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IMPLEMENTATION OF A CULTURAL DIVERSITY PROGRAM
IN AN URBAN CATHOLIC MALE HIGH SCHOOL

By
Diane Casey

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May, 2004

Approved by _____
Professor

Date Approved April 12, 04

ABSTRACT

Diane Casey
IMPLEMENTATION OF A
CULTURAL DIVERSITY PROGRAM IN A
URBAN CATHOLIC MALE HIGH SCHOOL
2003/04
Dr. Theodore Johnson
Master of Art in School Administration

The purpose of this study is to create and implement a cultural diversity team of high school students. These students with a faculty leader will spearhead student activities and events around the topic of diversity. The students will be selectively chosen by the intern to be involved in the leadership and implementation of this project. This program is intended to increase cultural awareness of students; staff, faculty and administration so that they can put into practice the skills to confront prejudice and discriminatory behavior in themselves and others. The high school students will develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills in the area of youth diversity. This program is warranted due to a more diverse population in the school.

The method of implementing this program is to work with the Youth Diversity Leadership Program of Temple University. The members of the Diversity Program will do three days of training for approximately 25-30 students from Northeast Catholic High School. Once the training is finished there will be three more days of coaching and technical assistance to prepare the 25 students to lead workshops with their peers.

The project on creating and implementing a cultural diversity team will take place at Northeast Catholic High School in Philadelphia. The population will consist of high school students who were selectively chosen to represent various ethnic backgrounds. The gathering of information will consist of a survey that is created by the intern. The survey will pinpoint attitudes that are present within the school in regards to cultural diversity and cultural sensitivity. The intern will use observation and faculty input to figure out who would benefit from the training, and what group would utilize the learned skills to influence participation in issues of cultural diversity.

The information will be collected and analyzed on an ongoing basis. The survey will be collected and deciphered to reflect the present attitudes on diversity, bigotry and racial differences. Observation and the use of a rubric for behavioral traits will assist in determining who will be a part of this project.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my husband Michael, and children; Michael (10), Meghan (7) and Edward (1) for being so patient with me throughout this whole long ordeal. I could not begin to count the endless times when I would say this is crazy, I don't think I could do another thing for this program, and my son Michael would hit me with his famous line of "Don't give up, believe in yourself". They never lost faith in me and they continually provide me with the understanding that is needed to succeed in life.

I would like to thank Fr. Nicholas Waseline OSFS for acting as my mentor this last year. I have worked and learned with him over the last six years. He is a wonderful principal and someone who has taught me many worthwhile traits. It is truly appreciated that he agreed to be my official field mentor, but he has been doing this job since he became the principal six years ago. I can always count on him to stand by me, talk over ideas and to provide me with a learning experience.

I would also like to thank Doctor Sherman Johnson for always being a phone call away and for dedicating his life to education.

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Chapter One

Introduction: Focus of the Study

Northeast Catholic High School for boys is experiencing change in demographics and the student population. The school community needs to adjust and assist in making this transition easier for students and families. The implementing of a cultural diversity program seeks to inform the members of the faculty and student body on differences and diversity. Attitudes will be influenced by presenting a program of action research for the students and faculty of Northeast Catholic High School and by making them aware that cultural differences should be accepted and embraced. The school population has developed from a 2% minority population into a 12% minority population in the course of one year. The study will be done to support the school community and inform the faculty and students of people and their differences.

The fact is that Northeast Catholic High School is a Catholic high school for Boys which identifies itself with respect for individual differences. The mission of the school is to educate all students in a Salesian tradition, which is based on bringing God into every aspect of your life and to embrace differences. The study will provide students with an opportunity to learn about other cultures and to experience a sense of belonging.

Purpose of the Study

The intern wants to learn about cultural diversity in an urban male catholic high school and how racial and ethnic differences impact the learning environment. The purpose of this study is to implement and create a cultural diversity program of high

school students who will spearhead student activities and events around the topic of diversity. The students will implement a program predicated on issues of diversity, bigotry and discrimination on the environment. This program will develop the capacity to recognize and acknowledge prejudice and discriminatory behavior in themselves and others. This program will develop and put into practice the skills to confront prejudice and discriminatory behavior. The students will demonstrate critical thinking skills and demonstrate an understanding of democratic principles and their own personal roles in making justice and equity realities in the world around them.

This project will contribute to the awareness of students, staff, faculty and administration to put into practice the skills to confront prejudice and discriminatory behavior in themselves and others. The faculty and high school students will develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills in the area of youth diversity. The objective is to improve the quality of the school and therefore the learning atmosphere for students by acknowledging and accepting cultural differences. The acceptance of cultural differences may improve instruction, programs and everyday socialization between students and staff. The ultimate intention is to have students from all ethnic and racial backgrounds accept and respect each other and to create a learning atmosphere where all students feel accepted and encouraged to be a part of the larger community.

Definitions: The following definitions and terms will be utilized in this study:

1. Diversity: The range of characteristics that distinguish and influence the behavior and values of individuals and groups; refers to a comprehensive organizational change management process which supports environments where diverse staff/employees can perform to their full potential and interact effectively with consumers and constituents.
2. Culture- A learned set of behaviors and values held in common by a group of people.
3. Multiculturalism - The life-long process of understanding the impact of culture in our daily lives and expanding our individual, societal, institutional and cultural boundaries to respect, value, and incorporate cultural differences in an environment which maximizes the contributions of each person and achieves unity, equity and justice.
4. Cultural Competence: A set of skills, values, attitudes, policies and structures that enable effective cross-cultural interactions, interventions and organizations.
5. Salesian Gentlemen: A person who is well educated, polite, mannerly, respectful, polished, accomplished conversationalist, at ease in many different social settings, and has a sense of propriety in dress, demeanor and conversation.
6. Ethnicity - The divisions of people distinguished by customs, characteristics, language, and common history. Ethnicity is the affiliation with a particular group.

Limitations of this Study

The project on cultural diversity will be implemented in the fall of 2003 as a new program to the school community of Northeast Catholic High School. This study is confined to this site only. The faculty will be required to participate in an in-service program and a faculty day of recollection on the topic of diversity and tolerance. The

difficulty will be seeing if they put into practice what was learned. In-service programs are only as effective as what is learned and put into practice.

One limitation is that the teachers may be resistant to the topic of diversity and may feel that we should leave well enough alone. Many of the faculty members have been in the school for over 20 years and are fairly set in their ways of teaching and interacting with others.

The second limitation is that the school faculty, administration and staff are 100% Caucasian maintaining the perception that “kids are kids” and that they learn the same. The funding for the student program at the present moment is tentative. If the grant money from the Anti Defamation League does not materialize, then this project will be done on a much smaller scale.

The process of cluster sampling may be biased because it is selective of who will be a part of this case study. The outcome will be decided upon the attitudes and beliefs of the minority population in the school.

Setting of the Study

By the third decade of the twentieth century, in the aftermath of World War I, industrial and manufacturing complexes spread beyond the older interior part of the city of Philadelphia into its rural extremities. Countryside became urbanized and factories and homes replaced farms. To serve as the labor force in these factories, ethnically diverse immigrants, mostly from Southern and Eastern Europe poured into Philadelphia. To serve the spiritual needs of this largely Catholic immigrant population, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and its cardinal archbishop, the Rev. Dennis Dougherty

founded a large number of parishes and educational institutions. Among these was Northeast Catholic High School for boys.

To staff the school, the cardinal called upon the Oblates of St. Francis DeSales, a religious order of priests and brothers especially renowned for their work in bringing the Catholic faith to the working class, through the education of youth.

The School opened its doors on September 25, 1926 with an original enrollment of 449 freshmen and sophomore students. During the ensuing Depression and World War, North Catholic continued to fulfill its mission of educating young men as Salesian Gentlemen. By 1950, with an enrollment of more than 4000 students, Northeast Catholic High School was among the largest Catholic high school for boys in the world.

During the 1960s and 1970s numerous changes began to have an impact on the school. As the urban population spread into the suburbs and the Office of Catholic Education opened a number of high schools in the remote reaches of the five county dioceses, the enrollment of Northeast Catholic High School began to drop. By 1965, the number of students enrolled was under 2400. Similarly, as the number of men entering the Oblates of St. Francis DeSales and other religious orders declined, laymen, and now lay women, began to take their place in the classroom and administration.

Today, these changes continue and have accelerated. As the number of traditional Catholic families continue to leave the city for the ever expanding suburbs, our enrollment continues to decline. The school opened September 2002, with 772 students, a faculty of 42 and an administration of 5. The faculty and administration is 100% Caucasian and consist of 6 Oblate men, 1 Sister of St. Joseph, 28 lay men, and 12 lay women. The faculty is 97% Roman Catholic and .2% other Christian religions. The

student teacher ratio is 21:1. The teaching staff consists of 17 teachers who have been in the school for over 20 years, 2 who have 16-20 years, 3 who have 11-15 years, 4 who have 6-10 years, 16 who have 2-5 years and 5 who have 1 year. 3 teachers possess a PhD. 30 have a Masters, 38 have a BS degree and 1 has an Associate degree. 51% of the faculty is graduates of Northeast Catholic High School.

The recent policy of open enrollment has prompted the school to compete with other high schools, both diocesan and private, both public and Catholic. Broader societal changes have presented other challenges. The ethnic and racial composition of the student body evolves gradually. An increasing number of African-Americans, Hispanic, and Asian students begin to give the school a multi-racial, multi-ethnic hue. The religion of the students is broken down by the following: 87% of the students are Roman Catholic, 9% are from other Christian religions, and 4% are other religious traditions. The ethnic diversity of the student population is 4% African American, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 87% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic/Latino and 1% other. A societal factor is that a large number of our students now come from non-traditional families and twenty-five percent come from single parent families. A socio-economic factor based on the 2000 city census data and financial aid applications for the estimates of family income and the percentage of families in economic categories is as follows: Public assistance, below \$20,500(26%), Working poor(20%) \$20,863-\$31,379, Middle income (34%) \$31,380-\$55,000 and Affluent (20%) \$55,000-\$90,000. The obvious need for this program is evident in the statistics alone.

Proud of the tradition and standing firm in the mission the stakeholders see these changes and challenges as opportunities. Northeast Catholic High School continues to

serve the church and community today as it did when it opened more than seventy-five years ago.

School Philosophy

The philosophy of Northeast Catholic High School embraces the teachings of St. Francis DeSales as it is rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our catholic beliefs anchor us in the past and commit us to an optimistic and challenging future.

St. Francis DeSales tells us that the Holy Spirit endows all human beings with inherent dignity, goodness and self -worth and bestows special gifts on each individual. Further, DeSales teaches that all human beings who are faithful in their call in life, cultivate their special gifts and perform their duties with dedicated fidelity, are capable of holiness. Fr. Louis Brisson, the founder of the Oblates of St. Francis DeSales, reminds us that in Salesian ideals the dignity of human person is supreme and that true Salesian love is humility before God and gentleness towards one's neighbor.

Because of the Salesian ideals, Northeast Catholic High School advocates an educational program that offers each student the opportunity to encounter a variety of learning experiences and to achieve success based on developed individual talents as well as communal commitment.

The values hold us to high standards and demand that we act as a beacon of hope and a model of Christian caring to the urban community that we serve. These Salesian beliefs summon us to educate the whole person and require that our academic program be inclusive and challenge all of our students to achieve potential.

Holding such ideals centers us in an ethos of accountability. Although ultimately, individual students must make education their own personal goal, the expectations of

parents, guardians, graduates, educational institutions and other stakeholders ensure that practices accord with these ideals.

Northeast Catholic High School has flourished for seventy-six years. In that broad span of time, the faculty, staff, student body, physical plant and curriculum have changed, but the philosophy has not.

Importance of the Study

This study and others like it are crucial to the success of our schools and the learning environment in which students are educated. All students are not alike and learning does not take place in the same way for everyone. A student's racial and ethnic background brings challenges for the student and the school in the educational process. Educators need to be aware that if a child is different or is perceived as different then this alone can become an obstacle in their feeling accepted and being a part of the school community.

There is no longer any doubt among educators that the demographics are changing in education. The question that this intern has is: Are the faculty, staff and administration at Northeast Catholic High School aware of our shifting demographics and how are we going to create and implement a program that addresses the issue of diversity and tolerance in the school to make learning/education for all students an optimal experience?

This study is also important in that it is pro-active on the part of the school. At the present moment there is no documented discrimination or racial tensions. This study has come about because of a conversation amongst the administration of the school and the administrative council. The fact is that the school population has grown from a 2%

minority population into a 12% minority population in one academic year. By looking at the facts and understanding that a predominately white Catholic school is changing to be inclusive of other ethnic groups and religions, a transition for all needs to be embraced. It is an essential need to respect the differences of a growing number of students whose culture is diverse from the majority of students. The diverse culture dictates what is important in the world. The faculty, administration, and students need to be educated and trained in cultural awareness so that all students and faculty feel a welcomed part of the school community.

Organization of the Study

The subsequent chapters in this thesis will include chapters two, three, four and five. Chapter two will be a review of literature that will center on the changing demographics in education and how diverse students fare in urban schools. Research shows that minorities are increasing but the number of educators is still predominately an aging white group. The intention of chapter two is to consider what measures need to be investigated and taken to meet the needs of the students at Northeast Catholic High School.

Chapter three will focus on the results of data collected from the faculty and students of the school. The data will be collected using a multicultural checklist that will provide information on how effective Northeast Catholic High School is in creating a multicultural environment. The second set of data will be obtained from a questionnaire made up for students. Individual interviews will be conducted using the questionnaire. The third set of data will be collected through informal discussions with two alumni minority students who when in the school held student leadership positions.

Chapter Four will focus on the information found from the three data sources and answer all sub-questions pertaining to this study. Chapter Five will be the conclusion and implications for further study.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Today in education professionals have the job of meeting the needs of a diverse student body. The United States is one of the most diverse nations in the world. It was at one time considered the melting pot, but today it is referred to as a wonderful mix of cultures and races, old and new immigrants, exceptionalities and talents. Cultural diversity is one of the nation's treasures which provide opportunities for learning that are not available in other nations. In no other era is cultural diversity more evident than in our schools.

Name-calling, insensitive comments, racial and ethnic slurs, bullying and put-downs affect every member of the school community. School environments where respect and civility are lacking leave many students feeling like outsiders. Many people who witness these behaviors wonder or ponder what they can say or do to challenge such behavior. Not knowing how to respond, students and teachers walk by a situation without intervening. The implementation of a diversity program at Northeast Catholic High School will help students become leaders in promoting respect among their peers and in creating schools that are fair, respectful and just.

Learning is a process. It takes time, talent and commitment from administrators, teachers, students and staff to become aware of our changing demographics and to look at our own perceptions of differences and diversity. The process needs to begin with challenging ourselves and our behavior to see what, if anything, are our biases and how we as individuals treat others who appear different from us.

Research shows that there is a tremendous need to increase the number of minority professionals in education. If the number of minority students is increasing, but the number of minority educators is decreasing we need to devise a plan that will benefit the students by respecting their diversity. According to the Educational Testing Service, over the next 15 years, college enrollments are projected to swell by two million- - to 19 million students- - with African American, Hispanic, and Asian students accounting for 80% of the growth. (Futrell, Mary H.; Gomez, Joel; Bedden, Dana). There is no empirical evidence that indicates that students of color learn better when taught by teachers of color. The most recent review of literature (King 1993) finds no connection between teacher race/ethnicity and student achievement. The positive aspect of this finding is that it requires all teachers to be accountable for teaching all students. We need to be prepared as educators to teach students of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

In the article In Teaching the Children of a New America: The Challenge of Diversity (Jan. 03), the author clearly states that with a diverse student population on the rise our schools of education need to have a well-defined, well resourced, professional development program that will prepare educators to close the achievement gap between diverse student populations. Most studies show that students learn best when they have a role model or someone who has similar characteristics. We must challenge school faculties and administrators to provide diverse students with an education that enables them to reach their maximum academic potential. In the article Diversity Within Unity: Essential Principles For Teaching and Learning In a Multicultural Society (Phi Delta Kappan, Nov. 2001) the author states that professional development programs should help teachers understand the complex characteristics of ethnic groups within the U.S.

society and the ways in which race, ethnicity, language, and social class interact to influence student behavior. If teachers are to increase learning opportunities for all students, they must be knowledgeable about the social and cultural contexts of teaching and learning. This is the area in which the intern will focus this paper. There is a documented need for educators to become more aware of students from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures. If educators really want to connect with students and find what we have in common, then first we have to respect and know our differences. It is only after we know our differences that we can go and find what we have in common. Research shows that student's are as uninformed and uncomfortable about different cultures as are many educators. Keeping this fact in mind, we can only improve the school setting by beginning a diversity program which will provide faculty and students with the opportunity to learn more about each other. The program will hopefully increase the acceptance level of the educators and the students and this will hopefully improve learning and instruction.

This paper will concentrate on issues regarding the change in racial and ethnic demographics at Northeast Catholic. The intern will look closely at how these very real issues are affecting our students in school and examine how educators can improve the educational climate so as to improve student satisfaction and student achievement. If we as educators can not make education relevant to students then we can not expect them to achieve their maximum potential.

The intern will focus on the changing demographics in education and determine how the changes are impacting instruction and the goals of education. Emphasis will be put on ethnicity and cultural diversity between students and staff. The intern will also

examine the research to determine whether achievement in school is more closely related to class rather than ethnicity.

The intern's theory regarding the need to bring about an awareness concerning cultural diversity among students is further supported by J. Banks (1994). He writes that teacher education plays an important role in preparing educators to be cognizant of cultural differences. Banks stressed that personal preparation heightens the skills of future teachers in the area of cultural diversity. He states, 'Once teachers connect to their own cultural experience, it will be a vehicle enabling them to relate to the culture of the kids' (Lockwood, 1992, p.26)

Teachers need to understand that a child's education and achievement will improve if instruction is improved. Teachers must improve themselves as human beings who are more aware and sensitized after professional training regarding cultural diversity. The schools need to provide teachers and students with training to make them more aware of the needs of the minority population and how to better meet those needs. We need the students to buy into something new, whether it is a program or an attitude.

Banks conceives multicultural education as an "education for freedom". It helps students to develop the skills to express and act on the questions: Who am I? Where have I been? What do I hope to do? It nurtures student's hearts as well as their minds in school and it is a process which helps students develop positive cultural, national, and global identification. It is so important for students to bond with their school and the people in the school. In the intern's school setting there seems to be bonding with the traditional students and the school, but we need to be cognizant of a similar dynamic among our minority population.

Cultural diversity is obviously a very complex issue with the changing of demographics and meeting the needs of a more culturally diverse student population. The answer should not and can not be a quick fix type of solution. One-day workshops for teachers will not insure a more “culturally aware” group. Making extensive plans for Black History Month or celebrating the Chinese New Year is a beginning, but acknowledging minorities who are famous for their philosophies or deeds is needed and should be an on-going process. Educators need to transform curriculums to help students to look at realities differently and to re-conceptualize the curriculum from other points of view. Multicultural educators believe that identity and positive self-esteem are based on the pride that each child has in his or her cultural group’s history, achievements, solidarity, and loyalty(Derman and Sparks, 1989) and that these qualities translate into improved school success.(Ogbu,1987: Phinney, 1991).

One way we can begin to address the issue at hand would be to re think workshops for educators. An in-service program is only as effective as the message conveyed and utilized or put into practice.

We need to address our ways of thinking. Jonathan Kozol in his book Savage Inequalities, cautions us regarding the notion that poor education is due to family and cultural backgrounds, versus perceptions of educators. For students of color, perhaps more devastating is the lack of access to high-quality education.(Kozol 1991) Teachers are teaching from their own perceptions, values and biases. If a teacher is not a minority, he or she may find it difficult to look at an issue or behavior in a different way.

The fact is, various ethnic groups have different values and in order to effectively interact with culturally diverse students, teachers have to know as much about student

ethnic backgrounds as possible. As with any learning that takes place, we need to become aware of issues, learn the facts and then how to implement change. If we as educators begin to see how diversity can enrich an environment, then differences among students and staff will be welcomed and not feared or cause teachers anxiety. If teachers are to be effective, they will need to be prepared to teach children who are not white. (Gloria Ladson-Billings) May 1994.

Chapter 3

Design of the Study

General Description

The fact that the racial demographics have changed and continue to change across the nation, but more specifically at Northeast Catholic High School, the intern made the determination to study this phenomenon and the actions taken by the educators and students involved in this school. The intern's hypothesis was as follows: How would the implementation of a cultural diversity program in an urban Catholic male high school address the issue of changing racial demographics?

The research the intern conducted was qualitative in nature. After collecting solid data using statistics from Northeast Catholic High School student enrollment records, a hypothesis was developed. The intern had developed a student questionnaire(Appendix A), a multicultural education checklist(Appendix B) for faculty that helped determine how effectively our school was in creating a multicultural environment and a checklist that helped in assessing the school's climate(Appendix B). It was hoped that the student questionnaire would answer questions that the intern had regarding the change in racial demographics and how the school had addressed those changes.

An observational study was conducted during a faculty in-service by observing the interactions that took place between staff and presenter in regards to cultural and ethnic differences. Statistics from school records (Appendix C) were collected by the intern in reference to the student ethnic makeup of Northeast Catholic High School over

the past four years. This provided a clearer picture of where the school started ethnically and how it has changed.

Interviews were also conducted with professionals from other schools regarding their perceptions of racial demographic changes taking place in their own schools and whether or not they were addressing the issue. The intern spoke with parents to find out what their perceptions were of their student's school environment, their level of achievement, and whether or not they felt some issues needed to be addressed in terms of cultural diversity.

Development and Design of the Research Instruments

The student questionnaire included eight questions designed to delve attitudes and experiences relating to diversity and tolerance. Many questions probed for evaluation beyond initial responses by including follow up. The first three questions were opinions; the remaining five questions asked "Have you? And if so, how did you respond."

The intern's intention, while using the questionnaire, was to examine how the staff and students who were not minorities were perceived by the minority students. In addition, the intern wanted to discover how minority students viewed the education in terms of quality and relevancy to their lives.

The use of the multicultural educational checklist provided the intern with the ability to assess the school climate and to determine its' effectiveness in providing an inclusive environment. The checklist was helpful in identifying the needs of the school community, and it provided direction for the implementation of a diversity program as well as a faculty retreat day on the topic of diversity. (Appendix D)

The intern did an observational study of the staff and students pertaining to their social interactions with each other regarding ethnic differences. This was done with the faculty in an in-service program on cultural differences. The students involved in the diversity program met on a bi-weekly basis, and an observational study was done when a student leader ran the meeting and the intern observed the peer interaction.

Statistics were also collected from school records in terms of the racial demographic changes in this particular school over the last four years. The statistical information was gathered in the following manner:

- First, the intern collected statistics on the racial makeup of the students for the past four years.
- Secondly, the intern collected statistics on the racial makeup of Northeast Catholic High School for the 2003 school year.
- Thirdly, the intern collected data on the racial makeup of the staff four years ago and for the 2003 school year.

The intern also interviewed educators from other Catholic high schools. A total of three representatives were interviewed regarding the changing demographics in their schools and how they addressed these changes.

Description of the Sample and Sampling Technique

The population sample was derived from the students at Northeast Catholic High School. The students were chosen by random cluster sampling. The intern walked around the lunch room and engaged students in conversation regarding the implementation of a diversity team. The team of students would have to be interested in implementing change and acceptance at Northeast Catholic High School. The intern sent out an invitation to 50

students who confirmed an interest in this program. The invitees were of mixed racial and ethnic backgrounds. The multicultural educational checklist was given to forty five faculty members and twenty five students. The faculty members were in-serviced in cultural diversity and recognizing differences among their students. The students were selected from the diversity team.

The intern interviewed three other professionals who work in similar changing demographic communities. One of the three professionals has implemented a diversity program in his respective school.

Description of the Data Collection Approach

The data collection approach included using student questionnaires to determine if, in the students' perceptions, there actually was a need for a more culturally and ethnically aware educational environment. The intern also spoke with parents in an effort to get a sense of how they, as parents, perceived their child's school environment and whether or not they felt their needs were being addressed.

In addition, the intern spoke with other professionals in the field of education in an attempt to acquire their impressions of the educational environment in which they work in terms of cultural differences and the manner in which they have been addressed.

The statistics from the Northeast Catholic High School regarding the racial makeup of the student body was compiled in a few different ways. First, statistics were collected from 1999 through 2003 of the racial composition of the student population. Secondly, the numbers of Caucasians, African Americans, Hispanics and Asian students were compiled for the Northeast Catholic High School for the past four years. And

finally, the racial makeup of teachers and staff were gathered from 1999 and then compared to 2003.

Description of the Data Analysis Plan

Evidence was present from the various data that proved this particular project had some sort of impact on Northeast Catholic High School. The intern attempted to collect enough data from various sources to show that there are major racial demographic and ethnic changes that have occurred and will continue to occur within the confines of the city and Northeast Catholic High School community.

There is no doubt that in the Northeast Catholic High School community the demographics, in terms of the ethnic makeup of the student population, has dramatically changed over the last four years. The intern showed also, with statistics, that the ethnic diversity among staff has not changed and that needs to be considered to better meet the needs of the culturally diverse student population.

Information derived from the discussions with outside sources was met with frustration. The intern was continually made aware that conscious efforts and awareness were indeed not present among several professionals within the educational field when the issue of meeting the needs of a more culturally diverse student population was mentioned. Student interviews gave the intern a chance to hear from the students about their feelings and perceptions, and it became clear that the school had made a conscious effort to improve this educational environment.

Chapter Four

Presentation of the Research Findings

What Information was Found ?

The implementing of a cultural diversity program was to inform the members of the faculty and student body about differences and diversity. Attitudes were influenced by presenting a program of action research for the students and faculty of Northeast Catholic High School and by making them aware that cultural differences should be accepted and embraced. The school population has developed from a 2% minority population into a 12% minority population in the course of one year. The study was done to support the school community and informed the faculty and students of people and their differences. The information that the intern found was surprising as well as interesting. First, the racial demographics in the school have been changing since 1998. Each year the school is receiving fewer Caucasian students, an increase in Hispanic, African American and Asian students. For example, in 1998, the school's statistics on the student population indicated there were 829 Caucasians, 23 Hispanics, 16 Asian, 4 African Americans and 4 Native American students. By the year 2004 the statistics were 673 Caucasians, 29 African Americans, 72 Hispanics students and 10 Asians (see Appendix E).

In contrast to this, in 1998 the school had 60 staff members, none of which were of a minority race. By 2004, out of a staff of 55, there were 53 Caucasians, one Hispanic and one Brazilian. At this time, the school does not have any African American teachers. The intern believes the school needs to continue to make it a priority to hire more

minority staff members, in particular African Americans and Hispanics instructors, to better balance the ethnic makeup of the student population.

The intern developed a questionnaire in an attempt to find out if the students sensed a difference between the ethnic make up of the students and the ethnic make up of the staff.(see Appendix A). This questionnaire was used at our Diversity Team meeting which consists of twenty five students. Of the twenty five students interviewed, all answered the questionnaire. The questionnaire that the intern developed, asked some very basic questions in the beginning such as “What do you like about the school?, What do you dislike?”, and if you could change anything “What would it be?. There were only nine questions and the intern hoped that of all the questions four through nine would be the most revealing. Questions four through nine asked specific questions that required a response of yes or no, and if so how did that make you feel.

Upon initial review of the student responses, the intern did not find much information that was revealing in terms of students and their perceptions of the ethnic differences between themselves and the students and staff. After a second, more careful reading of the responses, some issues were discovered that the intern found quite interesting. Again, the intern wants to remind the reader that the students interviewed are part of the Diversity Team. This could have contributed to the responses in that they knew the intern was looking for certain behaviors that would constitute implementing a diversity program.

The intern had a very difficult time in terms of parent contact and discussions. Many of the students in the school are living in single parent homes. Some of the parents are working two jobs just to make ends meet. These particular groups of parents were

difficult to contact. The intern did have a few successful conversations in that the parents were home when I called and were happy to answer inquires about the school.

Parents did not see any problem or reason to be concerned relative to the school or the environment. Parents were happy that the staff was able to get their sons to come to school and to do a reasonably good job in their education. Parents have high hopes and expectations for their sons and trust that the school will be a major influence in their son's development. The cultural imbalance between the staff and students was not a concern at all. One mother was an African American and another father, was an immigrant from Poland, and struggled with the language himself.

The intern spoke with parents at a Father and Mothers Association meeting in December. The intern was surprised to learn that not one parent had seemed to consider the cultural differences as an issue as to whether or not the school was addressing those differences in some way. The intern began to realize that so many parents today are living day-to-day and trying to survive, that they are reassured to know that their son is in a safe environment. They do not give much thought about the racial or ethnic make up of the school at this stage of social change.

The perception or point of view of the parents was similar to what the intern found when speaking to educators in other schools. Both Caucasian and African American educators said consistently to the intern that they saw no issue with an imbalance of the ethnic make up between students and staff. Educators felt that they were well equipped to handle any student regardless of racial or ethnic background. One administrator said in response to balancing or making the ethnic make up of staff more equal, "We send out the advertisement, and interview applicants. That is all we have to

do.” This is the extent of one school effort to create a more even ethnic balance in the school.

With these perceptions in mind, it can not come as a surprise to anyone that the programs dealing with cultural diversity are few. Many educators felt that by acknowledging Black History Month in February they were fulfilling any “requirements” in terms of being culturally aware. In terms of staff, the intern scheduled an in service program on cultural diversity and tolerance with the Temple Multicultural Institute. It is the goal of the intern to create a more sensitive atmosphere in the school to addressing ethnic differences and also creating an appreciation of those same differences. It is also the goal of the intern to encourage administrators to make a great effort when interviewing potential staff members to remember the ethnic balance between the students and staff. Recently a new staff member was hired to fill a position; the person was a female Hispanic. The school has made gradual strides, but much more needs to be done.

The students are receiving some, but not enough education concerning different ethnic groups. The Diversity Team is open to any and all interested students. The students who were involved showed great potential in becoming leaders in the school. The students participated in group dynamics which allowed for a starting point for all members of the team to become familiar with each other and their cultural differences.

In addition to the program above, the intern scheduled a speaker to come to school and speak to the students in small groups about cultural diversity. The intern has secured a grant that will subsidize the diversity training for twenty students and herself

beginning in March. The grant money and the diversity training will launch a successful diversity program at the high school.

What did the Information Mean?

The intern is just beginning to realize all the issues involved with this project. The various sources of information, although all related, can each mean several things.

First, with the shift in racial demographics in the school, many questions arise. Are we preparing our minority students for success in the world, and are they coming to school and feeling a part of the school community? Shouldn't educators be extensively trained in cultural differences so that when certain behaviors are observed with students who are different from themselves, ethnicity and culture can both be taken into consideration?

Secondly, in addition to training students more thoroughly about cultural differences, training is needed relative to interact more effectively in all ways with staff and students who are culturally or ethnically different from themselves.

It is also important that educators teach more about different ethnic groups on an ongoing basis. Research has shown that any goal, if it is to be effective, has to be repeated in some way or method on an ongoing, consistent manner. The diversity training will provide students the tools to teach and prepare their peers for the changes that have taken place within their own school.

The parents that were interviewed were happy to have this school as an alternative for their student. The end result for many of the parents is relief that now there is a school for their child, where their son has a chance to be successful. What many parents and educators do not realize is how much better the education could be if time was taken to

address some very important issues regarding cultural diversity. The intern also wonders if her response regarding cultural diversity would have been different if she was not Caucasian. Maybe the trust level and familiarity level needed to be higher in order for parents to speak their minds. The students also need cultural awareness education. The focus for students would be the understanding and acceptance of differences.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Introduction

The intern found that most students, parents, and educators, in and out of the school setting are just not discussing the concept of cultural diversity and its implications regarding the education of students. The reasons for not discussing, debating, or exploring cultural diversity appeared to the intern to be varied. One reason stood out dramatically to the intern and that was the desire to maintain the status quo. It became quite clear that for all people involved, change is a frightening entity. It seems as though it was easier, in the minds of some, to not take the risk or the challenge of recognizing impending change, even if it meant that ultimately, the education of all the students would be perceived to be of a lesser quality due to the lack of diversity.

Addressing the issue of the changing racial demographics and cultural diversity meant facing some uncomfortable and even painful realities to some people. The intern could not envision a way to avoid this pain, but was convinced the rewards would be invaluable to our students, parents, and educators. Growth sometimes involved dealing with thoughts and feelings that were not very pleasant, but were necessary in order to make positive changes.

Implications of Study on Leadership Skills

There is no question that the intern's leadership strengths and qualities increased while going through the experience of researching and implementing strategies

addressing the topic of cultural diversity. Midway through the project the intern realized that change would not be an event, but a process. With the issue of understanding cultural differences and tolerance, it became clear that not only was this issue one that involved a process and not just an event, but that it must be ongoing, always discussed, and continually reexamined.

The intellectual growth for the intern was immeasurable. Not only did the intern begin to examine current practices in the school but also ways of thinking, perceptions students had, and behaviors that were displayed. It was particularly interesting for the intern to talk with students about their perceptions and beliefs and then watch the behavior that followed. The implementation of a diversity program forced the intern to examine her own thoughts and behavior as it became clear that a person can say just about anything, but the behaviors that follow are most important. The intern realized that as an administrator just how important it was to act as a change agent when it comes to bringing people from different cultures together, willing and ready to work as a team.

As the intern stated in Chapter Four, this was, and continues to be a very complex issue which really needs to be examined in order to implement a program in cultural diversity. All of the issues which developed around the topic of cultural diversity were considered by the intern and were a challenge in terms of attempting to bring about awareness among the students and staff. From academic issues, like what is or is not taught in the classroom, to social issues like behaviors that are different from our own; the intern had to widen her perceptions concerning the issue at hand and all of the people involved with it. Furthermore, this growth process was a gradual and natural progression which seemed to evolve after doing research on the topic, speaking to staff, students, and

parents, observing the behaviors of all involved, and realizing the contradictions that existed between what was said by those involved and their behavior.

The end result for the intern was the realization that this issue of cultural diversity, changing demographics, and tolerance of differences can not be addressed by only acknowledging Black History Month, or bringing in speakers or other representatives to talk to the students, parents and faculty once or twice a year. Programs and speakers were very important to bring about awareness among people and to reinforce an idea or philosophy, but this issue is one that has to be lived, felt in the heart and soul of all people, and in particular, educators. It is an issue that has to be ongoing; all day, all night; an all embracing process and is something students have to hear in people's words as well as see in their behavior.

As a leader, this issue tested the intern constantly. The intern had to listen to many people with opposing views, many people who just had not given the topic much, if any thought at all, and some who just did not want to discuss the issue. This harsh reality forced the intern to reorganize the initial plan to have a formal committee, to have groups of people willing to sit around and discuss cultural diversity and how the school could provide a better education in relation to it. The intern realized that this was not going to be an easy topic to discuss. What the intern found was that she and the targeted audience were not as far advanced as was hoped, and therefore, she was forced to go back further than intended. The intern had to begin to "plant a seed" in order to just get to a beginning point. It was quickly realized that this issue and any positive changes that may take place in the future would require education, patience, endurance, tolerance, and time.

Implications of Study on Organizational Change

One of the most optimistic changes was the interest that was sparked by the speaker, Mr. Jerry Clark of the Anti Defamation League and Temple University's Multicultural Institute. This speaker succeeded in making people begin to think about their perceptions and behaviors when it comes to people different from themselves. The intern felt that Mr. Clark presented information about cultural diversity, acceptance, and tolerance in a very honest and forthright manner, and in a way that could not be ignored by anyone. He also was very skilled in getting his message across to the faculty in a way that was non-threatening. He had people evaluate themselves and were their stories began. However, the session when he had the individual faculty access themselves appeared to be the most profound for everyone.

The students on the diversity team have worked together over a six month period and have established a bond that is oblivious to race or ethnicity. The mixture of students that were involved in implementing this diversity program will be the catalyst for the school's changing and embracing atmosphere of differences. The students were trained in peer counseling and cultural diversity and will be educating the rest of the school community on cultural diversity. They are forming sub committees that will permit them with ample opportunity to spread the word that in this school everyone is welcomed and their differences are embraced within the learning community.

Change in this area of education, particularly, in this area of Philadelphia, is going to be gradual. Although the intern believes the atmosphere has begun to change and the faculty and students have started to examine their way of thinking and behaving, there is a lot of room for improvement. It seems that it would be essential for the communities

and schools to stop separating themselves from each other and viewing themselves as an island. Many of the elementary and middle schools are not racially balanced. What are educators doing to prepare students in a positive way for the changes they are faced with when they go to high school? What does the minority student do in adjusting to a new school? How have these students been prepared to effectively, positively, and humanely interact and relate to each other? Without assistance and guidance from a racially and ethnically balanced group of educators who are culturally and ethnically aware, this challenge may not be possible to achieve.

Further Study

There is no doubt in the intern's mind that this study affected all areas and everyone within the school. People's way of living, thinking, and behaving is systemic in nature. How a person behaves at work is a product of his or her past and will be a predictor about how that person will behave and respond to students in the classroom. In terms of the project, the intern felt that just by speaking with the faculty, parents, and students the awareness level was brought to a higher level.

The difference between this qualitative project and one that is quantitative was that people's backgrounds, lifestyles, and way of living required examination in order to progress, or move forward. In the future, this project will involve much thought, patience, compassion, tact, and non-judging on the part of every stakeholder. The intern was dealing with a very sensitive, complex issue which involved human behavior, cultural backgrounds, personalities, and more.

The Need for Further Study

There is no doubt this issue needs to be further examined. The most reassuring

factor for the intern is that grant money has become available for diversity training and cultural awareness for twenty students and three faculty members. The training would provide these twenty three people with the skills and the confidence to present the issues and concerns regarding cultural differences within the school and community. This program has the backing of the administration and should become one of the best marketing tools for this school. More research has to be conducted on the social as well as educational ramifications of having a racially balanced faculty to fit the racial balance of the student population. More research needs to be done on the positive affects of a culturally and racially "aware" and tolerant faculty in relation to student achievement.

The intern thinks that change will have to be made slowly in order for any kind of change to be successful. More research needs to be done to determine just how to create a desire within the faculty to make the necessary changes. This is where a vision and a mission statement that the faculty believes in will be vital to the success of this school and other schools in the nation. Finally, because schools are mini-societies of the larger society, the need for awareness of differences, tolerance of differences and ideas on how to proceed to make differences among people a positive, educational issue is imperative for the students.

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Appendix A
Research Instrument

Tolerance/Diversity Questionnaire

1. What do you like best about your High School?
2. What do you like least about your High School?
3. If you can change anything in the school, what would it be and why?
4. Do you ever encounter bigotry or racism within the school setting?
How does that make you feel?
5. Have you used or heard a racist comment in the last month?
Did you respond to it? Why or why not?
6. Have you used or heard a sexist comment in the last month?
Did you respond to it? Why or why not?
7. Have you used or heard an anti –gay or lesbian comment in the last month?
Did you respond to it? Why or why not?
8. Have you used or heard a comment demonstrating bias against a religious group in the last month?
Did you respond to it? Why or why not?

Appendix B
Assessment of Multicultural Climate

Multicultural Checklist

	We haven't thought about this	We need to do better	We do this well
1. Do school policies and procedures foster positive interactions among the different cultural group members of the school?			
2. Does the school provide opportunities for all staff and students to participate in the ascetic experience of the various cultural groups which constitute the schools population?			
3. Does the school foster the view of other languages as legitimate communication systems (including sign language)?			
4. Is the school staff (administrative, instructional, counseling, and support) multiethnic and multiracial?			
5. Does the school have systematic, comprehensive, mandatory, and continuing multiethnic staff development programs?			
6. Do the teaching strategies reflect a variety of learning styles?			
7. Does the curriculum promote values, attitudes, and behaviors which support cultural pluralism?			
8. Does the curriculum help students develop decision-making abilities, social participation skills, and a sense of political efficacy needed for effective citizenship?			
9. Does the school conduct ongoing systematic evaluations of the goals, methods, and instructional materials used in teaching about diverse cultural groups?			

School Climate Checklist

	We do this well	We need to give this more attention	Do Not Know
1. We have identified people within our school who are capable of and willing to address diversity issues.			
2. We have examined the curriculum and library and media resources for bias and appropriate multicultural content.			
3. We incorporate diversity issues into an orientation program for all new students and staff.			
4. We include students in the planning and implementation of orientation and other school-wide programs.			
5. We include parents/families in the planning and implementation of programs designed to improve intergroup relations.			
6. Teachers are encouraged to evaluate their own competence in managing diverse student populations.			
7. Ongoing staff development opportunities are available in anti-bias training.			
8. We conduct student leadership training on prejudice and conflict resolution.			
9. We have established a code of conduct for what constitutes racial, religious, ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation harassment, including appropriate sanctions for violating this code.			
10. Programs, assemblies, speakers, bulletin boards, holiday celebrations, etc. reflect our multicultural society.			
11. We have a plan to evaluate human relations programs and progress at designated intervals.			
12. We examine school policies and practices on an ongoing basis to ensure equal access to educational opportunities for all students.			

Appendix C
School Population Statistics

School Statistics

	Amer. Indain	Black	Hisp	Asian	White	Nat.Haw./ Pac. Isl	Multi- Racial
1998-1999	4	4	23	16	829	0	0
1999-2000	3	6	27	16	789	0	0
2000-2001	3	3	32	16	725	0	0
2001-2002	1	9	50	17	719	0	0
2002-2003	1	16	65	12	671	0	4
2003-2004	0	29	72	10	673	0	0
totals	12	67	269	87	4406	0	4

	minority	white	percent
1998-1999	47	829	5.67%
1999-2000	52	789	6.59%
2000-2001	54	725	7.45%
2001-2002	77	719	10.71%
2002-2003	94	671	14.01%
2003-2004	111	673	16.49%

Appendix D

Diversity Workshop Evaluation

APPENDIX E
Diversity Workshop and Retreat
Monday, January 19th
Evaluation Form

Please take a few minutes to critic the workshop and retreat. Your honest assessment will be beneficial in our upcoming presentations and retreat programs for the faculty.

1. What did you find effective from the faculty meeting on diversity in November?

2. Did you feel that the presentation for the retreat day was a good beginning on our work in diversity?

3. What did you enjoy about the presentation? And what would you have done differently?

4. Did you feel that the presenter provided a strong beginning for us to look at the issues and to build on our strengths and weaknesses?

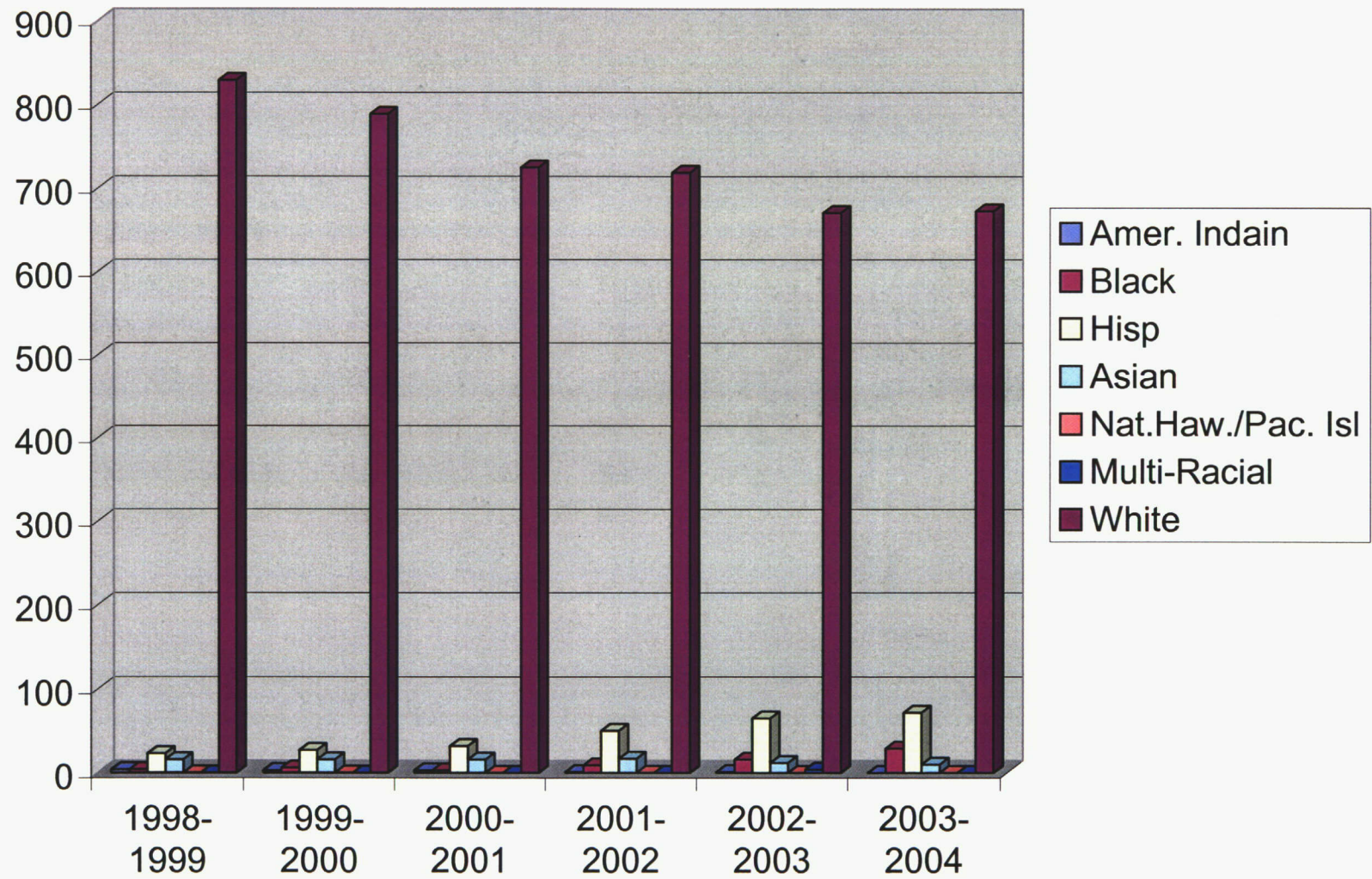
5. Please feel free to add any additional comments:

Please return this form to Mrs. Casey's mailbox in the main office.

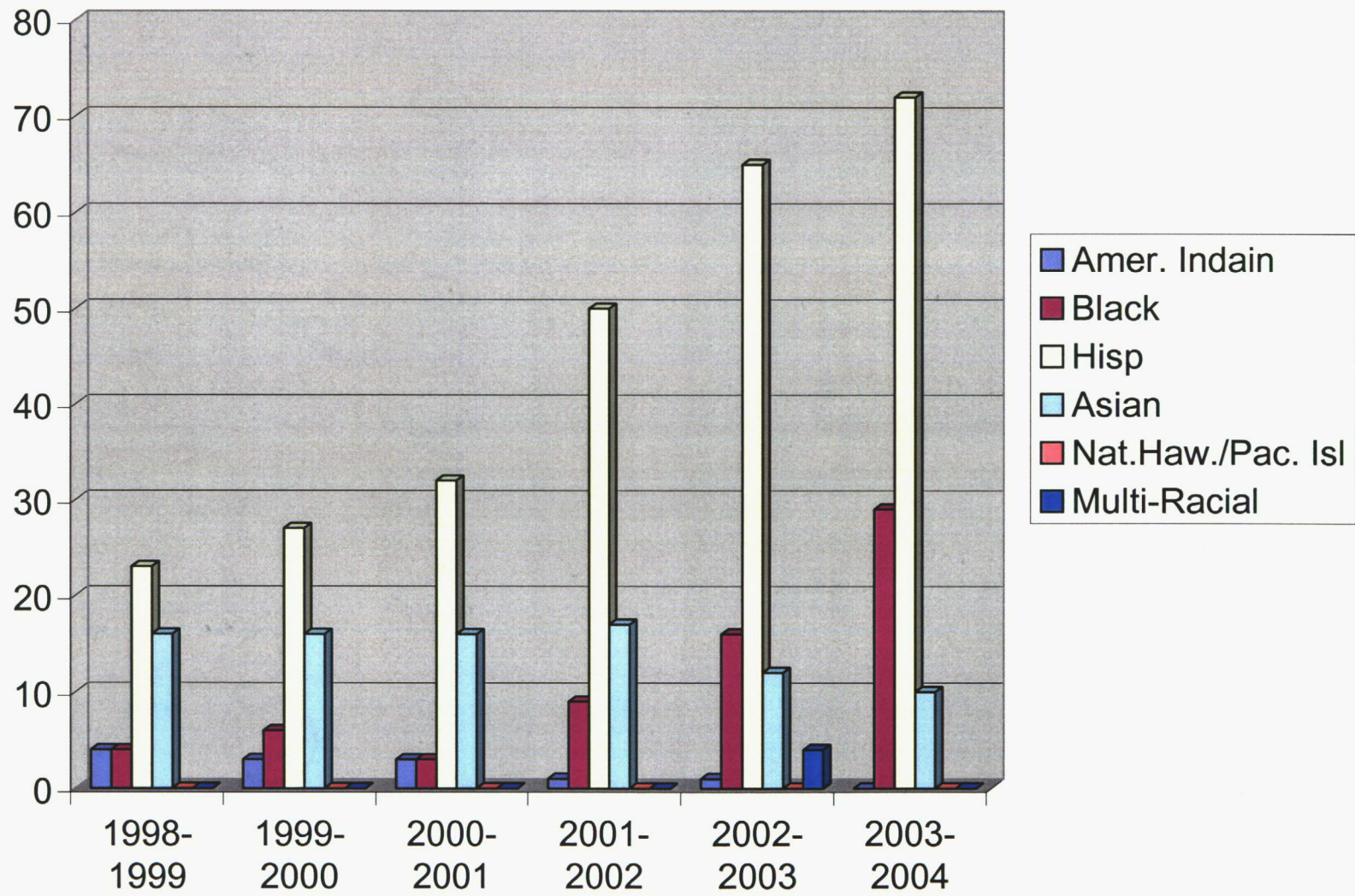
Appendix E

Student Enrollment Graphs

Northeast Catholic Student Enrollment



Minority Population at Northeast Catholic High School



Biographical Data

Name	Diane Casey
High School	Cardinal O'Hara High School Springfield, PA 19064
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Arts Health Education West Chester University West Chester, PA
Graduate	Master of Arts School Administration Rowan University Glassboro, NJ
Present Occupation	Assistant Principal Northeast Catholic High School Philadelphia, PA

