

Greetings, and welcome to the Mini-Conference on Newcomers, Schools & Community Connectedness!

In this document, you will find a list of registered attendees (as of Monday, April 8) and six briefing papers that share ideas from recent expert research related to our discussions. Students at St. Olaf College prepared these briefing papers. Their names are listed at the end of this introductory note.

On Thursday, please park in the east side lot at Faribault High School, and check in at the high school office. They will be able to guide you to our meeting spaces.

Our morning schedule follows:

9:30-9:35	Welcome from Todd Sesker, Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak
9:35 - 10:25	Keynote from Sambath Ouk. Comments followed by Q & A
10:25-10:35	Break
10:35-11:30	<p>Breakout One</p> <p>How can schools best serve refugee students who come into the school system as older students?</p>
11:35-12:30	<p>Breakout Two</p> <p>How do people "outside" the schools see them as a resource when addressing immigration and diversity? What might schools do over the next two or three years to build community connectedness in Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna?</p>

We have placed each registered individual in one of eight groups. The eight groups will circulate between four discussion circles. Our intent is to maximize chances for you to join in discussion and to meet other people attending.

	Circle 1	Circle 2	Circle 3	Circle 4
Breakout 1 10:35-11:30	<p><u>Group A:</u> Gus Avenido David D. Craft Molly Eroglu Troy Prigge Carolyn Treadway</p> <p><u>Group B:</u> Kari Behrens Jim Blaha Deb Purfeerst Marnie Thompson Shannon Fraser</p>	<p><u>Group C:</u> Kelly Frankenfield Lindsay Engberg Sara Line Libby Potter Michael McNally</p> <p><u>Group D:</u> Colleen Hansen Mary G.M. Hanson Amanda Hirdler Brad Palmer</p>	<p><u>Group E:</u> Mary Ellen Bondhus Anne Marie Leland Ruth Lilquist Yvetter Marthaler Sambath Ouk</p> <p><u>Group F:</u> Colleen Mertesdorf Suzie Nakasian Terry Ronayne Kathy Sirek</p>	<p><u>Group G:</u> Kuresha Dolal Angi McAndrews Mary McComiskey Chris Nevin Adrienne Falcon</p> <p><u>Group H:</u> Dennis Blackmer Yesica Louis Janet Lewis Muth Todd Sesker</p>

	Circle 1	Circle 2	Circle 3	Circle 4
Breakout 2 11:35-12:30	<u>Group A:</u> Gus Avenido David D. Craft Molly Eroglu Troy Prigge Carolyn Treadway <u>Group H:</u> Dennis Blackmer Yesica Louis Janet Lewis Muth Todd Sesker	<u>Group C:</u> Kelly Frankenfield Lindsay Engberg Sara Line Libby Potter Michael McNally <u>Group B:</u> Kari Behrens Jim Blaha Deb Purfeerst Marnie Thompson Shannon Fraser	<u>Group E:</u> Mary Ellen Bondhus Anne Marie Leland Ruth Lilquist Yvetter Marthaler Sambath Ouk <u>Group D:</u> Colleen Hansen Mary G.M. Hanson Amanda Hirdler Brad Palmer	<u>Group G:</u> Kuresha Dolal Angi McAndrews Mary McComiskey Chris Nevin Adrienne Falcon <u>Group F:</u> Colleen Mertesdorf Suzie Nakasian Terry Ronayne Kathy Sirek

This mini-conference is co-hosted by FAIRE (Faribault Alliance for Inclusion, Resourcefulness & Equity) and the Political Science Department at St. Olaf College. The briefing papers that follow were written by students enrolled in the Political Science 350 course, "Immigration and Citizenship," taught by Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak.

Statistics Explained

Laura Hein
Paul Jacobson
Nura Younes

English Language Learners

Alison Beech
Kai Milbridge
Ellen Windschitl

Political Visibility

Anna Hovland
Jordan Montgomery
Chong Vang

Schools Unify Communities

Rachel Braun
Wittney Dorn
Kasiani Nesturi

Parental Involvement

Kathryn Bjorklund
Claire Breining
Tenzin Kunsal

Cultural Differences

Christina Espey-Schmidt
Adam Napolitano
Sujata Singh

Mini-Conference on Communities and Schools in Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna

April 11, 2013

Attendees

Gus Avenido, St. Paul (Group A)

Director for the Office of Refugee and Resettlement, Department of Human Services, State of Minnesota

Kari Behrens, Faribault (Group B)

My name is Kari Behrens and I am an ESL teacher at Lincoln Elementary in Faribault (for 8 years). I currently teach 2nd grade and kindergarten.

Dennis Blackmer, Kenyon (Group H)

My name is Dennis Blackmer. I am a retired customer service manager who has been involved with the Foldcraft Foundation in Kenyon, MN, for several years. I am currently chairman of that organization. Our foundation is focused on third world needs as well as immigration issues. Over recent years we have distributed funds to many local non-profits who deal with the influx of immigrants. I am involved with the F.A.I.R.E group because of my personal interest in the local issues, and also because it gives me an opportunity to look for funding opportunities for the foundation.

Jim Blaha, Northfield (Group B)

I'm executive director of the Community Action Center of Northfield. The CAC's mission is to promote a healthy, caring and just community for all people, through resources, advocacy and volunteer effort.

Mary Ellen Bondhus, Faribault (Group E)

My name is Mary Ellen Bondhus. I work as a Mentor Specialist at So How are the Children (SHAC). We work with youth of different cultures (many new to America) to help integrate them and their families in the school and Faribault Community.

David D. Craft, Northfield (Group A)

Principal at Greenvale Park Elementary

Kuresha Dolal, Faribault (Group G)

Para in the Faribault Public Schools

Attendees

Lindsay Engberg, Faribault (Group C)

Assistant Director of Special Services

Molly Eroglu, Faribault (Group A)

My name is Molly Eroglu. I was born and raised in Faribault and I am currently an ESL teacher at Roosevelt Elementary working in the Faribault school district. I obtained my undergraduate degree in Elementary Education and later added on an ESL license obtained from Minnesota State University-Mankato. I am currently finishing up my Master degree in TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) at MNSU. I love learning about new cultures, people groups and languages.

Adrienne L. Falcon (Group G)

Adrienne Falcon, I direct the Academic Civic Engagement Program at Carleton College which connects courses and students' academic projects to community opportunities and needs in Rice County and beyond. Over the past four years I have developed science outreach and college access activities for young people in Northfield and Minnesota with the support of Carleton students. As a sociologist I research youth programs and diverse immigrant communities.

Kelly Frankenfield, Faribault (Group C)

I am currently a Teacher on Special Assignment for Faribault Public Schools as a literacy coach. Dual licensure in elementary education and Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) afford me a unique understanding of the curricular, cultural, and linguistic demands relevant to both native English and diverse learners. I have held a position as delegate-at-large on our state affiliate, MinneTESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) for two years. This position offers me opportunities to network with other ESL professionals at both the K-12 and university levels. I recently attended the National TESOL convention in Dallas where current topics such as newcomer programs, working with Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), and Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) were offered.

Shannon Fraser (Group B)

My name is Shannon Fraser. I recently moved to Northfield and I'm just about to begin serving as an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow. I will be serving in Faribault at So How are the Children (SHAC). I'm really looking forward to getting involved with the youth of the community. When I moved here I knew I wanted to be of service to the community, but didn't quite know how that would manifest. I think serving for the AmeriCorps will be an exceptional way to do this.

Colleen Hansen, Faribault (Group D)

LSW, Family Advocacy Services Director at Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. for nine years. I supervise the Senior Caregiver Advocacy/Home Delivered Meals component and the Transitional Housing/Homeless Services/Homeless Prevention and Economic Bridging components of our agency.

Mary G. M. Hanson, Northfield (Group D)

Attendees

Ruth Lillquist, Faribault (Group E)

Ruth Lillquist has been an ESL teacher with the Faribault Public Schools since 1997. She holds a Bachelors in English and Spanish from Luther College, and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Ruth has presented at national, as well as local conferences on issues related to English Language Learners and reading. Ms. Lillquist is a Faribault native and a graduate of Faribault High School. She currently co-teaches reading.

Sara Line, Northfield (Group C)

I am the Early Childhood Coordinator for the Northfield Public Schools Community Services Division. I was born and raised in Northfield. I have been working in Early Childhood for 18 years, 7 of those have been in Northfield. Up until a year ago, I taught pre-school in addition to coordinating it. My passion is early childhood and supporting families so children are ready to be successful in school and beyond.

Yesica Louis, Faribault (Group H)

My name is Yesica Louis and this is my 11th year teaching ESL at Lincoln Elementary.

Yvette Marthaler, Faribault (Group E)

Faribault Public School Board Member

Angi McAndrews, Faribault (Group G)

My name is Angi McAndrews and I am the EL Coordinator for Faribault Public Schools. We have a large EL population (more than 700 students) and EL staff (20 teachers and about a dozen paraprofessionals and cultural liaisons).

Mary McComiskey, Northfield (Group G)

Project ABLE Coordinator for Faribault & Northfield School Districts. ABLE provides specialized education, social, and recreational programming to meet the needs of our disabled population.

Michael McNally (Group C)

Michael McNally is Professor and Chair of the Religion Department at Carleton and Broom Fellow for Public Scholarship. Along with Shana Sippy, he leads the Religious Diversity in Minnesota Initiative.

Colleen Mertesdorf, Faribault (Group F)

Finance and Operations Director at Faribault Public Schools

Attendees

Suzie Nakasian, Northfield (Group F)

I am an elected representative to the Northfield City Council and serve as Facilitator of a Grass Roots Transit Initiative in Northfield. I am also the Convener of a Community Advisory Group for Northfield's TORCH Program (which is Tackling Obstacles and Raising College Hopes) which partners with income challenged youth in our community to support their educational and vocational goals.

Most recently, related to TORCH, I am working with Zach Pruitt of Northfield Healthy Community Initiative to develop a local Workforce Development Initiative, a private-public sector collaboration that would help local youth gain skills needed to find gainful local employment while also addressing the "job skills gap" for area employers. Personally, I am the proud daughter of an orphaned Armenian immigrant to this country and as such the living beneficiary of the kinds of programs that this conference seeks to inspire! I am also co-author of two school age "above average" youth.

Chris Nevin, Faribault (Group G)

My name is Chris Nevin. I have recently completed a master's of public affairs degree from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and I take particular interest in issues impacting refugee and immigrant communities and the challenges, as well as opportunities, that arise from the changing ethnic and cultural compositions of cities and towns of the mid-West.

My work background and community involvement include: experience managing programs in nonprofits focused on refugee and immigrant youth in Minneapolis, Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal as an Agricultural Extension Agent, board member and volunteer ESL/citizenship instructor at Somali Community Services of Faribault, and facilitator of F.A.I.R.E. (Faribault Alliance for Inclusion, Resourcefulness & Equality).

Sambath Ouk, Rochester (Group E)

Keynote Speaker, ESOL Coordinator for Rochester Public Schools

Brad Palmer, Faribault (Group D)

Principal at Jefferson Elementary

Libby Potter, Faribault (Group C)

Serving as the Americorps VISTA (government service program designed to fight poverty) at So How Are the Children (SHAC), a non-profit providing opportunities to underserved youth in Faribault. Over this year, I have worked at the after-school program at Faribault Middle School constructing a model for the program to tutor and assist students who are learning English. Most of our students are Somalis who have arrived in the last 2-3 years.

Attendees

Troy Prigge, Faribault (Group A)

Principal at Faribault Middle School

Deb Purfeerst, Faribault (Group B)

Director of Rice County Public Health. One of the goals of Rice County Public Health is Healthy Communities/Healthy People. We are very interested in working together with community partners to improve the health, well being, and success of all youth in our communities.

Terry Ronayne, Faribault (Group F)

I have been the Principal of Roosevelt elementary in Faribault for the last 7 years. Before that I was the K-12 principal in Le Center Minnesota.

Todd Sesker, Faribault (Group H)

My name is Todd Sesker and I am the superintendent for Faribault Public Schools. I am also a member of the FAIRE organization and look forward to listening to the information and research provided by the St. Olaf college students and listening to Mr. Ouk's message.

Kathy Sirek, Faribault (Group F)

ESL Teacher at Faribault High School

Marnie Thompson, Northfield (Group B)

Northfield High School Assistant Principal and Project Director for TORCH (Tackling Obstacles and Raising College Hopes), the goal of which is to increase the graduation rate of and postsecondary success of minority, low-income and would be first generation college students. School Connectedness and Truancy Prevention Coordinator for Northfield Public Schools.

Carolyn Treadway, Faribault (Group A)

I am the director of So How Are the Children (SHAC), a small, youth-serving nonprofit in Faribault. We provide out-of-school-time opportunities for youth who are marginalized by race, culture, and poverty. Much of the programming we provide is in partnership with other community entities—including the Faribault Public Schools, Rice Co. Public Health, United Way of Faribault and other youth-serving organizations. SHAC's goal is to close the Achievement Gap and to help these young people succeed in school so they have the academic and social skills to become productive adults.

Mark Wergland, Faribault (Group D)

Principal at Lincoln Elementary

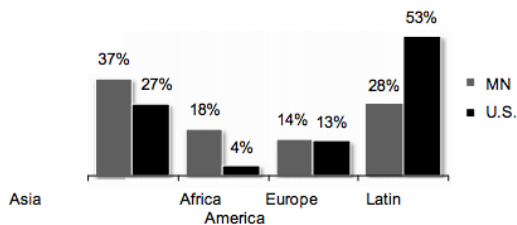
Mini-Conference on Communities and Schools in Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna

April 11, 2013

Statistics Explained

Immigration over time in Minnesota

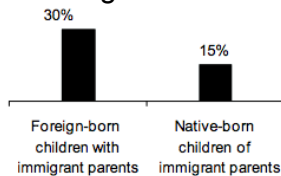
Distribution of foreign-born, place of origin of immigrants in Minnesota and the United States, 2008



Source: American Community Survey, 2005-2008

The immigrant population of Minnesota is uniquely diverse in comparison with the greater United States. Minnesota has played a unique role in placement of refugee and asylum seekers from around the world. The 1970's and 80's opened Minnesota's doors to these populations, starting with displaced Hmong from the Vietnam War. Minnesota has since received large populations from Bosnia, Liberia, the Sudan, Somalia, Burma (Myanmar), and more (Wilder 2010).

Limited English proficiency rates among Minnesota's foreign-born and native born children

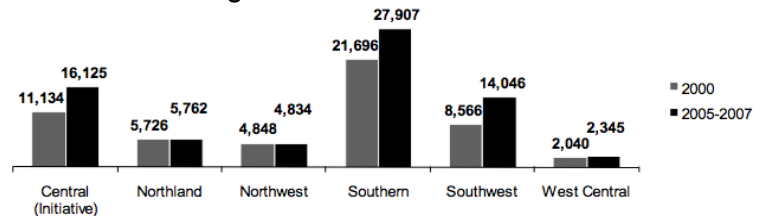


Source: Urban Institute's Children of Immigrants Data Tool, based on American Community Survey 2005-2006 estimates.

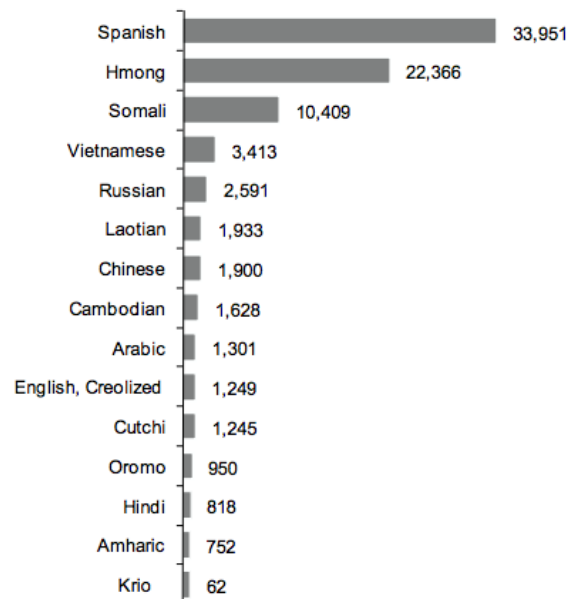
30% of Minnesota's foreign-born children have limited English proficiency, while 15% native-born children of foreign-born immigrants also possess low levels of proficiency. some type of English Language Learner program (Wilder 2010).

Minnesota has the 15th Fastest-Growing Immigrant Population in the United States. The state's immigrant population increased by 138%, compared to 57% percent nationwide in the 1990s (Arbeiter et al. 2011). The agriculture, meatpacking, and poultry-processing industries have provided major incentives for immigration to the state. Rural communities, especially in the southern and western regions, have seen the highest influx of immigrants over the last three decades.

Foreign-born population by Greater Minnesota region, 2000-2007

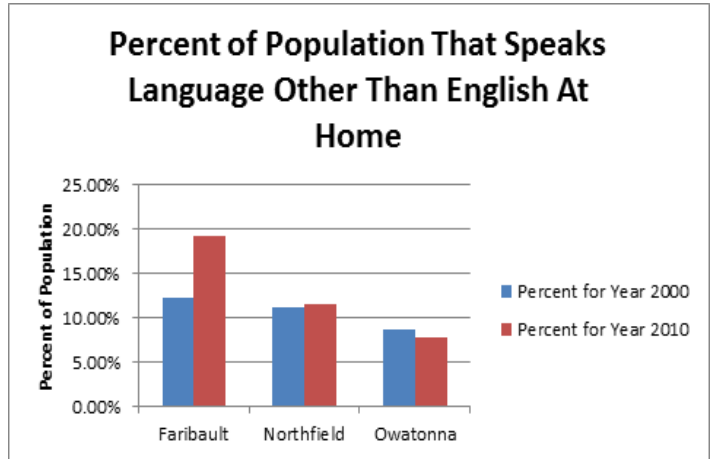
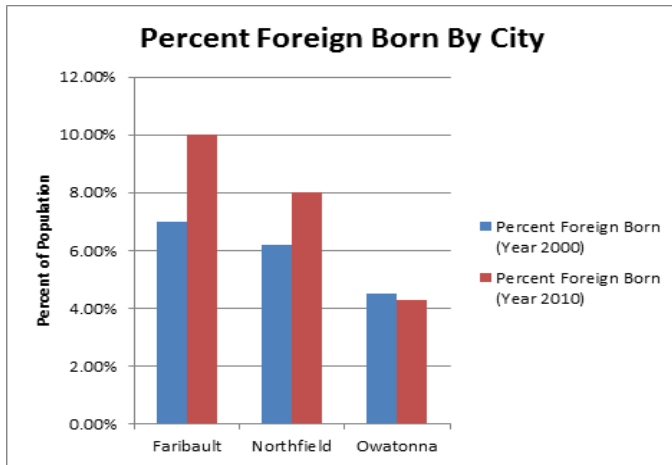


Source: Minnesota Compass, compiled from: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series



Minnesota schools are challenged by the linguistic diversity of the state's foreign-born children. This had led to difficulties in finding teachers with proper skills and credentials to meet the need of these students (Wilder 2010).

City Specific Data



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Reports, Years 2000 and 2010

Students and Schools

2012 Student Population

OWATONNA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

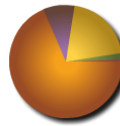
Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Am Indian	13	0.3%
Asian	67	1.4%
Hispanic	503	10.3%
Black	334	6.9%
White	3,945	81.1%
Total	4,862	100%



2012 Student Population

FARIBAULT PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

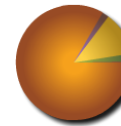
Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Am Indian	20	0.5%
Asian	74	1.9%
Hispanic	797	20.2%
Black	350	8.9%
White	2,705	68.6%
Total	3,946	100%



2012 Student Population

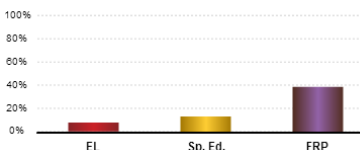
NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Am Indian	9	0.2%
Asian	90	2.3%
Hispanic	473	12.2%
Black	75	1.9%
White	3,221	83.3%
Total	3,868	100%



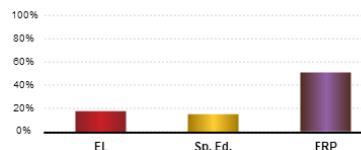
2012 EL - Sp. Ed. - FRP Population

OWATONNA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT



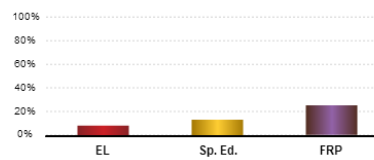
2012 EL - Sp. Ed. - FRP Population

FARIBAULT PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT



2012 EL - Sp. Ed. - FRP Population

NORTHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT



Source: Minnesota Department of Education, 2012

EL-English (Language) Learning

Owatonna, Faribault, and Northfield school districts each have varying proportions of student ethnicities enrolled in said district. For example, in Northfield, the largest percentage of minority students is overwhelmingly Hispanic, whereas in Faribault and Owatonna, other minority groups have larger percentages. Faribault has the largest percentage and highest count of multicultural children enrolled in its schools overall. Faribault also has the highest percentage of students relying on Free/Reduced Price Lunches as well as English (Language) Learning according to 2012 statistics (Minnesota Department of Education 2012).

Further Reading

A New Age of Immigrants: *Making Immigration Work for Minnesota* - Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

Describes characteristics of Minnesota's immigrant population; economic, social, and cultural effects of immigrants; policy considerations, and more.

After the Welcome Center: *Renewing conversations about immigration and diversity in Faribault*

Authors: Taryn Arbeiter '12, Maria Ward '12, Professor Katherine Tegtmeyer Pak

How increased immigration and diversity challenge public services and community relations

Minnesota Department of Education: *Data Center* - <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/index.html>

Provides up to date statistics and research on Minnesota public school

Department of Employment and Economic Development: *Regional Labor Market Information* - <http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/lmi/rws/default.aspx>

Statistics and other data on labor and employment data by county

Mini-Conference on Communities and Schools in Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna

April 11, 2013

English Language Learners from Immigrant backgrounds need to have resources in their schools that comply with their existing cultural norms and ways of learning, as well as helping them to socialize with their English speaking peers, which best fosters academic English learning

- Keep ELL in the classroom as much as possible. Students lose confidence when they fall behind on the curriculum, even if it is for language education.
- Work on building basic vocabulary before teaching more complex issues. Basic vocabulary help and support can be accomplished through tutoring programs before or after school.
- The more students use English in a social context (not in class or at home), the faster they will pick up academic English. Participation in after-school activities can provide additional English interactions with English-speaking peers.
- Interactive class periods where the students break into small groups and discuss what is being taught, is helpful for students from many different backgrounds.
- Test taking accommodations such as oral dictation of test, translation of test, and extended test times will benefit ELL students and help them to achieve academic success.
- School can be a culture shock, especially for students entering school for the first time, so an understanding of classroom expectations, as well as having their instructors understand the culture and learning styles from which they come, is necessary for an optimal learning environment.

Key Sources

-Acosta, B. D., Rivera, C., & Willner, L. S. (2008, October). *Best Practices in State Assessment Policies for Accommodating English Language Learners: A Delphi Study*. Retrieved April 2013, from The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education: ceee.gwu.edu/node/124

-Acosta, B. D., Rivera, C., & Willner, L. S. (2008, October). *Descriptive Study of State Assessment Policies Accommodating English Language Learners*. Retrieved April 2013, from The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education: ceee.gwu.edu/node/124

-Acosta, B. D., Rivera, C., & Willner, L. S. (2008). *Guide for Refining State Assessment Policies for Accommodating English Language Learners*. Retrieved April 2013, from The George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education: ceee.gwu.edu/node/124

- The GWU-CEEE, commissioned by the Department of Education, pursued a multi-year study and evaluation of state assessment practices. Each report is an assessment of the practices therein, and provides an evaluation and recommendation corroborated by an entire team of professional educators and researchers.

-Avery Carhill, C. S.-O. (1998). Explaining English Language Proficiency among Adolescent Immigrant Students. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45 (4), 1155 - 1179.

- A Quantitative analysis of the factors that affect immigrant students' development of English language skills.

-Callahan, Rebecca, Michelle Fresco, Lindsey Wilkinson and Chandra Muller. "ESL Placement and Schools: Effects on Immigrant Achievement." *Educational Policy* 23 (2009): 355-384.

- The effects of ELL placement on immigrant academic performance are the focus of this study, which looked at the disparity between high- and low-immigrant population schools. They found that in low population schools, ELL placement had a negative relationship with performance while the inverse was true with high population schools.

-Gillborn, D., & Ladson-Billings, G. (2004). *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Multicultural Education*. Routledge.

- A collection of resources that analyze the most successful forms of multicultural education as well as identifying the problems that exist in traditional teaching styles and curriculums.

-Minnesota Department of Education. (2011). *Program Models: English Learner Education Program Guidelines*.

- An explanation of ELL standards and styles that have been developed by the MN state Education department. Provides Pros and Cons for different English teaching styles

-Shepard, R. M. (2008). *Cultural Adaptation of Somali Refugee Youth*. LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC.

- Raynel Shepard has worked 30+ years as an educator of immigrant children. Her work seeks to illuminate the issues faced by African immigrant children, as the processes developed to accommodate other ethnically different immigrants do not necessarily aid the education and adaptation of these children, in this case young Somali refugees in public urban schools.

-World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment. (2012). *English Language Development (ELD) Standards*. Retrieved April 2013, from WIDA: www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx

- This document was developed with input from leaders in the field and educators in WIDA Consortium member states. This process was also informed by the latest developments in both English language development research and states' content standards for college and career readiness. It serves to expand and explain the ELD program and provide instructional benefit to those seeking its implementation.

Mini-Conference on Communities and Schools in Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna

April 11, 2013

English learning programs benefit the whole immigrant community, helping them gain political visibility and providing a bridge for further institutional interaction

Political visibility of rural immigrants and their needs:

- Immigrants in rural Minnesota live at the juncture of a myriad of issues. First, **rural immigrants represent some of the most vulnerable members of our population**. Those in legal limbo and refugees are especially economically disadvantaged. These groups tend to have a high need of social services, but very little political visibility with which to negotiate for them.
- **Networks provide political visibility to immigrant groups and issues**, so larger political, policy-making bodies, such as local governments, officials and non-profits, understand their needs. Even if rural municipal/county governments or school districts recognize their needs, these bodies frequently lack much of the funding to provide them. Immigrant communities lacking basic services have difficulty gaining knowledge of or trusting local institutions, damaging incorporation.
- **Immigrant needs will not be met unless rural communities make a concerted effort to recognize immigrant groups, aid them in navigating institutions and services, and develop a consistent trusting relationship with them.**

Scholarship on citizenship and political incorporation:

- Scholars have noted citizenship benefits political incorporation, but can also act as a stumbling block for some immigrants. In 2004, The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that 59 percent of the 31 million foreign born adults over eighteen in the United States were non-citizens. Not all of immigrants prioritize citizenship, and for some it simply is not an option. Therefore, there needs to be alternative paths for these adults to gain access to political incorporation and visibility. **Children provide a solution.**

Our Findings:

- **We have found that schools and parental participation play a major role in mediating citizenship in a rural areas**, providing a building block for further political visibility of immigrant groups. Increased connectedness of schools to community can help provide a necessary foothold for political visibility, and participation of immigrant parents in schools, regardless of legal status, is essential for this process to succeed.
- The largest measures for successful integration by this means comes in social and cultural capital . Social capital is the degree of cohesion between in- and out- groups. **In the schools, social capital can be accrued by incorporating parents into discussion about the education of their children, and giving them agency over an aspect of community that is essential: their children's education.** This attention to parental participation helps increase their sense of belonging and cultivates positive relationships with native populations.

Key Sources

- Brown, David and Daniel Litcher. 2011. Rural America in an urban society: Changing spatial and social boundaries. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 37: 565-592.

A great overview on current immigration discourse and the divisions therein. Brown and Litcher draw attention to the disconnect between rural and urban literature in the past, and discuss how this binary has shifted as a result of a new rural-urban interface. They suggest that because of shifting social and spatial boundaries (how rural life is thought of, for instance) both literature and institutions should account for and help integrate the two spaces.

- Portes, Alejandro, Erik Vickstrom. 2011. Diversity, social capital and cohesion. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 37: 461-79.

This article highlights the urgency of economic incorporation of immigrant groups into society, more so than social integration. Contact theory states that attitudes towards immigrants change as a result of increased exposure. Portes and Vickstrom state that economic integration is key for immigrant incorporation and visibility -- and place responsibility upon institutions rather than individuals.

- Crowley, Martha and Daniel Lichter. 2009. Social disorganization in new Latino destinations. *Rural Sociology* 74, 4: 573-604.

Focusing on the Latino diaspora, this article examines rural government responses to increased immigration and its effect on the local economy and community. This includes service provision for immigrants and institutional perception of immigrant's needs. The authors examine both real and imagined threats, focusing specifically on the difficulties of providing English language education to rural school districts.

Further Reading

- Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick, and Irene Bloemraad. 2008. *Civic hopes and political realities: Immigrants, community organizations, and political engagement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

A detailed examination of civic engagement and immigrant adaptation. Authors throughout the book present key cases of immigration across a host of receiver states. Although centered mostly on cities, it provides a cohesive theoretical framework through which to understand immigration.

- Gioioso, Richard N. 2010. Placing immigrant incorporation: Identity, trust, and civic engagement in Little Havana. *ProQuest ETD Collection for FIU*.

This article provides an account of immigrant incorporation through three dimensions of assimilation: identity, trust, and civic engagement. It focuses on the Cuban community and their transition from first to second generation immigrants, looking at how they are participating and incorporating into American civil society.

- Paciotto, Carla and Gloria Delany-Barmann. 2011. Planning micro-level language education reform in new diaspora sites: two-way immersion education in the rural Midwest. *Language Policy*. 10: 221-243.

Focusing on small, meat-processing and agricultural towns in Illinois, this study provides a glimpse into the unique challenges faced by rural school districts and how educators are adapting to English language teaching challenges. It offers insight into the development of political capital and institutional trust between students, teachers, parents and the community.

Mini-Conference on Communities and Schools in Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna

April 11, 2013

Schools unify communities. All other parts of the community interact with the school system.

- Schools are the first place of contact with the host community for many immigrant families. Schools can act as bridge between newly arrived groups and the home community. The school system is often the first institution of the host community that immigrants are part of.
- In many cases, elected officials are out of tune with the activities and characteristics of immigrant organizations in their communities, despite substantial immigrant populations. The variety of goals and needs of the immigrant community allow for a disconnect between the immigrant community and the local government. Immigrant groups needs are largely immediate, while mainstream organizations needs are often improvements that are not as vital to daily life. There is also often a lack of resources, on the local government side, to hear and address the immigrant community's needs (i.e. translators).
- Solutions are not "one size fits all." Each issue manifests itself differently for each group. Each immigrant group consists of a different culture, religion, language, and race; immigrant populations should not be treated as a whole. Being able to differentiate groups, and work with each according to their needs and backgrounds, makes work more efficient. There are different solutions for each issue for each group.
- Communities need to take a bottom up (instead of top down) approach. We need to equip students with skills for accessing structures beyond the school system (i.e. language, knowledge of the political system).
- Communities need to support and educate families in order to help children be successful in school and in life. We should not disregard the role of family, and the community, in education.

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Mini-Conference on Communities and Schools in Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna

April 11, 2013

Parental involvement is vital to students' academic success. Effective communication that cultivates mutual responsibility between immigrant parents and teachers is crucial to parental involvement.

Why is parental involvement important?

- The benefits are important regardless of immigration status or ethnic background.
- Parental involvement sends a message that education is important. Involved parents gain practical knowledge that helps them to praise or to change their child's behavior at school and home.
- Involvement is important at all grade levels, although many parents disengage as children become adolescents. Schools can take initiatives to encourage parental involvement as children enter middle and high school.
- Parental involvement differs based on the cultural norms of the parent; in a comparison of immigrant parents with similar English skills, Hispanic immigrant parents were the most involved in their children's education.

What challenges or barriers do immigrant parents face in becoming involved in their children's education?

- Immigration status creates barriers to parental involvement, even when the immigrant parent is of a higher socio-economic status.
- Socio-economic barriers, such as the need to find and secure housing and employment, are time-consuming and stressful for new immigrant parents.
- Relationships between immigrant parents and teachers can be difficult to develop because many U.S. teachers are white and native-born.
- The more time that Hispanic and Asian immigrants spend in the US, the more likely they are to participate in their child's education. The opposite is true of immigrants who categorized as racially Black. Because these immigrants face more direct discrimination, they may feel less welcome and thus participate less.

What can schools and parents do to improve relationships and increase parental involvement?

- Schools should accommodate immigrant parents by providing: bilingual school materials, flexible meeting times, optional translators/cultural liaisons, direct communication (ex: phone calls home), clear expectations, and informal community events to build relationships.
- Schools should improve cultural competency by instituting teacher trainings that include best practices and information about immigrants' cultural norms and challenges.
- Schools can help immigrant parents to become involved in their children's education by offering adult ESL classes and by encouraging them to participate in the classroom and to help with homework activities.
- (A point of disagreement: the role of students in translation/relaying information to parents)

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Mini-Conference on Communities and Schools in Faribault, Northfield and Owatonna

April 11, 2013

How can we address the cultural differences between immigrants and native-born students?

We face a dilemma when trying to recognize group differences and individual student needs. On the one hand, understanding group differences provides a basic framework through which to work with immigrant students. On the other hand, these generalizations may disenfranchise individual students whose experiences are not fully encapsulated in those of their respective groups. Because current research emphasizes the how much diversity there is within and between

- Classrooms with immigrant students require the use of more creative teaching approaches. Because these students may feel isolated or overwhelmed in new settings, incorporating their voices into the classroom is key. Allowing students to contribute to discussion through alternative approaches encourages learning between students and contributes to greater understanding between teacher and student.
- Scholarship suggests that immigrant students do better in classrooms where teachers understand their cultural background. Other faculty members such as librarians and technology staff should be utilized as resources and trained appropriately to provide immigrant students with information on American culture.
- The term “Latino” is used to refer to people who come from or are ancestrally from Mexico, Central and South America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and the Iberian Peninsula. Because of the diverse nature of the Latino population, speaking Spanish may be the only universal experience for this community. One of the challenges that Latino community faces today is being treated as a homogenous group. Social cohesion of this group depends on understanding and managing the multiple culture, codes, values, national systems and other socio-cultural and economic differences that are present within the group.
- It is important to acknowledge the close tie immigrants have, not only with their native countries, but only with their specific native cities. For example, Minnesota has 100,000 immigrants from Morelos, the second-smallest city of Mexico. This has led to the presence of at least three Morelense Clubs which allows Mexican immigrants to stay connected to their roots and their values. There have been cultural exchanges and research-oriented exchanges between Minnesota and Morelos that has helped foster greater understanding between cultural and social differences.
- For many Somali students, religion plays a fundamental role in identity, and dictates much of their behavior within and outside of the classroom. Studies indicate concerns about preserving Somali cultural identity in the face of dominant US culture. As Somali students attempt to integrate, they may face social pressures that challenge their Islamic principles. Facilitating discussion about these conflicts can contribute to more positive relations between students.
- Due to the absence of a written Somali script until 1972, Somali culture has relied heavily upon oral communication. This increases the difficulty that Somali students face as they attempt to learn to write in English. These students may initially learn better in classrooms that emphasize oral communication.

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