how localized school funding mechanisms have affected the low-SES, majority Latino Dover Public School District. The next section of this chapter will examine community factors which Dover educational professionals identified as being helpful to educational outcomes in their community in spite of the district’s low socioeconomic status and funding deficits.

Localized School Districting, Educational Outcomes, and Community Factors

This last section is devoted to findings related to the final research question. To recall, the final research question asked how localized school districting has affected educational outcomes and school programming for the Dover school community. The question also inquired about how localized school districting has affected interaction between the diverse members of the Dover school community. This final section will first present data related to educational outcomes for Latino students in the Dover Public School District. The remainder of this section will be divided into three thematic subsections: Professional Staff Dedication, Home-School Partnerships, and Programming for Latino Students.

Each of the thematic subsections will present factors which Dover educational professionals have identified as influential in educational outcomes for the district’s Latino students. These thematic subsections are based on three principal groups found in the Dover school community with which this paper is concerned: professional staff, Latino school families, and Latino students. Each thematic subsection has its own unique subthemes. Nonetheless, the three principal subsections are united by an

overarching subtheme that is related to the Dover Public School District's orientation toward the linguistic and cultural diversity of Latino students and Latino school families.

Outcomes for Latino Students

As demonstrated by the previous data, the Dover Public School District is an overwhelmingly Latino school district in a county that is predominantly non-Latino and white. The DPSD is also a predominantly low-income school district with levels of per pupil spending that are well below the averages for school districts in Morris County and the state of New Jersey. Additionally, the DPSD's per pupil spending is much lower than the average level of per pupil spending found among the predominantly District Factor Group A (lowest socioeconomic group), socioeconomically similar Abbott Districts. Not being a part of the Abbott Group, Dover does not benefit from the same funding and programming mandates that are guaranteed to Abbott Districts.

Despite socioeconomic and funding disadvantages, Latino students from Dover have been performing better on statewide standardized tests than their Latino counterparts from socioeconomically similar Group A school districts. Dover's Latino students have also been graduating from high school at rates comparable to the statewide average. The following data will demonstrate this.

Table 4-2 provides a summary of statewide standardized test score data from the last five years for Dover Latino students as compared to all Latino students from the socioeconomically similar District Factor Group A. The test scores are for the Language Arts Literacy (LAL) and Mathematics sections of the fourth grade, eighth grade, and eleventh grade statewide standardized tests. On each test, a score within the range of proficient or advanced proficient indicate that a student has passed. With the exception of the 2007 fourth grade test, Dover Latino students outperformed Latinos from

statewide DFG A school districts for each the LAL and Mathematics sections in the past five school years at each of the three grade levels. Figure 4-3 provides 5 year averages for each grade level on each test. (NJDOE, 2005-2009).

Dover Latino students were compared with other Latino students from District Factor Group (DFG) A primarily because according to the New Jersey Department of Education, one of the principal reasons for creating the DFG designations was “for the purpose of having a mechanism by which similar districts could be compared in terms of their performance on statewide assessments.” The department states “without exception, the average student performance increases as one progresses through the DFG classes” (NJDOE, 2009).

Performance in Dover has been strongest among eleventh grade Latino students on the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). The difference between Dover Latino students and statewide DFG A Latinos also has been the most pronounced at this level. Over the past five years, eleventh grade Latinos from the Dover Public School District have passed the HSPA Language Arts Literacy (LAL) section at an average rate of 74.8% as compared to 59.7% of statewide DFG A Latinos. During the same period, Dover Latino students averaged a passing rate of 63.9% on the Mathematics section while statewide Latinos from DFG A schools averaged 46.4% (NJDOE, 2005-2009).

The five year average pass rate for eighth grade Dover Latinos on the Language Arts Literacy (LAL) section has also been markedly higher than their Latino peers from other DFG A schools. Eighth grade Dover Latinos have had a pass rate of 65.8% on the LAL section over the past five years while Latino students from other DFG A schools have passed at a rate of 51.9%. The difference on the Mathematics section of the

eighth grade test is less pronounced, with Dover's Latino students passing at a rate of 44.6% and statewide DFG A Latino students passing at a rate of 41.7% over the past five years (NJDOE, 2005-2009).

Differences in average pass rates have been the least pronounced at the fourth grade level. Nonetheless, the average pass rate for the last five years for Dover Latino students has been higher than that of statewide DFG Latino students on both the LAL and Mathematics sections. Dover Latino students have passed the fourth grade LAL section at an average rate of 64.8% as compared to 59.8% for statewide DFG A Latinos. Likewise, Dover Latino students have passed the fourth grade Mathematics test at an average rate of 73.3% as compared to 67.3% for statewide DFG A Latino students (NJDOE, 2005-2009).

Thus the last five years of statewide standardized test score data indicate that Dover Latino students have been outperforming Latino students from socioeconomically similar DFG A school districts. Dover Latinos have been outperforming statewide DFG A Latino students most markedly on the eleventh grade High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), an extremely high stakes test that is used as a prerequisite for high school graduation. Nonetheless, graduation rates in Dover (and statewide) are higher than the pass rates for the HSPA because of the New Jersey Department of Education's provision of the Special Review Assessment (SRA), "an alternative assessment that provides students with the opportunity to exhibit their understanding and mastery of the HSPA skills in contexts that are familiar and related to their experiences." The SRA is administered under the supervision and discretion of teachers from each respective school district. The test is available in Spanish (NJDOE, 2009).

During the most recent five year period, graduation rates from Dover High School have been similar to statewide rates. Dover High School posted an 89.9% graduation rate in 2009, while the statewide graduation rate was 93.3%. This was the lowest Dover High School graduation rate for the past five years. Conversely, in 2006 Dover High School had a graduation rate of 98% while statewide the graduation rate was 94.2%. Table 4-3 summarizes graduation rates for Dover High School as compared to statewide rates (NJDOE, 2005-2009).

The educational professionals whom I interviewed indicated a variety of factors as contributors to the Dover Public School District's Latino students' success relative to statewide Latinos from socioeconomically-similar District Factor Group A schools. Generally speaking, the educational professionals expressed that this success was attributable to several key factors that exist within the confines of the localized Dover Public School District: a historically dedicated professional staff, policies and actions that are conducive to the development of strong home-school partnerships, and programming geared toward the needs of the district's predominantly low-income, majority Latino student population. Data related to the factors that the educators cited as contributors to the relative success of Dover Latino students will be presented in the rest of this chapter under three principal subthemes: Professional Staff Dedication, The Home School Partnership and Programming for Latino Students.

Professional Staff Dedication

The educational professionals whom I interviewed each identified key traits that pertain to the Dover Public School District's professional staff that they found to have contributed to success for Dover and its Latino majority student population. Overall, they found that the interaction of these faculty traits within the localized context of the Dover

Public School District has been beneficial to student outcomes. It is important to note that educational professionals in Dover commonly identified several key faculty characteristics that have helped their school's Latino student population. The most discussed characteristics were under the Professional Staff Dedication theme were: generally high levels of faculty retention, a high proportion of faculty who are graduates of the Dover Public School District, and pedagogical creativity. Furthermore, several educators cited a long term trend among district professional staff toward increasing respect for linguistic diversity and Latino cultures that has been fostered by periodic professional development.

Each of the ten professionals directly involved with the Dover school community identified the abundance of longstanding teachers and administrators that the school has on its payroll and low levels of teacher turnover as contributors to the school community's success. Data from the New Jersey Department of Education (2009) corroborate the educators. Teacher mobility in each of the Dover schools over the past five years has been typically lower than the state average. Table 4-4 provides a listing of faculty mobility rates at each of Dover's public schools over the past 5 years relative to state averages (NJDOE, 2005-2009).

Additionally, it is important to address the issue of professional staff salary as a factor that is indicative of overall professional staff dedication. Aside from one interviewee, no mention was made of this issue. However, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) publishes average salaries for administrators and teachers for each school district within the state. The NJDOE also publishes a statewide average for both administrator and teacher pay. The NJDOE's data indicated that Dover teachers

and administrators have been consistently paid at rates that are below the statewide averages. Table 4-5 and Figure 4-4 show Dover's lower teacher and administrator salaries as compared to state averages over the last five years, a reflection of the district's lower spending levels (NJDOE, 2005-2009). These figures are noteworthy in that they demonstrate that educational professionals tend to continue to work for the school district in spite of lower salaries than can be found in other New Jersey school districts.

Furthermore, in addition to generally low teacher mobility rates, each of the interviewees identified the shared Dover roots of many of their colleagues as an important component of professional staff dedication. Former Supervisor of World Languages and Bilingual Programs, Nicholas Avellino, described one of Dover's staffing patterns as "you plant the seeds and it grows and people feel good about coming back and helping their community; generally in the Abbott Districts you don't get teachers from the community," Avellino, himself a Dover High School graduate and lifelong town resident continued, "Dover has quite a number of faculty members and staff who live right in Dover still, or at least grew up here. Many have a great investment in this community." These views were shared by Avellino's successor, Karen Maslowski. Maslowski stated, "We have a lot of teachers and staff who are Dover graduates. I graduated from Dover High School and have spent most of my career here." Maslowski continued, "I've lived in the town my whole life and sent my children to Dover schools."

Guidance Counselor Alicia Alvarez, a Dover High School graduate who has worked in the Dover Public School District for thirteen years described the importance of staff with Dover roots, "Staff members who grew up here are better able to understand

where the kids and families are coming from because we lived it too. Even though its years later, you have more of an understanding of what they're going through." Her colleague, Guidance Counselor Thomas Laskaris, another Dover graduate, described it as, "I've been working here for twenty years now, and there are many school staff members who grew up in Dover and went to the schools, don't ask me to quantify it but it has to be something like a third." Laskaris continued, "I think it's good for the kids to see that many of us grew up here and that we can then serve as positive role models." He added, "Our superintendent and assistant superintendent are both from Dover as well." Regarding Dover's high number of ELL students and families and staff ability to empathize, Laskaris stated, "Personally, I definitely know the challenges of having parents that don't speak English or don't speak it well and I can definitely appreciate what a lot of the kids here are going through."

The two former teachers, neither of whom is from Dover, echoed similar sentiments, noting that the teaching staffs and administrations of their former schools in Dover consisted of a high proportion of longtime staff members, many of whom had attended the local school district as students. They both sensed that many of their colleagues with Dover roots felt invested in helping the community and school system to achieve success as its demographics became increasingly Latino. According to the former teachers, this sense of investment in the schools and community manifested itself in school leadership and affected teachers without childhood or family connections to Dover. Former teacher Michelle Rizzo stated, "Don Castelluccio, my principal, he was from Dover. He was of Italian descent but learned Spanish. He was always very open to providing as much service as possible to the Spanish-speaking community."

Rizzo expressed that the high proportion of her colleagues who had attended the DPSD as students helped her to better relate to current students and Dover school families. This view was shared by former teacher Nagelberg. Nagelberg also shared an outreach strategy that she adapted from some of her Dover-born colleagues. Nagelberg stated that if she had to reach a parent who was difficult to contact because of a work schedule conflict she would often go to that person's workplace and meet with them during a designated break.

Martina Derricks, the site director for North Dover Elementary's afterschool program added that during her tenure at the school she has found out that many of the teachers and administrators whom she interacts with on a daily basis are graduates of the Dover Public School District. Derricks identified common Dover roots as influential in the dedication to school and community she sees among Dover teachers and staff who aid her in various ways with the afterschool program, whether it is through daily communication or assistance in tutoring students. "People here really support each other, they definitely help each other out, it's a very tight community," Derricks stated. The site director then directed me to speak with a Dover teacher who often tutors students in the afterschool program. The Dover teacher, Nora Lewis, has been working in the Dover Public School District for the past ten years. Her father had been a vice principal at one of the Dover Public Schools and she attended school in the district through her graduation from Dover High School. Lewis, who is not Latina, described Dover as being "like a family, and you don't have to be a part of the Latino community to feel that way."

Former Supervisor Avellino also identified staff dedication to the Dover school community as a major factor that has helped Dover's Latino students to succeed. The former supervisor added pedagogical creativity as a component of this dedication. "We always were fortunate to have a lot of teachers who were up to the task," Avellino stated. Avellino recalled the many classroom observations he had made of teachers during his years as an administrator. In recollection, Avellino noted that he frequently observed that most Dover teachers often used several instructional strategies to reach diverse groups of learners throughout the course of a single lesson. Avellino noted that this pedagogical practice was necessary because classes often had a variety of students who had experienced school in different contexts both in the United States and in different Latin American countries. "With groups as varied as we often had, you had to have teachers who were willing to work individually with kids, in small groups, and with various methodologies." Avellino continued, "fortunately, we always had people who were willing to make the extra effort."

Furthermore, both of the former Dover teachers identified a trend among faculty members toward a greater acceptance of linguistic diversity and the Latino community throughout their tenures in Dover. "I think definitely that a more positive attitude toward the importance of language and Latino cultures grew," Michelle Rizzo stated. "This truly was generational. With the younger staff, there was much more of an embracing, while there was a certain resentment among elements of the older staff." Deborah Nagelberg corroborated Rizzo's views. During her tenure with the Dover schools, Nagelberg noticed that as time progressed that certain teachers would often volunteer to take the challenge of having recently mainstreamed ELL students in their

classes. Nagelberg explained, “Eventually certain teachers would take all of the recently mainstreamed ELL students each year.” Nagelberg continued “these were younger teachers, people under 40. I think they saw it as rewarding and as an opportunity to use the power of diversity, really of having a diverse population where we had people from all over Latin America.” Nagelberg also noted that professional development programs geared toward the entire faculty began to focus more on incorporating Latino students, particularly ELLs, into the whole school community. Nagelberg expressed this as a factor that helped nearly all faculty members to become more inclusionary towards Latino students, particularly ELLs.

Professional development that is focused on sensitivity toward Latino cultures and linguistic diversity continues to the present in the DPSD. Current Supervisor of World Languages and Bilingual Services, Karen Maslowski, stated that the school has workshops during professional development days that are geared toward helping staff to better work with Latino cultures and linguistically diverse students and families. Maslowski noted the influence of localized school districting on the DPSD’s Latino focus regarding staff recruitment and training. Maslowski stated, “Our town is about 80% Hispanic, so we work with that population much more than other districts surrounding us do.” Maslowski continued, “We always need people who can relate to the Hispanic community.”

The school’s current professional development plan corroborates Maslowski. The Dover Public School District’s Professional Development Plan for the 2009-2010 school year emphasized helping teachers to better work with ELL students and non-ELL Latino students. Based on responses from teachers regarding professional development from

the previous year, the district planned to implement additional professional development programs for all teachers regarding strategies for teaching ELL students across disciplines. These programs and workshops were to be led by ESL and Bilingual Instructors from the district who are experts in working with ELL students. Furthermore, the professional development program plan stressed collaboration between colleagues in order to create and implement culturally responsive writing assignments (Dover Public School District, 2009).

The final portion of this thematic subsection brought forth data related to the Dover professional staff's orientation toward language and Latino cultures last for a specific reason. This element of the Professional Staff Dedication thematic subsection was addressed last because it extends beyond the professional staff of the Dover Public School District. In the subsequent thematic subsections, the district's overall orientation toward language and culture will be shown as an important factor in both the fostering of home-school partnerships and the development of a school curriculum that is responsive to the needs of Dover's Latino community.

The Home-School Partnership

This thematic subsection addresses the importance of the home-school partnership to the relative success of Dover's Latino students. All of the educational professionals were in agreement about the importance of home-school partnerships within the Dover Public School District. The professionals identified this as a major contributor to helping Latino students in Dover to achieve success despite the obstacles of low-socioeconomic status within the context of a localized school district with below average levels of funding. Each educational professional identified a variety of ways in which home-school partnerships are facilitated within the Dover community. Through

the interviews, it became clear that strong-home school partnerships are facilitated in Dover through home-school interaction that is sensitive to the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Latino school families. This interaction is further facilitated through Dover's small walkable size and its access to public transportation.

According to the educational professionals, the state's localized school districting scheme has contributed to the development of a school community in Dover where Latino parents are accepted and welcomed. "In the early days (the late 1970s) it was often tough to get the Latino parents to come out, it really was, but we had to find a way" former Supervisor Avellino stated. "Really, we were the only town in Morris County that had the proportions of Hispanics, the numbers, so we had to be proactive early on." As the district's Latino population continued to expand throughout his tenure, Avellino expressed that it was increasingly important to ensure that the Latino parents were included as partners and allies so as to better serve Dover's students. According to Avellino and the other educators, inclusion of Latino parents and families as partners in the school community has been accomplished through a variety of measures.

Avellino first took the example of back to school nights. The former supervisor stated that by the late 1970s that the district always made sure that there were several Spanish-speaking teachers to speak with Spanish-dominant parents. By the mid 1980s, Dover made the back to school night programming more publicly bilingual so as to more fully include Spanish speaking parents. "By that point, the superintendent would ask me to write her speeches in Spanish." Avellino continued, "I'd record them for her. And she would listen to them and practice and then be able to read them for the Spanish-speaking parents, basically the same thing that she had said in English." Beyond back

to school nights, Avellino stated that it also became important to invite the parents into the school and cultivate an atmosphere that was non-intimidating, informal, and inclusive towards diverse Latino cultures. “One of the things that really helped were the festivals that we would have, the international dinners. They were always great things to get everyone to come together.” Avellino continued, “Latino organizations and restaurants from the town participated as well. We had representation from all these different countries.” Avellino continued, “It was a way to invite the parents into the school into what would sometimes otherwise be a very intimidating environment. The festivals were entertainment, but helped connect school to home.”

According to Supervisor Maslowski, the bilingual back to school nights and school festivals continue to this day within the Dover school community. Additionally, these programs have expanded to include monthly bilingual and Spanish-language parent advisory forums and workshops that are directed towards the educational needs of Latino families and students. “The Hispanic parents come out in full force, they’re very much interested in finding out how to help their children, even if they don’t speak English, sometimes especially if they don’t speak English.” Maslowski explained, “We spend a lot of time at meetings emphasizing that if they read to their child in Spanish, or have their child become proficient in reading in Spanish, that they’ll be able to read in English much more quickly.” Maslowski emphasized that various parent forums hosted by the school each month give Spanish-dominant Latino parents a forum in which they can express their needs and concerns in the language with which they feel most comfortable. Maslowski included that parents are given choices concerning the content of forums and workshops and are asked for their input on various school decisions.

According to Maslowski, the parent forums have been extremely beneficial to giving Spanish-dominant Latino parents a voice in the school community. Maslowski stated, “The parents have thanked us profusely in the past few years because they needed somewhere to go where they could speak in Spanish to somebody, and get some ideas and training for dealing with their children.”

Dover’s focus on the needs of Latino parents is not limited to group settings but is extended to interactions between individual parents and the school’s professional staff. As Spanish-speaking supervisors of bilingual programs at Dover, both Maslowski and Avellino have been highly involved in working with Latino parents at a personal level. Both described how they sought to cultivate open and trusting relationships with Spanish-dominant Latino parents throughout their careers at Dover. This has been accomplished both through meeting with parents at the aforementioned programs and forums as well as through weekly bilingual informational mailings from the school district that encourage communication in order to cultivate relationships with Latino parents. “I get many calls from parents who are seeking advice or want more information about our programs. They come and see me if they have questions, because I do speak Spanish, and they’re welcome to call me anytime” Maslowski explained.

Personal communication between Dover’s professional staff and Latino parents has not been limited to the administrative level. The non-administrative staff whom I interviewed all described Latino parents in the school district as being accessible and generally very concerned about the academic and social progress of their children. Through interviews, it was revealed that the district makes conscious choices in its

staffing patterns in order to best facilitate dialogue between Spanish-dominant Latino parents and professional staff. Each of Dover's public schools has a bilingual main office secretary who is in charge of answering and directing all phone calls that each respective school receives. Furthermore, the district prioritizes having a Spanish-speaking teacher in each grade level at each of the elementary schools, on each teacher team at the middle school, and in each subject area at the high school. This staffing pattern is in addition to teachers who are responsible for Spanish language and bilingual classes. According to the educational professionals, this allocation of staff helps to facilitate communication between Latino parents who are Spanish-dominant and the staff members who do not speak Spanish.

Additionally, Guidance Counselor Laskaris and Supervisor Maslowski both spoke strongly about the value of having academically-oriented afterschool programs that are sensitive to the needs of low-income Latino parents. "Many parents can't provide their kids with advantages that kids in other districts have. Many students I work with don't have a place to study, so we've had to establish some after school programs and studying groups for students," Maslowski explained. Laskaris further described the situation, that because of work responsibilities and linguistic differences that "the parents are not always able to help the students with homework, so we offer various programs after school that help to take the burden off the parents."

Furthermore, Dover's afterschool programs function as an intermediary that connects school and home. The afterschool staff members at the K-8 level interact with both Dover teachers and parents on a daily basis (as parents must walk to the school to pick up their children in the evening) and are thus able to help relay messages between

teachers and parents. According to Julia Enriquez, the Educational Programming Director for Morristown Neighborhood House, the organization that provides Dover's K-8 afterschool programs, about two-thirds of the organization's staff is bilingual in Spanish and English. According to Enriquez, this allows the staff to better communicate with Spanish-dominant parents and to aid them in working with Dover Public School District staff members who do not speak Spanish on occasions when the District is unable to provide a translator. Furthermore, according to Martina Derricks, the site director for Neighborhood House's program at North Dover Elementary School, the school site is open each day to parents who often come in to help the staff or to learn skills which they can use to aid their children with academics. This form of parental involvement was witnessed firsthand during a visit to the North Dover program, as a father, speaking in Spanish, drilled several children on multiplication tables. Several other parents came in and out of the program during my visit, thus demonstrating the openness of the environment.

The preceding interview data identified the Dover Public School District's sensitive treatment of Latino cultures and diverse linguistic backgrounds as key to the fostering of strong home-school partnerships. As a final portion of the Home-School Partnership thematic subsection, it is important to bring forth data regarding public transportation and small size. As will be indicated by interview data, both public transportation and the small geographic area of the Dover community have been pivotal in the facilitation of the aforementioned culturally and linguistically sensitive interaction that characterizes the home-school partnerships of the Dover Public School District.

The guidance counselors revealed that public transportation is extremely important in Dover because many people in the community cannot afford car ownership. Both guidance counselors identified Dover's high level of integration into the county's and the state's public transportation systems, its abundance of taxi and car services, and the town's small, walkable size as compelling reasons that lower-income Latinos often choose to live in Dover over other Morris County communities. They also identified these factors as helpful to the facilitation of communication between the school district's professional staff and low-income Latino school families. The factors of transportation and geographic size help to facilitate communication in that they allow low-income Latino families easy access to the schools which their children attend.

The afterschool program coordinators added that they had found with some difficulty about Dover's reliance on public transportation. The afterschool program, run by the Morristown Neighborhood House, has operated in the Dover Public School District for five years. The afterschool program's parent organization is headquartered over ten miles away in Morristown. It had been excessively difficult for many Dover parents to attend various evening functions and parent workshops at the Morristown headquarters during Neighborhood House's first year working with the school district. Upon receiving requests from members of the school community, Neighborhood House remedied this by moving all of its evening programming for Dover parents to its school sites within the Dover Public School District. This change allowed parents the ability to walk to their local schools for events, much as their children do in order to go to school during the day. According to the afterschool program coordinators, attendance by Dover parents at evening events increased markedly after the change was made.

Jane Ektis, Director of Dover Head Start, also commented on transportation in Dover. The director stated that many people from the community often lack personal automobiles and therefore rely on the use of Head Start's facility for various parent meetings and educational programs such as evening ESL classes. "They're able to walk here, so it's much easier," she stated. Dover's walkability is reflected in its public schools. According to Supervisor Maslowski, because of the compact geographical area which the school district serves, the DPSD has never required a school busing service and many parents, especially those with elementary age children, walk their children to nearby schools each day. This factor helps to facilitate daily interaction between home and school for many parents.

Thus Dover's small, walkable size is helpful to the facilitation of relationships between lower-income Latino families and the district's public schools. The small geographic size and transportation factors thus help the district in building home-school partnerships that are based upon respect for the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Latino school families. The final thematic subsection based on findings related to the third research question will address how localized public school districting affects programming for the district's majority Latino student population.

Programming for Latino Students

Interviews with educational professionals revealed views that localized school districting has given the Dover Public School District a greater level of autonomy in its ability to meet the needs of the students which it serves. This autonomy has been an impetus for the Dover Public School District to provide educational programming that is geared towards the needs of its predominantly low-income, majority Latino student population. According to former supervisor Avellino, reflecting on Dover's historically

large Latino population relative to the rest of Morris County stated, “It has been a great advantage for Dover to have been able to come up with programs that work specifically for the benefit of our district.” Avellino continued, “I feel that under a countywide school system, the specific needs of Dover would have probably been swallowed up.” This final thematic subsection will address how the Dover Public School District has implemented programming to serve the needs of the predominantly low-income Latino students which the district serves.

New Jersey Department of Education datasets from the past five years indicate that the majority of families with children enrolled in the Dover Public School District are Spanish-speaking. This is much greater than the state average, where just over 10% of school families statewide are Spanish-speaking. The data for home language can be found in Table 4-6. Additionally, most of the schools within the Dover Public School District have proportions of English Language Learners two to three times higher than the statewide average. This data can be found in Table 4-7 (NJDOE, 2005-2009). This being said, the district’s orientation toward language policy is extremely important to this final thematic subsection.

Bilingual Education and ESL Programming

The Dover Public School District’s Bilingual/ESL Three-Year Program Plan for 2008-2011 indicated that the district has developed numerous programs in order to meet the needs of its Spanish-speaking English Language Learner (ELL) population. Under the current plan, the district has a full-time bilingual education program at Academy Street Elementary School for kindergarten students. North Dover Elementary school is home to full-time bilingual programs for students in grades 1-5. East Dover Elementary school, which takes all sixth grade students in Dover, hosts a full-time

bilingual program for sixth grade students. Dover Middle School and Dover High School each have departmentalized (subject area), part-time bilingual programs and sheltered English courses. Each school within the district also provides ESL classes which are grouped by English proficiency level (beginner, intermediate and advanced) at each grade level in grades 7-12. All students who are enrolled in bilingual programs must also take ESL as required by state law. The plan states 136 students took part in the district's full-time bilingual programs, 146 took part in part-time bilingual programs, and 148 students were in English-based sheltered instruction and ESL programs. Students enrolled in ESL/bilingual programs are reassessed annually and on an as-needed basis before they enter the English-mainstream school setting (Dover Public School District, 2008).

The plan describes the district's first goal for bilingual programs as, "to provide a full academic program in all content areas linked to the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards." The district states that its second goal for bilingual programs is "to provide students with a nurturing setting upon arrival and facilitate the transition from Spanish to English through intense English instruction as students adjust to a new culture, school, and academic setting." Bilingual programs within the district utilize a transitional approach whereby both English and Spanish are used in instruction and Spanish is used for clarification, explanation and discussion (Dover Public School District, 2008, p. 3).

The interview with former Supervisor Avellino revealed that Dover began a curriculum for Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) starting in the late 1970s. The early program started with mixed grade classes but expanded in breadth over the years

to include a TBE class for each elementary grade level within the district and subject area bilingual courses at the middle and high school levels. The NJDOE mandates that each school district in the state have a bilingual program when twenty ELL students who speak the same language attend public schools within a district. Despite this mandate, Dover remains one of two school districts within Morris County with a bilingual program and one of only 72 districts statewide (NJDOE, 2009). Both Avellino and Maslowski noted that other districts with sufficient numbers of Spanish-speaking ELLs within Morris County apply for a waiver on bilingual programs each year. The bilingual education mandate stipulates that districts may apply for a waiver each year if a bilingual program would be unfeasible because of a geographically dispersed ELL population or student age range (NJDOE, 2009). In addition to TBE classes, the district also maintains ESL (English as a second language) pullout instruction, and content area sheltered English classes depending on the individual needs of students.

Furthermore, bilingual education within Dover is not limited to the K-12 level. According to the Head Start Director, Jane Ektis, a full-day TBE program is provided for all students at her school site in Dover. A half-day pre-K program with a curriculum similar to that of Dover Head Start was initiated recently within the Dover Public School District. Ektis also mentioned that El Primer Paso School has provided a half-day pre-K program since the 1970s. El Primer Paso's program seeks to build children's skills in both English and Spanish through a 50/50 bilingual format, charging tuition on a sliding scale. The director added that both Head Start and El Primer Paso coordinate closely with the Dover Public School District as nearly all of the children that are educated in each of the schools ultimately go on to attend school in the local K-12 district.

Native Spanish Programming

In addition to addressing the needs of English Language Learners through a program of Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and ESL, Dover also seeks to help students to maintain and improve their abilities in the Spanish Language. Under Avellino's leadership the district implemented a curriculum for Native Spanish courses at Dover High School the year after it began offering TBE classes. The Native Spanish program began at Dover High School in 1978 with a single course and has expanded greatly in breadth since its inception. Avellino, who has consulted other districts in the development of Native Spanish curriculums, noted that only a few other school districts in Morris County today have the critical mass of native Spanish speaking students to have such programs, none with the breadth of classes that Dover can offer.

According to Maslowski, Dover High School today offers several different tracks for Native Speakers of Spanish that are tailored to the varied educational backgrounds and Spanish expertise of the students which they serve. Furthermore, the school offers Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish Literature in addition to AP Spanish Language. Additionally, in the mid 1990s, Native Spanish was expanded to Dover Middle School. The Native Spanish Program at Dover Middle School is a multi-tiered program similar to what is found in Dover High School. Thus a curriculum that addresses the diverse Spanish language abilities and needs of Dover's students is implemented in grades 7-12 across the district.

Furthermore, both Maslowski and Avellino discussed a program that is conducted through Dover High School's Native Spanish courses which they both identified as being extremely successful. Through its Native Spanish courses, The Dover Public School District partners nearly every year with Repertorio Español, a

professional Spanish-language theater company based in New York City. With Repertorio Español, students in the Native Spanish courses are paired with professional writers from the theater company. Working with the writers, the students develop their own full-length plays. The students then compete against other schools with similar Native Spanish courses to have their plays selected to be professionally performed in New York City at Repertorio Español's theater. Dover students have won the competition several times since the partnership was initiated in the early 1990s. Additionally, Repertorio Español has performed professionally at the Dover High School auditorium for the wider Dover community in front of full-capacity audiences several times in the past two decades. Both Avellino and Maslowski see the partnership with Repertorio Español as being important within the majority Latino school district for the validation it gives to the Spanish language and Latino cultures both within the school and the wider community. Both administrators noted that they have witnessed this program inspire students to learn which has transcended itself to other academic areas and interests.

Other Programming

The academic focus that Dover places on Latino students is not limited to bilingual programs, ESL, and Native Spanish courses. Nonetheless, the supervisors, all three teachers, and both guidance counselors noted that Dover's ability to specialize in these programs has contributed to helping Latino students to excel in other academic areas. The district's strong and diverse offerings in ESL and bilingual programs help Latino English Language Learners to acquire the necessary skills to compete in classes that are conducted entirely in English. The DPSD's offering of Native Spanish courses allows students a linguistically and culturally validating learning environment which often

inspires the desire to learn in other fields. According to educational professionals, this combination has contributed to the cultivation of high standards and expectations for students across curriculums.

Former Supervisor Avellino and Supervisor Maslowski described the faculty's high standards as helping Latino students in the district to develop strong work ethics. Maslowski stated, "Our students work hard, a lot really work hard and do well. Many of them don't have economic advantages but overcome a lot of these challenges and do pretty well on tests and acquiring English for the many ELLs." Former teacher Michelle Rizzo corroborated that "curriculum was never dumbed down" because Dover was a low-SES school district or because of the high proportion of ELL students and that this positively benefited students in helping them to develop strong work ethics. Guidance Counselor Thomas Laskaris described the district as having high expectations for all of its students. "Whether ELL or from an English-speaking family, our goals are ultimately still the same; to get them up to the high school and to get them into the college prep track, and get them into a 2 or 4 year school after they graduate," Laskaris stated as he described advisement and expectations of students.

Furthermore, though Dover Public School District personnel seek to maintain high academic standards so as to prepare Latino students for post-secondary education, the district has recently taken action that acknowledges that higher education has often been inaccessible to many of its lower-income Latino students. Guidance counselor Alicia Alvarez described a recently implemented dual-enrollment college credit enrollment program that the Dover Public School District put into place with the cooperation of the County College of Morris (CCM). Alvarez described Dover as

traditionally having had “a lot of very intelligent, capable students” who did not pursue postsecondary education even though they had expressed interest in further study and had proven that they have the abilities to continue on to higher education. The guidance counselor spoke from her own personal experience when she stated that part of the reason for this is that many low-income Latino families in the district are extremely debt-averse. “They look at the tuition prices and they don’t know how they’ll ever pay it off.”

Laskaris and Maslowski also identified this issue. Both counselors, as well as Supervisor Maslowski discussed the dual enrollment program as a major step that the district has taken to help low-income Latino students to overcome some of the financial burden of higher education. The County College of Morris (CCM) dual enrollment program offers college-level courses in science and writing composition while students are still enrolled at Dover High School. Under this program, professors from CCM come to Dover High School to teach using the same curriculum that would be used for corresponding classes that takes place on the college’s campus. Through this program, students can attain a full-semester of college credits at no cost.

Alvarez, Laskaris, and Maslowski all stressed the benefits of the County College Program. The guidance counselors and the supervisor emphasized that the program has helped Dover students to gain additional confidence that they are capable of doing college level work. They also emphasized that the program can provide up to a semester of college credits at no cost to students and helps to encourage students to continue with further education. Both Alvarez and Maslowski found this to be especially important for many of Dover’s Latino students, most of whom are the first from their families to have had the opportunity to receive post-secondary education. Laskaris

stated that Dover is only one of a few school districts in the county that offers such a program and that the district is looking to expand it to include more courses.

The strengths of Dover's Latino students are not met without challenges. Though test scores among Dover's Latino students are generally higher than those of Latino students from socioeconomically similar DFG A districts, recent increases in the number of high stakes, statewide standardized tests are a major concern for Dover educators. Supervisor Maslowski stated, "I think the biggest challenge is passing state assessments, and they're adding more and more each year in the State of New Jersey." The supervisor stated that the number of state tests that are administered is daunting for the Dover Public School District because of the high number of students in the district whose first language is not English having to take state standardized tests in their second language.

The supervisor also expressed concern about the potential removal of the Specialized Review Assessment (SRA) a test that can be taken as a high school exit exam in New Jersey in place of the High School Proficiency Assessment. The test can be taken in Spanish and has been beneficial to latecoming high school age ELLs who have not yet acquired full proficiency in academic English. Former supervisor Avellino, and the two former teachers, expressed similar concerns about the increasing role of high stakes statewide, standardized tests.

Nonetheless, Maslowski remains optimistic. The supervisor continually expressed that the district's high proportion of Latino ELLs has allowed the district to specialize in providing services to that population. The supervisor identified this specialization as beneficial to some Dover Latino students' performance on state tests.

The supervisor explained, “Even though studies show that it takes 5-7 years to attain academic English skills, we have to do it quickly.” The supervisor then praised the teachers in her department, “when we get a new ELL student, say in ninth grade, that speaks no English, they still have to eventually pass all the tests to graduate.”

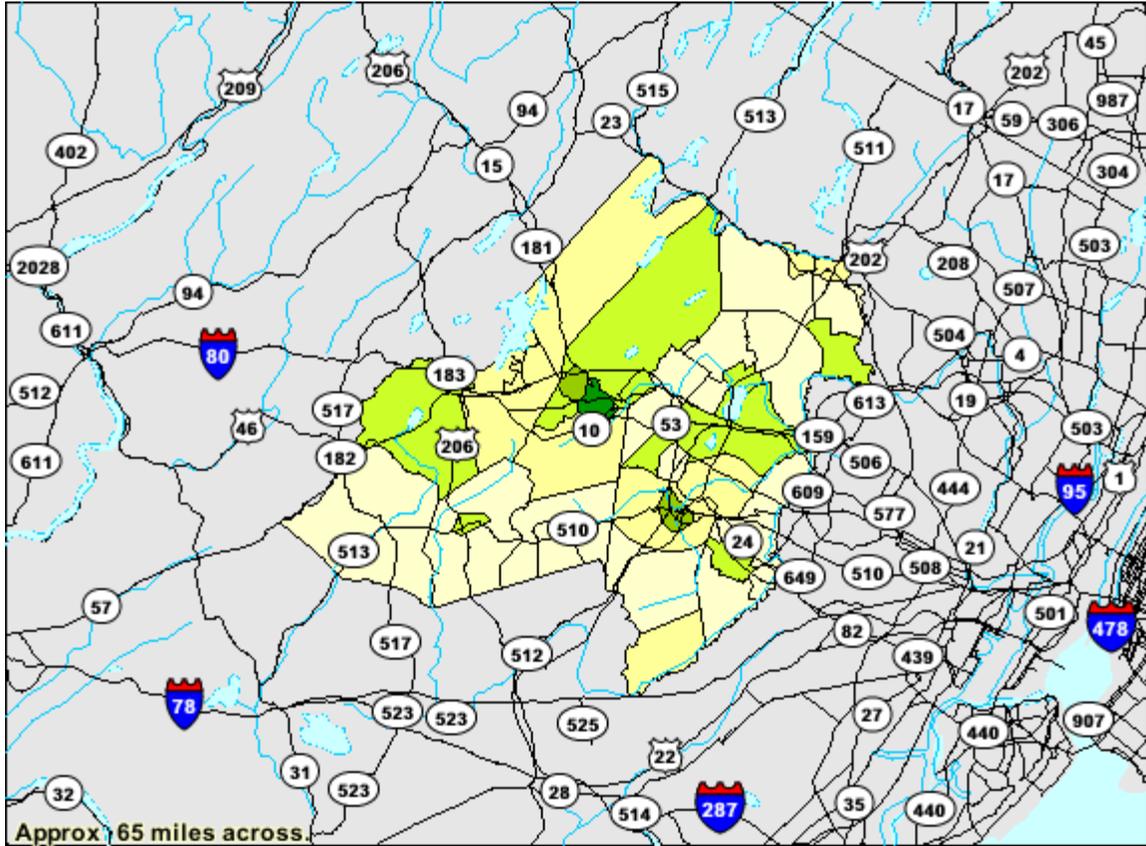
Maslowski explained, “so our bilingual and ESL department really work hard to get students learning English as quickly as possible. In this district they have to rise to the challenge.”

Chapter Summary

The New Jersey Department of Education datasets demonstrated that the Dover Public School District is disproportionately low-income and Latino relative to the rest of the relatively affluent county where it is located. Observational and interview data provided reasoning behind the development of a low-income, majority Latino community in the midst of county that is mostly non-Latino, white, and middle class. Furthermore, archival data from the New Jersey Department of Education demonstrated that the Dover Public School District is funded well below the mean and median levels for Morris County, the State of New Jersey, and the similarly low-SES District Factor Group A Abbott Districts. Additionally, interview data revealed that the Dover Public School District is funded insufficiently for the meeting of all community educational needs as identified by educational professionals affiliated with the Dover Public School District. Successful programs and vital services have been cut, the lack of Abbott pre-K mandate creates a waiting list for Head Start and similar programs each year, and teacher and administrator pay is consistently lower relative to the rest of the state.

The final section of this chapter demonstrated that in spite of socioeconomic and funding challenges found within a low-income, majority Latino school system, that the

Dover Public School District has often managed to exceed state expectations for student performance as determined by District Factor Group. The educational professionals whom I interviewed found that high levels of professional staff dedication, the fostering of home-school partnerships, and the development of programming geared toward the educational needs of Latino students as having had pivotal roles in Dover's relative success.



Data Classes

Percent	
1.5 - 2.9	Lightest yellow
3.4 - 5.1	Yellow
5.8 - 9.4	Light green
23.2 - 27.1	Medium green
50.6 - 57.9	Dark green

Features

- Major Road
- Street
- Stream/Waterbody
- Stream/Waterbody

Items in gray text are not visible at this zoom level

Figure 4-1. Morris County Latino Population by Municipality (The dark green spot in the middle of the map corresponds to Dover). Source: 2000 U.S. Census Data

Table 4-1. Comparative Cost Per Pupil

Comparative Cost Per Pupil									
2008-2009		2007-2008		2006-2007		2005-06		2004-05	
Dover	State	Dover	State	Dover	State	Dover	State	Dover	State
11,261	\$13,601	\$10,382	\$12,598	\$10,169	11,939	\$9,774	\$11,673	\$9,167	\$11,215

Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

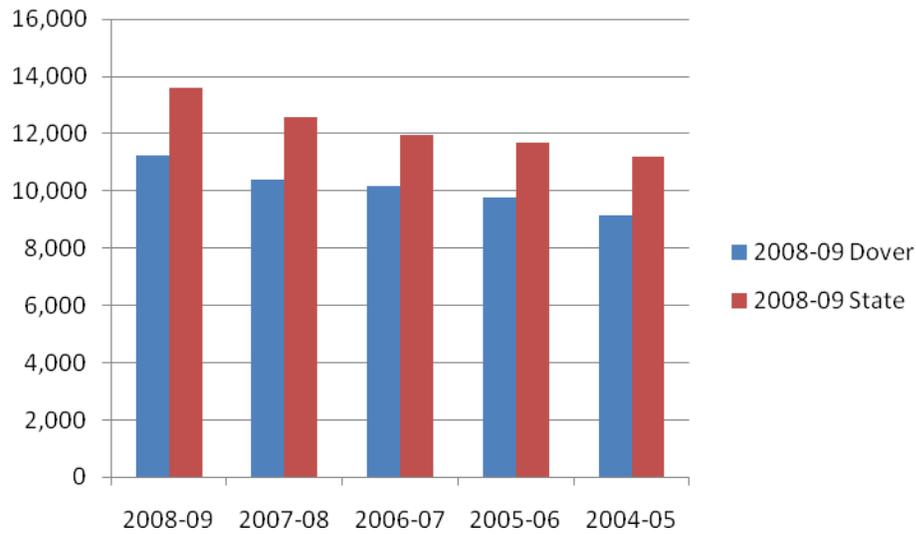


Figure 4-2. Comparative Cost Per Pupil Graph; Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

Table 4-2. NJDOE Test Score Data – Dover Latinos and. DFG A Latinos

		Grade 11 - HSPA			Grade 8 - NJASK/GEPA			Grade 4 - NJASK		
		Partial	Proficient	Advanced	Partial	Proficient	Advanced	Partial	Proficient	Advanced
2009 LAL	Dover	21.2	70.3	8.5	20.3	75.1	4.5	51.7	45.5	2.8
	NJ DFG A	39.4	57.9	2.7	40.2	58	1.8	60.3	38.4	1.4
2009 MATH	Dover	39	54.2	6.8	46	40.3	13.6	24.8	55.9	19.3
	NJ DFG A	54.5	40.7	4.8	50.3	36.5	13.2	40.9	43.5	15.6
2008 LAL	Dover	23.8	70.3	5.9	26.3	66.9	6.9	29.3	70.1	0.6
	NJ DFG A	43.1	54.8	2.2	40.5	57.2	2.4	32	67.1	0.9
2008 MATH	Dover	33.7	63.4	3	55.4	39.4	5.1	27.8	43.8	28.4
	NJ DFG A	53.7	41.9	4.4	56.5	34.5	9	27.6	48.9	23.5
2007 LAL	Dover	16.5	71.1	12.4	40.3	55	4.7	32.4	64.8	2.8
	NJ DFG A	39.5	55.5	4.9	50.6	46.4	3	36	62.3	1.7
2007 MATH	Dover	33.7	63.4	3	50.3	47	2.7	33.1	54.5	12.4
	NJ DFG A	54.1	41.6	4.3	57.9	34.4	7.6	30	47	23
2006 LAL	Dover	30.7	64.6	4.7	42.7	54.9	2.3	31.3	68.2	0.6
	NJ DFG A	43.6	52	4.4	52	45.9	2.1	39.2	60.1	0.7
2006 MATH	Dover	37	59.1	3.9	60.8	33.5	5.7	21	52.8	26.1
	NJ DFG A	52.7	42.3	4.9	62.4	31.5	6.2	32.1	42.6	25.3
2005 LAL	Dover	33.9	63.7	2.4	41.4	56.8	1.8	31.5	68	0.6
	NJ DFG A	44.9	51.9	3.2	54.5	43.9	1.6	33.7	65	1.2
2005 MATH	Dover	37.2	56.2	6.6	64.3	32.2	3.5	26.8	52	21.2
	NJ DFG A	52.7	41.3	6	64.5	30.4	5.1	33	46.9	20

Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

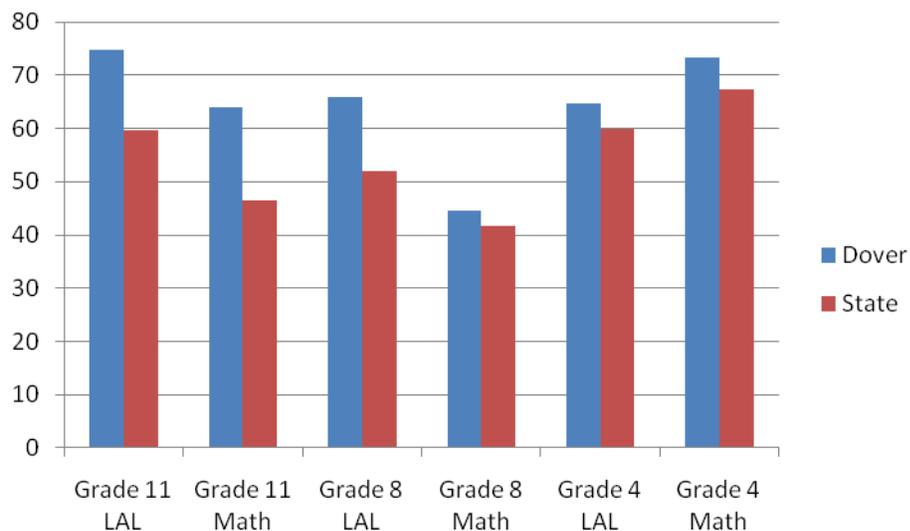


Figure 4-3. NJDOE Test Score Data: 5 Year Averages for Dover Latinos and DFG A Latinos. High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK); Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

Table 4-3. Graduation Rates

High School Graduation Rates %		
Year	Dover	State
2008-09	89.9	93.3
2007-08	91.2	92.3
2006-07	94.2	92.3
2005-06	98	94.2
2004-05	93.2	91.3

Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

Table 4-4. Faculty Mobility Rate

Year	Faculty Mobility Rate % by School					
	DHS	DMS	ASE	EDE	NDE	State
2008-09	2.4	0	0	2.6	2.4	4
2007-08	4.9	26.2	0	8.8	0	5.7
2006-07	1.2	7.1	6.2	6.2	0	6.2
2005-06	2.3	0	5	0	3.7	6.7
2004-05	6.6	6.7	2.5	16.2	10.1	7

Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

Table 4-5. Administrator and Teacher Salaries

Title	Dover vs. State Average Salary Comparison				
	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
Admin Dover	\$96,874	\$98,971	\$93,630	\$87,823	\$85,906
Admin State	\$114,950	\$111,311	\$108,450	\$105,960	\$102,755
Teacher Dover	\$57,987	\$56,412	\$52,822	\$50,487	\$44,722
Teacher State	\$59,545	\$57,242	\$55,550	\$53,871	\$52,562

Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

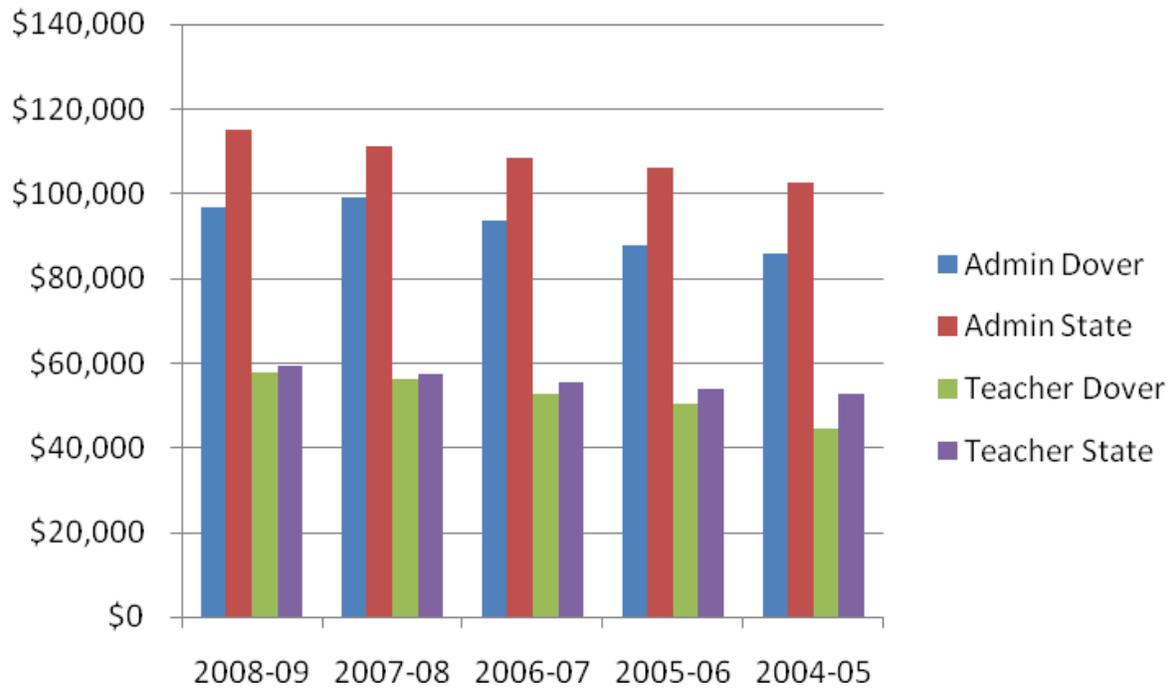


Figure 4-4. Administrator and Teacher Salaries; Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

Table 4-6. Home Language by School

		Home Language by School					
	Language	DHS	DMS	ASE	EDE	NDE	State
2008-09	Spanish	56.3	63.5	68.8	76.4	74.7	10
	English	37.8	35	30.3	21.6	25.3	78.2
2007-08	Spanish	55.6	62.7	71.4	69.9	73.7	10.8
	English	39.7	34.7	27.3	25	25.2	77.6
2006-07	Spanish	55.6	59.7	74.8	72.4	68.5	Unknown
	English	36.4	39.1	24.1	26.2	29.1	Unknown
2005-06	Spanish	54.5	61.8	73.1	71.3	68.3	Unknown
	English	40.3	35.6	25.4	27.7	29.4	Unknown
2004-05	Spanish	57	70.8	68.1	70.9	68.6	Unknown
	English	41.1	26.9	26.7	26.2	30.7	Unknown

Dover High School (DHS), Dover Middle School (DMS), Academy Street School (ASE), East Dover Elementary School (EDE), North Dover Elementary School (NDE); Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

Table 4-7. Limited English Proficient by School

Year	% Limited English Proficient (LEP)					
	DHS	DMS	ASE	EDE	NDE	State
2008-09	10.5	5.3	5.8	1.6	9.3	3.9
2007-08	11.8	8.5	9.5	2.2	14.3	3.7
2006-07	11.6	11	10.2	Unknown	15.5	3.9
2005-06	12.9	11.4	11.8	7.4	10.4	3.8
2004-05	13.7	13.1	11.3	10.5	10.6	3.8

Dover High School (DHS), Dover Middle School (DMS), Academy Street School (ASE), East Dover Elementary School (EDE), North Dover Elementary School (NDE); Source: New Jersey Department of Education (2005-2009)

CHAPTER 5 OBSERVATIONS

Interviews with educational professionals affiliated with the Dover Public School District (DPSD) added to archival data to demonstrate how localized school districting as found in the state of New Jersey has affected a predominantly low-income, majority Latino school community. The interviews revealed how the DPSD has been specifically affected by the state's localized school districting and funding mechanisms. The interviews also revealed how the gradual growth of a longstanding, predominantly low-income Latino majority within the confines of the Town of Dover has affected the responses of educational professionals in engaging the corresponding school community. This chapter places these issues within the context of the literature and makes potential policy recommendations for the improvement of K-12 educational finance and the engagement of low-income, majority Latino school communities.

Localized School Districting

All of the interviewed educational professionals concurred that New Jersey's system of localized school districting has led to the development of a predominantly low-income, majority Latino school community within the confines of the Dover Public School District (DPSD). With only 3.6% of Morris County's total public school enrollment but 25% of its Latino students and 26% of its students eligible for free and reduced price lunch, the DPSD represents the segregation of much of Morris County's low-income Latino population into one school district (NJDOE, 2009). Several of the interviewees mentioned the greater availability of affordable housing relative to other Morris County communities as a principal contributor to this demographic and socioeconomic trend. As discussed by both Frankenberg (2009) and Bischoff (2008), small localized school

districts have the potential to contribute to socioeconomic and demographic segregation as school district boundaries are used as frames of reference which homeseekers use when considering where to live. This affects property values and thus certain groups become effectively priced out of certain communities and their corresponding school districts. Though interviewees acknowledged that New Jersey's localized school districting scheme has contributed to the segregation of low-income Latinos into the Town of Dover and its corresponding school district, they also recognized that this arrangement has conferred certain advantages for this group. Most notably, interviewees mentioned the town's small walkable size and connection to mass transportation as important features for low-income Latinos in Dover, many of whom cannot afford car ownership. Furthermore, the town's concentration of Latinos within a predominantly non-Latino, white middle-class county has allowed Dover to focus its social and educational services to reflect the demographics of the community and likewise develop a base of Latino-owned businesses oriented toward the needs of the community.

Localized Funding

Several of the educational professionals who were interviewed expressed dismay with how funding has affected the Dover Public School District (DPSD). From the interviews, it was revealed that the current setup of K-12 school funding in the state of New Jersey has had a particularly negative impact on the DPSD, a low-income district that is not eligible for the funding and programming mandates that are allowed to the socioeconomically similar Abbott Districts. As discussed by Goertz, Lauver and Ritter (2001), the district-based redistribution of tax dollars that focuses most specifically on the needs of the Abbott Districts has adversely affected low-income non-Abbott school

districts throughout the state of New Jersey. Interviewees revealed the realities of Dover's lack of benefit from the Abbott Decisions, helping to show the real-life impact on an actual community. Interviewees discussed how successful programs have been forced to be cut, the precariousness of state funding from year to year, and the district's inability to meet all educational needs within the community.

Dover Community

All of the educational professionals who were interviewed identified the state's localized school districting scheme as having certain benefits for Dover's Latino community, particularly in Morris County which is overwhelmingly non-Latino and white. The statement by former Supervisor of World Languages and Bilingual Programs, Nicholas Avellino, that "It has been an advantage for Dover to have been able to come up with programs that work specifically for the benefit of our district. I feel that under a countywide school system, the specific needs of Dover would have probably been swallowed up," speaks to this. Avellino's statement fits well with Mintrom's finding that small, localized school districts are better able to focus on meeting the needs of the specific student populations and communities which they serve (Mintrom, 2008). Furthermore, in making decisions that are focused on the specific needs of the community, it seems that Dover's administration and professional staff has typically been able to find ways to work with the community's strengths, an important way of affecting positive outcomes according to Nieto (2004).

Professional Staff

One of the major themes revealed through the interviews was the Dover Public School District's (DPSD) retention of dedicated, longtime professional staff, many with roots in the Dover School Community. Interviewees identified the district's cultivation of

a familial atmosphere within the context of a small, walkable school community as helping to cultivate conditions that encourage former students to eventually start careers as members of the Dover faculty. Interviewees revealed that such faculty members are able to be more empathetic to students and families from the town because of their shared experiences. The interviewees also demonstrated that faculty members with Dover roots often feel that they have a vested interest in the school community and are in turn dedicated to facilitating positive outcomes for students. Their dedication in turn leads to their willingness to embrace the use of multiple modalities to reach diverse learners and their willingness to assist faculty members without Dover roots in understanding the community. This is similar to the situation observed by Howley and Howley regarding the low-income, localized, small community of the “Concordia School District” (2006). The case studies by Garcia, Trumbull and Rothstein Fisch (2009) and Colombo (2007) demonstrated that culturally and linguistically sensitive professional development can help faculty and staff to better relate to Latino cultures and better work with Latino students. Perhaps it is the dedication of Dover’s professional staff, their desire to empathize with students and families, and their vested interests in the community that has led to the district’s focus on implementing professional development oriented toward meeting the needs of Spanish-speaking English Language Learners and bilingual Latino students.

Home-School Partnerships

The district has made increasing efforts to engage Spanish-dominant Latino parents since at least the late 1970s so as to facilitate stronger home-school partnerships. The district seems to adhere to the principles espoused by Delgado Gaitan (2004) of “connecting, sharing information, and staying involved” in that Dover

educational professionals report that the district has a history of seeking to engage parents in a variety of ways that are linguistically and culturally sensitive (p. xi). This shows that parents and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds are valued. Events geared toward parents are bilingual in format and international school festivals allow for the celebration of home cultures in an environment that seeks to be informal and nonintimidating, so as to foster relationships between home and school. The district's strategic placing of Spanish-speaking staff is focused on fostering communication between Spanish-dominant parents and the school. Additionally It seems that the district's efforts to work with Dover's Latino parents are indicative of a school district that views parental support of the school community as an asset, much as the study by Reyes, Scribner and Paredes Scribner found with the high-performing Latino schools in Texas. Additionally, based on observation and interviews, the afterschool program as run by the Morristown Neighborhood House seems to foster communication between home in school similar to what was found in the study by Riggs and Medina (2005). This seemed to be helped by the program's bilingual staff and the informal atmosphere by which parents entered and left the program and provided assistance to the staff.

Programming for Latino Students

Interviewees acknowledged that Dover's Latino students face certain challenges but also recognized the strengths that these students bring to school. Several school professionals expressed that high stakes statewide standardized tests are a major challenge for ELL students who have not yet mastered academic English. In her article on trends in ELL education, Ma noted that autonomy and discretion in decision-making is important for schools in developing programs that work for their students (2002). DPSSD professionals expressed that localized school districting's effect of concentrating

a disproportionate number of Latino ELL students within the district has been cause for the district to be proactive in addressing the needs of these students through the development of a variety of bilingual education, sheltered English, and ESL programs that are not widely available elsewhere in Morris County. The variety of bilingual programs and ESL classes are indicative of a district that has been able to tailor its curriculum to the needs of its ELL students. Furthermore, Mora (2009) and Salazar (2008) discussed the effective banning of bilingual education in several other states whereas Zehr (2007) conversely discussed the favorable climate which exists in New Jersey for this educational practice. Surely the legality of bilingual education in New Jersey coupled with the state's localized districting structure has contributed to Dover's ability to make decisions that are better for meeting the needs of its Latino ELL students through a variety of instructional techniques. Clearly, there would be fewer options if bilingual education were banned in New Jersey as it is in several other states.

Additionally, Dover is able to offer a multi-tiered group of Spanish for Native Speakers (SNS) classes in grades 7-12. The district has been offering SNS classes since the late 1970s and has developed a unique writing partnership with the Repertorio Español of New York City. This is indicative that the District values the bilingualism of Latino students as a strength to be developed and seeks to provide programming that is relevant to students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Carreira (2007) found that SNS programs which value students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds are able to support English-Spanish biliteracy and help to raise achievement among Latinos. Perhaps the secondary-level SNS programs are partly why the statewide test score achievement is highest for the DPSD's Latino high school students relative to other District Factor

Group A Latino students. Additionally, the DPSD sets high expectations and recognizes the needs of its students with the implementation of both academically-oriented afterschool programs and the County College of Morris dual-enrollment partnership.

Policy Recommendations

My research does not allow me to make generalizations about all localized, predominantly low-income, majority Latino school districts. However, it does raise issues about the fairness of public school funding mechanisms. It also brings forth issues about the costs and benefits of school district localization with regard to low-income Latino communities.

First, the findings revealed that the DPSD is funded at 68% the level of the socioeconomically similar Abbott Districts, most of which also belong to the same District Factor Group (DFG) A, the lowest socioeconomic grouping for New Jersey school districts. While Abbott Districts receive programming mandates and funding mandates that ensure that they are funded at least comparably to the state's wealthiest school districts, Dover is left out of this equation and is in fact funded at 83% of the state average. This hardly seems fair. The state of New Jersey should explore the option of implementing a new school funding regime for meeting the needs of low-income students. The example of Dover helps to make it obvious that many low-income students live outside the borders of the state's Abbott Districts. The state should consider a targeted-spending approach that provides supplemental funding on a per-student basis.

Second, the Dover Public School District's Latino students typically have outperformed socioeconomically similar District Factor Group A Latino students on statewide standardized tests as indicated by five year test trends. Dover school

professionals revealed Dover's relative success to be attributable to various community factors that are generally not characteristic of the urban districts that most DFG A Latinos attend. First, the Dover Public School District, a predominantly low-income, Latino school district corresponds to a small, walkable geographical area that helps facilitate communication between home and school. This is not typical of most of the state's other predominantly low-income, Latino majority school districts, most of which correspond to much larger cities in heavily urbanized areas. These districts do not necessarily have to disband into smaller districts in order to replicate some of the benefits of localization that the DPSD has enjoyed. Perhaps one strategy these districts could employ would be to ensure that each of their schools correspond to a specific neighborhood. Still it seems that factors found in Dover, such as the maintenance of longstanding staff with community roots who are committed to the school district would be difficult to replicate elsewhere.

Third, schools need to focus on being sensitive to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students and school families that they serve. The case of the Dover Public School District and its predominantly low-income, majority Latino school community illustrates that positive outcomes can be conferred when schools view students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as strengths. The DPSD has made a sincere effort to ensure that Latino school families feel welcome in the district and has actively sought their collaboration. This has been done through both the fostering of home-school partnerships and the development of educational programming to meet the needs of Latino students since at least the late 1970s.

Finally, given the praise that both the current and the former supervisors of World Languages and Bilingual Programs gave to the native Spanish program, it seems evident that this program has been successful in helping to increase the bilingual range of students and raise student achievement across subject areas. The Dover Public School District should consider implementing Native Spanish at the elementary level if the funding to do so becomes available. Additionally, other districts with sufficient populations of Latino students of bilingual background should consider the implementation of such programs if they have not done so already.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my study was a beginning, primarily qualitative investigation into school district localization and the ability of one specific school district to respond to the needs of its predominantly low-income, majority Latino community despite funding deficits. My study found that despite funding deficits, several community factors have worked in Dover's favor to help provide generally better educational outcomes for low-income Latino youth than can be found among socioeconomically similar Latino students in other low-income District Factor Group A New Jersey school districts. My study was in certain ways limited by the fact that only members of the school district professional staff were interviewed. A follow-up study on the Dover Public School District may seek interview participants from the wider Dover school community, such as parents and guardians. Future studies may investigate this topic using a more quantitatively focused approach that could facilitate comparison between districts.

My Inspiration

In December of 2008, after seeing the film *The Wrestler*, I made a visit to Dover, New Jersey, a town that played a significant role in my youth. The film was shot entirely

in New Jersey and I thus recognized many of the sites that were depicted onscreen. I was amazed to see the dramatic ending of the film take place at none other than the Baker Theater, an early 1900s venue located in downtown Dover that is today used for everything from wedding receptions to the showing of South American soccer matches. Inspired by nostalgia, the purpose of my trip to Dover that day was to see the Baker Theater in real life once again. When I arrived at the theater on Blackwell Street, the marquee was not advertising the date of the next soccer match, concert, or wedding but was instead expressing congratulations to the Dover Public School District for winning a silver medal award from U.S. News and World Reports (I later found out that U.S. News took socioeconomic disadvantage into account in awarding these distinctions to schools.)

The Dover Public School District's winning of the award intrigued me. Growing up less than ten blocks from Dover, I can recall the town and its corresponding school district at times being scorned by outsiders for perceived shortcomings. Dover is a predominantly low-income community where a majority of residents are Latino; the towns in Morris County that surround Dover are predominantly middle-class and non-Latino white. When I underwent a teacher preparation program at The College of New Jersey major topics of focus in many of the courses that I took were the roles of socioeconomic status and cultural background and their relationship to educational outcomes within New Jersey's public educational system. This was so much the case that the college's education department required that it's students complete two unique teaching internships; one in a school with students of predominantly middle-class and

generally white backgrounds, and another in a low-income school with mostly minority students.

Recollections to experiences from my youth on the day that I revisited the Baker Theater gave me the idea that perhaps Dover had certain community factors that were influential in its winning of the school award. I frequently visited the town of Dover as I lived just ten blocks outside of its borders and my maternal grandparents were town residents who had lived in the town since the 1940s. As a child, I spent many school vacations at my grandparents' home in Dover. From a young age, I received the impression that Dover was a caring community. My grandparents frequently performed small acts for the benefit of their neighbors. People in the neighborhood were always friendly toward me. My grandparents rarely locked their door.

At the start of my early adulthood, roles reversed and I became a caretaker to my grandparents as their abilities to function independently slowly diminished. Virtually every day during my final two years of high school I would drive to my grandparents' house in Dover to take care of any necessary household chores or to take them anywhere that they needed to go. My position arose out of practicality; all of the adults in my family worked fairly long hours while I finished school at 2:00 each day, a factor that was especially important for taking my grandparents to their frequent appointments with physicians. Though we made an effort to do so, my family could not always expediently meet every need that my grandparents had. Many important tasks were handled by a small group of their neighbors, all of whom were young immigrants from Colombia and Ecuador. All of these people had their own family obligations and seemed to work multiple jobs with very little personal time. Still, they took the time out of their

lives to help their elderly neighbors, my grandparents. Perhaps these experiences further reinforced my earliest images of Dover as a caring community that belied the perceptions of critical outsiders.

Both of my grandparents had passed away before I started my second semester of college. Typically working twenty or more hours per week while attending classes full-time and living near my college in Trenton, my contact with the Dover community declined to an annual visit to the town's Colombian Festival and an occasional dinner at one of its Latin-origin restaurants whenever I happened to be in the area. Nonetheless, from my youthful experiences I retained an interest in the community that was sparked again on the day that I revisited Dover and discovered that the town's school district was winning praise and accolades from a national magazine. It was from this context that I began my research.

APPENDIX A
DATA PLANNING AND COLLECTION MATRIX

Research Questions	What did I need to know?	Why did I need to know this?	What kind of data answered the question?	Where did I find the data?	Whom did I need to contact for access?
1	Does localized school districting segregate students based on socio-economic status and cultural background? How does this affect school and community?	To understand how NJ's localized school districting affects socioeconomic and cultural diversity within schools.	NJDOE data, census data, interviews with Dover staff, former Dover Staff	NJDOE, U.S. Census Bureau, Dover School District, Neighborhood House, Head Start	NJDOE data, U.S. Census Data, educational professionals from Dover School District, community organizations
2	How does school funding work within a localized context in New Jersey? How does this affect the school community?	To understand how NJ K-12 public school districts are financed.	NJDOE data; Interviews with Dover Staff, former Dover staff	NJ Department of Education, Dover School District, Neighborhood House, Head Start	NJ Department of Education data, staff from Dover District, community organizations
3	What are some of the positive and negative consequences that localized districting has on Dover? Programs offered to students and families? Interaction between diverse stakeholders within the community?	To understand how localized districting may have benefits for the Dover school community as well as negatives. Especially concerning programming and interaction of community members.	Interviews with Dover staff, former Dover staff, Dover Schools website	Dover School District, Neighborhood House, Dover Head Start	Dover Staff, former Dover staff, community organizations

Adapted from LeCompte and Schensul (1999)

APPENDIX B
ADMINISTRATOR QUESTION GUIDE

1. Describe the student demographics at your school (race/ethnicity/language/income/ participation in free or reduced lunch) etc.
2. What do you feel are some of the greatest academic, social, and economic challenges confronting students from your school or school district? What are some of the greatest strengths that can be found in your student body? How do these qualities influence the leadership role you take as an administrator?
3. In general, how would you describe your interaction with parents? What types of concerns do parents from your district often have? Are parents from your district generally accessible? For what reasons might they be inaccessible?
4. In what ways do you think the reputation of the local public school district influences parents' decisions to live in the community and whether or not to send their children to the municipality's public schools? How does this affect your school district?
5. How do you find that the state of New Jersey's system of localized school districting affects your school and school district? Do you have any opinion of county-wide school systems as found in many other states?
6. Do you think there are any ways by which New Jersey's system of localized school districting and municipality-based school funding could be improved? If so, how?
7. How do you feel that the current plans of the New Jersey governor and legislature to change the mechanisms of redistribution of school funding to better meet the needs of economically disadvantaged students (regardless if they live in the state's designated, economically-disadvantaged Abbott Districts or not) may affect students in your district?

APPENDIX C
TEACHER QUESTION GUIDE

1. Describe the student demographics at your school (race, ethnicity, home language, two-parent or single parent households, family income, participation in free or reduced lunch etc).
2. What do you feel are some of the greatest academic, social, and economic challenges confronting students from your school or school district? What are some of the greatest strengths that can be found in your student body? How do these qualities affect your role as a teacher? Your pedagogical practices?
3. In general, how would you describe your interaction with parents? What types of concerns do parents from your district often have? Are parents from your district generally accessible? For what reasons might they be inaccessible?
4. Have you encountered language barriers with parents while working in this district? How was this addressed? Do you feel that there are sufficient numbers of faculty who can communicate with non-English speaking populations?
5. In what ways do you feel parental involvement affects student behavior and academic performance? What types of challenges do you confront with students whose parents do not seem involved with their child's academic life? What about students with overly-involved parents?
6. As a classroom teacher, do you feel that your district's level of funding is sufficient in meeting the educational needs of students in your district? Where might funding deficits be noticeable?
7. Do you feel that your district is able to provide the necessary support for students who are English-language learners? How does this support (or lack thereof) aid (or hinder) you in best addressing the educational needs of English-language learners in your classroom?
8. How do you feel that your district's level of cultural and socioeconomic diversity (or lack thereof) among students affects the overall classroom experience? The culture of the school?

APPENDIX D
GUIDANCE COUNSELOR QUESTION GUIDE

1. Describe the student demographics at your school (race, ethnicity, home language, two-parent or single parent households, family income, participation in free or reduced lunch etc).
2. What do you feel are some of the greatest academic, social, and economic challenges confronting students from your school or school district? What are some of the greatest strengths that can be found in your student body? How do these qualities influence the role you take in advising students?
3. In general, how would you describe your interaction with parents? What types of concerns do parents from your district often have? Are parents from your district generally accessible? For what reasons might they be inaccessible?
4. What factors do you typically take into account when advising a student at your school who seeks your advice about the type of academic program he or she should pursue?
5. In what ways might a student's status as an English language learner (as opposed to being a native or fluent speaker of English) affect your advisement of him or her?
6. What factors would you take into account when advising a student from your district who told you that he or she was considering attending a trade school after graduation? The armed forces? How do you think that their parents would react?
7. In general, can you tell me about some of the post-graduation plans of students in your district? Do many students attend private/out of state, four-year colleges and universities? In-state four year colleges and universities? Community colleges? Trade school? Join the military? Enter the workforce full-time?
8. Regarding the previous question, what factors do you feel most influence students' post-graduation decisions? Why?
9. Do you think that public higher education within New Jersey's college and university system is generally affordable for most students in your district? If applicable, how sufficient do you think the state's Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) is in addressing the needs of graduates from your district (To be eligible for EOF, students must have family incomes of less than \$41,300 for a family of four for the 2008-2009 academic year)? Why or why not?

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Matt Trokan was born in 1985 in New Jersey to Thomas and Norma Trokan (Nowak). Trokan lived his entire youth in Morris County and attended public schools there. In his youth, he spent much of his time at his maternal grandparents' home in Dover. He later attended The College of New Jersey where he majored in history. In addition to majoring in history, Trokan underwent a teacher preparation program to teach secondary-level social studies. He graduated from The College of New Jersey in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and a state-issued teaching license. As of June 2010, Trokan will be teaching English in a Chilean public school as part of a joint program sponsored by the Chilean Ministry of Education and the United Nations Human Development Programme.