

White Flight in Rural America: The Case Study of Lexington, Nebraska

by

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## ABSTRACT

The term "White flight" and its effects are well documented in large urban city centers. However, few studies consider the same effects on smaller American communities. This case study investigates Lexington, Nebraska, a rural community of approximately 10,000 citizens, that has experienced a population influx of minorities in the last 25 years. The population shift has increased the representation of Hispanic, Asian, and now Somali students in the Lexington Public School system, which, in turn, has been accompanied by a dramatic decrease in White, Anglo students. This study attempts to identify and describe the reasons for the exodus of White students from the public school setting. Possible reasons that might explain the decreases in White student enrollment may include overcrowding in schools, unsafe school environments, and/or less one-on-one attention with classroom teachers.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Here in the most improbable of places, the abstract, sweeping themes of free market capitalism, religious politics and immigration policy intersect with cold, hard reality—the human drama that unfolds when people from thirty-five different countries converge on an isolated town of 2000 people and decide to call each other “neighbor.” I can’t think of a grander social experiment. What emerges from this preposterous brew is not only a story of hope and beauty, but also of pain and devastation (Grey, Devlin & Goldsmith, 2009, p. xiv).

This dissertation is a case study set in the rural Midwestern town of Lexington, Nebraska. In 1990, Iowa Beef Packers (IBP) opened a slaughterhouse in Lexington (Schlosser, 2001) which has forever changed the face of their schools and community. With the meat packing industry firmly entrenched in Nebraska, workers and their families relocated from other parts of North and South America to the Midwest for a chance to live the American Dream. One of the effects of the IBP plant opening was the Introduction of a large-scale minority work force, predominately Latino, living in a very White, rural, close-knit community. Schools experienced a flood of culturally diverse and linguistically different students. In essence, IBP unknowingly became the means of turning Lexington into a test tube experiment on integration.



What happens to rural America when community demographics suddenly change? As more minority students enter public schools in a traditionally White, somewhat remote community, how do the local citizens react to such changes? Do parents move to other rural communities that reflect the demographics they are traditionally familiar with? Are White students enrolled in other educational institutions outside of the public school setting while they continue to live in their same neighborhoods? Do citizens resist the influx of new and different individuals or do they welcome them into their community? As the diversity of rural communities increases, will behaviors show a pattern of “White flight” out of these same communities?

White flight can express several connotations depending on the local circumstances. For the purposes of this study, White flight is the movement of White students as they withdraw from the Lexington Public Schools and enroll in other, less integrated educational settings, including homeschooling. This case study will attempt to describe the forces driving the White student population decrease in the Lexington Public Schools while the community experienced a dramatic increase in minority student enrollment over the same time period.

### History of Lexington, Nebraska

As the United States pushed westward during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century to settle the great Midwest and beyond, one major pathway leading to the frontier was the Oregon Trail. Hundreds of thousands of Americans and immigrants followed the trail seeking lives of fortune and peace. Soon stagecoaches and

Pony Express stations spread across the prairie. During this time Plum Creek, Nebraska, near the Platte River was settled by Daniel Freeman (Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community, 2009). The budding community was forced to re-locate to Fort Kearney for safety, after the Plum Creek Massacre of 1864 by Native Americans. As the first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, more settlers stayed in the area to work on the railroad, telegraph lines, and farms (Wikipedia Oregon Trail, Retrieved on 08/12/2010, from, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon\\_Trail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon_Trail)). In 1871, Dawson County was organized and Plum Creek was designated as the county seat. During 1872, Plum Creek received a boost in population when a colony from Philadelphia arrived with 65 men, women, and children. Many of the current residents of Lexington can trace their heritage to this Philadelphia colony. Looking to revitalize Plum Creek, the residents decided to change the name of their community to something they felt was more distinguished. The residents selected Lexington, which commemorated the Revolutionary War Battle of Lexington, the year was 1889 (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Virtual Nebraska, see Dawson County).

Schools were a priority for the settlers in Lexington and were present from the earliest days. In 1872, one year after Plum Creek was designated as the county seat, it is recorded that they had one school with six children. One year later, school districts were organized and several buildings were erected (Kansas Collection Books). At the time of the 1880 Census, the population was recorded at 344, and within five years it had increased to 1,392. As 1889 approached, Plum Creek had three newspapers, a 600-seat opera house, five churches, and a

school with six departments (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Virtual Nebraska, see Dawson County).

Today Dawson County is primarily composed of seven communities, the largest being Lexington. The communities of Gothenburg, Cozad, Lexington, and Overton are located along Interstate 80. Eddyville, Sumner, and Farnam have a population of a few hundred each and are located elsewhere in the county. Dawson County is 24 miles south to north and 42 miles east to west (Kansas Collection Books). County population as of the 2000 Census was reported at 24,365 individuals. Lexington had 10,011 citizens at that time (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

#### The Arrival of the Meat Packers

Iowa Beef Packers (IBP) was founded in 1961 at Denison, Nebraska. Mr. A.D. Anderson and Currier J. Holman, co-founders of IBP, revolutionized the meatpacking business over the next ten years. Instead of setting up meatpacking establishments in large cattle yard cities such as Omaha, Kansas City, and Chicago, they moved out into the country close to where the cattle were being raised. By establishing meatpacking operations in rural towns they accomplished three goals: cut procurement costs of land and buildings, reduce freight costs of shipping cattle and meat while also reducing the amount of bruising and weight loss from dehydration that cattle suffered while being shipped to central cities.

By 1967, IBP had introduced the idea of boxed beef. No longer would they ship entire carcasses of beef to butchers. Instead, they would cut and

package beef using the latest vacuum packing technology. Not having to ship bones and excess fat that would not be used by the butchers, allowed IBP to maximize the use of truck space and reduce transportation costs. At the time, IBP was the premier meat packing company on the cutting edge of automation. They continually upgraded their facilities to reduce the technical aspects of the butchering process. High-skilled butchers were no longer needed. IBP effectively introduced the “disassembly line” as well as the “deskilling” of its workers. Today workers stand on the "kill floor" and repeat the same cut on every piece of beef that swings by (Wahl, Gunkel, & Sanchez, 2000). With the help of its rural location and technological advances, IBP effectively kept the unionization of its workers at bay and relatively powerless (Nebraskastudies.org Retrieved July 21, 2010, from, <http://www.NebraskaStudies.org>).

This revolution in the meat packing industry created side-effects that were not present in earlier forms of the industry, particularly low-paying jobs that attracted minorities. Eric Schlosser, in *Fast Food Nation*, frames the modern realities of the meatpacking industry this way: “They have turned one of the nation’s best-paying manufacturing jobs into one of the lowest-paying, created a migrant industrial workforce of poor immigrants, tolerated high injury rates, and spawned rural ghettos in the American heartland” (p. 149). One of the current criticisms of the meat packing industry is that a constant labor pool is required to feed the industries high turnover rates. The individuals most willing to take such dangerous, low paying jobs are migrant minority workers.

Iowa Beef Packers was purchased by Tyson Foods Inc. in 2001. Tyson provides products and services to customers throughout the United States and more than 90 countries. Founded in 1935, with headquarters in Springdale, Arkansas, it is one of the world's largest processors and marketers of chicken, beef, and pork. Currently it is the second-largest food production company in the Fortune 500 and a member of the S&P 500. The company has more than 110,000 individuals employed at more than 400 facilities and offices in the United States and around the world (Tyson Corporate Website, retrieved 08/18/2010, from, <http://www.tyson.com/Corporate/>).

The focus of this case study is to examine more specifically what Eric Schlosser calls a “migrant industrial workforce” and the impact that migrants have had on the Lexington School system, a rural historically White community. I will examine how this migrant population living in Lexington, Nebraska, has affected the enrollment of White students at the local public schools. Is White flight taking place in this corner of rural America? How has the community of Lexington felt about the influx of migrant workers? Are the feelings towards Latino and other migrant workers affecting White school enrollment in Lexington? Are there other factors affecting the population of students? In this case study, I will examine newspaper articles, school board minutes, demographic data, and conduct semi-structured interviews with a variety of community members from Lexington. Although, rural White flight has not been studied and the body of literature is devoid of any major studies on this topic, my hope is to understand the pattern of behavior that people use to escape from migrant

populations. As the United States becomes more diverse and ethnic populations become more mobile, a spread of population diversity across the nation rivals the great migration of African Americans starting in 1910 (Wikipedia, Great Migration of African Americans, Retrieved 08/18/2010, from, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_Migration\\_\(African\\_American\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Migration_(African_American))).

### Setting the Stage: Population Shift

Starting in the 1950's, reported population decline and farming consolidation in rural community after rural community caused a steady population exodus throughout the Great Plains and prairies. The strain on commodity prices in these regions also reduced the purchasing power of its local citizens for the products they generated. All these factors combined to form a stagnant or depressed economic outlook in rural America. In an effort to restore the economic power of America's Heartland, local, county, and state officials looked at value-added industries to sustain their communities (Broadway, 2000). Lexington was hit particularly hard when the Sperry-New Holland combine plant closed in 1986. The area saw an 11% population decline during the 1980s (Stull, Broadway, & Griffith, 1995).

The conditions described above were typical of the Midwest landscape at the time of the meatpacking rebirth. The stage had been set for meatpacking operations to scatter across the Midwest and Great Plains, specifically in Nebraska, Iowa, and Kansas (Gouveia & Saenz, 2000). The arrival of the meatpacking industry into these rural communities brought with it a combination

of blessings and problems. Although, not extensively studied, a few researchers have examined the effects of such social impacts on rural communities.

Typically, rural communities see housing shortages, increased crime, and increased demand for social services such as unemployment support, medical, and special services (Aponte & Siles, 1994; Broadway 2000, 2007; Gouveia & Stull, 1997; Stull & Broadway, 1995; Schlosser, 2001). One major problem that the meatpacking industry addresses on a regular basis is constantly securing a dependable labor supply. Most rural communities lack a large pool of surplus workers. The locals either have worked in the meatpacking industry and have quit or have chosen not to work due to the hazardous nature; a major reason for the high employee turnover rate in the industry (Broadway, 2000; Gouveia & Stull, 1997; Gouveia & Saenz, 2000; Schlosser, 2001; Wahl, Gunkel & Sanchez, 2000).

When the Meatpacking industry relocated to rural communities throughout the Great Plains, a dramatic shift in the Hispanic<sup>1</sup> population occurred. In a research article entitled "Latinos in the Heartland: The Browning of the Midwest," authors Robert Aponte and Marcelo Siles (1994) documented the increased Latino presence from 1980-1990. Aponte and Siles looked at Latino populations in ten states that constitute the Midwest: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and Wisconsin (North and South Dakota were left out of the analysis due to low population counts).

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Both terms have been used interchangeably. To simplify the nomenclature employed here as well as the body of research, I will refer to immigrant workers from Central and South America and those populations that consider themselves Mexican or Hispanic will be referred to as Latinos.

During the 1980's, the largest concentration of Latinos was found in Illinois, predominantly the Chicago area, then in Michigan and Ohio. Nebraska was one of the states with the fewest numbers of Latinos, measuring just above Iowa and the Dakotas. In fact, Nebraska accounted for only 3% of the Latino population in the entire Midwest at that time. However, this changed dramatically over the next 20 years. "Latinos captured the bulk of population growth in the Midwest over the 1980's. More than 56% of the region's total population increase of over 800,000 persons was accounted for by Latinos. Non-Hispanic Whites dropped by over 330,000...." When the data are analyzed in the context of the Midwest region, the growth they saw prior to 1990 set the stage for a massive Latino migration into the Midwest. "As the United States approaches the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, few societal changes in sight match the coming demographic shift, commonly known as 'the Browning of America'" (p. 2).

At the dawn of the 1990's, several factors emerged that played a significant role in the migration of large numbers of Latinos into the Great Plains region. Many issues surrounding population shifts and the immigration of Latinos exist. However, in an effort to give the reader a more comprehensive picture of the factors that have impacted Latino population shifts, this case study will attempt to simplify a complicated topic into a few generalizations. These generalizations will not capture the full complexity of the issues in the immigration debate, but they will add background information on Lexington's current condition.



First, the meatpacking industry relocated to rural America. Nebraska depends on the meatpacking industry for 15% of all its manufacturing jobs (Wahl, Gunkel & Sanchez, 2000). Meat packing accounts for 22% of the Nebraska gross state product (Stull, Broadway & Griffith, 1995). Second, increased levels of technology and environmental factors make rural towns ideal locations for the meatpacking corporations. Third, employment strategies or recruitment policies helped shape the trajectory of new migrant workers into the Heartland. Last, crowded living conditions, low wages, and poor quality of life in urban centers like Chicago are seen as “pushing” factors responsible for migration/immigration to rural areas (Gouveia & Saenz, 2000; Gouveia & Stull, 1997; Schlosser, 2001).

The Latino population within the United States has grown from 9.6 million in 1970 to 35.3 Million in 2000, a 27% increase. During the time frame of 2000-2006, Latinos accounted for 50% of the nation's growth. The Latino growth rate during this time was three times the growth rate of the total population. It is projected that in 2010, Latinos within the country will number 47.8 million and will continue to grow to 102.6 million by 2050 (U.S. Census Bureau, Ethnicity and Ancestry Branch, Population Division, 2006). The percentage of Latinos from 1970 to today has gone from 4% to 15% of the total U.S. population (Glass, 2008).

Between 1988-1997, Latino growth in the Midwest measured 57.8% while non-Latino growth was measured at less than 4%. The Midwest Region saw the second highest growth in Latino population, second only to the South (58.3%). Latinos accounted for roughly 28% of the regions absolute growth (Gouveia &

Saenz, 2000). This same trend was highlighted by the U.S Census Bureau: the Midwest saw a 26.1% increase in Latino persons from 2000-2006. The South also showed the largest percentage gain of 31.2% during that same time period. The United States saw an overall population increase of 6.1% while the Latino population grew at a rate of 24.3%. It is clear that the “Browning of America” is quickly taking place in the Midwest.

The population shifts seen across the Midwest are becoming more dramatic. Looking closer at Nebraska, Dawson County and Lexington have seen intense growth of the Latino population. Most of the growth is directly related to the meatpacking industry. Nebraska has seen Latino populations increase from 2.3% in 1990 to 4.6% in 1999. In roughly ten years, the Latino populace doubled. Only three other states have seen the same growth during that time: Arkansas, North Carolina, and Georgia (Gouveia & Saenz, 2000).

Dawson County is composed primarily by four cities: Lexington (county seat), Gothenburg, Cozad, and Overton with a few smaller communities. Dawson County has seen similar trends with Latinos measuring 2.6% of the county population in 1980, growing to 3.3% in 1990, and as of the 2000 U.S. Census measuring 24.4% (U.S. Census, 2000). According to the 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimate, Dawson County’s population is 30.6% Latino, roughly 7,534 persons. This is twice the national Latino population percentage. Lexington, by far, is the largest community garnering nearly 41% of the entire county population. The 2000 Census Demographic Profile for Lexington measured 51.2% of their 10,011 citizens as Hispanic or Latino. In an

article published by the Lincoln Journal Star, Dr. Lourdes Gouveia, associate professor of sociology and director of Chicano-Latino Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha addressed the increased role of Latinos in Nebraska and how the language barrier affects integration. She specifically mentions the growth of Latinos in Lexington between 1999-2000 as high as 1,500 percent.

Two researchers who profiled similar trends in Postville, Iowa, call these circumstances, “rapid ethnic diversification; the transition from populations that are predominately or exclusively White and English-speaking to those that are multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual, all in the course of a few short years” (Grey, Devlin, & Goldsmith, 2009, p. 2). This is the case with Lexington, Nebraska.

Prior to the opening of IBP’s meatpacking operation in Lexington, a Community Impact Study Team (CIST) was formed. Their mission was to study other rural communities that have experienced changes due to the meatpacking industry. The CIST funded in part by IBP visited Dodge City, Garden City, and Emporia, Kansas as well as Norfolk, Nebraska. The team visited with school and city officials with the desire to understand and prepare for the “rapid ethnic diversification” that was going to take place in Lexington (Stull, Broadway, & Griffith, 1995). Despite taking a proactive approach and applying the lessons from other rural communities, the transition from a predominately White community to a much more diverse population today has caused some friction among the Lexington citizenry.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

“Americans love to talk about the myth of the Melting Pot, but it is another thing to make it work. Americans also love to talk about the miracles diversity can bring, but only as long as it seems to benefit them as individuals and interest groups” (Grey, Devlin, & Goldsmith, 2009, p.xv).

Desegregation plans by the Federal Government and public schools have not succeeded in providing an equitable education in regards to facilities, teacher quality, and curriculum for all students. Fifty years after *Brown v. Board of Education* and the enactment of the Civil Rights Act, it is becoming obvious how difficult it is for a nation to address these inequalities. Absent from the debate is the rising Latino population in rural America and the impacts they are having on remote Midwest communities. Education research for many decades has focused on large-city school district segregation and desegregation efforts in relation to African American students (Coleman et al., 1966, 1975a, 1975 & 1976; Clark 1991 & 2009; Crowder, 2000; Crowder & South 2005; Frey, 1979 & 1980; Farley & Frey, 1994a; Farley, Steeh, Krysan, Jackson, & Reeves, 1994b; Orfield, 1978; Orfield, Shely, Glass, & Reardon, 1993; Orfield & Yun, 1999; South & Crowder, 1998). The reality is that the Latino population across this nation is the fastest growing minority group. The high birth rates and immigration rates of the Latino people are on track to become the "majority minority" in America (U.S. Census Bureau, Ethnicity and Ancestry Branch, Population Division, 2006). The communities that are experiencing rapid Latino population shifts have been

attempting to determine how best to approach integration. In most of these rural circumstances, many of the realities are far different from those that are identified in the research on urban centers.

In terms of the student population of Nebraska, the majority of Latino students attend schools with high levels of other minorities. As of December, 2006, the Omaha Public School System, the largest in the state, has a Latino student population of 22.6%. Estimates predict that Latino students will be the majority in five years (Gouveia & Powell, 2007). “Older, White Americans entering their retirement years with diminishing assets and the prospect of continued work will be asked to support the public institutions that increasingly will be serving a younger, browner clientele” (Glass, 2008, p.115). For some individuals the realization of supporting children who speak Spanish as well as looking different is difficulty to comprehend. In the Midwest, Nebraska, Dawson County, and even in Lexington a “rapid ethnic diversification” that mixes a younger minority population that is predominately Latino into locations that have long been established as White, close-knit rural communities is taking place. The body of literature that pertains to “White flight” might illuminate the implications of such drastic population shifts.

As America entered the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, public schools had the blessing of the United States Supreme Court to segregate schools under the “separate but equal” doctrine handed down in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The case of *Brown v. Board of Education* was argued before the Supreme Court in 1954, which reversed this “separate but equal” doctrine and found that separate could never be equal.

Following this landmark decision, years of litigation followed in most states. Some states, rather than force integration, repealed their compulsory attendance laws to allow parents freedom to choose where to send their children for schooling. Multiple court decisions have outlined specific criteria to help districts comply with all desegregation expectations. They were most notably referenced in *Green v. County School Board Of New Kent County*, 391 U.S. 430 (1968). This case outlined specific responsibilities schools must fulfill in terms of student assignment, faculty, staff, transportation, extracurricular activities, and facilities, now termed the “Green” factors (LaMorte, 2008).

Ten years after *Brown* at the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, school integration moved very slowly. Many state and district leaders took a "wait and see" approach. James S. Coleman, Ernest Q. Campbell, Carol J. Hobson, James McPartland, Alexander M. Mood, Frederic D. Weinfeld, & Robert L. York (1966) being directed by the 1964 Civil Rights Act formed a research team that was to look at public education for the purpose of “determining the availability of equal educational opportunities in the public schools for minority groups; Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Oriental-Americans, and American Indians, as compared with opportunities for majority group; Whites” (p. Report Resume).

The Equality of Educational Opportunity Study—commonly referred to as the Coleman Report (1966)—documented the extensive segregation still taking place in American schools despite the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling 12 years earlier. Coleman (1966) found that the great majority of students attended

schools that were segregated. Despite the slow pace at which the country tried to implement desegregation plans, Coleman and his team identified several factors that show signs of impacting student achievement. First, socioeconomic factors influence student achievement. Second, positive school conditions have been found to impact the lowest achieving minority students' achievement more than White students' achievement. Third, quality teachers show the largest effect on minority student achievement. The report also concluded that the “achievement gap” minority students experience early in their education will remain with them through their entire school experience.

#### Introduction of White Flight

In a follow-up study, Coleman (1975) analyzed recent trends of integration and some of its side effects. He concluded that the large-scale desegregation practices being implemented by school districts across the country had acted as a pushing mechanism for, “White parents moving from a school district in which the contact between Blacks and Whites is great to a school district in which it is small—usually from a city system where there is a high proportion of minority children to a suburban system which there is a low proportion” (p.3). For the most part, America was still segregated as of 1968 with the average African American student attending school whose student population was 74% African American. The average White student was attending school with 93% other White classmates. Between 1968-1972, school integration gained more momentum and the total segregation among schools in the U.S. dropped

from 72% segregated to 56% in 1972. Small districts experienced the most rapid desegregation changes across America while for the most part larger districts still saw significant segregation among schools within their district.

The last point Coleman (1975) addressed is the notion of a general movement of White populations, specifically White middle class to the suburbs. Although his data analysis was not completed at the time of publication, he did share trends identified from the twenty largest central city districts as well as the next fifty largest city districts. He noted that Whites leaving urban city centers predated school desegregation. Although, in the 1975 article he never identified this phenomenon as “White flight,” his analyses helped popularize the definition of the term that came to stand for the phenomenon of middle class, White suburbanization that took place after World War II (Rossell & Hawley, 1982). It is important to note that the desegregation of public schools contributed to the flight of White middle class populations and added to changes already taking place in large cities. Coleman further concluded that the effect of desegregation in these large cities had a great impact on Whites leaving. He concluded that Whites fleeing integration was taking place in large and middle-sized cities, however it was more prominent a large-city environments.

Coleman elaborated on his original research in the Coleman Report and published a brief description of his results in October of 1975 in *Phi Delta KAPPAN*. Almost a year later in September of 1976, he made a presentation on the effects of school desegregation on White flight. These two scholarly works by Coleman summarized his findings going back as far as his 1966 report. He



clearly stated that desegregation efforts in large central city districts have contributed to the movement of White students to the suburbs. He further wrote that he had found evidence that in these large-city districts that have at least 50% African American students one could expect to see White students leave these areas for the suburbs at a rate of 23% and 17% in smaller cities. These percentages are measured the year desegregation efforts are initially implemented. The following years, the flow of Whites from these city centers can be expected to decrease. However, Whites still leave in larger numbers than those measured in the two years prior to the desegregation initiatives pushed by the district (Coleman, 1975 “Racial Segregation in the Schools: new research with new policy implications”, 1976).

Gary Orfield and The Civil Rights Project of Harvard University followed Coleman’s research but approached it by looking at different data sets rather than surveys. In Orfield’s (1993, 1999) two studies on the segregation of American schools, data sets from the US Department of Education Common Core of Data Public School Universe were employed. His analyses document findings on student segregation similar to those outlined by Coleman. One of the main points of his research is that students of color are more likely to be segregated into schools of poverty due to the strong correlation between race and poverty (Orfield, Schley, Glass, & Reardon, 1993). Orfield and his colleagues also found that the highest degree of segregation is in large to mid-size metropolitan cities.

Integration has progressed much faster in rural and small locales. Orfield and his team did do a better job than Coleman by actually addressing the Latino

population. Orfield also found that Latinos are least segregated in the Midwest. Although he did not address the reasons behind such an observation, this greater integration of Latinos is obviously due to the remoteness of the majority of these rural communities, which, for the most part, have one public school with no other viable schooling options. The distances between communities often do not make it practical or affordable for parents to drive students to other towns for school. To remain in predominately White dominated schools is the only option. Charter schools are still relatively uncommon in many states. The cost of attending Private schools and Internet schooling were not realistic options when Orfield evaluated his data. Homeschooling is possible but the educational level of the parents in most rural communities makes such arrangements difficult. The net effect is greater integration of Latino students in rural areas for the simple reason that there are few viable alternative educational choices.

In both reports, Orfield (1993, 1999) tackled the White flight notion head on. He argued that White flight was not caused by desegregation as Coleman (1975, 1976) suggested. He wrote, “The underlying reality, of course, was a dramatic drop in the number of school age White children in the U.S., as the White birth rate fell and the White population aged.” He also suggested, “Desegregation has certainly not produced White abandonment of the public schools, though it has doubtless had impacts on enrollment trends in some districts” (Orfield, Schley, Glass, & Reardon, 1993, p.13).

In conjunction with the desegregation efforts of many school districts around the nation, specifically large central city districts, the United States

Supreme Court Case of *Miliken v. Bradley*, 418 U.S. 717 (1974), also influenced desegregation efforts. In effect, the ruling was that desegregation efforts were to be limited to single districts. This created a “push” factor, which allowed middle class White students and families to relocate from one district to another district that was more demographically "acceptable." Orfield (1993) addressed the topic of suburban segregation. He cautioned that suburbs with one school district may fall into cycles of rapid population shifts due to the lack of educational options that most large central city districts have. What is interesting about his categorization of suburbs is exactly the reality of rural towns, which have only one school district to serve all constituents. Orfield (1993) warned, “Unless the nation wishes to recapitulate the experience of schools in city ghettos and barrios in suburban settings, there will be a need for concerted efforts to develop and maintain stable integration.... The risk is that they [problems] will spread and that some of the vicious cycles at work in older cities will take hold in suburbs” (p.37).

In a follow-up study, Orfield (1999) focused more of his research on the segregation taking place for the growing Latino student population. Orfield and Yun (1999) did an excellent job of highlighting the evolving situation with Latino students and the segregation they are experiencing across the nation, something that Coleman did not address. The large metropolitan areas are still extremely segregated and African American students are still experiencing school segregation; however, Orfield and Yun (1999), noted that Latino students are even more segregated than African American students. For the most part, White

students continue to associate with other White students. One statistic from Orfield's work that pertains to this case study is based on student data across the nation: the average White student attends classes with 8.6% African American students, 6.6% Latino students, 2.8% Asian, and 1% Native American.

This study will examine in Lexington, Nebraska, how White students react when they are exposed to demographic population shifts in their student body that far exceed what the average White student is accustomed to seeing? How do community members react when the demographics of their schools do not reflect the typical experience of a traditional White student as pointed out by Orfield's work? How do White students and their families react to increased racial and cultural interactions that they have most likely never experienced before in their rural communities?

A critic of Coleman's argued that his findings on the causes of White flight are not accurate. Christine Rossell (1975-1976) did concede that White flight occurs but only on a limited basis and only in the year of implementation of desegregation efforts. She argued in her own research of 86 large to moderately large city centers in the northern United States that White flight took place the year school districts implemented their desegregation plans. After integration initiatives were implemented, the following years showed a steady decline in out-migration of White students. In fact, the levels of students leaving were lower after implementation than the years before integration. Her findings are somewhat mixed. She shows that White flight takes place, which seems to support the argument of Coleman, but Rossell states that it quickly drops off.

Additional research explored social and economic factors that could impact White flight. Researchers attempted to isolate issues other than public school desegregation to see how they have impacted the city-to-suburb migration of White middle class Americans. The expansion of metropolitan areas and the changes in tax structures, neighborhood demographics and poverty levels, crime, and the relocation/loss of blue collar jobs all appear to have played significant roles (Frey, 1979 & 1980; South & Crowder, 1998; Crowder, 2000). Generally speaking, if a person is White and has the means to relocate out of a mixed demographic neighborhood or a predominately high minority neighborhood, that person would most likely choose to move to a White neighborhood (South & Crowder, 1998; Crowder, 2000; South Crowder & Chavez, 2005). Although these reasons are indicators associated with White flight, they do not establish the root cause of why White middle class Americans decide to move when the above mentioned issues reflect a higher minority population.

The root cause, so prevalent at the height of the Civil Rights movement, which played into the hearts and minds of so many families when it came to school desegregation, was fear. When the Los Angeles Unified School District looked at implementing their integration plan, a parent survey revealed that if they followed through with the plan many parents would withdraw their children. The school district accepted a much less integrated approach (Orfield, 1978). Another study, more willing to call White flight for what it is, stated that “if it occurs at all, it occurs not from the problems experienced during the first year of desegregation, but from the fear of problems. In other words, if Whites leave, it is typically not

because they participated in the plan and did not like it, but because they refused to participate at all” (Rossell & Winter, 1975-1976, p.683). In a more contemporary study, researchers Sikkink and Emerson (2008) stated that Whites from all education levels are likely to share fear of integrating their children with Black students.

Fear of a great many things regarding White flight, I feel, is at the core of this phenomenon. How does one measure fear? Can it be operationalized? How do people act when they are afraid of another group of people? How does a rural community react when they see their schools, houses, and neighborhoods reflect a much different human element? How does fear impact racial attitudes and stereotypes? How successful can researchers be at eliciting honest answers about fear of "others" when to admit to such fears carries with it a social stigma?

### Neighborhood Preferences

Demographers and geographers have studied neighborhood preferences of Whites and Blacks to try to answer the question of neighborhood segregation. The better an individual understands residential preferences, the better one is able to understand the attitudes and beliefs that contribute to White flight. The Schelling Model of Segregation is helpful in comprehending this concept. In simple terms, the model measures households (people's tolerance) stability in an area until changes in the region reach a threshold. When the threshold is reached, households or people start to relocate (Clark, 1991). This study found, along with three others (Clark, 2008; Farley, 1994a; Farley, Steeh, Krysan, Jackson, &

Reeves, 1994b) that, “Whites express preferences for neighborhood combinations of at least 80/20- that is, neighborhoods that are 80% White and 20% Black. Black individuals prefer neighborhoods that are 50/50, where the racial mixture is half Black and half White” (Clark, 1991, p.9). Some feel that because White populations usually have the income and ability to pick up and move to desired neighborhoods, they are more responsible for the segregated cities and neighborhoods seen across this country. Perhaps this is the case in understanding the demographic shifts taking place in Lexington. White families may be relocating within and outside of Lexington to remove themselves from sections of the city where minorities are concentrated.

The different aspects that complicate the term "White flight" are linked to school desegregation efforts, mandatory busing practices, changing demographics of large metropolitan city centers and social and economic factors that impact housing practices, jobs, tax structures, and the profound effect on the demographics of cities and their migratory patterns. The complexity of the White flight debate, the majority of which focuses on race relations between African Americans and Whites in large northern cities of the United States, shows a substantial void in the literature when White flight does not pertain to the relationships of races other than African Americans and Whites. Gary Orfield (1978) wrote a scathing article addressed to the social science body of researchers scolding them for not committing themselves to researching desegregation to its fullest extent. This case study is an attempt to add to that conversation with an

entirely new context of racial dynamics and social structures, as well as the rural Midwest environment far outside any metropolitan influences.

As important as it is to understand the historical context of White flight and the research that stands behind this work, three reasons suggest that body of work is not entirely applicable to the case study of Lexington. First, the desegregation of schools and the ensuing research that documented the White middle class moving to the suburbs was focused primarily on African Americans moving into metropolitan areas (Farley, 1994a). In Coleman's (1966) report he categorized his survey results as metropolitan v. non-metropolitan areas. Non-metropolitan areas included populations less than 50,000 individuals. The focus of that report and his subsequent Recent Trends in School Integration research (1975) is entirely on large to mid-size city centers. A few scant pages in the Coleman Report even discuss non-metropolitan areas. Gary Orfield and other researchers also focus on large urban centers but do not address rural America.

Second, the overwhelming majority of studies compare population patterns between White middle class and African Americans. The body of research does not look at cases such as Lexington, Nebraska, and Garden City, Kansas, where a poor White working class is experiencing an influx of a predominately Latino labor force.

Third, the exponential growth of the Latino population in the United States and the rapid migration of Latinos across this nation are having a profound effect on every aspect of American culture. This reality is far different from the migration of the African American population during school desegregation and



the Civil Rights movement. The African American migration involved movement to large urban city centers in the northeastern United States. The demographic shift of Latinos across the U.S. is not only taking place in large urban city centers but in all areas of the country regardless of size. Moreover, the Latino migration involves many individuals who speak a different language from English. The case study of Lexington will attempt to further the discussion of White flight as it pertains to a rural setting dealing with the influx of a Latino population.

## Chapter 3

### Methods

Current research has failed to provide workable solutions that address the impact of neighborhood racial influences on individual mobility. Some direct evidence identifies the racial conditions of neighborhoods as increasing White flight; however, individual analysis of White mobility is missing (Crowder, 2000). The majority of research that has been conducted on the question of White flight and school desegregation has taken place in large urban city center school districts looking at African American integration with White students. Little is known about the patterns and determining factors of the actual residential mobility of Latinos into majority white neighborhoods (Scott, Crowder & Chavez, 2005).

There is an absence of qualitative studies in the research when looking at White flight patterns, reasons, and outcomes. Prior research most often used U.S. Census data and other forms of quantitative data to make broad generalizations about urban central city school districts. These have little relevance to this case study. This lacuna in the literature justifies the relevance of this case study in rural America.

The issue of White flight and the factors associated with this phenomenon are complex. Therefore, for this purpose, the case study method of research has been selected. A specific chain of extraordinary events has occurred in Lexington, Nebraska, that recommends it as a unique situation to study. The

majority of studies dealing with White flight and migratory preferences have attended only to quantitative data.

This study will be looking at the dynamics of one particular rural city that has experienced a rapid and continuing population shift that has created some forceful circumstances for the school and the larger community to grapple with. The case study method has many advantages for this type of research. However, critics of the case study approach do point out several disadvantages. The case study approach does not lend itself to sweeping generalizations nor should it be used that way. More specifically much of this study will be conducted using microinterpretation and microanalysis. Microinterpretation gives meaning to an individual's experience (Stake, 2010). The interviews will center on individuals experiences in regards to the "rapid ethnic diversification" in the public school system, followed by a microanalysis of that individual's experience.

One potential barrier that critics cite in regards to the case study method is that it is interpretative research. According to Robert Stake, "All research requires interpretation, and, in fact, human behavior requires interpretation minute by minute" (Stake, 2010, p. 36). The interpretation of findings is open to questions in all studies, qualitative or quantitative. The very nature of qualitative research lends itself to more debatable interpretations (Stake, 1995). This is the reality of the case study method; however, every effort has been utilized to make clear concise interpretations based on the best data at hand. The primary goal is to describe the situation in Lexington Schools by using a variety of data points to

provide the clearest interpretation possible. Based on these interpretations, assertions will be submitted in the analysis portion of this study.

This case study will employ elements of both quantitative and qualitative research. The qualitative components will yield information that will be interpreted and analyzed to gain a better understanding of the student enrollment pattern of the Lexington Public Schools. This will require some level of interpretation that may be more heavily criticized (Stake, 1995 & 2010). However, the usage of both qualitative and quantitative methods will give a balanced and accurate depiction of the circumstances of Lexington Schools as well as the larger community. A mixed methods approach will help clarify the different environmental contexts Lexington is immersed in while improving the quality of the evidence (Stake, 2010).

One last obstacle that may impact the study is my own personal background. I am currently residing in a rural community in southeastern Arizona. I am currently finishing my third year as school district superintendent. Prior to that I was the high school principal in the same community. Having lived in a rural community for the past six years, I have come to understand the nuances and cultural differences of a rural town. During this time in public education, Arizona has experienced a significant change of expectations toward one particular minority group, Latinos. With the passage of Arizona House Bill 1070, a divisive and controversial issue dealing with illegal immigration into Arizona has sparked heated debate on both sides of the issue. Due to the unique circumstances of being a border state with Mexico and living in a small rural

district in southeastern Arizona, we are experiencing many issues that appear similar to what Lexington has gone through. For this reason, I have more of an “emic” perspective (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) on issues such as community culture, challenges of rural communities, public education policy, and challenges minority students face in public education as well as impacts to public education from migratory minority populations.

The benefits of the case study approach outweigh its limitations for research on the current topic. Using mixed methods for this case study will only help to clarify and triangulate the data to help give clear and concise answers to the research question and sub-questions.

To understand how a rural school district struggles with rapid student demographic shifts, I have consulted the methodological strategies used by May (2006) and Eckes (2006). For this study I did not conduct structured interviews as May (2006) did in her study. However, I selected several questionnaires as an interview guide when constructing my own interview format (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I used a guided, semi-structured, open-ended interview platform patterned after the in-depth, phenomenological based interview (Seidman, 2006). A sample of guided questions, which I consulted for my interviews, can be found in Appendix B. For the purposes of this study I shortened the three separate interviews recommended by Seidman (2006), into one 60-minute interview. Although I have shortened Seidman’s (2006) protocol, the three distinct interview stages will be present: primarily a focused life history, details of the experience,

and reflection of the meaning. Standard protocols for selecting and conducting semi-structured interviews have been followed (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Data analysis of the various transcripts was conducted using a thematic approach (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Seidman, 2006). Each transcript was read and excerpts from the various transcripts were coded into categories. “The researcher then searches for connecting threads and patterns among the excerpts within those categories and for connections between the various categories that might be called themes” (Seidman, 2006, p.125). Due to the nature of this study, my intent is to use these thematic elements to describe in a “holistic, contextualized analysis” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 274) the current and past realities of Lexington as the community transforms from a predominately White close knit town to the epicenter of multiculturalism in central Nebraska.

In addition to the qualitative approach, I also used a variety of data sources from the United State Census Bureau, newspaper articles, school board minutes, school attendance information, and online forums and blogs. The current trend of online forums allows citizens to hide behind layers of anonymity with the protection of free speech. These online perspectives will provide a unique layer of data interpretation regarding the current context in Lexington. As a country, we have made significant progress in terms of extending rights and privileges to all people. However, when individuals are provided a format to espouse their deepest feelings while hiding their identities, a researcher comes closer to a true understanding of the racial feelings of a small, rural town as it experiences “rapid ethnic diversification.”

## Chapter 4

### Findings

To understand the history and population shifts documented in Lexington, Nebraska, it is crucial to know the fundamental dynamic that is taking place there, which is to say that the traditional super-majority presence of Caucasians in the community and especially in the public schools has significantly declined in number. Changing demographics of communities, schools, immigration, and human behavior are all extremely complex issues. Each of these elements is at work in Lexington. To understand the pattern of behavior as it relates to student enrollment a variety of contexts, such as “temporal, spatial, historical, cultural, economic, and personal” must be investigated (Stake, 2010, p.31). The different contexts included in this research are community demographics, economics, school enrollment patterns, newspaper editorials/Internet blogs, and qualitative interviews.

#### Community Demographics

To appreciate this demographic shift a brief examination of the population is required. Table L1 records the population change for the city of Lexington for the last 50 years. Lexington experienced few population fluctuations between 1970 through 1990 when finally Lexington started to see significant growth after the opening of IBP, now Tyson Foods Inc. The growth experienced by Lexington was due to the huge influx of Latino minority workers. As operations increased at IBP, a constant supply of fresh labor was needed. This created a dramatic shift in

the population dynamics of Lexington as well as Dawson County. Table L2 is a display of the Hispanic/Latino population percentage for Dawson County, for which Lexington is the county seat. The growth of Latinos is small from 1980-1990. However, tremendous growth took place after 1990. It is reasonable to assume that such drastic population shifts will create additional social impacts on the local community. This is the reality of such drastic migrant influxes that are critical to the understanding of the relationships among culture, economics and schooling that are at work.

YEAR	POPULATION
1970	5654
1980	7040
1990	6601
2000	10,011
2010	10230

**Table L1: Lexington Pop. 1970-2010**

YEAR	% Hispnanic/Latino
1980	2.6
1990	3.3
2000	25.4
2010	32

**Table L2: % Latino in Dawson County**

Table L3 highlights the demographic shifts between the two most populace races starting from 1990 to present. The 1990 Census identifies that only 329 Latinos or approximately 5% of the population of Lexington was of Latino origin. Over the next ten years Lexington experienced a dramatic increase of Latinos. As of the 2000 Census they account for 51% of the entire Lexington



community. The recent publication of the 2010 census measured the Hispanic/Latino population as 60.4%.

Year	Total	White	% White	Hispanic	% Hispanic
1990	6601	6452	97.7	329	4.98
2000	10011	6427	64.2	5121	51.2
2010	10230	3174	31	6183	60.4

**Table L3: Total Population and Demographics of Lexington**

It appears that the number of White individuals in Lexington has only dropped by 25 individuals between 1990-2000 the percentage of individuals who consider themselves White has dramatically decreased. The change between 2000-2010 also shows a dramatic percentage decrease as well as a numerical decrease of Whites in the community. Such drastic population shifts have a profound impact on housing, business, unemployment, and the social sector, which ultimately is the strength of any economy.

Communities	1990 Census	2000 Census	2010 Census
<b>Gothenburg</b>	<b>3232</b>	<b>3619</b>	<b>3574</b>
Latino/Hispanic	43	131	173
White	3197	3524	3353
<b>Cozad</b>	<b>3823</b>	<b>4163</b>	<b>3977</b>
Latino/Hispanic	228	456	529
White	3634	3888	3403
<b>Overton</b>	<b>547</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>594</b>
Latino/Hispanic	5	59	62
White	546	599	525
<b>Elwood</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>707</b>
Latino/Hispanic	5	21	26
White	679	746	661

**Table L4: Total Population and Demographics of surrounding communities**

Table L4 provides another reference in helping us contextualize the growth and demographic changes seen in Lexington. As stated previously Gothenburg, Cozad, Overton, and Elwood are all surrounding communities of Lexington; within a 20 minute drive at the most. Oddly while Lexington has experienced a great deal of growth and racial integration, these four nearby communities have remained demographically unchanged. A comparison of Table L4 to Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 for the same communities, reaffirms that the pattern of the four communities fluctuates very little in total population and student growth. Large numbers of citizens are not leaving and large numbers of immigrants are not moving in. These are fairly stable bedroom communities.

#### Economic Context

A case study produced by the Center for Great Plains Studies at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg, 2003), profiled Dawson County and the impact immigration would have on the local economy. They found that immigration has less of a role on the economy than first thought. The closing of the New Holland plant in 1985 caused a spike in unemployment and the eventual out migration of more than 2,000 workers. The opening of the IBP plant seemed to revitalize the local economy as well as attract thousands of new migrant workers. This case study found that the arrival of a ready work force has several positive effects. First, the real food industry wage increased in direct relation to the increase of the IBP meat production despite the continual increase of migrants. Second, the housing market between 1980-1990 declined by nearly

40%. With the influx of Latinos between 1990-1999, the real estate market in real terms increased by 21.7%. Third, the number of businesses steadily increased from 681 in 1990 to 712 as of 1999. In a recent Labor Market Regional Review, Lexington Micropolitan Statistical Area (2010), the number of privately owned businesses reached 799 as of 2008. In summary, the case study found that, Dawson County seems to be a thriving hub of economic activity in comparison to the peer counties used in the study. Immigration does not seem to have been detrimental to Dawson County's economic health (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg, 2003).

According to Sperling's Best Places to Live, Lexington currently has a cost of living 24% lower than the U.S. average. The unemployment rate for Lexington is 4.40 % (Sperling's Best Places, retrieved 01/04/2011, from, <http://www.bestplaces.net/zip-code/nebraska/lexington/68850>). Considering the economic recession that has rolled across the United States, Nebraska has done relatively well. Nebraska's unemployment rate was measured at 4.7% compared to the rest of the nation at 9.5 % as of July 2010 (Batelle Technology Partnership Practice, 2010).

For the last twelve years, the Nebraska Department of Revenue posts annual sales tax revenues by county and city. From 1997-1998 to 2008-2009 both Dawson County and Lexington saw annual increases in sales tax revenues every year except for the 2005-2006 time frame for just Lexington. They have only experienced growth of less than one percent 3 times during that twelve-year history. Lexington averaged a net sales tax increase of 4% each year for the past

twelve years. During the current recession, Lexington has posted net sales tax increases in revenues of 3.5% and 2.7% for the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 years respectively (Nebraska Department of Revenue, retrieved 01/04/2011, from, [http://www.revenue.state.ne.us/research/monthly\\_net\\_sales.html](http://www.revenue.state.ne.us/research/monthly_net_sales.html)).

The review of the annual new privately-owned residential/building permits for Dawson County as found on the U.S. Census Bureau's webpage also shows stable home growth. From 1990 to 2009 the average permit rate was 44 units per year. This includes single family, two family, three and four family, and even five or more family units. The average annual cost to build these private residences is approximately 3.23 million dollars. Despite the lowest number of building permits of 13 in 2008 the county has rebounded with 56 unit permits for 2009 at a cost of 4.2 million, 4<sup>th</sup> highest over the last 20 years for construction costs (U. S. Census Bureau, Annual New Privately-Owned Residential/Building Permits, retrieved 01/04/2011, from, <http://censtats.census.gov/cgi-bin/bldgprmt/bldgdisp.pl>). The number of housing permits being issued compared to historical numbers shows steady growth in the housing market. In a February 2007 Lexington City Newsletter a short editorial documented recent economic growth. The article cites the increases in property valuations rising from \$57.5 million from 1990-2000, or an increase of 5.16% per year. From 2000-2007, the total valuation rose another \$85.1 million. The closing line of the article states, "Spread the word and feel proud- Lexington's a developing city, with the promise of more improvements in 2007 and beyond (City of Lexington Nebraska Webpage; monthly newsletter, February, 2007, retrieved 08/14/2010,

from, <http://www.ci.lexington.ne.us/archives.asp>). By all accounts Lexington is a growing, robust economy.

The Nebraska Department of Labor has released a Labor Market Regional Review (2010) of the Lexington Micropolitan Statistical Area (MC). Micropolitan statistical areas are defined by the study as core populations between 10,000 and 50,000 residents, as well as areas with high degree of social and economic integration. In Nebraska, there are ten such areas. The report states that, “There were positive job flows for the Lexington MC and the state, showing that expanded employment between 2007 and 2008 for both areas. Positive job creation and new hires contributed to this trend” (p. 43).

Both the Labor Market Review of the Lexington Micropolitan Statistical Area (2010) and the case study by Bodvarsson and Van den Berg (2003) highlight an increased outflow of native labor due to immigration of Latino migrant workers. Bodvarsson and Van den Berg clearly state, “Native workers may leave the area when large numbers of immigrants arrive, thus mitigating the impact of immigration on the local labor supply” (p.307). In a more diplomatic tone, the Labor Market Regional Review (2010) highlighted the fact that negative domestic migration was taking place while migrants were relocating to the Dawson County, Lexington area. In fact, the Lexington MC ranked 4<sup>th</sup> highest for international immigration out of the 93 Nebraska counties. This helped compensate for the out-migration of the native work force. The report also brings to light that the Lexington MC has the largest population proportion of Latinos for all the Micropolitan Statistical Areas across the state.

### School Enrollment Patterns

Central to this study is the phenomenon of the dramatic decline of White students from the Lexington School system. The demographic shifts that have taken place in the community are even more evident in the student demographics of the Lexington Public School system. According to Table L3, the community demographics of Lexington showed that roughly 50% were Latino while the student population of Latinos during the 2000-2001 school year was measured at 59%, close to a 10% increase in Latino student levels. Table L5, clearly shows the increase of Latinos and the decrease of White students in the public schools of Lexington. Over the past 22 years, the Latino population has increased from 75 individuals to current levels of 2,260, a growth of 2,185 students. Conversely, the White student population has decreased from a level of 1,591 to just 448 during that same time period, a total loss of 1,143. According to enrollment numbers, for every two Latino students that enroll in Lexington Schools, one White student withdraws. Even more staggering than the numbers, is the percentage of the student body of which these two races are comprised. White students measured 95% of the total student population in 1989-1990, compared to Latino levels of just 4%. Today's levels of Whites account for just 15% of the student body while Latino students are close to 80%.

Students who wish to withdraw from Lexington and enroll in another educational institution must obtain board approval for the transfer. They must utilize the application for student transfer published by the Nebraska Enrollment Option Program (Appendix A). This allows students and their parents to petition

the governing board where they currently attend by requesting a transfer to another school district. Both school districts must approve the student request for a transfer. According to Lexington School Board Minutes from the 1992-1993 school year to this current year, the board has approved 414 student withdrawals. During that same time period the Lexington Governing Board approved 311 student transfers into the district. According to Table L5 from 1992-1993 to this school year, Lexington Schools have seen a decrease in White student enrollment of 1,138 students. School board minutes confirm the transfer of only 414 students of all races. A district level representative declared that Lexington has no private schools for students to transfer to, and they currently have 10 students listed as attending home school. Student enrollment numbers suggest that hundreds of White students are exiting the school system without filing the proper paperwork outlined by the Nebraska Department of Education required for student transfers while also failing to gain the approval of the Lexington Governing Board. It appears that the White students who are leaving the Lexington Public School system are leaving the region entirely and relocating to other communities outside of Dawson County.

**Table L5: Lexington School Enrollment by Race**

Years	Total Membership	White	Hispanic	% White	% Hispanic
1989-1990	1682	1591	75	95	4
1990-1991	1665	1549	97	93	6
1991-1992	1887	1612	232	85	12
1992-1993	2062	1586	421	77	20
1993-1994	2218	1534	640	69	29
1994-1995	2242	1477	696	66	31
1995-1996	2343	1402	880	60	38
1996-1997	2373	1317	1003	55	42
1997-1998	2349	1226	1079	52	46
1998-1999	2448	1170	1226	48	50
1999-2000	2469	1073	1336	43	54
2000-2001	2518	968	1490	38	59
2001-2002	2520	845	1621	34	64
2002-2003	2668	828	1777	31	67
2003-2004	2809	745	1994	27	71
2004-2005	2714	664	1988	24	73
2005-2006	2751	595	2055	22	75
2006-2007	2829	599	2100	21	74
2007-2008	2953	593	2191	20	74
2008-2009	2841	557	2133	20	75
2009-2010	2805	485	2147	17	77
2010-2011	2915	448	2260	15	78

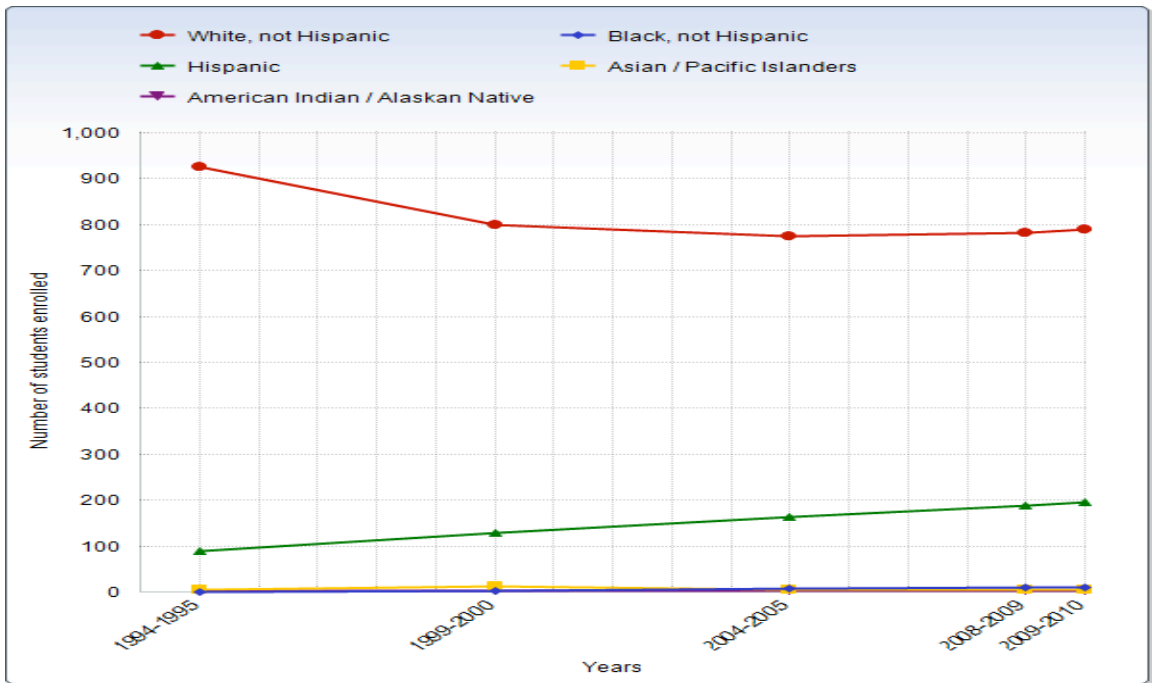
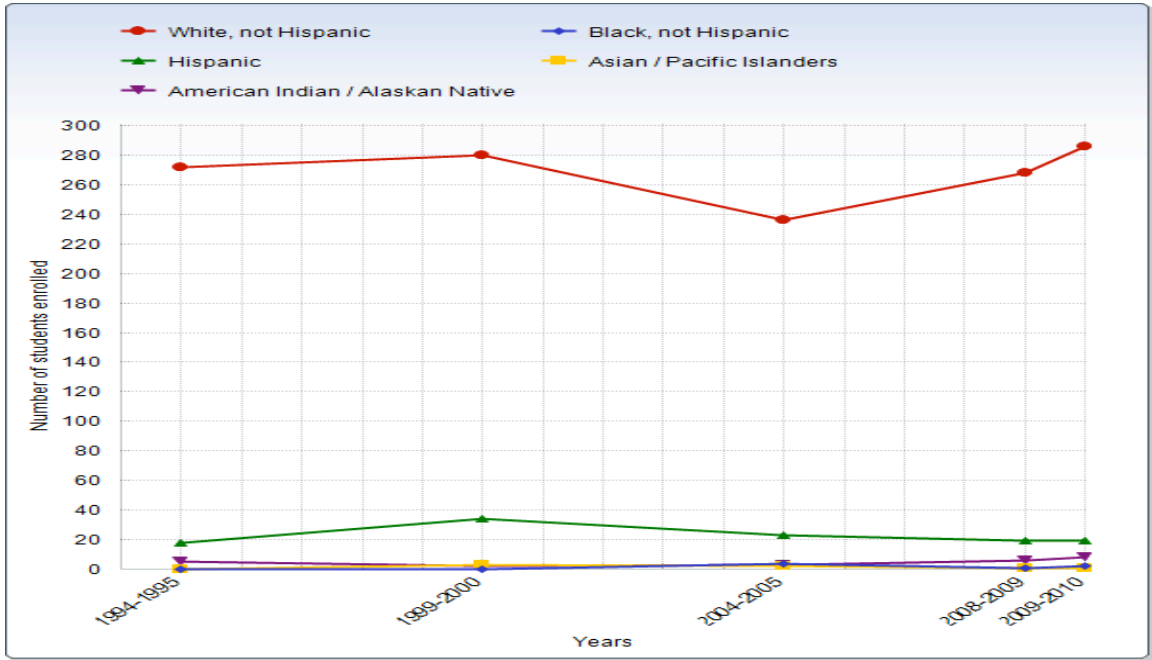
The governing board minutes starting from the 1992-1993 school year document that over the last nineteen years, the top three school districts to which students transferred out to were Overton (105 students), Elwood (56 students), and Cozad (47 students). The remaining students choose among a variety of country schools around Lexington. However, these country schools are now closed and have been absorbed by other rural school districts such as Elm Creek, Cozad, Overton, Gothenburg, and Sumner-Eddyville-Miller.

Commuting distances from Lexington to Overton, Elwood, or Cozad are reasonable. Overton is East of Lexington by 11 miles while Cozad is 14 miles to



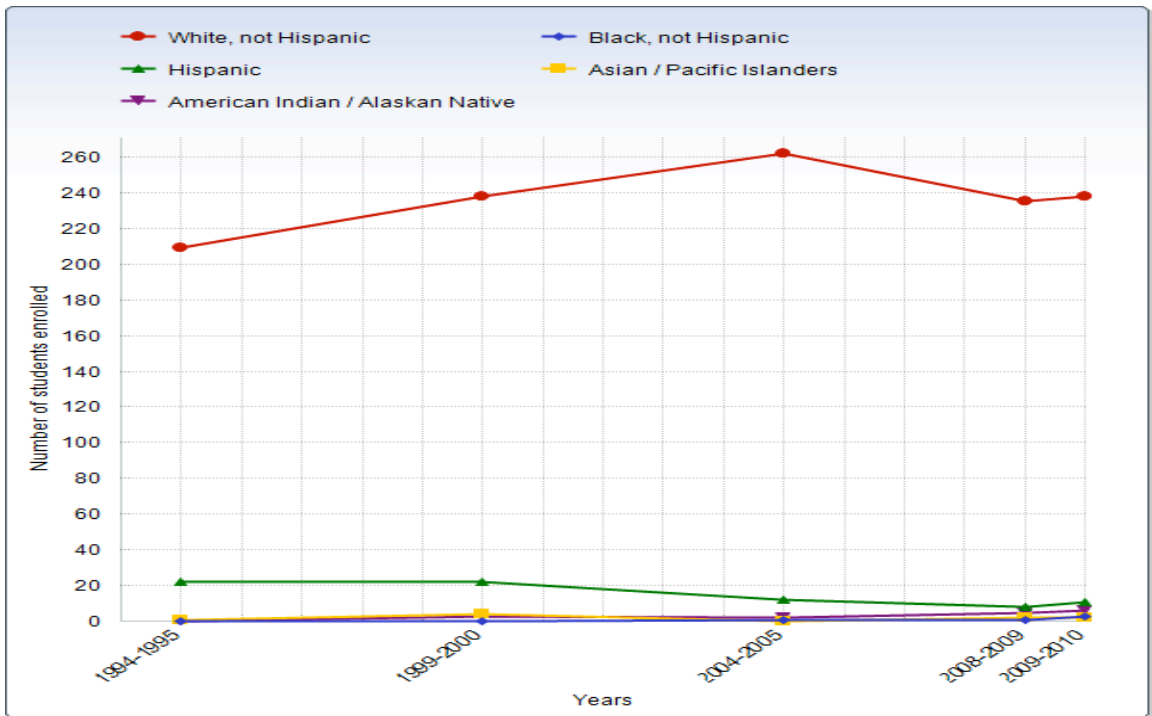
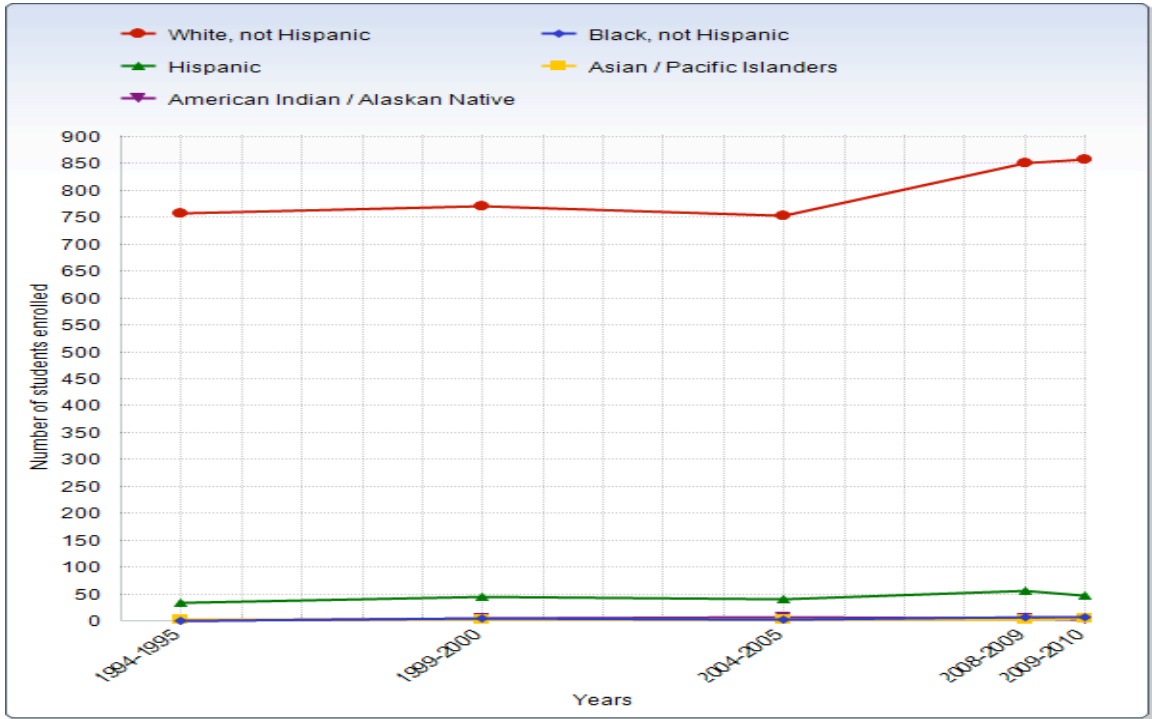
the West. Both communities are along the Interstate 80 corridor; travel time is negligible. Elwood is 17 miles to the southwest. The proximity of these other communities gives parents within Lexington Schools several other educational options. However enrollment in Overton, Elwood, and Cozad in conjunction with the board approvals of the Nebraska Option Enrollment do not equal the declining number of White students no longer found in Lexington Schools. With no choice of private or parochial schools to select from and limited home schooling options, the Lexington school population decline of 1,138 White students reflects the question "Where have the White students gone?" School enrollment trends for Overton, Elwood, Cozad, and Gothenburg help frame the context of student enrollment patterns for Dawson County and in particular Lexington. White student enrollment increases can be documented in several surrounding districts, however those numbers do not come close to the reduction of the more than one thousand White students who no longer appear on Lexington Schools enrollment records.

**Figure 1: Overton District Enrollment by Race**



**Figure 2: Cozad District Enrollment by Race**

**Figure 3: Gothenburg District Enrollment by Race**



**Figure 4: Elwood District Enrollment by Race**

Figures 1-4, show that two districts saw an increase in White students: Elwood and Gothenburg. The number of students by which these two districts increased compared to the more than one thousand White students that no longer attend Lexington Public Schools leaves many unanswered questions.

Approximately eleven years after the opening of IBP Inc., Lexington School officials performed their first “listening” survey as they called it. The results were published in the June 24, 2002 board minutes. They targeted 350 community individuals plus Key Communicators. They utilized technology of The Leadership Group with community residents drawn from the phone book. The survey was done in English and Spanish. They had 71 residents respond of which 94% were English speaking and 5.6% were Spanish. The respondents were equally divided between parents with children in school and individuals with no children in school. They note in the report that they had a low Latino response rate. Of the residents that did respond, 64% of parent responders were college educated as well as 54% of the community responses indicated some college attendance. The scale used in the survey was a six-step Likert scale with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 6 strongly agree. The general consensus for most of the questions was positive. Those who responded to the survey felt that the schools were safe and well maintained, the governing board was representing the community well, and the superintendent was qualified. When asked to rate the school district on a scale of A, B, C, D, or F the results were mixed, 54% of parents and 53% of the community voted the school district as receiving an A or B. However, 41% of parents and 37% of the community rated the district as

receiving a C or less. Total results showed 43% of all respondents rating the district receiving an A or B while 39% rated the district receiving a C or less. Mixed results were also evident when the survey asked if they thought Lexington Schools were doing better compared to ten years earlier. The summary report highlighted that 20% of the community responded with a 1-strongly disagree. However, 51% rated that same question between 4 and 6 inclusive. The summary response by the district for this particular question identifies why the results were somewhat mixed.

Many interpretations could be made regarding this question. The question was worded carefully in a manner so as to be suggestive. Overall it is intended to assess the feeling of people about our schools. Everyone knows of changes in the community and schools. Most have some degree of appreciation of the challenges, and the promises of the changes that are occurring.

#### Newspaper/Internet Forums

Newspaper stories and editorials as well as Internet forums help provide another contextual piece of data that documents the multi-cultural relationship that is taking place across Nebraska and in Lexington.

As mentioned previously Nebraska used to have what locals call “country schools” or Class I schools. According to Lexington Governing Board Minutes, hundreds of students withdrew to attend many of these “country schools.” In 2005 the discussion of equity regarding these Class I schools reached a boiling

point. Senator Ron Raikes of Lincoln introduced legislation LB (126), which was eventually passed, which consolidated these Class I elementary or “country schools” with larger districts. The per pupil allocation in Lexington Public Schools was \$8,589, compared to a range of \$9,580 to \$10,962 in outlying Class I schools.

Raikes pointed to Lexington Public Schools, which has a large Hispanic population and is bordered by affiliated Class I school districts attended by mostly White students. Those small schools receive more funding per pupil than Lexington Public Schools even though the Lexington District has a higher percentage of needy children.

Another state senator, Ray Aguilar of Grand Island, another meat packing community, stated that the emotional support for these Class I schools is partly driven by racism. Senator Elaine Stuhr of Bradshaw, also shared the above sentiments by saying that families who are seeking separation from Latinos seek out these schools as White flight destinations (Jenkins, 2005, February 11). A year later, a former Lexington Superintendent commented on the controversial school consolidation bill.

He believes race is one reason families take their children out of Lexington and into outlying Class I’s. Some parents, he added seem less driven by the desire to separate their kids from minorities than by concerns their kids will get less attention in schools with many Spanish speakers (Jenkins, 2006, January 7).

Representative Tom Osborne in a tight gubernatorial race with Governor Dave Heineman also commented on the controversial topic of Class I schools where he remarked, “I have seen some cases where the cause of segregation has been advanced, to some degree, by Class I schools” (Jenkins, 2006, January 7).

With the number of Latinos entering Nebraska, the population of Latino minority students in schools has almost doubled from 1996-2002. In response to this growing trend Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman came under fire for not having any minority representatives on his 13 member Nebraska Education Leadership Council, which included nine White men and four White women (Bauer, 2005, October 26). With the controversial debate of Class I schools as the backdrop to equitable school financing, the state of Nebraska has struggled with the integration of Latinos into their public schools, particularly in communities such as Lexington. The issue of immigration as it relates to Nebraska communities has even reached the attention of federally elected officials such as Senator Chuck Hagel. He scheduled a community forum in Lexington to discuss reactions to a recent study about attitudes towards immigrants. Senator Hagel understands that Lexington has been, “affected as much by immigrants as any town in America” (Hagel schedules Lexington forum on immigration, 2007, May 16).

With the increased numbers of Latino children entering Lexington Public Schools, district officials are left with only one option: adapt to the current context of their student demographics. In 2005, Lexington launched its first dual language program at Bryan Elementary. Although Superintendent Todd

Chessmore, state senator John Wightman, and others feel that the dual language is a success, not only in terms of language acquisition but also in creating positive relationships between the Latino and English communities, others are just as passionate about English only instruction. Editorials in newspapers have criticized Lexington schools for making concessions to Latinos. Pat Jandebour a citizen of Overton expressed her views to Senator Hagel at his community immigration forum in Lexington.

They should tell them to learn our language or leave.... [C]ommunity leaders appear unwilling to tackle the many difficult issues associated with a rising Hispanic population, issues such as rising crime rates...Lexington is not going to do anything about the immigration (Abourezk, 2007, June 9).

Still Legislative philosophies are deeply divided on whether to create policy that assimilates Latinos into Nebraska's rural communities work force or to create substantial hurdles such as bill (LB963) introduced by Governor Heineman. This piece of legislation would ensure that no state, federal, or local public benefits would go to illegals (Young, 2008, December 10). However, in early 2008 Governor Heineman signed into law a school funding bill (LB988), which provides a more equitable funding mechanism for schools that teach students with higher poverty rates and those that are learning English. The four school districts which brought the suit against the state, withdrew their claim once the bill was signed into law; Lexington was one of those school districts (Bratton, 2008, April 1). Even with the victory of a more equitable funding structure for



public schools serving high needs students, local newsprint captured the feelings of many Nebraska citizens in articles titled “Legislative committee focuses on immigration laws at hearing” (Young, 2008, December 11) or “Group to examine impact of refugees in Nebraska” (Ortiz, 2009, August 23).

For city council, school board, and school district officials these are not just headlines of some distant issue that are affecting big city schools. These headlines are pointing directly at issues being dealt with on a daily basis by Lexington authorities. For example, in an article authored by Joe Duggan for the Lincoln Journal Star, a few of the opinions surrounding the changing enrollment patterns in Lexington Schools are chronicled.

Cindy Walker didn’t like what she saw in the classroom of her hometown, but her concerns had little to do with teachers or curriculum. What she didn’t like were all the brown faces in Lexington Public Schools. She said she felt the teachers would devote too much time to children who spoke mostly Spanish. “My kids aren’t going to be held back because of the Hispanics,” she said. “It seems like they work more with Hispanics, the White kids are just pushed aside.”...the part-time convenience-store clerk removed her children from their hometown schools. Her 17-year-old goes to high school in Overton and her 7-year-old attends a country school, where almost all the faces are white.

Two gentlemen in the article were also quoted as saying, “Sometimes I feel like a foreigner in my own town and that fear was a major factor behind the city’s Anglo population decline. Others say that the aging White population are selling

their homes and moving to Johnson's Lake, nine miles south next to Elwood. The reasons describing why the White senior citizen population is moving depends who you speak with" (Duggan, Retrieved March 8, 2010, from, <http://www.ruralwomyn.net.lexington.html>).

Scott Bauer of the Associated Press has also documented the frustrations of Lexington citizens as they watch their local school demographics change. In an interview with former Lexington Superintendent Dick Eisenhauer, Mr. Bauer captures the frustration he feels when he sees, "White families take their children out of the schools in his Nebraska district and enroll them in smaller, outlying ones where there are virtually no poor or Hispanic students." Eisenhauer further states, "I feel distressed if they would opt out for that reason" referring to the increased numbers of Latino students. Cecilia Huerta, director of the state's Mexican-American Commission summarizes the communities feelings this way, "People in Lexington and Schuyler do not want their kids being polluted by Latin Americans and Hispanics, they think they're not going to get the quality of education if they have a diverse classroom" (Bauer, 2005, February 18).

As a follow-up to this editorial by Mr. Bauer, fifty additional online comments were posted in association with this article. Two comments in particular shared an alternative viewpoint that I also found in a few of my interview transcripts.

I doubt whether it's a question of race, as such. People want their kids to get a first-rate education, and if substantial numbers of other students in the classroom with them are less prepared or even less bright or don't

... speak the language well, it pulls the whole class down.... A good school that offers enhanced education will not have to worry about students' whether they are poor, rich, white, black, green or yellow. People start pulling their kids from schools when the dumbing down starts.

In 2005, The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review captures similar sentiments from Lexington's Athletic Director, Neal Randel. "There's talk that a White girl will never be homecoming queen again. Tradition is so important to people here, and I know it just eats away at people's hearts that the things they held near and dear are never going to be the same again." Marvin Peterson, a senior manager at the Tyson Plant, pulled his son out of Lexington High School to attend another district 40 miles down the interstate. Peterson claims that the changing student demographics have weakened the athletic programs as well as the daily instruction, which have impacted in a negative way his son's ability to play college athletics. Mr. Peterson further states, "I want to support Lexington. I live in Lexington. I'm a big Lexington supporter. But I'm also a parent ... and I have to do what's best for my kids, in my mind" (Houser, 2005, November 20).

### Online Forums

As I looked at online forums and blogs I was surprised by the lack of information specifically on Lexington. I hypothesized that with the security of anonymity many citizens would be more free to share their views on Lexington and in particular Lexington Public Schools, good or bad. Three substantial posts from the websites <http://www.topix/forum/city/lexington-ne/> or

<http://www.topix/forum/city/cozad-ne/> are all that I found. They are titled, "Lexington has turned into a third world town" (2007), "ICE agents arrest 44 illegal immigrants" (2008), and "Lexington...more like Mexington" (2009). Among the three forums, 195 responses have accumulated. Some responses are from locals and others are from across the country. It is hard to tell at times if they are former residents of Lexington or just use these online forums as a place to espouse their feelings on immigration and other heated topics related to the increasing number of Latinos across the country. Despite the lack of online posts these do add another element of triangulation as to the feelings surrounding the Latino presence in Lexington. One post from Grand Island, Nebraska stated, "Lexington City officials are proud of their community. They are more worried about ICE raiding Tyson and arresting illegals than they are about the white families (who pay taxes) who are leaving town." Another person from Lexington commented by saying, "Town is ruined, local people do complain, but it doesn't do you any good. City officials are going to do whatever they want. The people who brought IBP to town left within two years of them coming to town. Left the rest of us to put up with there [sic] mess"(Lexington has turned into a third world town, 2007).

Despite the undercurrent of racial tones, those citizens who have weathered the initial storm of "rapid ethnic diversification" see bright skies for the future of Lexington. One of the reasons city and school officials feel confident about the direction of the community is due to the grand opening of the Dawson County Opportunity Center. A partnership was brokered between business and

school officials that refurbished the old Wal-Mart building into what is now a multi-agency building. Key tenants include Lexington Public Schools entire preschool program, post secondary classrooms with higher education and offices for Dawson Area Development. The grand opening ceremony was attended by Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman (Penner, 2011).

### Qualitative Interviews

The qualitative interviews are extremely valuable. They have given shape to some of the quantitative facts that have been illustrated earlier as well as bring in additional data pieces that were not available through quantitative methods. I was on site in Lexington for approximately five days in February 2011. I had appointments with ten individuals and was able to secure three additional interviews while in Lexington. I interviewed a total of thirteen individuals, six men and seven women, all of whom were White. I interviewed six professionals in the education field while the other individuals came from the Lexington Housing Authority, Dawson County Area Development Center, Real Estate, Lexington Chamber of Commerce, Tyson Foods Employee, and an employee of a local motel. The professionals who are currently in the public education sector where composed of three area superintendents from Lexington, Elwood, and Overton; two Lexington principals; one Lexington public school teacher. Eight out of the thirteen individuals interviewed either have children currently in Lexington Public Schools or at one point had children in the school system during the influx of the Latino student population. The individuals who I interviewed are

survivors of a significant community transition. They have stayed and dealt with all the difficulties associated with the IBP work force transition. The attitudes and opinions of those who left might differ; but in some respects they might differ in predictable directions.

The audio recordings of the thirteen interviews produced 147 pages of transcribed dialogue. These pages were then analyzed for thematic elements (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Seidman, 2006). From these transcripts six thematic topics emerged (Seidman, 2006), which help triangulate the notion of White flight in rural America. The themes that I will discuss are titled:

Changes/Transition

Perceptions

Fear

White Flight

Benefits of Diversity

Community Support

#### Changes/Transition

When the New Holland Plant closed its doors, the city authorities had two choices: attempt to recruit a new business to fill the void by the combine manufacturing or wither away to a small town that resembles most other Nebraska towns. Multiple times throughout my visit, individuals commented on this historical reality. One person shared, “The street that we lived on in Lexington, every house was for sale but ours, because everybody was transferred, or took a

job somewhere else. Our community literally just dried up overnight.”

Community officials created a committee to attract other businesses to provide an economic recovery. After several failed attempts to find a replacement business, IBP took over the old New Holland plant and moved in. The first several years were difficult on several fronts. Although Lexington sent out a research committee to other meatpacking communities to prepare as best they could, it still was a challenge because they lacked the infrastructure in their community for how fast they grew and they had a workforce that didn't look like them or speak their language. Interviewees remarked on the difficulties of the transition:

- It just seemed like the infrastructure of the community was not ready for it. Did not have the housing that was needed. Did not have the experience or the knowledge to know how to handle the influx of non-English speaking community members, and things like that. So it was a pretty rough transition for a few years when they first came in.
- Change is difficult for a lot of people no matter how many years you grow. Change is not something that's acceptable in a lot of people's eyes.
- I'm sure that it was probably a shock, but I don't think people anticipated what it really would be. I think there was a sense of gladness because our community was dying off from not having anything in the plant.

- It was great for us. There was a lot of concern because of the difference, the growth for one thing, and different population we were not used to having. We had some Hispanic, they'd been here for ever and ever, so we embraced them
- There was the handful of people that are loud and voice their opinion. So there was a lot of conflict. Definitely there was conflict and then just because of cultural, just because of language barriers and stuff.
- I remember some comments from our local Hispanics that they were upset at our newcomers, for maybe doing some things that put them all in a light that was not, you know, pleasing.
- There was a lot of changes going on. The community tried very hard to work with the new citizens to get them acclimated to our culture.

In some respects people felt that change brought opportunities but also difficulties. Some wondered what could be more perfect than a meatpacking plant in the middle of cattle country. Others were not pleased with the population that such an industry would attract. However, it is clear that the outcome of doing nothing would have been a crippling death for the community.

### Perceptions

When I arrived in Lexington, I drove to the local Wal-Mart, which is right off Interstate 80. Within minutes of entering the store I saw a few female patrons



whom I assume were clothed in traditional Somali attire and noticed the presence of many Latinos. Minutes after arriving, I was already trying to categorize or place labels on what I was experiencing to understand the context. Perceptions of Lexington have been negative for the most part since the meatpacking industry moved in. This negative reputation plagues the community today. The current issue of the local paper published an article with the headlines “Bennett wants to change outsiders’ opinions of Lexington.” In that article the Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce stated that their biggest hurdle today is, “changing the minds of outsiders who believe Lexington has a bad reputation. . . . we need to get the outside world past the stereotypes” (Rowan, 2011, February 5).

Superintendent of Lexington Schools, Todd Chessmore, shared with me what he was told when he was considering the job in 2006: “What I can tell you is that I have family that live in the area and the reputation of Lexington was not very good and still isn’t if you go out in some of the surrounding communities.” When others were interviewed and asked why Lexington has such bad press, most of the responses revolved around issues of race, immigration, crime, and drugs.

- Well, I don’t know what they are saying now but what I have heard, I mean the rumors are that there’s violence in the school, that there is violence in the high school. There’s fighting in the high school, that there’s drugs in the high school, that the high school is overrun with gangs and that the community is overrun with gangs.

- I have a lot of people when I go to conference, and they'll say, Oh, but I heard that there are gangs roaming the Wal-Mart parking lot and you're just not safe. Well, I've never had that experience.
- Well, I think the perception is that there is that you have the Hispanics and so there's a lot of crime.
- The Hispanics, the drugs, the gangs and things like that. They're there, and we don't deny that they're there. We also will tell you that we don't put up with it.
- Yeah well, and again, this is just my opinion on it, but with the world being so globally aware, people turn on their television and see what's happening in Chicago, and New York, and Detroit, and the crime. And of course the pictures that they flash on TV are not white kids. So I think people assume, well if that's what its like in the big city, that's what it's going to be like here eventually, if it's not already.

As perceptions turn into the realities for certain individuals, they can also be changed. Numerous times during the interviews, I was told that if you look for the bad you are going to find it. If you want to see all of the problems and issues that are facing a community and focus on those you will find them. Despite the many negative perceptions that were shared with me I did receive a few insightful comments that were more positive.

- I think that they perceive that there's a lot more problems than what there actually is. It's an eye-opener...but I think Lexington's done a good job of dealing with that.
- I had one guy that moved from here to Kearney, is an older retired guy and he came back to one of our meetings...he was one of the biggest nay sayers in Lexington. Now he's one of our biggest proponents because he says, "You guys don't know what you have...you know, it's not as bad as I thought it was."
- The eye opener for me was that Lexington was nothing like people said it was and what all the challenges and the supposed gangs and fights and drugs and all of that stuff [that] is supposed to be Lexington is virtually nonexistent.

Unfortunately, the reputation that continues to shape the image of Lexington is dominated by talk of Latinos dominating the community population while Lexington has dealt with increases of crime, drugs, and gangs. Citizens, business owners, and other communities surrounding Lexington observed the increased numbers of Latino workers coming into Lexington and attributing spikes in crime, drugs, and gangs to them. Those who lived in Lexington during the initial start up phase of IBP explained that doubling the size of the community by any sort of population to a community of 10,000 will naturally bring with it an increase in deviant behavior. This would especially be so if the largest employer is bringing in young males to work in the meatpacking plant. One individual addressed this topic in a rather forthright manner.

- You hate to stereotype everyone outside of your community as being racist or culturally biased or whatever. But, the reality of the majority of mid-western United States, Nebraska included, is White. And until the last 25-30 years, that's the way it was no matter what community you went to...but it wasn't necessarily because we had bad people coming in, it's because we had young stupid men coming in, just like anywhere else, you know. And so you know at that time the crime rate went up.

### Fear

Seventy-seven percent (10 of 13) of the individuals who were interviewed discussed fear on some level as a possible explanation for shifting population dynamics for the past 20 years. Perceptions, rumors, and stereotypes when mixed with fear create a reality for some individuals that cannot be changed.

- My elderly are very frightened, actually...but they're very frightened of the population.
- If they don't want to be in Lexington because they have fears of school districts or whatever they don't have to live there.
- Just the diversity scares people. It really does...I think that diversity kind of scares them because they start to believe the stories of drugs, violence, and those kinds of things.
- Lexington dropped two to two and one-half grade levels so parents got scared and moved to other communities to get them out.

- Oh, prejudice, there was prejudice because people were afraid.
- There was a lot of fear of the property values going down or, gosh they play loud music, and things like that.
- You have the perception well, I don't understand this culture, I don't know them, and so there might be some fear that well, I'm not sure if I want my son or daughter to go there.
- The initial charge was that I don't understand it; it's different with what I grew up with. So, there might be some fear.

At the conclusion of my visit I had the impression that the fears people were discussing were fears of the adults in the community, not the children. After interviewing two parents who had pulled their children from Lexington Public Schools, it became apparent that the children being moved or opted out of Lexington were not terribly unhappy with the situation. It was the fear of the parents.

- The kids don't know how to accept the different nationalities, the different ethnics. You don't know what to do with these other kids. I can see why parents would move their kids out. I would never, never move back to Lexington. I would never have my kids come to school here ever again.
- They don't want to deal with the monotony of the different cultures here in town. It's so much more uncomfortable here with all the different ethnics here now that people don't want to be around it. Kids don't want to be around it. They know that

there's a lot of trouble, a lot of problems, with the different cultures.

It sounds as if both parents are sharing with me their own biases and their own lack of understanding on how to integrate their children with the changing demographics. They almost sound as if they are calling out for help to better understand the other ethnic groups in the community. When the first parents says "You don't know what to do with these other kids," what she is really saying is that she does not know how to interact with this other group of people. A lack of understanding or a lack of multi-cultural experiences can then create fear of the unknown. Mr. Chessmore captured the core issue for this community when he said, "I think it's a case of White people being prejudiced. I don't know any better way to say it. People are afraid of things they don't understand and as a race, I think, that we have a tendency to be afraid of people or things that are different." In simplistic terms, if parents instill in their children a view of the world that certain cultures typically cause more trouble than other cultures then it is logical to assume that children will retain those same ideas. Conversely, if children learn from their parents to embrace diversity in its many forms then it is also logical to assume that those children will retain that view of the world. I believe the above responses show that fear is one of the major, if not the only reason, we see the enrollment trends in Lexington.

## White Flight

The number of individuals who broached the topic of White flight during our conversations surprised me. At times I got the impression that this was a historical occurrence rather than a possible ongoing trend. Many individuals recognized the phenomenon taking place although only one individual felt that it was continuing to take place. I recognized that although I will be sharing excerpts from my interviews that may highlight a particular viewpoint the topic of this dissertation is rather complex. To attempt to understand the reasoning behind such school enrollment trends has many unique complications, especially when dealing with issues such as race. To clarify some of the enrollment trends in Lexington Schools, I provided each interviewee a series of graphs of other area school districts' enrollment patterns by race (See Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4). I then shared with them a graph with Lexington's enrollment trends by race (See Figure 5). I simply asked what their interpretation of the graph was or how they could explain the steady decline of White student enrollment. Usually the topic of White flight emerged with a variety of qualifying statements or explanations. Here I share with you some of those statements and then share some of the possible explanations that were given to me.

- I think there was probably an impression that there was White flight, that people abandoned the community and I think some did. I think it would be very naïve to say no they didn't...

- I'm wondering if it's not part of it, if the Caucasians have moved out of Lexington and taken their children with them...I'm thinking that they're just picking up and leaving.
- I have to believe there was some White flight at that time.
- There's a term in town called White flight and that happened.
- We have a lot of teachers that live in Kearny that won't live here which is kind of sad, yeah...to get away from the Hispanic population I believe.
- There was a lot of what they called White flight with people leaving the community because of fears of what the community would become.
- Well, I mean, I'm not going to say that there's zero White flight because there is probably some. Probably more back when IBP first came.
- But, the ones that wanted to stay are still here, but then there are some that wanted to go to either a smaller community or a more affluent Caucasian community.
- The White flight was enormous, just enormous. Tons of people. But we still do have a large group of Caucasian families that will send their child too; they didn't move, but they've opted to go to Elwood or they've opted to go.
- I believe people would have thought we would have maintained a certain level of English-speaking population...but we had some



White flight that occurred during that time...many people left because they could get hourly jobs or factory jobs in other communities around and they left.

- They actually move somewhere off and that still might go back to the same reason our kids aren't going to that school. I don't like this community anymore, it's changed. It's different than when I grew up and I don't want to accept it. So I'm going somewhere else (speaking about others who have moved their kids).

Due to the semi-structured interview protocol that was established a few, follow-up questions were asked based upon the interviewee's responses. A sample follow-up question may have been, "what do you think may have caused such an enrollment fluctuation?" A variety of responses were given. Possible explanations revolved around the fact that the aging White community was no longer having school aged children, a lack of attention by teachers in the classroom who were dealing with second language learners, class sizes increasing above 30, a lack of one-on-one attention by the teachers, school buildings were not at a level that could accommodate a rapid influx of students, and school size was larger than what parents were used to. One overarching factor that seemed to play a significant role in these explanations was that the state funding formula did not account for students with high needs. Superintendent Chessmore placed the bulk of the blame on "the state refusing to step up to the plate and to fund the district in a way that would allow reasonable class sizes and to accommodate the education of the kids coming in." The current state funding formula has been

revised to account for such needs due to litigation brought by Lexington and three other high minority districts.

Although class size and building capacity play a role in the decisions parents made to pull out, it is not the only reason. If that were the case Latino students would leave as well for smaller class sizes so they might receive more individualized attention. I am confident that parents who advocate for the best learning environment for their children can be found across all cultures and all races, not just among White parents. However, the data does not support large numbers of Latino students leaving Lexington Schools. Unfortunately, one other possible explanation for the White student enrollment decrease is due to minority children moving into the schools.

- We get a few students whose parents say, “I just don’t want my kid in that environment.” Call it racist, call it whatever you want, I don’t know. I’m not going to put a label on it.
- Well, most of them weren’t overtly racist, I guess, is the word I want to use. But they would say things like, “Well, I’m just not sure that I like the environment.” These code words. “There’s too much gang violence.” Those kinds of things. “My kid doesn’t fit in any more.”
- I think a lot of people use the cultural issues of our community as an excuse for their kids not succeeding in these schools.
- I think the parents of your White kids are pushing them out of the nest. I mean, I want my kids to go away for a four-year college

and I want them to maybe have some letters behind their name. I want them to experience something... The Hispanic parents, they've already brought them here. They already think that this is a better life than what they probably had. Even if the kid was born here.

- The schools are too overcrowded, and there's cliques, there's different nationalities, and the more they keep bringing people in for the plants here, the school system's not getting any better.
- People aren't going to be bringing their kids to this school system. With Tyson and the different ethnic groups coming here... As for the Caucasians, it never used to be like this, it used to be a really good system. I can see where it's gone down and I can see where the different nationalities have taken over the school.

### Benefits of Diversity

Due to my own preconceived notions of what I expected to hear in the interviews, I was somewhat surprised by the many comments I heard from individuals who valued the diversity of their community. I continued to hear comments throughout the majority of my interviews that required me to justify the benefits of diversity as a core theme.

The impressions that I gathered from the community were that they did not dwell on the past. They embraced the future. They saw the diversity of their community as an asset for their students. They realized that each community,

even rural Nebraska, is connected to the global society. They felt that their community demographics were more representative of the changes taking place across the world with a more mobile society. I came to admire the determination and vision of the residents with whom I interviewed.

- From a very personal perspective I believe that we are a world that is much more diverse, and many times especially the Midwest our children never had the opportunity to run (with) children (or) people of other ethnicities and nationalities and race. And I really think that puts somebody in a disadvantage for the rest of their lives.
- I just think that the diversification is a positive for this area. I mean I honestly believe that. I think that it's created a lot of new opportunities for both the influx of people that came to Dawson County and the people that were already here.
- In some ways, a lot of ways for economic development, it's been a big plus, because we can show that we have a labor force. A lot of companies, especially if they are coming from somewhere besides Nebraska, are looking for a more diversified labor force.
- If you don't think you have diversity, go find it, because kids don't live in a bubble anymore. As connected, as the world is that we live in now, we can't be that naïve to think that our little bubble is all by itself out here. We have to operate with everybody else.

- We are preparing them (students) for the future once they leave because they are going to encounter people of opposite races. I think our kids are a way step up. I think that my son has realized that now more than he's in college.
- Our kids now know what it's like to go out into the big bad world and we don't have prejudices. Sure, we still have little bumps and things like that.

### Community Support

In conjunction with the value the community has placed on their diversity, they have also developed a resolve to continue to support their growth. The community understands that had the meatpacking plant not come, "Lexington would have dried up, and blown away." The residents of Lexington who have remained feel proud of their community. In fact, some feel that when "Those people that left Lexington when things got tough, we are glad they are gone. We didn't want them here anyhow. The people we wanted here are the ones that have stayed, fought the battle and made Lexington the type of community that it really is."

After all of the research, economic indicators, and school enrollment trends, what type of community is left in Lexington? The community has created a non-profit foundation that holds an annual fundraising dinner each year for community projects. According to Mr. Chessmore, they raise approximately \$220,000 each year. They have recently built a new million-dollar aquatic park

and a million-dollar community library and just finished an athletic complex that has multiple baseball fields as well as a soccer complex.

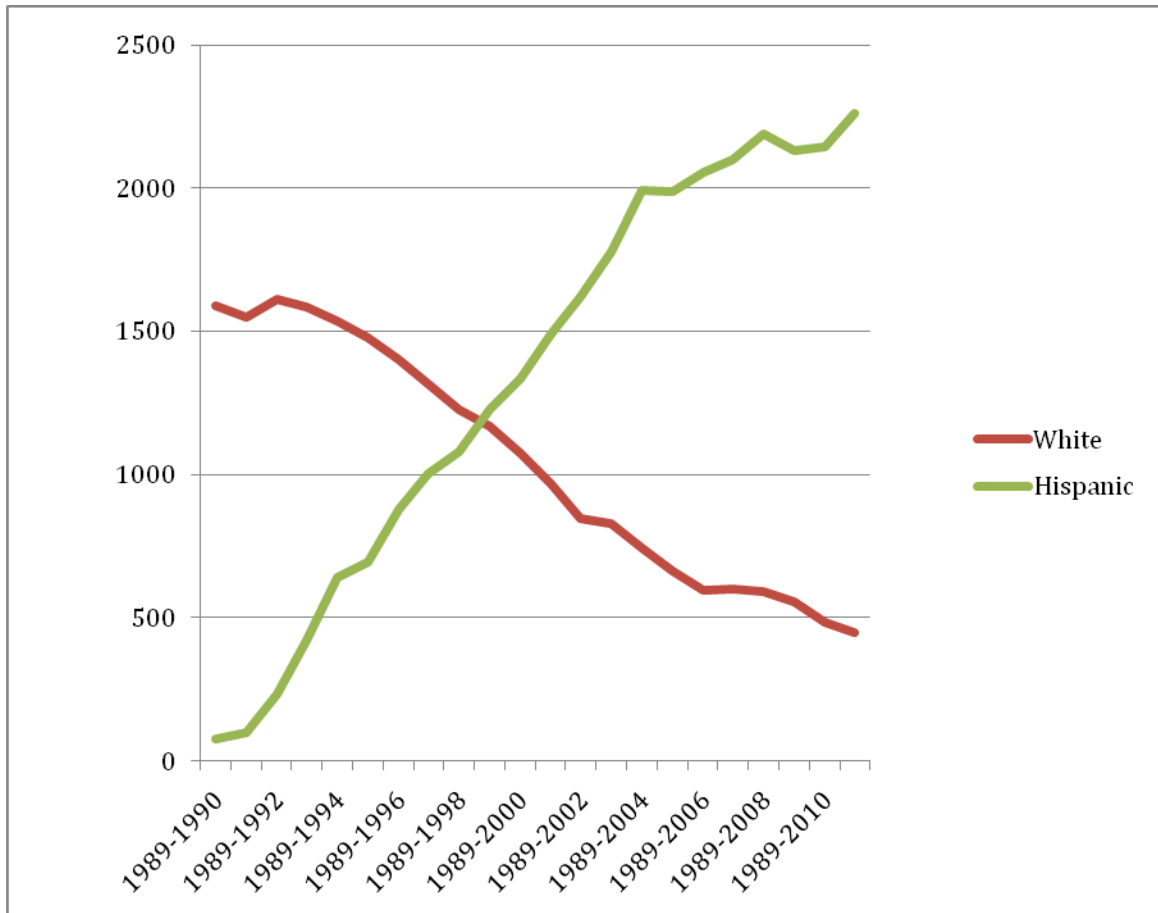
- I don't know of a community for a school that is 75% minority and 80% poverty, and yet you see the things going on in the community. It just really doesn't add up. And it adds up because those community leaders have stayed, and they've looked beyond color and they've said, "this is our community."

Not only has the community taken upon itself this never-say-die attitude, but the schools are fairly progressive. They have a dual language program in its sixth year of operation. According to the superintendent this is the second dual language program in the entire state. They currently have a one-to-one computer initiative in place. It is evident that their facilities have been upgraded to support the increased numbers of students. They also provide a variety of career paths for continuing education for their high school students. They offer advanced placement classes, college level classes through Central Community College, and many co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Students can also take advantage of a nursing program by working directly with the Plumb Creek Care Center. The most recent development was the opening of the Opportunity Center. In the Opportunity Center they now have the facilities that can support classes through Central Community College. These classes might utilize their new computer lab, nursing lab stations, and career and technical education classes such as welding. Despite all of the positive changes that have taken place, there are times when the community lacks support on issues. Before Todd Chessmore was

hired as the current superintendent, a school bond election was defeated. As a current superintendent I understand the many political, social, and economic factors that play into a successful bond campaign. The bond was defeated by a mere 121 votes. Despite the failure of the bond election community members take the philosophy of, “don’t cry about it. Let’s just roll up our sleeves and let’s do it and keep your nose to the grindstone and things will work out.” Lexington continues to hold a variety of fundraisers that raises hundreds of thousands of dollars each year that supports the development of community and educational initiatives.

## Chapter 5

### Analysis



**Figure 5: Lexington District Enrollment by Race**

“School choice arguably has become the most significant education policy issue of this decade. Choice programs such as vouchers, charter schools, open enrollment, and tuition tax credits continue to be discussed and debated at all levels of government and society” (Cobb & Glass, 1999, p. 2). One of the side issues stemming from the school choice debate focuses on the reasons parents use to relocate their children to other educational options.



When parents move their children from their neighborhood school in favor of an alternative educational setting (charter school, home school, or another public school) what are their motivations for doing so? Studies have found that most often parents are looking for smaller class sizes, better teachers, and safer schools (May, 2006 and Eckes, 2006). When the student demographics show a majority-minority student population, do parents use the above stated reasons as euphemisms for deeper feelings that are unfavorable toward students of color? Under the guise of “school choice” do White parents remove their children to other educational settings due to a high minority population at their neighborhood school? This warrants concern among education policymakers as well as stakeholders at community, district, and school levels. Is this school choice movement based entirely on our fundamental constitutional right of pursuing happiness for ourselves and posterity, or is there something else motivating this rationale? Do we speak of school choice in terms of creating a more competitive education system around fiscal responsibility and better economic funding or is this a circumlocution for racial prejudices that our society carries? Can it really be as simple as saying that when “choice” is an option we will see the resegregation of the American public school system close at hand (Gandara, 1994).

This case study attempts to add to that discussion. In particular, the purpose of such a study is to describe the richness of the events that have taken place in regards to the decline of the White student enrollment in the Lexington Schools and the variety of social forces that may impact such enrollment trends.

To further understand the many dynamics that play into the enrollment trends, I will enumerate in what follows and then discuss the possible explanations why such a drastic decline in White student enrollment occurred.

**1.) Economic conditions of the area for the last 20 years necessitated a large steady decline of citizens due to a sagging economy.**

Some of the responses I received through my interviews indicated that White parents left for economic reasons, for better paying jobs, more opportunities elsewhere. I would suggest that Latino parents also relocate for better paying jobs. In fact, Latinos have already established the fact that they are willing to relocate from California, Texas, Mexico, and even Central America and move to Nebraska for a decent wage. I am confident that the high mobility of the Latino population we have seen across this country is due to the fact that they are seeking better employment than what they currently have. If Latino families are willing to make those kind of sacrifices why not continue to relocate for higher paying jobs regardless of location? Moving for economic gains is not a unique phenomenon observed among White families who live in Lexington. Moving for increased economic benefits is not unique to any one specific race, but is a common thread running through the human race.

Bodvarsson and Van den Berg (2003) specifically analyzed this very issue in terms of the influx of a migratory workforce in Dawson County. They found that a willing immigrant labor force provided several positive economic outcomes. Most notable was the rebound of the housing market as well as an

increase in the number of new businesses. This in turn has created an increase in demand for goods and services, which has been reflected in the steady increase in sales tax revenues as outlined earlier. In conjunction with these positive economic indicators, the cost of living is below the national average as is the town's unemployment rate. By all accounts, Lexington is the economic hub of Dawson County and the other surrounding counties. The county seat is thriving and growing and showing gains in a variety of economic indicators more so than other nearby towns and counties. Then, why do we see an outmigration of a native workforce?

## **2.) The outmigration of the native workforce is a rural phenomenon.**

One of the responses I received when I probed about possible reasons for the exodus of White students from Lexington schools was this.

- I think it's not just a Nebraska problem. It's a rural problem. We're seeing kids want to get into cities. They've grown up where, you could interview any high school kid, I don't care if they're from Lexington, Gothenburg, or Cozad, whatever, they're going to say there's nothing to do around here. They're going to say there's no opportunities for them here. They're going to say it's boring. They want to go out and see something they haven't seen.

In response to such a claim, an examination of school enrollment trends for the surrounding communities as outlined in Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4, shows very little

decline in the White student enrollment for the last seventeen years. If students were truly leaving to escape the rural nature of their upbringing and to experience the world, I would expect to see declining enrollment in all population subgroups. I would also expect to see Gothenburg, Overton, Cozad, and Elwood declining in community population and size, which is not taking place either (See Table L4). The notion that White student enrollment declining in Lexington is due to a lack of opportunity in rural America could possibly be true; however, that same trend is not evident in the neighboring communities. The idea that the White students of Lexington are somehow trapped in their rural locale and are being held back by their geographic location is false, unless the community has changed drastically which has impacted their views of the world and their own opportunities. In the case of Lexington, the economic growth and the creation of new businesses has not hindered but expanded students' opportunities.

**3.) “Lexington schools lack the curriculum that will prepare my child for future success.”**

There is no indication from this research that the curriculum was not on a par with state requirements. Nor have I seen anything that would indicate that the curriculum of the neighboring community schools was in any way superior to the curriculum being taught in Lexington. Currently, Lexington schools offer more career opportunities to their students than those offered in the surrounding communities. If the goal of parents was to prepare their child for future success,

the diversity and curriculum in conjunction with the technological equipment Lexington Schools offer make it a wise choice.

**4.) Lexington Schools are not safe; they are full of gangs, drugs, and violence.**

Although this was not discussed at length it was mentioned through a few interviews and is a common perception of Lexington. Superintendent Chessmore when first hired heard similar rumors. Now that he has been in office for five years he says that those claims are absolutely false. My tour of several school facilities never gave me the impression of an unsafe school environment. I saw no police cars on campus or any sign of police security. No metal detectors were found at the campuses I visited. In fact the only security visible was the on site school administrator. I saw no signs of students lined up outside of the principal's office waiting for disciplinary action. Scanning the local paper and Internet forums for editorial information regarding Lexington schools never revealed any type of evidence that student safety was ever an issue. The listening survey the district conducted in June of 2002, reported favorable comments from the participants regarding student safety. The report also documented that 53% of the community and 54% of parents giving the school a grade of an A or B. Although there is obvious room for improvement the report showed no glaring deficiencies in addressing gangs, drugs, or student safety. Perceptions and rumors regarding safety issues in Lexington Schools are just that, speculation.

**5.) “My child is not getting the attention they used to receive in school; the class sizes are too large.”**

Supporting anecdotal comments from a few of those whom I interviewed stated that the facilities of the public schools were not equipped for the rapid increase in students. Modular classrooms were brought in to help ease the strain on the buildings. However, several individuals did mention that they felt their students were no longer getting the one-on-one attention they used to get due to the large number of non-English speaking students that were now in school. The current superintendent blames that reality on the Nebraska school funding formula. During this transition period, numerous country schools or Title I schools were springing up in the area. Lexington Schools were seeing many students opting out to attend these country schools that were predominantly White. Parents did not have the option to choose charter schools because they had not been legally approved by the state legislature and hence are nonexistent. At one point there was a parochial school but it had closed down a decade or more earlier. There was no evidence of an online or virtual academy for parents to choose. Currently there are only ten students registered for home schooling. Parents had very few educational options for their children, which did result in a higher level of frustration for parents during this transition period. However, was the frustration directed at the appropriate cause (lack of appropriate funding) or was it directed at a particular race? I cannot help but wonder what it would have been like had it been an influx of predominately English speaking White students? One parent responded with the following statement: “It doesn’t matter if it was

with other English-speaking kids or if it was mixed. They just don't take the time. It's a multi-cultural thing. They just don't." This statement is somewhat perplexing. At first this individual stated that it would not have mattered if it was all English-speaking kids moving into the school district but then she said it is a multi-cultural thing. Does this confusion in language bespeak confused feelings at a deeper level?

Analysis of these types of response are similar to what Suzanne Eckes (2006) found in her study. She proposed that many of the reasons parents gave for not integrating their White children with an African American student population at their neighborhood school could be viewed as euphemisms for racism. I too propose that this is a reasonable interpretation of some of what I heard in Lexington.

**6.) The White population has fewer children than the Latinos, there are fewer professional job opportunities for White professionals, and the traditional White citizen is aging and moving out.**

All of the above statements were shared with me throughout the course of my field research. All are factual statements. As I look at the community profile of Lexington and evaluate their different school, economic, and demographic contexts, I also compare these points of data to Overton, Cozad, Gothenburg, and Elwood. When making such comparisons I see four nearby communities that are a fraction of the size of Lexington. Despite their size, they too must be experiencing an aging population that is migrating out, fewer children entering

school due to a low birth rate among Caucasians, and many fewer professional opportunities for their communities.

If all of the above concerns are factual, then we should see the same declining school enrollment for White students and we should also see the same population decline in their communities due to a lack of new businesses or business opportunities for their professional citizenry. In Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4, we do not see the declining White student enrollment caused by the low birth rate of the Caucasian parents. In Table L4, the data does not support the notion that these other communities are experiencing to any great degree smaller communities because of the reasons listed above. What is evident is that if outmigration is taking place in these four smaller communities, then they are also experiencing an immigration of proportional White individuals. What I see is that Overton, Cozad, Elwood, and Gothenburg are demographically stagnant communities. Since the 1990 Census, they have shown very little population and diversity fluctuations of any significance. They have maintained the status quo, while in Lexington the influx of migratory workers has not only brought challenges but has also provided an economic boost.

The reality is that the only difference between Lexington and its surrounding communities is the large number of Latinos. When describing this enrollment phenomenon the data are clear: White students are leaving for reasons tied to issues of race. That type of reasoning puts a stain on humanity, a stain that in some cases can never be removed. The current citizens of Lexington feel the pressure. They have heard the racial comments and rumors. The community



leaders that have stayed feel an obligation and a duty to improve the legacy of their community. One community leader said it this way: “I guess White flight leaves a bad taste in your mouth, especially for the White people that are still here, putting their kids through school and graduating their kids.” Lexington should feel encouraged by the many positive views their citizens carry with them. Many individuals with whom I spoke cherished the diversity of the community. One person shared the following analyses.

- My brother-in-law and sister-in-law have their children in a private Catholic school. When you go to their events there’s all these White kids, and to me I’m like, “Wow, you are totally doing your kids a disservice by not getting them out.” And everything they do is with that same socioeconomic group and you’re like, “that is not the real world.” And so it almost makes that environment more small town than us.

### Conclusion

The facts of this case study are that 1,138 White students have left Lexington Public Schools since 1989-1990. Over the course of the last twenty-two years, for every two Latino students who enrolled in school, one White student left. The reasons with the exception of White flight that have been enumerated to explain such a drastic decline in White student enrollment numbers do not appear to hold true when those same arguments are applied to the other local communities. There are credible statements that identify insufficient

classroom space and per pupil funding streams that were negatively associated with the increase of migratory children in the schools as causes for White families taking their children out of Lexington's public schools. To lay blame for increased class sizes and language barriers at the feet of children of one particular race is cause for concern. District and school officials staffed schools as best they could with the funding they were given. As a current rural superintendent in Arizona, operating in the midst of the worst housing and economic meltdown since the Great Depression, I too can attest to the lack of funding which is so critical to the operation and staffing of any school district. Despite the complexities of rapid ethnic diversification, immigration, and school choice, the reality of this case study shows that the reasons parents have removed their children from Lexington Schools can be linked to the large presence of Latinos. In other words, White flight is not just taking place in large urban areas but can also be found in the heartland of America. I can only conclude that White flight existed In Lexington “motivated primarily by racial prejudice; that Whites negative stereotypes about the personal qualities of minority-group members lead them to avoid residential conflict with these groups (Crowder, 2000, p.253).”

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APPENDIX A

APPLICATION FOR STUDENT TRANSFER

**APPLICATION FOR STUDENT TRANSFER  
 NEBRASKA ENROLLMENT OPTION PROGRAM  
 2010/2011 SCHOOL YEAR**

**SECTION 1: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PARENT, LEGAL GUARDIAN, OR STUDENT (if an emancipated minor) requesting a transfer to attend a school district other than the district of residence. Between September 1 and March 15, this application must be sent, (postmarked) or delivered to the Option School District. If after March 15, this application MUST be accompanied by a WRITTEN release (waiver) from an authorized official of the Resident District or Section 2 must be completed by the resident school district.**

Student Name (Last, First, M.I.)		Birthdate: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____ Sex: F <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/>	
Parent/Guardian Name (Last, First, M.I.)		Mailing Address	Residence Address (if different)
City		Zip Code	Telephone Number (home/work)
Expected Grade Level at Time of Enrollment: K <input type="radio"/> 1 <input type="radio"/> 2 <input type="radio"/> 3 <input type="radio"/> 4 <input type="radio"/> 5 <input type="radio"/> 6 <input type="radio"/> 7 <input type="radio"/> 8 <input type="radio"/> 9 <input type="radio"/> 10 <input type="radio"/> 11 <input type="radio"/> 12 <input type="radio"/>			
Does Student Require Special Education Services? (check one)		Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
If Yes, Does the Student Have an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?		Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Is the Applicant a Sibling of a Current Option Student? (check one)		Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Has the Applicant Attended Option District for the Immediately Preceding 2 Years?		Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Does Applicant qualify for free or reduced price lunches?		Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
Signature of Parent		Date	
Resident District Name and Number		Building Currently Attending	
Option District Name and Number		Building Preference	

**Application must be sent or delivered to the Option School District**

**SECTION 2: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RESIDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT (only if this application is submitted by the parent, legal guardian or student after the March 15 deadline).**

The resident district waives deadline dates: _____	The resident district will not waive deadline dates: _____
Reason for Denial (required): _____	
Name and Title of Authorized Official: _____	
Date: _____	Signature: _____

**SECTION 3: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE OPTION SCHOOL DISTRICT. Whether approved or denied, send photocopies to the Applicant, the Resident District and to the Department of Education.**

OPTION SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME: _____		Date this Application Received: _____
County: _____	County-District Number: _____	Phone Number: _____
The Option School District Approves _____ (or) Disapproves _____ this application.		
Reason for Denial (required): _____		
If district approves this application, date student will begin attending Option District: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____		
Name and Title of Authorized Official: _____		
Date Application Accepted/Rejected: _____	Signature: _____	

**CHANGE OF STATUS**

To be completed by an authorized official of the Option District (or parent) when the Option student quits the option, withdraws the application prior to attending or if the Option student's Resident District changes for any reason and the student continues attending the Option District (original resident). **Send photocopies to the Applicant, the Resident District and the Department of Education.**

The Status of This Student is Changed for the Following Reason(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawal of the application prior to attending the present school year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Has completed the grades offered in the Option District.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attending High School in a district which is affiliated with the resident District.
<input type="checkbox"/> Cancellation of Enrollment Option during the present school year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discontinuation of school attendance (moved away, deceased, etc.).	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____		
Date Change of Status: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____		
New Mailing Address: _____		
City: _____ Zip Code: _____ Telephone Number (home/work): _____		
New Resident School District Name: _____		
County: _____ County District Number: _____ Phone Number: _____		
Name and Title of Option District Official (or parent): _____		
Date: _____	Signature: _____	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE

Revised 4/09

## INFORMATION FOR COMPLETING THE ENROLLMENT OPTION APPLICATION FORM

Photocopies should be made for communication and coordination of the necessary information with Applicants, Schools, and the Department of Education.

When completing applications for the Enrollment Option Program, applicants and school officials should be aware of the following dates:

<b>September 1:</b>	Earliest date for submitting applications for the next school year.
<b>March 15:</b>	Deadline for filing applications unless a waiver of dates is granted.
<b>April 1:</b>	On or <u>before</u> this date, the Option District must inform the Resident District of all names of applications.
<b>April 1:</b>	Final date for option district to respond to the application.

### DEFINITIONS:

<b>Option School District:</b>	A public school district the student chooses to attend other than his or her resident school district.
<b>Option Student:</b>	A student that has chosen to attend a public school district other than his or her resident school district, including a student who resides in a learning community and who has chosen to attend an option school district in such learning community prior to the effective date of the establishment of such learning community, but not including a student who resides in a learning community and who enrolls in another school district in such learning community.
<b>Resident School District:</b>	The public school district in which a student resides, or attends as a resident student.
<b>Note:</b>	The Resident and Option School Districts should retain this form until the student completes school or cancels the Enrollment Option.

---

### DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING SECTION 1:

- The parent or legal guardian should complete this section. The student may complete this section if he or she is an emancipated minor.
- A separate application form is required for each applicant.
- Indicate in the appropriate spaces:
  - If the student needs Special Education services and has an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
  - If the applicant has a sibling that is a current option student.
  - If the applicant has attended the option district for the immediately preceding two years.
  - (Optional) if the applicant qualifies for free or reduced price lunches.
- Applicant must currently reside in the Resident School District listed in Section 1 at the time of application.
- The application should be signed or delivered to the office of the superintendent of schools of the Option School District or to the president of the school board in those districts that do not have a superintendent of schools.

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### DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING SECTION 2:

- This is only needed if the application is made after March 15.
- If the Resident School District will not waive deadline dates, the reason for denial must be stated in the appropriate space.

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### DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING SECTION 3:

- If the Option School District approves the application, indicate by marking the appropriate space.
- Submission of an incomplete form is not an adequate reason to disapprove an application. The Option School District officials should secure a complete form prior to the March 15 deadline.
- If the Option School District disapproves the application, the reason for disapproval must be stated in the appropriate space.
- Whether approved or disapproved, photocopies of any application received by the March 15 deadline must be sent by April 1 to the Applicant, the Resident School District, and the Department of Education.
- **NOTE:** Applications submitted after the March 15 deadline must have Section 2 completed or be accompanied by a written release from the Resident School District that includes a statement of deadline waiver, the signature of the superintendent or school board president, and the date of such action. The application should also be sent to the Applicant, the Resident School District, and the Department of Education.

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### DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE CHANGE OF STATUS SECTION:

- When an Option student moves out of the Resident School District, completes grades offered in the Option School District, becomes a resident of the affiliated high school district or ceases to attend the Option School District for other reasons, the Option School District should complete the Change of Status section and send photocopies to the Applicant, the Resident School District and the Department of Education.
- When the parents seek to withdraw an application or cancel an approved Enrollment Option transfer, they may notify the Option District official who will then complete the Change of Status, or parents may complete the Change of Status and affix their own signature. In either case, copies must be provided to the Option and Resident districts and the Department of Education.

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### APPEAL PROCESS:

The parent or legal guardian may appeal a rejection of an application or of a request to release to the State Board of Education within thirty days after the date the notification of the rejection is received. A sample petition form for this appeal can be found in Appendix A of the Nebraska Department of Education's Rule 61 (<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/LEGAL/RULE61.htm>).

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If the Applicant or School District officials have questions or need assistance in completing this form, contact:

Nebraska Department of Education  
Enrollment Option Program  
301 Centennial Mall South  
P.O. Box 94987  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68509-4987  
Telephone (402) 471-3323

Additional copies of the "Application of Student Transfer - Nebraska Enrollment Option Program" form may be downloaded from our website at: <http://ess.nde.state.ne.us/OrgServices/EnrollmentOption/ApplicationForm.htm>

Revised 6/08

## APPENDIX B

### GUIDING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please share with me how long you have lived in Lexington, Nebraska?
2. Where you born and raised in the Lexington area?
3. How long have you worked in your current capacity?
4. Does Lexington have any private or parochial schools besides the public school system? Do any of the local communities have any private or parochial schools?
5. Did you have any children/grandchildren/nieces/nephews attend Lexington schools?
6. Were you happy with the education they received at Lexington?
7. Do you know what Lexington was like before IBP moved in?
8. Can you tell me what happened to Lexington after the meatpacking plant opened?
9. In your opinion how has the meatpacking industry impacted Lexington Schools?
10. According to the Nebraska Department of Education Lexington has experienced some interesting enrollment patterns? (Show Graph) What do you think is taking place in this chart? How would you explain the enrollment pattern?
11. What do you think could cause such an enrollment fluctuation?
12. I pulled enrollment trends from other area school districts and they do not seem to be experiencing the same pattern as in Lexington, why do you think that is?
13. Have you known anyone that has removed his or her children from Lexington Schools?
14. If so, what were the reasons they expressed to you for that change?
15. How do you think the typical citizen has reacted over the last ten years seeing a large influx of migrant workers enter Lexington and Lexington Schools?
16. Why is that?



17. Do you have any idea where a majority of the White students are currently attending school? Charter schools, online/virtual schools, homeschooling, etc...
18. Do you think some community members are afraid of sending their children go to school with a large number of immigrants? Why is that?

APPENDIX C

Option Enrollment Data

	OPTION ENROLLMENT		OPTION OUT TO													
	IN	OUT	OTHER	COZAD	OVERTON	ELWOOD	ELM CREEK	S.E.M.	DIST #4	DIST #15	DIST #16	DIST #17	DIST #21	DIST# 22	DIST #25	
2010-2011		3			2			1								
2009-2010	8	21		9	8	2		2								
2008-2009	15	30	4	3	17	2		4								
2007-2008	14	10		2	4	1		3								
2006-2007	4	2			1		1									
2005-2006	8	9		1	6										2	
2004-2005	25	44		11	12	1		6		4	2	3		3	2	
2003-2004	14	24	2	2	2	3		3		2	2	5			3	
2002-2003	24	16	1		1	4		1			2	4			3	
2001-2002	36	34	2	2	5	5	1	1		1	4	9		3	1	
2000-2001	22	34	2	5		8		13				4			2	
1999-2000	26	37	3	4	12	5		1		1		8			3	
1998-1999	23	35	1		13	8		2		3	2	3		2	1	
1997-1998	19	27	3	2	3	5				3	5	2		1	3	
1996-1997	14	48	13	2	13	7				5		4			4	
1995-1996	19	15	1	1	6	2	2			2					1	
1994-1995	26	21	3	3	2	1			1		2	1		2	6	
1993-1994	11	5	2			2		1								
1992-1993	3	2	2													
TOTAL	311	414	0	39	47	105	56	4	37	1	21	19	43	0	11	31

APPENDIX D

Sales Tax Revenues

Counties	1998 Net Taxable Sales	1997 Net Taxable Sales	% Change
Dawson	155,672,079	152,787,282	1.9
Lexington	86,614,632	84,197,572	2.9
	1999	1998	
Dawson	157,970,433	155,672,079	1.5
Lexington	86,981,109	86,614,632	0.4
	2000	1999	
Dawson	165351935	157970433	4.7
Lexington	92094763	86981109	5.9
	2001	2000	
Dawson	167982483	165351935	1.6
Lexington	94485479	92094763	2.6
	2002	2001	
Dawson	170,844,196	167,982,483	1.7
Lexington	96,939,490	94,485,479	2.6
	2003	2002	
Dawson	179,360,001	170,844,196	5
Lexington	101,349,366	96,939,490	4.5
	2004	2003	
Dawson	192,242,775	179,360,001	7.2
Lexington	111,397,267	101,349,366	9.9
	2005	2004	
Dawson	204,377,844	192,242,775	6.3
Lexington	121,036,030	111,397,267	8.7
	2006	2005	
Dawson	205,309,128	204,377,844	0.5
Lexington	120,987,961	121,036,030	0
	2007	2006	
Dawson	221,158,624	205,309,128	7.7
Lexington	127,158,624	205,309,128	5.3
	2008	2007	
Dawson	224,601,120	221,158,624	1.6
Lexington	131,889,075	127,158,624	3.5
	2009	2008	
Dawson	224,955,733	224,601,120	0.2
Lexington	135,429,563	131,889,075	2.7

APPENDIX E

Photographs of Lexington



Business offices in forefront, meatpacking plant behind





Trailer housing for Latino workforce described by Eric Schlosser as “rural ghettos”.







Dawson County Opportunity Center

APPENDIX F

IRB Application

<p>Arizona State University Office of Research Integrity and Assurance P.O. Box 871103 Tempe, AZ 85287-1103 Phone: 480-965-6788 Fax: (480) 965-7772</p>		<p><i>For Office Use Only:</i> Date Received:  HS Number:</p>
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**SOCIAL BEHAVIORAL APPLICATION HUMAN SUBJECTS**

**PROTOCOL INFORMATION**

Protocol Title: Date:  
 11/26/10  
 White Flight in Rural America: The Case Study of Lexington, Nebraska

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI)**

Please note that the PI's CV and human subject's protection training certification must be attached with this application.

Name and Degree(s): Gene V Glass

Department/Center:  
 Emeritus Professor of the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education

Mailing Address:

Email: Gene Glass <glass@asu.edu> Phone: Fax:

University Affiliation:  
 Professor (Emeritus Professor)  
 Associate Professor  
 Assistant Professor  
 Instructor  
 Other: Please specify. ("Other" categories may require prior approval.  
 Students cannot serve as the PI)

**CO-INVESTIGATORS (CO-I)**

- A Co-I is anyone who has responsibility for the project’s design, implementation, data collection, data analysis, or who has contact with study participants.
- If the project involves medical procedures or patient care that the PI is not certified or licensed to conduct, a responsible physician or other certified or licensed professional must be included as a Co-I. The application must include a copy of supporting documentation for this individual (CV, license, board certification etc).

Name	Study Role	Affiliation	Department	Email/Tel/Fax
Student (yes/no)				
Joseph C. Farnsworth	Graduate Student	at ASU		Mary Lou Fulton
<a href="mailto:jan21@asu.edu">jan21@asu.edu</a>		Yes		

### **PROJECT FUNDING**

1a) How is the research project funded? (A copy of the grant application **must** be provided prior to IRB approval)

- Research is **not funded** (Go to question 2)
- Funding decision is pending
- Research is **funded**

b) What is the source of funding or potential funding? (Check all that apply)

- |                                      |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Private Foundation | <input type="checkbox"/> Department Funds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subcontract | <input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship         | <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |

c) Please list the name(s) of the sponsor(s):

d) What is the grant number and title?

e) What is the ASU account number/project number?

f) Identify the institution(s) administering the grant(s):

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

2. Provide a **brief** description of the **background, purpose, and design** of your research. Avoid using technical terms and jargon. Describe all interactions with potential study participants (e.g., how identified, how recruited) including all of the **means you will use to collect data** (e.g. instruments, measures, tests, questionnaires, surveys, interview schedules, focus group questions, observations). Provide a short description of the tests, instruments, or measures. (If you need more than a few paragraphs, please attach additional sheets.) **Attach copies of all instruments and questionnaires. FOR ALL OF THE QUESTIONS, WRITE YOUR ANSWERS ON THE APPLICATION RATHER THAN SAYING “SEE ATTACHED”.**

"White Flight" has been well documented in urban city centers. However, this case study has investigated Lexington, Nebraska, a rural community of approximately 10,000 citizens, in the midst of a population influx of minorities. This population shift has increased the representation of Hispanic, Asian, and now Somali students in the public school system. This increase in minority enrollments in the Lexington public schools has been accompanied by a dramatic decrease in White, Anglo students. This study attempts to identify the reasons for the exodus of White students from the public school setting.

I will attempt to interview approximately 10-15 citizens of Lexington, Nebraska. With the help of my research committee I would like to interview school officials, municipal authorities, parents, and a few specialist that might include a realtor and the local newspaper editor.

This case study will employ elements of both quantitative and qualitative research. The qualitative components of this study will yield information that will be interpreted and analyzed to help me gain a better understanding what is happening to the population of the Lexington public schools. This will require some level of interpretation by the researcher that may be more heavily criticized (Stake, 1995). However, the usage of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies will give a balanced and accurate illustration of the circumstances of Lexington. To gain a better understanding of these questions I have consulted the methodological strategies used by May (2006) and Eckes (2006). For this study I will not conduct structured interviews as May (2006) did in her study. However, I have selected several questionnaires as an interview

guide when constructing my own interview format (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). I will use a guided, semi-structured, open-ended interview platform patterned after the in-depth, phenomenological based interview (Seidman, 2006). For the purposes of this study I will shorten the three separate interviews recommended by Seidman (2006), into one 60-minute interview. Although I have shortened Seidman's (2006) protocol, the three distinct interview stages will be present: primarily a focused life history, details of the experience, and reflection of the meaning. Standard protocols for selecting and conducting semi-structured interviews will be followed (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Using mixed methods for this case study will only help to clarify and triangulate the data to help give clear and concise answers to the research questions which will be used to help guide my interviews:

- How do the local citizens react as more minority students start entering public schools in a traditionally White, secluded community?
- Do parents move to other rural communities that reflect demographics they are traditionally used to?
- Are students enrolling in other educational institutions including homeschooling, while they continue to reside in their community?
- Do citizens fight the influx of new immigrant workers or do they welcome them into their neighborhoods?
- As the diversity of Lexington increases, will behaviors emerge that reflect a migratory pattern of White flight?

- What are the impacts on the school system when large numbers of Hispanic students enroll?
- How have community members felt regarding the influx of migrant workers and their families?
- How do white students react when they are exposed to demographic shifts of their school population that exceed what the average White student sees?
- How do community members react when the student population of their local school shifts radically in ethnicity?
- How do White families react to increased inter-racial and inter-cultural interactions that they have limited dealings with?
- Are White community members afraid of the influx of Hispanic migratory workers and their families?
- What are the implications for other public school systems?

### **STUDY DURATION**

3. What is the expected duration of the study through data analysis? (Include a timeline, if applicable).

I anticipate the data collection process will last until April of 2011.

a. When is the expected date that you wish to begin research? (MM/DD/YY)  
 12/01/2010 (must be after submission date) Note: Protocols are approved for a maximum of 1 year. If a project is intended to last beyond the approval period, continuing review and reapproval are necessary. Research cannot begin until you have received an approval letter.

### IRB APPROVAL

4. Has this project been reviewed by another IRB?  Yes  No (If yes, please complete the information below and attach a copy of the IRB approval materials).

a) What is the name of the institution?

b) What is the current IRB approval date/status of IRB application?  
approved

### STUDY SITES

5. Where will the study be conducted? (Check all that apply)

On campus (Please indicate building(s) and room number (s) when known)

Off campus (Please provide location and letter of permission, where applicable) I will be conducting a case study in Lexington, Nebraska. I will interview adults that are 18 years of age and older. I do not anticipate gaining any special permission from any institutions.

### SAMPLE SIZE/DURATION

6a) What is the expected number of individuals to be screened for enrollment? I hope to interview between 10-15 individuals.

b) What is the **MAXIMUM** number of subjects that you plan to enroll in the study? 15

c) What is the approximate number of: 7 Males 8 Females

d) Indicate the age range of the participants that you plan to enroll in your study. 18 to ?

e) What is the expected duration of participation for each subject? (at each contact session and total) 1 - 60 minute interview.

### SUBJECTS

7. Will the study involve any of the following participants? (Please check all that apply if your study specifically targets these populations)

Children (under 18)

Pregnant women

Prisoners or detainees detained or imprisoned

Persons at high risk of becoming

Decisionally impaired their health?

Patients- what is the status of

Fetuses

Native Americans



Non-English speakers (Include copy of all materials in language of participants and certification of the translation and back-translation: <http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/humans/forms> )

- a) If **any** of the above categories have been checked, please state how you will protect the rights and privacy of these individuals.

Lexington, Nebraska has experienced a significant population change for the past 20 years that has resulted in over 50% of the population being identified as Hispanic/Latino. It is possible that one or more of my interviewees speaks English as a second language. No interviews will be conducted in Spanish only English. I will ensure that no names or identifiable characteristics, or titles are used to jeopardize the confidentiality and trust study participants have placed with me.

- b) Please provide the rationale for the choice of the subjects including any inclusion criteria.

The choice of the subjects is directly related to the purpose of the case study, which is the population shift within the school population and how that has affected the White enrollment. For this purpose I will interview school officials that have dealt with the population shift. I would also like to interview municipal leaders, parents, and the local newspaper which has accumulated substantial documentation over the last ten years.

- c) Will any ethnic/racial or gender groups be excluded from this study? If so, provide the rationale for the exclusion criteria.

I will primarily seek to interview the above-mentioned individuals. At this point I am not aware of the races or genders of the individuals whom I wish to interview.

I will not purposefully exclude any ethnic/race or gender groups willingly.

However, at this point I am not sure of the race and gender of the individuals I wish to interview.

### **RECRUITMENT**

8. Describe the process(es) you will use to **recruit participants** and inform them about their role in the study. **(Attach copies of any recruitment materials.)**

A conference over the telephone will take place where in I ask the candidate if I can set up an interview date and time. Before I arrive I will have mailed out my consent form for their participation in my case study.

a) Will any of the following be used? **(Check all that apply and attach copies)**

- Internet/Email
- Newspapers/radio/television advertising
- Posters/brochures/letters
- Other

### **DECEPTION**

9. Does the proposed research require that you deceive participants in any way?

- Yes  No

a) If your response is “yes,” describe the type of **deception** you will use, indicate why it is necessary for this study, and provide a copy of the debriefing script.

### **COMPENSATION**

10. Will any type of compensation be used? **(e.g. money, gift, raffle, extra credit, etc)**

- a)  Yes **(Please describe what the compensation is)**  No (go to question 11)

b) Explain why the compensation is reasonable in relation to the experiences of and burden on participants.

c) Is compensation for participation in a study or completion of the study? (Note: participants must be free to quit at any time without penalty including loss of benefits).

Participation

Completion

d) If any of the participants are economically disadvantaged, describe the manner of compensation and explain why it is fair and not coercive.

### **INFORMED CONSENT**

11. Describe the procedures you will use to **obtain and document informed consent and assent**. **Attach copies of the forms that you will use**. In the case of secondary data, please attach original informed consent or describe below why it has not been included. Fully justify a request for a waiver of written consent or parental consent for minors.

(The ASU IRB website has additional information and sample consent and assent forms.)

## INFORMATION LETTER-INTERVIEWS

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Gene V Glass in the Mary Lou Fulton College of Education at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to try and determine why the White student enrollment in Lexington Public Schools has declined over the last twenty years.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve one 60-minute interview. During this interview we will discuss your views on the topic. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop the interview at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty, and all participants will be 18 years or older.

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. There is no benefit to you for participating in this case study.

Your responses will be confidential. Your name or job title will not be used in any way. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used. Transcripts of your interview will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and subsequently shredded after the research study has concluded.

I would like to audiotape this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be taped; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. The recording of your interview will be stored on my office computer until a paper transcript has been produced, at which time the recording will be deleted.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team headed by Dr. Gene V Glass at <glass@asu.edu>. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

Sincerely,

Joseph C. Farnsworth  
<jan21@asu.edu>

## **RISKS**

12. What are the potential risks of the research? (Check all that apply)

- Physical harm
- Psychological harm
- Release of confidential information
- Other

a) Describe any potential risks to human subjects and the steps that will be taken to reduce the risks. Include any risks to the subject's well-being, privacy, emotions, employability, criminal, and legal status.

The results of this research study may be used in reports; presentations, and publications, but the researcher will not identify any candidates. I will not use any identifying names. Subject codes will be utilized if it is necessary to become more detailed in my report. Audio recordings of interviews will be erased once the transcripts have been produced. These transcripts will remain in a locked filing cabinet. The researcher is the only person who has keys to access this cabinet

## **BENEFITS**

13a) What are the potential benefits to the individual subject, if any, as a result of being in the study?

No known benefits for the subjects at this time.

b) What are the potential benefits, if any, to others from the study?

The possible benefits in the research may lead to further research on parental choice.

## **DATA USE**

14. How will the data be used? (Check all that apply)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dissertation                                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Publication/journal article |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis project  | <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate honors                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Results released to participants/parents employer or school | <input type="checkbox"/> Results released to                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Results released to agency or organization                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Conferences/presentations              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please describe):                                    |   |

## **PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

15. Describe the steps you will take to ensure the confidentiality of the participants and data.

The results of this research study may be used in reports; presentations, and publications, but the researcher will not identify specific individuals. I will not use any identifying names. Subject codes will be utilized if it is necessary to become more detailed in my report. Audio recordings of interviews will be erased once the transcripts have been produced. These transcripts will remain in a locked filing cabinet. The researcher is the only person who has keys to access this cabinet.

a) Indicate how you will safeguard data that includes identifying or potentially identifying information (e.g. coding).

Subject codes may be used to protect individual privacy. I will secure all transcripts in a locked cabinet and erase all audio interviews once the transcripts have been produced.

b) Indicate when identifiers will be separated or removed from the data. [Not sure how to answer this](#)

c) Will the study have a master list linking participants' identifying information with study ID codes, and thereby, their data? If so, provide a justification for having a master list. (Note: In many cases, the existence of a master list is the only part of a study that raises it above minimal risk, that is, places participants at risk.)

A master list will not be kept.

d) If you have a master list and/or data with identifiers, where on campus will the list and/or data be kept? **(Data sets with identifiers and master lists, whether electronic or in hard copy, should be securely stored on an ASU campus except in unusual circumstances (e.g., research conducted out of the state or country).)**

e) If you have a master list, when will it be destroyed?

f) How long do you plan to retain the data?  
The data will be kept long enough to fulfill the graduation requirements to receive my doctorate degree. After I have satisfied the graduation requirements and those of my dissertation committee the transcripts will be destroyed and other sensitive data will be disposed of.

g) How will you dispose of the data?

Transcripts will be shredded along with other sensitive information.

h) Where on campus will you store the signed consent, assent, and parental permission forms (If applicable)? **(Consent, assent, and parent permission forms should be securely stored on an ASU campus)**

As the co-investigator I have secured office space through Dr. Arnold Danzig to secure my paperwork.

#### **INVESTIGATOR INTERESTS**

16 Have all investigator filed a current annual conflict of interest questionnaire with the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance? It is the COEUS module at: <http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/coi>  Yes  No

a) Do any of the researchers or their family members, have a financial interest in a business which owns a technology to be studied and/or is sponsoring the research?  Yes  No (If yes, please describe and disclose in the consent form.)

b) Are there any plans for commercial development related to the findings of this study?  
 Yes (If yes, please describe.)  No

c) Will the investigator or a member of the investigator's family financially benefit if the findings are commercialized?  
 Yes (If yes, please describe.)  No

d) Will participants financially benefit if the findings are commercialized?  
 Yes (If yes, please describe.)  No

### **BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS**

17a) Will biological materials be collected from subjects or given to subjects?  Yes  No (If no, please skip to question 18)

b) Provide a description of the material (blood, tissue, vectors, antibodies, etc.) that will be used:

c) If the study involves human blood, do you have the required ASU Biosafety disclosure on file?  Yes  No (If yes, what is the Biosafety Disclosure number.)

d) Will any of the material being used in the study come from a third party?  Yes  No (If yes, attach copy of the Material Transfer Agreement if required.)

e) Does this study involve transfer of genetic material of animal tissue into humans?  Yes  No  
(If yes, please cite the ASU Institutional Biosafety Disclosure number).

### **TRAINING**

**18. The research team must document completion of human subjects training from within the past 3 years.**

(For more information see: <http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/training/humans> )

**Please provide the date that the PI and co-investigators completed the training and attach the certificate.**

### **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**



In making this application, I certify that I have read and understand the ASU Procedures for the Review of Human Subjects Research and that I intend to comply with the letter and spirit of the University Policy. Changes in to the study will be submitted to the IRB for written approval prior to these changes being put into practice. **I also agree and understand that informed consent/assent records of the participants will be kept for at least three (3) years after the completion of the research. Attach a copy of the PI's CV unless one is already on file with the Office of Research Integrity and Assurance.**

Name (first, middle initial, last):

**Gene V Glass**

Signature: *Gene V Glass*

Date: 11/29/2010

<b>FOR OFFICE USE:</b>	<p>This application has been reviewed by the Arizona State University IRB:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Full Board Review</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Expedite Categories:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Exempt Categories:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved    <input type="checkbox"/> Deferred    <input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Project requires review more often than annual Every _____ months</p>
	<p>Signature of IRB Chair/Member: _____ Date: _____</p>



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Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

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**To:** Gene Glass  
ED

*fr* **From:** Mark Roosa, Chair *SM*  
Soc Beh IRB

**Date:** 12/06/2010

**Committee Action:** Exemption Granted

**IRB Action Date:** 12/06/2010

**IRB Protocol #:** 1011005764

**Study Title:** White Flight in Rural America: The Case Study of Lexington, Nebraska

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2).

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

### **Superintendent/CEO: Pima, Arizona, 2008 to Present**

Finished my third year as CEO of a small rural school district with approximately 750 students K-12. Successfully navigated the school district through the worst economic collapse in state history by: prioritizing small class sizes (1-15.1), reducing transportation costs, increasing technology by providing more computer labs to students, laptops for teachers, and mobile computer carts and interactive smart boards in the classrooms. Implemented digital pacing calendars (Beyond Textbooks) and assessment protocols (Galileo) to help increase rigor and data driven decision-making. Co-chaired “Visions Committee” with board member to identify guiding principles, mission statement, and school motto. Outlined district priorities with community input. Oversaw the construction of a 1 million dollar six-classroom bond project.

### **Principal: Fort Worth, Texas 2003-2005 & Pima, Arizona 2005-2008**

My administrative experience includes two years as an assistant principal in an urban city school district in Fort Worth, Texas. I transitioned to rural Arizona to pursue the principalship of Pima High School. My duties included implementing computer based curriculum for at-risk and special education students, lowering student to computer ratio, implementing 1<sup>st</sup> ever credit recovery during summer, satisfying all AYP requirements, maintaining a “Highly Performing” rating by the state of Arizona, creating site-based team, and maintaining order in a wide range of day-to-day activities and extra-curricular events.

### **Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS): Arizona Department of Education approved PBIS consultant**

Starting in 2006 I was trained through the University of Arizona in Positive Behavior Support. This is a program that “catches kids being good” and teaches students the expected behaviors for school. Since I implemented this program, Pima has seen discipline referrals drop, tardies decline, and an increase in student eligibility. In addition to this I completed formal training on how to coach a variety of district teams across Arizona on team building for meaningful school wide change. Pima High School was recognized by our university sponsor for effective implementation and I was asked to sponsor a team from the San Carlos Indian Reservation. With this training I am eligible by the Arizona Department of Education to serve as a consultant for their support cadre state wide.

### **Biology Teacher and Coach: Fort Worth, Texas, 2000-2003**

My teaching experience focused on relating to and motivating students from an urban, low income, at-risk population. My efforts were later recognized and I was selected to teach the AP Biology class. This experience required 30 additional hours outside of school to be trained in differentiated instructional practices. I

also participated in 25 hours of AP Biology lab practices through Texas Christian University (TCU). I coached the female varsity soccer program for two years. My first year we made the district play-offs, tabulated a winning record both years, and I was awarded “Coach of the Year” for district 7-4A.

**BA** – Arizona State University, Bachelor of Arts in Education

**MA** – University of Texas at Arlington, Masters of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

**Ed.D-** Arizona State University, expected graduation Summer 2011

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#### **CAREER OVERVIEW**

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- **Superintendent** – District CEO, 2008 to present, Pima Unified School District
- **Pima High School** — Principal, 2005 to 2008, Pima Unified School District
- **Pima Junior High** — Principal, 2005 to 2006, Pima Unified School District
- **Handley Middle School** — Assistant Principal, 2004-2005, FWISD
- **Leonard Middle School** — Assistant Principal, 2003-2004, FWISD
- **South Hills High School** — Teacher/Coach, 2000-2003, FWISD