

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Educational Administration: Theses, Dissertations,  
and Student Research

Educational Administration, Department of

---

Fall 10-12-2010

# Understanding Social Capital Development and Academic Attainment of Mobile Students

Julie A. Gaddie

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, [julie.gaddie@sjsd.k12.mo.us](mailto:julie.gaddie@sjsd.k12.mo.us)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsedaddiss>



Part of the [Educational Administration and Supervision Commons](#)

---

Gaddie, Julie A., "Understanding Social Capital Development and Academic Attainment of Mobile Students" (2010). *Educational Administration: Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research*. 45.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsedaddiss/45>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Educational Administration, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Educational Administration: Theses, Dissertations, and Student Research by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT  
OF MOBILE STUDENTS

by

Julie A. Gaddie

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Educational Administration  
Under the Supervision of Professor Marilyn L. Grady

Lincoln, Nebraska

October 12, 2010

UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC ATTAINMENT  
OF MOBILE STUDENTS

Julie A. Gaddie, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 2010

Adviser: Dr. Marilyn Grady

The United States has a long history of searching for utopian possibilities of public school, amidst a steady stream of population mobility. Horace Mann proclaimed that schools would be able to assimilate the millions of immigrants arriving during the late 1700's. He promised that schools could end poverty, crime and social injustice. Today, public schools continue to serve a revolving door of students and most agree there may be little that can be done to prevent student mobility amidst the complexities of a growing global economy, immigration and the increase in children living in poverty. The challenge for the public school system is to create technical solutions to address the needs of mobility students, while meeting the growing demands of NCLB.

The purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to gain information about post-move functioning of mobile students by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data. In the study, quantitative data were used to measure the collective academic achievement of students who had attended their elementary schools for less than one year at the time of testing in comparison to the total school achievement in Math and

Communication Arts based on results from the MAP (Missouri Achievement Program) Test from 2008-09. In the second phase, qualitative interviews were used to probe significant quantitative findings by exploring the needs of mobile students with ten elementary principals. Furthermore, a historical view of the effects of mobility was gained from the experiences of adults born during five different decades (1940's through the 1990's) who moved a minimum of three times during their elementary school years.

The quantitative results of this study illuminate the long standing belief that changing schools is detrimental to the academic attainment of students. A significant gap in academic performance was found in both Communication Arts and Math between students who had been in their schools for the entire school year and those who had not.

The qualitative learnings from this study suggest the need for educators to assess and compensate for gaps in the social capital of mobile students. Educators often have wondered why some students from the poorest of homes can move from school-to-school, obtain their academic goals, and become contributing members of society. The findings of this study suggest that students who are successful, regardless of socioeconomic status, race or gender, have tapped the resources around them to create a social capital bundle. Some children draw their social capital from financial resources, some from strong parental support, some from church and community activities and some from deep creative roots. The results suggest that the combination of these social capital sources is the foundation of individual student success.

## Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	p. 1
Purpose Statement.....	p. 3
II. Literature Review .....	p. 6
Public Perception.....	p. 6
Purpose of Schools.....	p.7
Historical Perspective.....	p.8
Accountability Systems.....	p. 9
Mobility Rate.....	p. 10
School Policy.....	p. 13
Who’s Moving.....	p. 15
Academic Impact.....	p. 21
School System Implications.....	p. 27
Classroom Implications.....	p. 35
Student Implications.....	p.37
Social Capital.....	p. 37
III. Methods.....	p. 44
Rationale for Mixed Methods.....	p. 44
Data Collection Procedures.....	p. 50
Quantitative Procedures.....	p. 50
Qualitative Procedures.....	p. 52
Sampling.....	p. 56
Quantitative Post test only with nonequivalent groups.....	p. 56

Sample Case Study.....	p. 56
Historical Multi- Case Study.....	p. 57
Data Analysis.....	p. 57
Quantitative Procedures.....	p. 57
Qualitative Procedures.....	p. 58
Verification.....	p. 59
Presentation of Findings.....	p. 60
Research Reflexivity.....	p. 61
Ethical Considerations.....	p. 64
Dissemination.....	p. 65
IV. Quantitative Results.....	p. 66
Null-Hypothesis.....	p. 68
Findings .....	p. 71
V. Historical multi-case study.....	p. 72
Marie.....	p. 72
The Setting.....	p. 72
Family Journey.....	p. 73
School Days.....	p. 84
Impact.....	p. 92
Review of Literature.....	p. 100
VI. Joe.....	p. 109
The Setting.....	p. 109
Family Journey.....	p. 110

School Days.....	p. 119
Impact.....	p. 131
Review of Literature.....	p. 139
VII. Lori.....	p. 145
The Setting.....	p. 145
Family Journey.....	p. 146
School Days.....	p. 151
Impact.....	p. 156
Review of Literature.....	p. 162
VIII. Lisa.....	p. 166
The Setting.....	p. 166
Family Journey.....	p. 167
School Days.....	p. 176
Impact.....	p. 186
Review of Literature.....	p. 197
IX. Travis.....	p. 202
The Setting.....	p. 202
Family Journey.....	p. 204
School Days.....	p. 208
Impact.....	p. 225
Review of Literature.....	p. 229
X. Historical Multi-Case Study Themes.....	p. 238
Reason for moving.....	p. 239

Extended Family .....	p. 240
Social Capital .....	p. 240
Financial Capital .....	p. 241
Human/Parental Capital.....	p. 242
Community/School Capital.....	p. 245
Creative Capital.....	p. 247
Friendship Networks .....	p. 247
Academic Attainment.....	p. 249
Lifelong Impact.....	p. 250
XI. Sample Case Study.....	p. 254
Housing.....	p. 255
Refugees.....	p. 259
Boundary Changes/District Transfer Policies.....	p. 261
Academic Challenges .....	p. 263
Assessment.....	p. 263
Finding the gaps.....	p. 263
Ongoing Formative Assessment.....	p. 264
Seamless Curriculum.....	p. 265
Academic Interventions.....	p. 267
Social Challenges.....	p. 271
Feeling Welcomed.....	p. 271
Sense of Belonging .....	p. 272
Mixed Socio-economic Challenges.....	p. 273



Low Socio-economic challenges.....	p. 274
ELL population social challenges .....	p. 274
Social Interventions .....	p. 275
Establishing clear expectations.....	p. 275
Principal meeting at enrollment.....	p. 276
Making expectations public and explicit.....	p. 276
Counselors.....	p. 277
Low Socio-economic social interventions.....	p. 278
NCLB.....	p. 279
School choice.....	p. 280
Community Relations.....	p. 284
School Climate.....	p. 286
XII. Summary & Conclusions.....	p. 289
Discussion.....	p. 289
Quantitative Results.....	p. 293
Sample Case Study.....	p. 295
Historical Multi-Case Study.....	p. 301
Recommendations.....	p. 306
Learnings.....	p. 306
Further Research.....	p. 311
XIII. References.....	p. 312
Appendix A (Generational Participant Letter of Invitation).....	p. 325
Appendix B (Principal Participant Letter of Invitation).....	p.327

Appendix C (School District Letter of Invitation).....	p. 329
Appendix D (Generational Participant Consent to Participate).....	p. 331
Appendix E (Principal Participant Consent to Participate).....	p. 333
Appendix F (Institutional Review Board Proposal).....	p. 335
Appendix G (Confidentiality Agreement -- Transcriptionist).....	p. 336
Appendix H (Generational Participant Interview Protocol).....	p. 345
Appendix I (Principal Participant Interview Protocol).....	p. 349
Appendix J (IRB Letter of Approval).....	p. 350
Appendix K (Data Tables Generational Participants).....	p. 351
Appendix L (Data Tables Principal Participants).....	p. 358

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The traditional perspective of United States education is anchored in the belief that schools follow a standard academic routine that we recall from our own education. Teachers begin each fall with a group of students assembled together for the next nine months. They regularly evaluate students' progress and adjust their instruction based on information gathered through daily classroom routines, homework and assessment tools. End-of-year achievement data are used for planning instruction and curriculum for the following year.

This portrait of routine classroom life, however, is inaccurate for many urban schools. During the 1900s, schools became multi-purpose institutions charged with maintaining the historical academic context of the U.S. classroom, while reforming the public school system to meet the social expectations placed on them. Urban principals find themselves working to meet the demands in a school environment judged by how well students perform on standardized tests (Reese, 2007). The school-centered approach outlined by No Child Left Behind, utilizes standardized test scores to measure society's full range of expectations for schools. The challenge for school leaders working to improve education within the expectations of NCLB reflects the public perception depicted through the media, "the strategy for improving the educational attainment of students in the United States is often expressed as improving schools: if schools were better at teaching students, the population would be better educated" (Offenberg, 2004, p. 337).

The challenges for public school leaders are compounded when student mobility is examined. The reality of public schools is that, “in the real world, many students are just passing through” (Hall, 2001, p. 24). The United States, with about one-fifth of the population moving annually, has one of the highest national mobility rates in the world (Titus, 2007). Many educators agree that mobility affects everyone in the school setting. The traditional classroom routine of formative assessment becomes meaningless when the student population tested changes within the school year. Schools districts, principals, and classroom teachers are being held accountable for the academic achievement of students who have received much of their education elsewhere (Wasserman, 2001).

The literature confirms “at all income levels, mobility is at least as great of a predictor of subpar performance as race, poverty, or disability” (Hall, 2001, p. 25). Some moves are often thought to be voluntary, largely-opportunity-related, and a primary means for families to improve their economic well-being and/or living circumstances (Schafft, 2005). However, as a general phenomenon, “families that are poor move 50% to 100% more frequently than families that are not poor” (Hartman, 2000, p. 229). Teachers recognize that stability in family, residence, school and school attendance supports better learning. However, given the staggering number of students coming and going from the classroom, those who need stability the most, the poor, appear to have the least. The poor are more mobile.

The barriers represented by student mobility have pervasive consequences for the students involved and for the classrooms and schools they attend. Student

mobility is the result of the entwinement of poverty, housing, economic development and global immigration. Given the complexities of student mobility, school leaders seek to improve the academic attainment and well being of mobile students through the examination of the individual student's ability to successfully adjust to a new school. The literature confirms the findings of Kaplan (1999), the greater number of risk factors in a child's life, the greater number of protective factors required to counter balance them. In addition, relocation studies have concluded that, as risk factors accumulate, the student's ability to adjust to changing schools diminishes (McLeod, Heriot, & Hut, 2008). Literature further supports factors that contribute to the adjustment children make when they change schools. Based on these factors, school leaders gain insight into the need for intervention targeted at building mobile student resilience.

The academic and social resilience displayed by students when they change schools is closely tied to social capital development. The disruption to student's social capital development can have academic implications for mobile students. Students experiencing mobility are left without direction or guidance to cope with the knowledge and skill gaps they experience. Some students adapt readily, but most experience high levels of stress and failure in common classroom situations (Puentes, Herrington, & Kritsonis, 2008). As a result, longer-term gaps in foundational academic skills and social development negatively impact the academic attainment of mobile students (Rhodes, 2007).

## Purpose Statement

Given the impact of mobility on classroom instruction and student development, it was important to examine the complexities surrounding student mobility. Therefore, the purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to gain information about post-move functioning of mobile students by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data. Quantitative data were used to measure the collective academic achievement of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing in comparison to the total school achievement in Math and Communication Arts based on results from the MAP (Missouri Achievement Program) Test from 2008-09. In the second phase, qualitative interviews were used to probe significant quantitative findings by exploring the needs of mobile students with ten elementary principals. At the same time, a historical view of the effects of mobility was gained from the experiences of adults born during five different decades (1950's through the 1990's) who moved a minimum of three times during elementary school years.

The overarching mixed method question for the study was: What is the impact of changing schools on academic attainment and social capital development?

The following sub-questions were used to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research topic.

## Quantitative

### *Null-Hypothesis*

There is no difference between the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency in Math or Communication Arts on the 2008-09 MAP test and the amount of time they have attended the school. Essentially, the performance of the student who attended the school all year (Group A) and the sub group of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year (Group B) will be parallel to one another at each grade assessed.

## Qualitative

### Historical Multi-case study

- How did moving affect the academic progress of each participant?
- What was the role of social capital when reestablishing social networks at a new location?

### Sample case study

- What factors outside of school are affecting children changing schools?
- What are the biggest academic challenges for mobile students?
- What are the biggest social challenges for mobile students?
- What programs, school routines or indicators of school culture affect the success of a mobile child?

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### *Public Perception*

The spirit of No Child Left Behind legislation and the policies underlying these efforts are based on the belief that equilibrium exists between the services a school provides and the attainment of students (Offenberg, 2004). Newspapers and other observers often turn raw test scores into school rankings. As a result, urban schools serving low-income students usually dominate the bottom rankings, whereas schools in wealthy suburbs occupy the upper ranks. This approach leaves the reader in the dark as to how much these rankings reflect school quality differences and how much they reflect differences in the student populations served (Thompson, 2004). If the current legislative mindset is built on the tendency to proclaim school quality based on raw test scores, then the question is: if schools traded student populations, would the suburban schools retain their higher rankings?

Much of what is found in publications regarding student achievement in public schools is anchored in the belief that if schools were “better” the student’s raw scores on standardized testing would improve. “The strategy for improving the educational attainment of students in the United States is often expressed as improving schools; if schools were better at teaching students, the population would be better educated” (Offenberg, 2004 p. 337). The No Child Left Behind Act requires each state to develop a 12-year plan of Adequate Yearly Progress. Plans must include steps to ensure students attending a given school for most of the school year will score proficient in reading and mathematics on standardized tests (Offenberg,



2004). The penchant for equating a school's worth with its test scores makes sense in a sports-saturated world of winners and losers, but does it really reflect society's full range of expectations for the schools (Reese, 2007)?

In contrast, several researchers believe that a more realistic method of predicting the outcome of student achievement may require some attention to student mobility. When assessing the effectiveness of a school, an issue that must always be addressed is which students have attended the school for a sufficient time to be influenced by its programs and for whom the schools should be held accountable (Ligon & Paredes, 1992). In addition, Ligon and Paredes (1992) found that "the longer a student is exposed to a program of instruction, the better the chance that the student will learn and acquire the skills necessary to succeed in society and the work force" (p. 2). The assessment structure of NCLB provides only a glimpse into the complexity of learning. "Without measuring a school's mobility rate, standardized tests can't possibly offer an accurate snapshot of students' learning progress" (Hall, 2001, p. 25).

### *Purpose of schools*

Reese (2007) states, "Historically, public schools have never made the life of the mind, or mastery of academic subjects, their central or only mission" (p. 227). He further explains that during the past century, schools have become multi-purpose institutions, which is why they are so easy to criticize and forever in need of reform. However under NCLB, the current approach to improving student achievement is clearly school-centered. Nowhere does it acknowledge that "students achievement is influenced by factors out of school, despite research

showing that nutrition, family functioning, exposure to toxins, and a host of community factors also influence student behavior and achievement”(Offenberg, 2004, p. 338). With so many things transpiring in schools simultaneously, public schools lack coherent purpose. “To secure high academic standards for everyone is nevertheless, to dream of something that has never existed in our society” (Reese, 2007, p. 227).

### *Historical Perspective*

The United States has a long history of searching for utopian possibilities of school, described by Horace Mann, born in 1796. Mann said “schools would help assimilate the millions of immigrants arriving from Germany and Ireland, teaching them American values, Christian (Protestant) morals” (Reese, 2007, p. 224). He promised that schools could end poverty, crime, and social strife. The prospects of human perfection, social harmony, and the safety of the republic were soon tied up with the fate of the emerging public school system (Reese, 2007). Americans continue to aspire to fulfill the vision of Horace Mann.

Now more than ever we seek to attach the fate of public education to schools’ ability to assimilate immigrants, end poverty, crime and social strife and obtain social harmony. Many educators proclaim that public schools cannot be expected to solve these historical societal challenges. “Let’s stop making teachers an easy scapegoat. There are many factors that affect student learning that are beyond a teacher’s control, including a school’s resources, class size, availability of special education, the performance of other teachers, student mobility and attendance, and parent support” (Weigarten, 2008, p. 8). Future historians will have their hands full

trying to explain why the public and countless policymakers in the past half-century regarded every social, economic, and political ill as an educational problem. “Why were schools, as in previous generations, supposed to compensate for the deficiencies of parents, religious leaders, or high-placed government officials” (Reese, 2007, p.218)?

Many attempts at educational reform, among them No Child Left Behind, assume that the quality of the educational programs being offered by schools can be inferred from the achievements of the children who attend them” (Offenberg, 2004, p. 338). However, ignoring the effects of poverty defies common sense and the results of most research. It implies that the family role in children’s education is negligible, at least in a good school (Thompson, 2004). As the need for school accountability continues to build, public schools are in pursuit of the ‘right kind of accountability.’ The right kind of accountability system, says Andrew Rotherham, education policy director at the Progressive Policy Institute, will “measure the progress of all students and get them the help they need, without creating perverse incentives for schools by holding them accountable for factors they cannot control” (Hall, 2001, p. 23).

### *Accountability Systems*

The design of the accountability tool used to measure the effectiveness of public schools has global implications for the twenty-first century. In the modern world, schools can “decisively help determine which individuals will or will not attend college, who will rise into the professions, and who will sink into the service economy” (Reese, 2007, p. 220). At the extremes, two conceptual models dominate

the accountability debate. One side, favored by many educators, interprets research like that of Coleman (1966) as showing that the school's influence is minimal. In this view, family, environment, neighborhood, and economics largely swamp whatever the school can do (Thompson, 2004). In contrast, many political and business leaders claim that schools serving poor children should be held to the same standards as those serving the middle class. "If poor children do not do as well, they argue, the school is at fault, reflecting low expectations, a weak teaching staff, poor leadership, or inadequate resources" (Thompson, 2004, p. 201).

As researchers examine accountability systems' strengths and weaknesses, they are faced with a flaw that few policy makers have considered adequately. Annual tests cannot distinguish who is learning and who is not learning if they do not take account of the fact that the students being tested in any given school differ from year-to-year (Hall, 2001). In response, some are looking toward value-added approaches. Value-added approaches focus on student-by-student gains, project the achievement of each student over a short period of time from his or her growth, history, and background. The difference between the projection and actual achievement is the "value added." Because it takes social factors and early achievement into account, value-added approaches may be fairer to students, but some argue that because expectations are related to individual student histories, it is not a good strategy for evaluating progress toward the broad, "all students will be proficient" societal goal of No Child Left Behind (Offenberg, 2004).

*Mobility Rate*

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 recognizes mobility as a factor in achievement. NCLB mandates to the states include that the state's own accountability model must be adjustable for mobility, though it does not specify the manner in which this is to be done (Rhodes, 2005). Accounting for mobility in data analysis varies greatly from state-to-state. Harvard Graduate School of Education's Principals' Center, "few state departments of education report student mobility rates" and although "school districts typically report some form of student mobility rate... its pervasiveness is difficult to assess because equations are based on varying formulae and timetables" (Hartman, 2002, p. 23). Hall (2001), in a publication designed to examine the NCLB plan, claims that the inconsistent statistical approach to addressing the academic and society ramifications of student mobility makes no sense. He further explains that "tests show that, at all income levels, mobility is at least as great a predictor of sub par performance as race, poverty, or disability" (Hall, 2001, p. 25).

The complexities found in formulas designed to track student mobility continue to cloud the understanding of student mobility. Rhodes (2005), describes student mobility as changes in school enrollment at times other than those prompted by program design. Stability, when used as a specific term in mobility research, represents the number or percentage of students who are continually enrolled in a given school from the start of that year to the end (Rhodes, 2005). The confusion in tracking student mobility rates is further complicated when the stability figures and the mobility figures extend beyond 100%. The sum of both stability and mobility figures in individual schools may exceed 100% because the

most commonly used methods of measuring mobility recognize that when one child leaves, and another arrives, there are two changes, even though the population may remain the same (Fowler-Finn, 2001). Many researchers have found that a single mobility index is inadequate to answer the questions everyone has about this phenomenon (Ligon & Paredes, 1992). A school in which 90% of the students are stable, but the other 10% turn over six times, has a different mobility rate than the school in which those 10% only turn over once (Rhodes, 2005).

In alignment with the formula described by Rhodes, where the mobility rate is calculated by the number of times a student has changed schools, a 1994 U.S. General Accounting Office study reports that by the end of the third grade, one out of six children had attended three or more schools, and that students often changed schools more than once during the school year (Hartman, 2002). Hall, in a publication designed to examine the approach to student mobility outlined by NCLB, explained many believe that NCLB does not adequately account for the reality that “in the real world, many kids are just passing through” (2001, p.24). In more recent study from 2003, The National Assessment of Educational Progress shows fluctuations in mobility rates by type of schools, school size, ethnicity, and income:

- 34% of all fourth-graders, 21% of eighth-graders, and 10% of twelfth-graders changed schools at least once in the previous two years;
- 25% of third-graders attending urban schools are highly mobile, compared to about 14% in suburban and rural schools;
- 41% of Hispanic and 45% of African-American fourth-graders changed schools, compared to 27% of white fourth-graders;

- 43% of low-income fourth-graders changed schools, compared to 26% above the poverty limits (Black, 2006, p. 47).

Mobility seems to undercut programmatic efforts to solve school problems and transform schools into effective organizations (Patrick & Hirschman, 2002). A study of Chicago schools show that the average student moved just three miles. The Census Bureau's annual mobility report confirm that this pattern is the norm nationwide (Rhodes, 2005). Students in schools faced with the long-term effects of high mobility, which include lower achievement levels and slower academic pacing, had a reduced likelihood of high school completion. Every student in the public school system is affected by student mobility. Data on how highly mobile classrooms affect non-mobile students in those classrooms are rare, but, in all likelihood, such patterns significantly retard curriculum pacing and decrease social and educational attachments to fellow students (Hartman, 2002).

### *School Policy*

Many educators agree that mobility affects everyone in the school setting. However, in the absence of national guidance, most district policy makers are left to address student mobility without statistical clarity. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) revealed high interest in mobility, but no satisfactory resolution of how to measure and calculate mobility statistics (Ligon & Paredes, 1992). Without continuity in the measurement of mobility, some school districts continue to ignore student mobility as a factor of organizational stability.

The number of kids who change schools is astounding (Black, 2006). School districts often categorize mobile students as a first step in understanding the problem. Those who stay in their home schools are considered stable, and those who move six or more times during K-12 -- often children from migrant, military, homeless, or low-income families -- are labeled highly mobile (Black, 2006). Most school districts have programs in place to deal with the special problems of migrant students, most schools do not have systems designed to address the problem of urban mobility (Ligon & Paredes, 1992).

Both Chicago and Houston have examined district policy in an effort to improve academic stability for students. "Chicago Public Schools, which has struggled with high mobility, reports that 23% of students who entered first grade in 1999 had changed schools by the end of the year. In response to the high mobility findings, Chicago Panel on School Policy promulgated a Mobility Awareness Action Plan, titled "Staying Put" in 2000" (Hartman, 2002, p. 22). Despite the district-wide effort to reduce mobility in Chicago, four years after entering first grade more than 50% of students had changed schools (Black, 2006). In a similar effort, Houston Independent School District also has a "One Child, One School, and One Year" policy, and its transportation department will transport homeless kids anywhere in the district (Hartman, 2002).

With the absence of a strong transfer-mobility policy at the district level, building administrators are left to navigate the requirements of NCLB, while balancing the revolving door of students. Without a district stance on student mobility, "school administrators in urban schools often bow to community, parent,



teacher, and budget pressures by transferring children” (Hartman, 2002). In addition, principals may solve short-term problems of discipline at the expense of school stability. These “push” factors from within the school environment, cause harm to a student’s education. It is an important goal of school policy to reduce their incidence wherever possible (Hartman, 2002). Educators are charged with examining the involuntary factors affecting student mobility while structuring school policy to protect students from the internal “push” factors present in many schools.

### *Who’s moving?*

The need to examine the effects of student mobility on the public school system is a pressing issue that cannot be ignored. As one researcher stated, any attempt at educational reform will be “brought to its knees” unless it takes student mobility into account (S. Stringfield, personal communication, April 20, 1999; Nakagawa, Stafford, Fisher, & Matthews, 2002). To better equip building principals and school district officials in constructively meeting the needs of mobile students, there is a need to understand who is moving in and out of schools across the United States. As a general phenomenon, “families that are poor move 50% to 100% more frequently than families that are not poor” (Hartman, 2002, p. 227). Some mobility is viewed largely as a strategic activity initiated by students and their families to serve their own interests and educational preferences. There may be little that can be done to prevent mobility when mobility is a result of families’ decisions to change jobs or residences.

Some mobility is neither strategic nor related to moving. Students and schools initiate student transfers in response to social as well as academic concerns, previously described as push factors. “The most general, yet potentially the most effective strategy to reduce mobility is to improve the overall quality of the school” (Nakagawa, Stafford, Fisher, & Matthews, 2002, p. 121). Bruno, of UCLA, and Isken, of the Lennox School District in Los Angeles, examined student mobility in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). In the 1996 issue of the *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, they reported that transiency in this country stems from many causes: divorce, job relocation, homelessness, immigration, and migration (Bracey, 1996). Incidence of such transiency are disproportionately higher among certain identifiable groups -- in particular, low-income, homeless, farm worker, and minority children, “as a result the already inadequate education received by these students is grossly magnified” (Hartman, 2002, p. 229).

The challenges of creating technical solutions to address student mobility are exasperated by the cultural crisis moving across the United States. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) have captured the change in American culture through their illustration of a time machine:

If you could step into a time machine and travel back fifty years to the time of your parents or grandparents, you would find the world much changed. There would be no computers and television would be quite new. The cities would appear small and provincial, with only the occasional car and few retail chain outlets. Travel back another fifty years and cars disappear from the streets, as do telephones, washing

machines, and vacuum cleaners from our houses and airplanes from the air” (p. 11)

The changes in technology, the degree of global connectivity undreamed by citizens fifty years ago, and the flow of immigration into the United States is moving faster than practical solutions for student mobility can be generated.

The number of identified school-age migrant students in the United States is estimated to range from half a million to approximately 800,000 (Gibson, 2003). The number of U.S. Latinos is increasing eight times more rapidly than the population as a whole; by 2025 a quarter of all U.S. K-12 students will be of Spanish-speaking origin (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census 2000; Ream, 2005). Among adult farm workers in the United States, only approximately 15% have completed 12 years of school or more (Alvarez-McHatton, Zalaquett, & Gingras, 2006). The need to work and contribute to family income draws migrant youth away from an obstacle-laden academic path (Martinez & Cranston-Gingras, 1996). Dropout rates for migrant students are cited at 45 to 90% (United States General Accounting Office 1998; Alvarez-McHatton, Zalaquett, Gingras, 2006).

In addition to the numerous immigrant students the public school system is welcoming, many children living in poverty find themselves relocating to a new as the school as the family pursues economic or emotional stability. “A very large portion of such moves, particularly for low-income and minority students, are triggered or necessitated by factors that are not associated with positive change for the family” (Hartman, 2002, p. 228). The changes in the welfare reform system have impacted some family decisions to pursue housing and employment in the absence

of governmental support. When families leave the welfare rolls, they are more likely to be residentially mobile than those who remain on welfare, caused in large part by employment opportunities that require or prompt a move (Hartman, 2002).

Although the idea that schools might create programs that could stabilize their populations has intuitive appeal, it is unlikely that school community can be built in the absence of larger community efforts to stabilize the housing of families when changes in employment occur (Nakagawa, Stafford, Fisher, & Matthews, 2002). A family surviving just above the welfare eligibility line likely encompasses the population who finds the need to move most frequently.

Students who are considered homeless have legislative protection against changing schools as a result of their loss of housing. These children have the same protected right to a free, appropriate, and non-segregated public education as their non—mobile peers. The newly reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the new McKinney-Vento legislation provide new strength to provisions designed to keep children who become homeless in their school of origin, for the remainder of the academic year even if the child is permanently housed outside that school's boundaries (subject of course to parents' or guardians' wishes). The McKinney-Vento legislation ensures that if the homeless child chooses to attend a school in a more convenient location, the school shall immediately enroll the child even if appropriate records and proof of residency are unavailable. The school is obligated to obtain necessary records from the child's previous school. In addition, local education agencies are required to provide and pay for transportation to and from the school (Hartman, 2002).

The ideals of these safeguards for homeless students are a necessary measure to prevent children from missing out on school as a result of loss of housing. However, the challenges of working with families who may live in hotels, cars, campgrounds, or literally on the street frequently prevent school officials from fully complying with the collection of documents (birth certificates, school records, immunization records) mandated by the legislation. These interactions regarding student records between the school and the parent may contribute to the unwelcoming feeling described by some families. “Despite the fact that high-mobility schools are more likely to offer access to services that will help families become part of the community, the initial interaction between these schools and parents may be less than welcoming” (Nakagawa, Stafford, Fisher, & Matthews, 2002, p. 120).

The mindset of the parents or adult figures regarding school is likely central to the decision to have their children change schools. Parents are the central decision maker in the lives of their children, and many parents make decisions for their children in response to their immediate needs and through the filters of their own experiences with school. “Our society grants parents high levels of independence and rights to act in ways of educational planners for their children; local reform efforts and the creators of No Child Left Behind did not give adequate attention to this fact” (Offenberg, 2004, p. 354). Some parents or guardians may believe there is always a better place to live rather than commit to making the place better where they are now. These parents also may attribute academic success

more to luck rather than to hard work. Mobility fuels these beliefs (Fowler & Finn, 2001).

Because of parents' own prior experience with the school system, they may be reluctant to approach the school; they find it easier to simply pick up and change schools when academic or social problems arise (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Negative interactions with or impressions of teachers and administrators, as well as unresolved discipline and special education issues, are often the root of parents' decisions to change schools (Rhodes, 2005).

Many schools are working to unify their efforts with parents and caretakers to better understand practices that can support the educational experience of students moving in and out of schools across the United States. School personnel must first acknowledge the stresses and time constraints in the lives of families who are mobile (Nakagawa, Stafford, Fisher, & Matthews, 2002). Reyes and Fletcher (2003) report that schools that have an organizational culture emphasizing high expectations and continuous improvement for both students and teachers have greater success with students from mobile families (Reyes & Fletcher, 2003). Some school principals use NCLB Title I funds to pay teachers for after-school tutoring and to reduce class sizes during the regular school day to expand the impact of instruction (Ream, 2005). The effectiveness of these efforts are contingent on the school staff's understanding and compassion for the families they serve. Although schools with high levels of mobility make attempts to build community, these attempts frequently do not translate into greater involvement from families. There is a tendency for some of these children and families to believe that personal

involvement will only result in additional pain when relationships are inevitably broken again (Fowler-Finn, 2001).

Even when well-intended interventions are put into place to support the learning of mobile students, damaging oversights can occur. For instance, high-mobility schools were slightly less likely to report welcoming activities (e.g., special classes for new students, school tours). Although high mobility schools are more likely to have a staff person dedicated to parent involvement, to have a family support professional make home visits, and to have parents sign a written commitment for involvement, these same practices may reinforce the parent as a problem and a client (Nakagawa, 2000) rather than as a resource and a partner (Epstein, 1996). Substantial research on parent availability confirms the commonsense idea that the family is the institution that has the job of raising children and socializing them. Public policies and programs can help families when they are struggling, but no acceptable substitute for families has been invented (Barton, 2004).

#### *Academic Achievement Impact*

In the 2004 Annual Social and Economic Supplement to the U.S. Census published on September 21, 2004 by *Education Week*, researchers found that 15 to 20% of school-aged Children moved in the previous year (Heinlein & Shinn, 2000). With student mobility affecting so many Children in the public school system, educators are challenged to examine the relationship between mobility and educational attainment (commonly measured by achievement tests, grades, and

age-grade progress). The effects of changing schools on educational attainment are complex due to the number of conflicting variables that must be considered.

When examining the effects of mobility on student achievement, researchers are challenged to separate the effects of changing schools from pre-existing academic and social factors. Heinlein and Shinn (2000) found that mobility was related to lower achievement when no controls for prior achievement were used. In contrast, results of longitudinal studies of mobility were not associated with changes in achievement, once earlier achievement was controlled. “Low-income, urban American children of color attending high-poverty schools presently rank at the bottom of almost every measure of academic achievement; almost two thirds score below basic proficiency levels on national standardized tests” (Olson & Jerald, 1998, p. 10). Therefore, it is difficult to establish if the mobility of the child is the root of a Child’s limited academic attainment or if the quality of his educational experience prior to moving and after the move is to blame.

Based on findings from the first two waves of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health conducted in 1994, South, Haynie and Bose (1995) highlight several characteristics and behaviors of mobile students to explain why mobile students are more likely than non-mobile students to drop out of high school. The examination of risk for academic struggle appears to be closely tied to the quality of the child’s overall educational experience and their relationship with their parents, their school, and their peers. South, Haynie and Bose further state that students’ relationships to their schools might be particularly important for explaining the effect of mobility on school drop out, given that low educational aspirations and



weak school attachment lead to higher dropout rates and other diminished educational outcomes (Rumberger & Larson, 1998; South, Haynie & Bose, 2005). Lash and Kirkpatrick (1990) also considered the “contextual effects” of student mobility through the analysis of the level of mobility in the school as a whole and dropout risks, even among non-mobile students (Lash & Kirpatrick, 1990).

Long before South, Haynie and Boss (2005) addressed the complex variables surrounding student mobility, Straits (1987) accounted for the distance of residential moves. He concluded “socio-cultural differences between locations are the most influential factors in the effect of mobility on age/grade progress in school. For teenagers with less educated parents,” Straits acknowledged that age/grade progress is a “crude” measure of achievement” (Heinlein & Shinn, 2000, p.350) The results in both studies indicate that the academic attainment of mobile students may be affected by factors associated with cultural context, the climate of the school, and the students’ relationships with family, friends, and the school itself.

To further understand the complexity of mobile students’ academic and social development, many educators turn to the well-known 1966 Coleman Report. The report often is cited as showing that family factors are more predominant than school factors in explaining differences in achievement between minority and nonminority students (Barton, 2004). Furthermore in Coleman’s theory, residential mobility is seen as problematic for youth because moving to a new community or a new school severs social relations that bind parents, Children, teachers, and other community adults, thus diminishing Children’s social capital (Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004). Coleman, in fact, goes so far as to use residential mobility as an approximate

indicator of Children's access to social capital, on the assumption that "the social relations that constitute social capital are broken at each move" (Coleman, 1988, p.113).

The disruption to social capital development may have large academic implications for mobile students. Students experiencing mobility are left without direction or guidance to cope with the knowledge and skill gaps every day. Some students adapt readily, but most experience high levels of stress and failure in novel classroom situations (Puentes, Herrington, & Kritsonis, 2008). Longer-term academic gaps in instructional foundations are detrimental to mobile students' academic attainment (Rhodes, 2008).

Disruptions to learning in the early years are particularly damaging to the learning process. Elementary school children who move frequently face considerable disruption in their lives. These children often are not helped to adjust to their new teachers, peers, and practices that make schools different. Unless policy-makers and school personnel focus greater attention on the needs for children who transfer schools frequently, continuing low achievement, grade retention, and failure are the likely consequences to be faced (Audette & Algozzine, 2000). The academic impact for children who change schools during the elementary school years can result in gaps in understanding and diminished confidence in learning. Particularly in math, student conceptual development is cumulative; many of the foundational skills that are taught in the elementary years may be lost when a child changes schools (Heinlein & Shinn, 2000). However, school personnel are cautioned that attempting to bridge the gaps in learning by exclusively emphasizing

academic development at the expense of the students' social adjustment process is not likely to be a successful strategy (Rhodes, 2008). It is the peer-focused developmental aspect of mobile students that may affect their academic work (Puentes, Herrington & Kritsonis, 2008).

The effects of mobility on student academic attainment and social capital development are magnified when students change schools repeatedly. Heinlien and Shinn (2000) found that students with two or more moves prior to Grade 3 scored lower than their peers in reading and math achievement in Grade 3 and were less likely to be achieving at grade level, a pattern that persisted to Grade 6. The odds of being retained by Grade 6 were over twice as high for children with three moves before Grade 3 as for children with no moves before Grade 3 (Heinlein & Shinn, 2000). "In a study in one inner-city school, no student with an A average had previously enrolled in more than 2 schools; 38% of students with D and F averages had attended 2 or more schools" (Levine, Wesolowski, & Corbett, 1966, p.155).

A more recent study published in 1994 by the U.S. General Accounting Office, "showed that 41 percent of frequent school changers were below grade level in reading, as were 33 percent in math; these percentages were higher than those of students who had not changed schools. About 17 percent of all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders had already attended three or more schools; the rate for minority students was double the rate for white students." (Barton, 2004, p.10)

In addition to academic implications, repeated transfers result in discontinuity of relationships with teachers and peers (Rhodes, 2008). Students found themselves

unable to focus on academic studies until they could secure a peer group with which to interact (Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004). Without a solid relationship with teachers and peers, Wood (1993) reported that Children who moved frequently (5 or 6 times) were at an increased risk of failing a grade. In a more recent study Simpson and Fowler (1994) supported the earlier findings, stating that students who moved three or more times were at twice the risk for repeating a grade as Children who had never moved (Heinlein & Shinn, 2000).

High student mobility rates relate significantly to low achievement test scores. One explanation for this significant relationship is curricular inconsistency (Titus, 2007). Student mobility creates many challenges for students, for their parents, and for educators. These challenges, such as transferability of school records and credit hours, are exacerbated by the great diversity among states, school districts, and schools across America.

“There are 48 different state assessments which measure student achievement. Age requirements vary for entering school and for leaving school before earning a high school diploma. Curriculum differences result in a possible loss of credit. There are grading system differences which affect class rank. Schools have schedules which are not standardized and widely different calendars. Credit variations occur because of block scheduling, combined courses, and other factors. Graduation requirements differ because of credit and exit examination variations.” (Keller & Decoteau, 2000, p. 469)

School starting age varies from 5 to 8 years old, and this is complicated by different birth date rules. The age at which students are allowed to drop out of school before earning a high school diploma varies from 16 to 18 throughout the 50 states (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2004; Titus, 2007).

### *Schools System Implications*

Mobility has become a major source of concern for school systems across the country as housing costs rise, families change neighborhoods, and immigrants continue to stream into American cities (Holloway, 2000). A hallmark of education is the following of standard routines. Classrooms are filled each fall with groups of students expected to learn together for a nine-month term. Progress is regularly monitored and adjustments are made to facilitate efforts to enhance end-of-year assessments that are then used to plan instruction and curriculum for the following year. The cycle is important and its regularity pervasive in American education. However, for many urban school districts, the regularity of standard procedures is frequently upset by erratic patterns of student mobility (Kerbow, 1995). In 2002, New York City chancellor Harold O. Levy described the magnitude of the impact of student mobility on the school system. He states “student mobility is perhaps the hardest problem, because it is often the function of circumstances beyond the control of the board” (Holloway, 2000, p.1).

As school systems work to create stability amidst a revolving door of students, some believe that states should play a larger role in addressing the problem. States should mandate standardized collection and reporting of school mobility data as a vital tool in understanding the nature of the problem (Hartman, 2002). Student

mobility has existed for years, but the pressure to provide academic and social solutions has grown into a more serious challenge as No Child Left Behind continues to impose high-stakes tests on school systems (Holloway, 2000).

The entwinement of poverty, housing, economic development, global immigration, and a world market place have accelerated the need for school systems to address student mobility as a community problem. “Educators at all levels must understand and relate to other linked systems. To bring about results, we need to get out of our silos” (Hartman, 2002, p. 237). State officials must examine the widespread academic effects that are a result of changes to the public housing system. One clear example would be to “dissuade local public housing authorities using the HOPE IV project renovation program, which is displacing tens of thousands of low-income families--from forcing families to leave during the school year” (Hartman, 2002, 236). Hartman further argues, “Likely nothing would do more to reduce harmful school transiency than increased residential security and stability. The greatest boost in this area would come from a vast increase in the supply of decent and affordable housing, substantially reducing external pressures to move” (Hartman, 2002, p. 236). However, with student mobility continuing to rise across the United States, efforts to design school-based solutions to address the needs of mobile students are beginning to emerge at the federal, state and school district level. Many are turning to The Department of Defense for direction in creating a sustainable transition system.

The Department of Defense (DOD), which operates many schools in and around military bases, has an excellent track record with regard to student mobility --

transience being a way of life for military families as a result of the assignment rotation system. The Department carries out timely transfer of records (not only among DOD schools but also between those schools and non-DOD schools), employs efficient record keeping, and has clearly specified course transfer agreements and clearly articulated graduation requirements (Hartman, 2002). Despite high mobility, the overall academic achievement of students in Department of Defense Educational Activity (DoDEA) schools, as measured by a battery of tests, is among the highest in the nation (Titus, 2007). For African American and Hispanic students, it is the highest in the nation (DoDEA, n.d.). Smrekar and Owens (2003) found the testing measures used by DoDEA schools yielded “compelling evidence of the benefits of linking assessment with strategic intervention for school improvement and system-wide reform against the backdrop of high student mobility” (Smrekar & Owens, 2003, p. 5).

Although Children in military families gain more than half of their formal basic education in U.S. public schools, the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), an umbrella agency created in 1994, operates more than 200 public schools with approximately 8,785 teachers serving 102,600 students. DoDEA schools educate the Children of military service members and other U.S. government employees where American public schools are not available. As a result the student population turnover rate is about 37% each year for Children in military families. This high student mobility rate prompted DoDEA administrators to institute a standardized transition

system to help transferring students and a system of uniform curriculum with standards-based instruction (Titus, 2007, p.86).

The examination of the DoDEA system does pose several notable differences from the public school system. The DoDEA spends almost \$2,000 more per pupil than the national average (Tofoya, 2001). Teachers earn on average nearly \$10,000 more annually than their public school peers. Schools are small with state-of-the-art computer labs (Titus, 2007). However, despite the differences in funding, facilities, and teacher compensation, educators are gaining insight to student mobility through the examination of the streamlined organizational practices of the DoDEA. For example, standardization allows DoDEA schools to quickly process students who are coming and going; when students arrive from other DoDEA schools their teachers know what content they have covered (Delisio, 2002). In an attempt to create a world-class education system, DoDEA has developed rigorous curriculum standards that specify what students should know and be able to do (Titus, 2007). Furthermore, the commitment to academic excellence by the DoDEA can be easily identified in the 2001 report to the National Education Goals Panel, *March Toward Excellence*. DoDEA Director Joe Tofoya emphasizes, “that the high mobility index of 35% for students within DoDEA schools is not used as an excuse for underachievement” (Titus, 2007, p. 81). The director identified eight factors that account for high academic achievement by students in DoDEA schools:

- Centralized direction setting with local decision making



- Policy coherence and regular data flow regarding instructional goals assessments, accountability, and professional training and development
- Sufficient financial resources linked to instructionally relevant strategic goals
- Staff development that is job-embedded, intensive, sustained over time, relevant to school improvement goals, and linked to student performance
- Small school size, conducive to trust, communication, and sense of community
- Academic focus and high expectations for all students
- Continuity of care for Children in high quality preschools and afterschool programs
- A corporate commitment to public education that is material and symbolic and that is visible and responsive to parents within the school community. (Smrekar & Owens, 2001, p.10)

The Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC), a nonprofit organization formed in 1998, serves as an advocate for all military-related mobile students. The International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) and MCEC are working together to help mobile students. The original purpose of IBO, a nonprofit educational organization established in Switzerland in 1968, was to facilitate the international mobility of students preparing for postsecondary education by providing schools with a curriculum and diploma recognized by universities around the world (Titus,

2007). The core values of the IBO include high standards embracing diversity, working together through partnerships, innovative pedagogy, and the active involvement of stakeholders. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program emphasizes critical thinking and a global worldview (MCEC, International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO]).

One of the most important educational elements offered to IB students is the notion that they can readily move among IB schools with the assurance that they are being prepared for the same exams with common curriculum and program standards in place. The MCEC strongly encourages military-connected students to enroll in rigorous curricula and to become involved in programs that are portable and widely available (Titus, 2007, p. 89).

To ease the hardships for mobile students MCEC has formulated recommendations for local consideration. Findings from the United States Army's Secondary Education Transition Study (SETS) were used by MCEC to develop a framework of suggestions for possible courses of action to support mobile students (Smrekar & Owens, 2003). To help mobile students transition more smoothly, specific suggestions in the form of "Best and Promising Practices" grew out of SETS. Those suggestions include:

- Timely transfer of student records
- Checklist for student transfers
- Immediate new student orientation which includes a transition buddy
- Access to extracurricular programs

- Communication of variations in school calendars and schedules
- Staff professional development targeted toward mobile students
- Reciprocal graduation requirements for course substitutions, waivers, and testing

In addition to the suggestions compiled in the “Best and Promising Practices,” MCEC also has developed a Web-based Interactive Counseling Center that schools can subscribe to through the MCEC Web site. This video-conferencing system allows families and educational counselors to exchange information in real time between sending and receiving schools (MCEC).

As a result of the success of DOD students, state and federal agencies have begun to formulate plans to serve migrant students based on the use of technology, attention to consistent curriculum, and efforts to support the emotional needs of students found throughout the DoDEA approach. Distance learning, similar to the efforts of the MCEC, have provided a technology-based strategy to address gaps in student learning and the changing curriculum standards as students move from one venue to another. Hartman (2000) outlines several specific programs targeted to meet the needs of migrant students.

- Project ESTRELLA (Encouraging Students through Technology to Reach High Expectations in Learning, Life Skills, and Achievement) a U.S. Department of Education- funded program, facilitates interstate coordination to enable migrant students to accumulate credits and experience continuity in their instruction (Branz-Spall, Rosenthal, & Wright, 2003).

- The federal Migrant Education Program has established an electronic interstate record transfer system, national distance-learning programs, and a laptop computer project for secondary school migrant youth that enables them to take advantage of online mentoring (Hartman, 2002).
- Florida Anchor School Project, the Opti School software stores student records to assist receiving schools in making appropriate placement decisions and to allow teachers to align standards, requirements, and curriculum across states (Popp, 2003).
- Project SMART (Summer Migrants Access Resources Through Technology) is a national distance-learning program specifically designed for migrant students that broadcasts to selected sites for eight weeks each summer by satellite, airing over public and cable television. Taped programs are available for locations that cannot receive live broadcast (Hartman, 2002).

In addition to efforts targeted to meet the needs of military and migrant students, school districts are looking for ways to influence the decision of parents and students when they are considering a voluntary transfer. Students who do transfer and their parents need to be better informed (a) about the problems often encountered when changing schools and (b) about how to minimize those difficulties (Rumberger, 2002). Staying Put, a project of the Chicago Panel on School Policy and the University of Chicago's Center for School Improvement, works with parents and educators to clarify the rights and responsibilities that exist under

Chicago Public Schools and state policies. For example, elementary school students who move can complete the school year without transfer, although bus service may not be provided; high school students who move do not have to change schools at all and can continue to attend their original high school until they graduate (Hartman, 2000). In a similar effort, The Chicago Public Schools coordinates the distribution of a brochure titled *If You Move...*, which bears the subtitle “Your Children could lose more than their next-door neighbors” (Hartman, 2000, p, 234). The material summarizes data on the potential for education setback, discourages voluntary moves within the school year, and provides suggestions about alternatives to changing schools, as well as tips on how best to handle unavoidable moves (Kerbow, Azcoitia, & Buell, 2003).

At the building level, educators are looking for ways to welcome students, build lasting relationships, and meet the needs of mobile students. The Los Angeles Unified School District’s Early Assistance for Students and Families Program seeks to welcome new students and their families through a series of social work interventions and tasks. Workers attempt to welcome new students in several ways: (a) by using an initial greeting table at the start of the school year, (b) by extending welcomes through members of student clubs, (c) by establishing formal “welcomers” in each class, and (d) through making formalized connections to parents of new Children (DiCecco, 1995). By listening to the voices of highly mobile students in a city high school, school personnel and youth advocates are offered an opportunity to examine and adjust district and individual school policies and

practices to support both the social development and the subject-area learning of these students (Rhodes, 2008).

### *Classroom Implications*

Schools with significant incidences of student mobility also report an impact on their non-mobile students, teachers, and overall school climate (Student Mobility, *Education Week*: September 21, 2004). Bruno and Isken (cited in Bracey, 1997) found that “nearly” all classroom teachers reported that each time a new student arrived at the classroom, instructional time was lost to the regular students in helping the Child settle into the established classroom routine. When faced with the reality that they must either deviate from prepared lessons to address learning gaps or experience higher failure rates, teachers’ reactions are largely based on their own passion for students, the culture of the school, and the level of expectation established by their campus leadership. Review materials become staples for the stream of newly arriving students (Holloway, 2000).

In contrast, Department of Defense schools offer several key characteristic specific to the classroom instruction, staffing and climate. DoDEA schools are staffed by career teachers who tend to stay in one school. Licensed teachers fill almost every position, and most teachers have advanced degrees and extensive work experience. Teachers’ expectations of students, reported by students as part of a school climate survey, are considerably higher than the national average (Smrekar & Owens, 2003). A computer-based diagnostic program, used to assess reading and mathematics skill levels, typically is administered to new students within 48 hours of their arrival (Hartman, 2006). Mobile students represent a population of students

that calls for an approach to teaching and learning that is more individualized and one that builds a classroom culture of tolerance and support (Puentes, Herrington & Kritsonis, 2008).

### *Student Implications*

The challenges for students as they change schools are both academic and emotional. Kerbow (1996) argue that mobility disrupts the continuity of students' learning processes. Students enter new schools "out of sync" with subject matter, and are not as academically prepared as the rest of their cohorts (Scanlon & Devine, 2001). They learn coping mechanisms and socializing strategies. Some find resilience, inner strength, and insight from surviving and processing these experiences. Rhodes reports that when mobile students are interviewed, some academic concerns are noted, social and emotional issues are by far the most often repeated themes within the answers to open-ended interview questions (Rhodes, 2008). Furthermore, because of transition stress, some mobile students experience downshifting, a psycho-physiological response to a perceived threat or unpleasant experience that impedes or diminishes learning after a move (Keller & Decoteau, 2000).

### *Social Capital*

To meet the academic and emotional needs of mobile students, educators are challenged to examine ways to build personal resilience and search for insights into the theoretical factors that reduce Children's learning and emotional functioning. One approach that does attempt to understand such causal mechanisms is social capital theory (Coleman, 1990). Social capital refers to the "...social relationships,

ties, and networks established among people within the context of wider social systems” (Midgley & Livermore, 1998, p. 31). Links between parents, key individuals, and social institutions within communities are all sources of support for individuals, particularly Children. Coleman (1988) suggests that social capital enhances human development, cognitive capacities, and social functioning (Scanlon & Devine, 2001).

Based on social capital theory, it is social relationships and their disruption that are responsible for post-move reductions in Child wellbeing (Scanlon & Devine, 2001). It is perhaps not surprising that mobile youth have fewer friends, are less popular, and are more likely to be isolated than adolescents who have resided in their schools or communities for a longer period of time; forming friendships takes time, which puts newcomers at a relative disadvantage (South & Haynie, 2002). In a somewhat similar fashion, research also shows that changing schools is often associated with reduced academic performance and school completion, social competence, and self-esteem (Rumberger & Larson, 1998).

When students change schools, emotional responses, quality and speed of social adjustment may vary according to the reasons for the change of school. School changes that were the result of deliberate choices made by families seeking better educational opportunities for their Children involved less traumatic responses. Students whose changes have been involuntary, unexpected or unwanted recounted the most negative experiences (Rhodes, 2008). When a Child changes schools, the strong and enduring connections between and among Children, their friends, parents, teachers, and other community members who function as



sources of social, emotional, and financial support, and normative guidance that facilitate Children's positive development are often severed (South, Haynie, & Bose, 2005).

Changes in a student's access to the social relationships, ties, and networks requires students to reestablish themselves with peers, school personnel and their community. The recognition that specifically adolescent behavior, is shaped to a significant degree by the behavior of significant peers in their social networks has raised several key questions regarding the role of friendship networks for mobile students. "The friendship networks of mobile adolescents are thought to be less complete, less satisfying, and less conducive to pro-social behavior than are the networks of residentially stable youth" (South, Haynie & Bose, 2002, p. 316). Perhaps most critically, mobile youth are likely to be integrated into peer groups whose members exhibit weak educational performance and who do not value educational success. Ethnographic studies of school culture reveal a fairly clear status hierarchy, with status largely determined by perceived popularity (Adler & Adler, 1998). Because students' placement in the school hierarchy is often based on being known by other students (Eder, 1985), recent arrivals to the school are apt to be at a disadvantage (South, Haynie, & Bose, 2005).

Rhodes (2007) reported that the emotional anxiety of changing schools was primarily related to worry about the formation of friendship. Students indicated an inability to concentrate on their studies until they felt secure that they would have the possibility of being able to negotiate the social setting (Rhodes, 2008). Although not applying a systematic and rigorous social-network approach, small-sample

studies by developmental psychologists generally find that, compared with their residentially stable counterparts, mobile youth report having fewer close friends and less personal intimacy with the friends they do have (Humke & Schaefer, 1995). Haynie and South (2002) find that members of the social networks of mobile adolescents tend to have low grade point averages and lower college expectations than the network members of non-mobile adolescents (South, Haynie & Bose, 2005).

When students change schools, the relationship between students and their parents may provide educators additional information for supporting their development. In Coleman's conceptualization, social capital refers to connections between actors that "inhere in family relations and in community organization and that are useful for the cognitive and social development of a Child" (Coleman, 1990, p. 300). Students from two-parent families may have more so-called "social capital" that can help mitigate the effects of residential mobility (Coleman, 1988). In addition, when compared to stayers, mobile students report significantly lower quality relationships with their parents, and the parents of movers report lower levels of involvement in their Children's networks and the larger community (South, Haynie, & Bose, 2005).

Particularly noteworthy, given the implications for theories of adolescent social capital (Coleman 1988), are the fairly sharp differences between residential movers and stayers in the degree to which these Children's parents have knowledge of the actors in their Children's networks. "This deficit of strong network ties within the local community limits the amount of social support and supervision that all

students--mobile and non-mobile--receive from other parents and community members more generally” (South, Haynie, & Bose, 2005, p. 70).

Ultimately, the challenge for educators is to work with mobile students to help them navigate the reestablishment of their social capital structure in order to build student’s academic engagement and thus to maximize the student’s academic attainment. When a student changes school frequently their involvement in school--related activities is effected and their risk for dropping out of school increases. “Students who participate in many activities, who report being engaged academically, and who report stronger attachment to their school are less likely than others to drop out during the following year. These indicators explain a modest amount of the differences between movers and stayers in the risk of dropping out” (South, Haynie, & Bose, 2005, p. 88). Although it is true that studies demonstrate that relocation is not always problematic, the correlation between high rates of mobility and other risk factors such as poverty, life cycle changes, and single-parent family structure suggest a troubling profile of cumulative academic risk (Scanlon & Devine, 2001).

The literature reviewed for this study examined how public perception has been shaped by NCLB, while the purpose of public schools continues to expand. The idea that schools are being held accountable for student performance on high stakes testing in spite of the reality that many students have received their education in pieces as they have jumped from school-to-school has been overlooked by many. Amidst a society shaped by immigration, global markets, and economic struggle, the challenge for public schools goes beyond how to keep children in one school, the

more pressing challenge is how to equip students to endure the disruption to their academic growth and social capital development that occurs when a move takes place.

Therefore, based on the findings of the literature reviewed the purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to gain information about post-move functioning of mobile students by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data. In the study, quantitative data were used to measure the collective academic achievement of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing in comparison to the total school achievement in Math and Communication Arts based on results from the MAP (Missouri Achievement Program) Test from 2008-09. In the second phase, qualitative interviews were used to probe significant quantitative findings by exploring the needs of mobile students with ten elementary principals. At the same time, a historical view of the effects of mobility was gained from the experiences of adults born during five different decades (1940's through the 1990's) who moved a minimum of three times during elementary school years.

The overarching mixed method question for the study is: What is the impact of changing schools on academic attainment and social capital development?

The following sub-questions were used to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research topic.

#### *Quantitative Null-Hypothesis*

There is no difference between the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency in Math or Communication Arts on the 2008-09 MAP test and the

amount of time they have attended the school. Essentially, the performance of the students who attended the school all year (Group A) and the sub group of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year (Group B) will be parallel to one another at each grade assessed.

### *Qualitative Research Questions*

#### Historical Multi-case study

- How did moving affect the academic progress of each participant?
- What was the role of social capital when reestablishing social networks at a new location?

#### Sample case study

- What factors outside of school are affecting children changing schools?
- What are the biggest academic challenges for mobile students?
- What are the biggest social challenges for mobile students?
- What programs, school routines or indicators of school culture affect the success of a mobile child

## Chapter 3

### Methods

#### *Rationale for Mixed Methods Study*

As I explored the issue of student mobility, it became apparent that it is a result and symptom of societal complexities. The issues surrounding student mobility reach far beyond the school walls into poverty, housing, economic development and global immigration. Without a template for simple answers, one is challenged to address what we can have an impact upon. This study provides a multi-dimensional examination of academic attainment and social capital development of mobile students. Through the examination of individual students' abilities to successfully adjust to new schools, these characteristics were analyzed.

Responding to the complex issues surrounding student mobility, a concurrent mixed method design allowed for an interdisciplinary research approach. Both quantitative and qualitative skills "are needed to study the increasingly complex problems facing educators and social scientists. Addressing these problems required amassing substantial evidence--all types of evidence gained through measurement of precise questions, as well as more general assessment through open-ended questions (Creswell & Garrett, 2008). By utilizing the concurrent triangulation approach, I was able to use "two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross-validate, corroborate findings within a single study" (Creswell, 2003, p. 217).

### *Characteristics of Mixed Methods Research*

In addition to addressing the complex nature of the topic, Bryman (2006) provides five justifications for combining qualitative and quantitative research. Included in the five justifications, Bryman highlights the need for triangulation. "Triangulation: convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from different methods. In coding triangulations, the emphasis is placed on seeking corroboration between quantitative and qualitative data" (Bryman, 2006 p. 105). Bryman further builds a foundation for the use of a mixed methods study by providing 16 rationales for mixing the qualitative and quantitative data methods. Out of the sixteen rationales, five pertain to the design needs of this study (Bryman, 2006, p. 105-106).

- a) Triangulation or greater value--refers to the traditional view that qualitative and quantitative research might be combined to triangulate findings in order that they may be mutually corroborated.
- b) Offset--refers to the suggestion that the research methods associated with both quantitative and qualitative research have their own strengths and weaknesses so that combining them allows the researcher to offset their weaknesses to draw on the strengths of both.
- c) Completeness--refers to the notion that the researcher can bring together a more comprehensive account of the area of inquiry in which he or she is interested if both quantitative and qualitative research techniques are employed.

- d) Illustration--refers to the use of qualitative data to illustrate quantitative findings, often referred to as putting 'meat on the bones' of 'dry' quantitative findings.
- e) Utility or improving the usefulness of the finding--refers to a suggestion, which is more likely to be prominent among articles with an applied focus, that combining the two approaches will be more useful to practitioners and others.

Building on the ideals set forth in Bryman's list of sixteen rationales for mixed methods study, Creswell and Garrett (2008) note, "when researchers bring together both quantitative and qualitative research, the strengths of both approaches are combined, leading, it can be assumed, to a better understanding of the research problems than either approach alone" (p. 324).

### Types of Mixed Methods Design

Implementation	Priority	Integration	Theoretical Perspective
No Sequence Concurrent	Equal	At Data Collection	Explicit
Sequential-Qualitative first	Qualitative	At Data Analysis	
		At Data Interpretation	Implicit
Sequential-Quantitative first	Quantitative	With Some Combination	

Creswell, 2003, p. 211



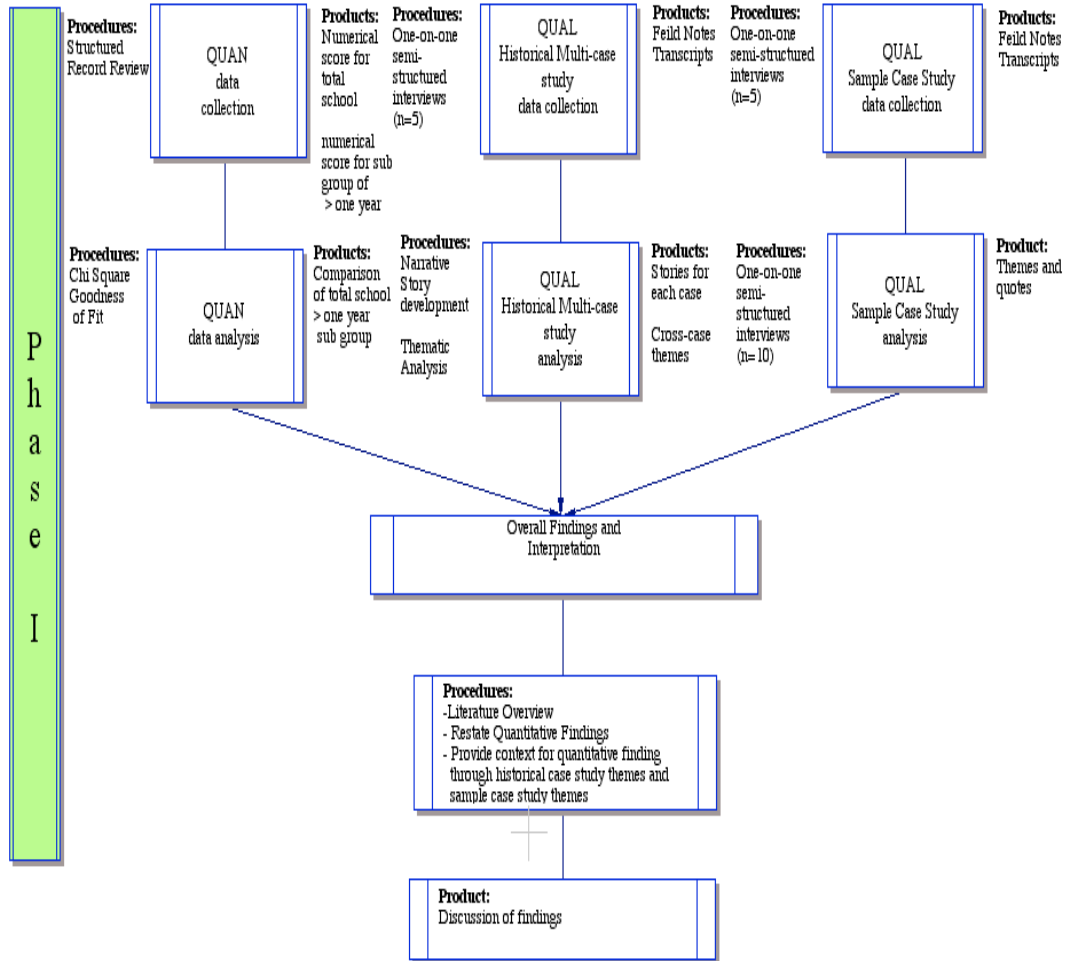
When considering the strategy to employ during a mixed methods study, Creswell (2003) illustrates four decisions critical for selecting a mixed methods strategy:

1. What is the implementation sequence of the quantitative and qualitative data collection in the proposed study?
2. What priority will be given to the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis?
3. At what stage in the research project will the quantitative and qualitative data and findings be integrated?
4. Will an overall theoretical perspective (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, lifestyle, class) be used in the study. (p. 211)

For the purpose of this study, a concurrent triangulation strategy was utilized. “The concurrent triangulation approach is selected as the model when a researcher uses two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 2). The study was *implemented* through separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method. Although the quantitative data were collected prior to conducting the follow--up principal interviews, the dominant data collections (post test state assessment data for non-equivalent groups and historical multi-case study) occurred at the same time.

The concurrent triangulation strategy was advantageous because it is familiar to most researchers and the concurrent data collection results in a shorter data collection time period as compared to one of the sequential approaches. The

*priority* of the qualitative data and quantitative data was given equal weight. The quantitative data occurred first in the data findings to provide an initial understanding of the impact of mobility on student learning. The qualitative data findings followed in an effort to better understand the context and factors affecting the quantitative data findings. Both quantitative and qualitative findings were considered dominant to the framework of the study. The results of both the quantitative and qualitative data findings were *integrated* in the discussion and interpretation to understand the overarching mixed method question of the study. That is, to better understand the impact that changing schools has on academic attainment and social capital development. “This interpretation can either note the convergence of the findings as a way to strengthen the knowledge claims or the study or explain any lack of convergence that may result” (Creswell, 2003, p. 217).



Therefore, the intent of this concurrent mixed methods study was to examine the post-move functioning of mobile students. In the study, quantitative instruments were used to measure the academic achievement of students in Math and Communication Arts who had attended their elementary school for less than one year in comparison to students who attended their school for the entire year. The data findings were used when exploring the effects of changing schools with elementary principals who currently serve buildings with mobile students. Finally,

interviews were conducted with generational participants who moved a minimum of three times during their elementary school years. The reason for combining both quantitative and qualitative data was to better understand the complexity of student mobility by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data.

Data Design	Data	Procedures
Quantitative Posttest-only with nonequivalent groups	Structured record reviews MAP Results 2008-09 Math and Communication Arts  Group A: Total school performance  Group B: Sub group performance (students attending the school for less than one year).	Chi-square test for Independence
Qualitative Sample case-study	Transcribed interviews Interviewer field notes	Interviews with ten elementary principals
Qualitative Historical Multi-case study	Transcribed interviews Interviewer field notes	Interviews with five participants from five decades.

### *Data Collection procedures*

#### *Quantitative*

Academic achievement of mobile students was examined through a structured record review of the achievement data from elementary schools located in four urban school districts in Missouri. Data were derived from the MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) test from 2009 in both Math and Communication Arts. Data included the overall performance of students who attended the same

school all year in both Math and Communication Arts (Group A) and the overall performance of children who had been in the elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing (Group B) at each grade level assessed. A comparison of the overall performance of children who had been in the elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing and the overall performance of students who had been in their school the entire year in both Math and Communication Arts was conducted using the Chi-square test for independence. “The Chi-square test for independence uses frequency data from a sample to evaluate the relationship between two variables in the population” (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009, p. 618). In keeping with the recommendations of Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), the Chi-square test for independence was chosen to evaluate the relationship between two variables.

The null-hypothesis scale of measurement for this study is represented below and states that “the two variables being measured are independent; that is, for each individual, the value obtained for one variable is not related to (or influenced by) the value for the second variable” (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009, p. 618). The two variables are considered independent because there is no consistent, predictable relationship between them. Therefore, the frequency distribution for one variable is not related to or dependent on the second variable.

#### *Null-Hypothesis*

There is no difference between the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency in Math or Communication Arts on the 2008-09 MAP test. Essentially, the performance of students who had attended their school all year

(Group A) and the sub group of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year (Group B) will be parallel to one another at each grade level assessed.

Null-Hypothesis: Expected frequencies for  $H_0$

	Percentage Proficient	Percentage not Proficient
One Year Students	50%	50%
< One Year Students	50%	50%

#### *Historical multi-case study*

Historical multi-case study was used to explore and analyze the phenomenon and contribute to a dynamic, yet bound focus on the issue of student mobility. The historical study thus conceptualized will become “... a rich, varied, evolving intellectual process with which one achieves a deeper and better understanding of the world. It deals with the past, but it conceptualizes the past as being in a constant dialogue with an ever-advancing present, responding to new questions and revealing fresh patterns to illuminate the human condition” (Brundage, 1989, p. 2). Through the use of a historical multi-case study research design, the exploration of the interrelationship of the past history and present status of student mobility was made possible. By interviewing five participants from different decades who moved at least three times during their elementary school career, an anecdotal perspective was gained.

A contextual, intergenerational study of student mobility provides a longitudinal perspective of the academic and social effects of children changing schools. Allowing for a more holistic picture to emerge from the research that “includes enough detail and actual data to take the reader inside the interpretations by including enough detail and actual data to take the reader inside the social situation under examination” (Hatch, 2002, p. 9).

Through the use of historical case study, patterns are frequently identified that often were not obvious to study participants involved in or directly experiencing the phenomenon under study (Valerio, 1999). The use of qualitative multi-case research allowed for the exploration of participants’ experiences in changing schools as a child and key events or relationships that influenced their lives. The exploration of these patterns provided “naturalistic generalizations from analyzing the data, generalizations that people can learn from the case either for themselves or to apply to a population of cases” (Creswell, 2007, p. 163).

#### *Sample case study*

Through the use of a sample case study, I was interested in gaining insight into the efforts of elementary principals to support the academic and social development of mobile students. Creswell (2007) explains the importance of the use of a sample collective case study for the inquiry. “In a collective case study, the one issue or concern is selected, but the inquirer selects multiple case studies to illustrate the issue” (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). Through interviews with several elementary principals who serve mobile students, I gained a deeper understanding of the effects of mobility and efforts of schools to meet the needs of mobile students.

Based on the recommendations of Creswell (2007), cases were selected to gain different perspectives on student mobility. Creswell refers to this technique as “purposeful maximal sampling.”

The primary data collection for the sample case study and historical multi-case study occurred through in-depth, face-to-face interviews with participants. The research questions needed to be broad as they changed with the emerging case study design. Personal experiences of the participants varied, and the use of probes facilitated the process of understanding each person’s unique perceptions. Open-ended or unstructured questions were used to encourage informants to talk about, clarify, and give examples of their experiences.

The data consisted of transcribed interviews and interviewer field notes. Creswell (2007) recommends (a) developing a backup copy of all computer files, (b) using high quality recording devices, (c) developing a master list of the type of information gathered, (d) protecting the anonymity of participants by masking their names in data, and developing a data collection matrix as a means of locating and identifying the information collected for a study (p. 142-143). In keeping with best traditions of case study, I adhered to the following steps as recommended by Creswell (2007, p. 132-134) for interview data collection.

1. Identified interviewees based on the purposeful sampling strategies of intensity and criterion,
2. Determined that one-on-one interviews were most appropriate for this project. Letters of invitation were sent to both the generational participants (APPENDIX A) and elementary principal



participants (APPENDIX B). In addition, letters of invitation were sent to school districts to initiate conversation regarding quantitative data collection (APPENDIX C).

3. Obtained informed consent in writing from generational participants (APPENDIX D) and elementary principal participants (APPENDIX E). Prior to the first scheduled interview, a copy of the consent form was mailed to each informant. At the time of the initial meeting with each participant, the intent of the study and consent form was reviewed to insure clarity and understanding. Each participant received a copy of the signed consent form.
4. Used a digital recording device for interviews, as a part of the IRB application (APPENDIX F) process, a confidentiality agreement was established between the researcher and transcriptionist (APPENDIX G).
5. Designed an interview protocol form containing four “grand tour” themes. The interview protocol for generational participants contained 28 questions (APPENDIX H). The interview protocol for elementary principal participants contained eight questions (APPENDIX I). Ample space between the questions was given to write field notes from the interviewee’s comments. The interview for elementary principal participants took one 60-minute session. The interviews for generational participants included four, 60-minute interviews.

6. Refined the interview questions and the procedures further through pilot testing. Determined a mutually agreed upon place for conducting the interviews.

### *Sampling*

#### *Quantitative Post Test--only with Nonequivalent Groups*

Data from the 2008-09 MAP assessment was collected for both Math and Communication Arts from four urban school districts in Missouri. The structured record review included test results from all of the elementary schools within the four urban school districts (approximately 60 elementary schools). The total school performance data were obtained from the Missouri Department of Elementary Schools website, and is public knowledge. The sub-group data (< one year) was obtained through each school district by personal contact. Prior to applying the Chi square test of independence, the number of students within the sub group (<one year) was extracted from the total school performance data to obtain the two separate independent samples. Sample A, students who had been in their building the entire year and Sample B, students who had been in their building for less than one year at the time of testing.

#### *Sample Case Study*

The selection of elementary principal participants was based on school performance data from four urban school districts in Missouri. The criteria for the purposeful sampling of elementary school principals included: (a) principal of the school during the 2008-09 school year, (b) willingness to reflect on the student data representing the overall performance of students attending the school for less than

a year in comparison to students who had been in their building all year in Math and Communication Arts, and (c) the ability to share insights related to the efforts of the school to serve mobile students.

#### *Historical Multi-case Study*

The selection of generational participants began with inquiries by the researcher through professional colleagues for individuals who had the potential to meet the study criteria. The criteria for the purposeful sampling of individuals who moved repeatedly during their elementary years included: (a) age (moves occurred from the ages of 5-11), (b) representation of a decade born between the 1940's and the 1990's, (c) moved a minimum of three times during elementary school, and (d) ability to share memories, decisions, and insights related to the experience of changing school repeatedly as an elementary school student.

#### *Data Analysis*

Quantitative data analysis began with a detailed description of state assessment data, the analysis of student performance for the two independent groups of students, and interpretation of assertions. A Chi-square test for independence was conducted to determine whether the data support or refute the null-hypothesis.

#### *Null-Hypothesis*

There is no difference between the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency in Math or Communication Arts on the 2008-09 MAP test. Essentially, the performance of students who had attended their school all year (Group A) and the sub group of students who had attended their elementary school

for less than one year (Group B) were parallel to one another at each grade level assessed.

In the Chi-square test for independence, the sample data are expressed as a set of observed frequencies ( $f$ ) and the null hypothesis are used to generate a set of expected frequencies ( $^{\wedge}f$ ). The Chi-square statistic simply measures how well the data ( $f$ ) fit the hypotheses ( $^{\wedge}f$ ). Because the data are viewed as two separate samples (Math and Communication Arts) representing two separate populations (total school results, <one year subgroup), the goal of the Chi-square test was to determine whether there is a relationship between proficiency and time enrolled at a given school for each grade level assessed.

#### *Qualitative Procedures*

The time frame for data collection was late spring and summer of 2010. Interview transcripts were submitted to participants for review, clarification, and verification. Data analysis began with accumulation of detailed description, analysis of themes, and interpretation of assertions. “The process of inductive analysis begins with the examination of the particulars within the data, moves to looking for patterns across individual observations, then arguing those patterns as having the status of general explanatory statements” (Hatch, 2002, p.160).

As I collected data, my goal in collecting data was to identify patterns and themes and to subsequently interpret them. I understood the need to remain open to possibilities and to contrary or alternative explanations for findings. Thus, the goal of analysis was to select and discard codes as necessary and to “treat the

evidence fairly, to produce compelling analytic conclusions, and to rule out alternative interpretations” (Valerio, 1999, p. 17).

### *Verification Methods*

#### *Quantitative*

The reliability of the data collected was maintained through cross checking data entry. Thus, at the time raw data were entered into an electronic spreadsheet, I cross checked a random 10% of data entered to ensure the data had been entered correctly.

#### *Qualitative*

Participant interviews were digitally recorded. Transcripts of the taped interviews were required. In keeping with The Texas Historical Commission’s recommendations, I reserved the right to audit the original transcripts of the interviews and to seek the verification of an external auditor to ensure an accurate reflection of the participant responses.

The tapes were professionally transcribed and were sent to each participant for review. Member checks were used to provide critical observation and interpretations. This process requires informants “...to review the material for accuracy and palatability” (Stake, 1995, p. 115). All participants reviewed their transcripts from taped interviews to verify accuracy, provide clarification, and answer questions.

### *Presentation of Findings*

The quantitative data findings were presented using the presentation format outlined by Gravetter and Wallenau (2009). When utilizing a Chi-square test for independence, “it is customary to present the scale of measurement as a series of boxes with each box corresponding to a separate category on the scale” (p. 607).

Using the series box design, data were presented for participating schools as follows:

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

#### Communication Arts

	Percentage Proficient	Percentage not Proficient
One Year Students	50%	50%
<One Year Students	50%	50%

#### Math

	Percentage Proficient	Percentage not Proficient
One Year Students	50%	50%
<One Year Students	50%	50%

“Well-designed qualitative projects create results that *are* useful, transferable, and generalizable” (Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 223). The goal of including both the historical multi-case study and the sample case study was to describe in narrative form the experiences of mobile students and the experiences

of elementary principals who serve them. The context within which student mobility is embedded was presented by weaving the past experiences of mobile students with the current effort of school officials through a rich, thick description. “The researcher’s interpretation must engulf what is learned about the phenomenon and incorporate prior understandings while always remaining incomplete and unfinished” (Creswell, 2007, p. 214). As naturalist inquiry, this work will remain a work in progress.

Although the data findings were presented in different sections, the data were combined both in the study discussion and the findings sections to seek convergence among the results. “The structure of this type of mixed methods study (concurrent) does not as clearly make a distinction between the quantitative and qualitative phases” (Creswell, 2003, p. 222).

#### *Researcher Reflexivity*

The role of the researcher in a mixed methods study is to adhere to the underlying assumption for quantitative and qualitative research. The role of the quantitative researcher is one of objective observer that neither participates in nor influences what is being studied. Furthermore, “the role of the (quantitative) researcher is considered external to the actual research, and the results are expected to be replicable no matter who conducts the research” (Weinreich, 2006, p.1).

In contrast, the qualitative researcher is deeply entwined in the interpretive research. “The inquirer typically is involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants” (Creswell, 2003, p. 184). Through qualitative methods the

researcher will elucidate the central phenomenon from the perspective of those living it (Hatch, 2002, p. 7). As an observer and interviewer, I was the key instrument in data collection. Therefore what is to be known came from the informants and their insider viewpoints. Within the qualitative methods framework, Hatch and Creswell (2007) encourage the researcher to carefully consider the paradigm or worldview in which they will conduct their study.

Researchers and the participants in their studies are joined together in the process of construction. From this perspective, it is impossible and undesirable for the researchers to be distant and objective. It is through mutual engagement that researchers and respondents construct the subjective reality that is under investigation (Hatch, 2002, p. 15).

The goal of the research, from the constructivist paradigm, was to “rely as much as possible on the participants’ views of the situation” (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). As observer and interviewer, I was an inquirer. The research process, thus conceptualized, is an interpretive process that could become value-laden and biased.

Through the use of the constructivist framework, I focused my questions to elicit the viewpoints of the participants in the study. For the elementary principal participants, I sought to understand the academic and social impact of changing schools and explore efforts by school officials to minimize any negative impact. For participants in the historical multi-case study, I sought to understand their unique perspective. How did changing schools effect the academic achievement and social



capital development of the participant? How did the efforts of school officials affect the participants' ability to learn and develop when they changed schools? My role was to explore and describe through both the sample case study and historical multi-case study, participants' experiences using Brown and Gilligan (1992) described as "the creation of voice-centered, relational method" for research. This method acknowledges the uniqueness of each participant's voice and the dynamism of the relationship between informant and researcher. The goal of the approach does not require the researcher to deliver generalization, but encourages the researcher to provide readers with sufficient "thick descriptions" within the material for their own generalizing (Stake, 1995, p. 102).

As a researcher, I developed from personal and professional experience a theoretical sensitivity. Thus, I recognized how my own background would shape interpretation and bring meaning to the data through my own unique lens and personal values and bias to the research process. "Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens..." (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). I am one of two children raised by parents who have been married for over forty-three years; neither I nor my brother ever experienced changing schools outside of the standard end of the year transitions. However in my work as an elementary principal, I have watched countless children move in and out of schools, some only attending a few days before moving on to the next school. I came to this research with personal values about and views of student mobility, a phenomenon that is itself complex and value-laden. Aware of this bias, I positioned myself in the

research to acknowledge how my interpretation streams from my own personal, educational and historical experiences.

### *Ethical Considerations*

Research has concluded that when people are able to think about the academic and social well being of the students in their classroom, they are able to find new insights that are meaningful to both the instructor and to the students. The results of the study add to the growing body of literature regarding student mobility. The comparative data and interview data will provide participants, as well school administrators, with an understanding of the effects of student mobility on academic achievement and the overall well being of mobile students. The valuable insight gained through the study will be used to better understand the needs of students who change schools during their elementary school career.

However, due to the focus of the study, generational participants were questioned about areas such as their emotions connected to changing schools that may be sensitive. As a part of qualitative research, “we ask a lot when we invite individuals to participate in our qualitative studies... we ask them to reveal what goes on behind the scenes of their everyday lives. We ask them to trust us to the point that they are comfortable sharing the intimate details of their life worlds” (Hatch, 2007, p. 65). As a result, all participants were told that they could discontinue an interview at anytime and choose not to continue at that time or in the future without any negative consequences. At each session, I reviewed the purpose of the study and reiterated that participation would remain confidential. If

a participant became uncomfortable during a session, she /he was informed that they could stop and would not be required to continue.

#### *Dissemination*

Each participant received a final copy of the completed study. The data will remain confidential with access restricted to the researcher and participants.

### *Quantitative Data Results*

Academic achievement of mobile students was examined through a structured record review of the achievement data from elementary schools located in four large school districts in Missouri. Data were derived from the MAP (Missouri Assessment Program) test from 2009 in both Math and Communication Arts. Data included the overall performance for students who attended their school all year in both Math and Communication Arts (Group A) and the overall performance of children who had been in the elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing (Group B) at each grade level assessed as defined by The Department of Education for the State of Missouri.

The Department of Education for the State of Missouri provides districts with criteria for marking students > one year in the core data system. The > one year designation in the core data system is inclusive of students who have changed building within a school district and those who have entered the district from another school district. A detailed description for the designation can be found at [http://dese.mo.gov/MOSIS/FileSpec\\_201104AprilCycleStudentCore.html](http://dese.mo.gov/MOSIS/FileSpec_201104AprilCycleStudentCore.html). Districts are asked to code students in the less than one-year sub group based on one of the following criteria:

1. Any student who was not enrolled in the building the last Wednesday in September.
2. Any student who was not enrolled in the building during the MAP test administration.

3. Any student who was not enrolled in the building at least half of the eligible days between the last Wednesday in September and the MAP test administration.

Consequently, students who change schools during the summer or who enroll in a new school during the months of August or September are not counted in the >one sub group. Students who change schools as a result of redistricting or school choice are also not likely to be counted in the subgroup because most of them would be in attendance at their new site by the last Wednesday of September.

A comparison of the overall performance of children who had been in the elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing and the overall performance of students who had been in their school the entire year in both Math and Communication Arts was conducted using the Chi-square test for independence. “The Chi-square test for independence uses frequency data from a sample to evaluate the relationship between two variables in the population” (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009, p. 618). In keeping with the recommendations of Gravetter and Wallnau (2009), the Chi-square test for independence was chosen to evaluate the relationship between two variables. The two groups examined are considered to be independent of one another because students who attended for less than one year were removed from the total school population results. The disaggregation of the these students created Group A, students who had attended their school all year (based on the definition provided from the Missouri Department of Education) and Group B, students who had attended their school for less than one year (based on the definition provided from the Missouri Department of Education).

The null-hypothesis scale of measurement for this study is represented below and states that “the two variables being measured are independent; that is, for each individual, the value obtained for one variable is not related to (or influenced by) the value for the second variable” (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009, p. 618). The two variables are considered independent because there is no consistent, predictable relationship between them. Therefore, the frequency distribution for one variable is not related to or dependent on the second variable.

#### *Null-Hypothesis*

There is no difference between the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency in Math or Communication Arts on the 2008-09 MAP test and the amount of time they have attended the school. Essentially, the performance of students who had attended their school all year (Group A) and the sub group of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year (Group B) will be parallel to one another at each grade level assessed.

Null-Hypothesis: Expected frequencies for  $H_0$

	Percentage Proficient	Percentage not Proficient
One Year Students	50%	50%
< One Year Students	50%	50%

Data from the 2008-09 MAP assessment was collected for both Math and Communication Arts from four urban school districts in Missouri. The structured record review included test results from all of the elementary schools within the four urban school districts (approximately 60 elementary schools). The total school

performance data and the sub-group data (< one year) were obtained through each school district by personal contact. Prior to the Chi square test of independence the number of students within the sub group (<one year) was subtracted from the total school performance data to obtain the two separate independent samples resulting in Sample A (students who had been in their building the entire year) and Sample B (students who had been in their building for less than one year at the time of testing).

At each grade level for Communication Arts and Math the number of students in Group A (one year) was totaled for all elementary schools within the sample. In addition, the total number of students who scored proficient (proficient or advanced) was totaled for all elementary schools within the sample. The total number of students for each grade and the total number of students who scored proficient inclusive of all four districts for Communication Arts and Math is represented below. Group A (one year)

Communication Arts	Total Number of Students	Number of Proficient
Third Grade	4542	1989
Fourth Grade	4389	2298
Fifth Grade	4450	2413
Sixth Grade	2047	1203

Math	Total Number of Students	Number of Proficient
Third Grade	4487	2163

Fourth Grade	4389	2277
Fifth Grade	4443	1810
Sixth Grade	2048	1312

At each grade level for Communication Arts and Math the number of students in Group B (>one year) was totaled for all elementary schools within the sample. In addition, the number of students in Group B who scored proficient (proficient or advanced) was totaled for all elementary school within the sample. The total number of students for each grade and the total number of students who scored proficient inclusive of all four districts for Communication Arts and Math is represented below. Group B

Communication Arts	Total Number of Students	Number of Proficient
Third Grade	348	79
Fourth Grade	384	117
Fifth Grade	324	104
Sixth Grade	115	43

Math	Total Number of Students	Number of Proficient
Third Grade	415	126
Fourth Grade	387	123
Fifth Grade	338	98
Sixth Grade	114	38



The variation in total number of students at each grade level between Communication Arts and Math is a result of students receiving a “level not determined” classification on the exam in one subject area, but not the other. The level not determined classification was assigned when students did not complete enough questions on the exam to receive a score.

The goal of the Chi-square test for Independence was to evaluate the relationship between time of enrollment in a school and proficiency on the state assessment. At all grade levels for Communication Arts and Math the proportion of students in Group A, who attended their school all year (as defined by the State of Missouri) exceeded the proportion of students in Group B, who attended their school for less than one year (as defined by the State of Missouri). The p-values at less than .0001 at each grade level are very close to zero and indicate a significant relationship between time enrolled in a school and proficiency on the MAP test.

Communication Arts	Math
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade, $X^2 (1, 4890)=58.9, p>.0001$	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade, $X^2 (1,4902)= 48.9, p>.0001$
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade, $X^2 (1,4773)= 67.6, p>.0001$	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade, $X^2 (1,4776)= 57.4, p>.0001$
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade, $X^2 (1, 4774)= 59.3, p>.0001$	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade, $X^2 (1,4781)= 18.0, p>.0001$
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade, $X^2 (1,2162)= 20.3, p>.0001$	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade, $X^2 (1,2162)= 43.4, p>.0000$

Based on the results of the Chi Square test for Independence analysis, the data shows a significant relationship between time enrolled in a school and proficiency. Therefore, the null-hypothesis is rejected.

## Chapter 4

### Historical multi-case study

#### Marie

#### First grade class of 1945

##### *The Setting*

Marie and I first spoke the day I called to discuss the study with her. A close friend and colleague had recommended Marie to me as a possible participant. From our first phone call, Marie was bubbly and eager to participate. She told me during the first phone conversation that she was “a wild one” and wanted to know if I was sure I could handle her.

Marie was a bundle of energy and life from our first encounter. Marie and I met three times during the summer. We took advantage of two trips she had planned to the town which I reside. It was Marie’s three grandchildren that brought her to my hometown, but they agreed to share grandma Marie with me each trip for a couple of hours. In addition, we met one time at a public library near Marie’s home in south Kansas City.

Marie and I had an instant connection when we met. I was so impressed by her peppy personality and her pristine appearance. In contrast, by the time I interviewed Marie I was deep into the dissertation process, and I know I looked dreadful. Each time we met Marie would express her concern for me and ask if I was getting enough rest. She would take the time to compliment my ability to balance my family, my work and my research. Marie was genuinely interested in my

research, and she was excited to have a role. Marie was far more worried about supporting me and making sure that I felt good about the work I was doing than she was about her own comfort level with the interview process.

During our time together Marie eagerly told her story. She carefully told me about her family, her father's employment with the railroad and the challenges she faced during her school years. Marie's life has been a story of contrasts. Her outgoing and welcoming personality that I experienced was a long way from the trials of her childhood. As Marie's story emerged, a picture of a shy little girl struggling to fit in evolved into a woman who meets everyday with a smile and a "spicy" kick in her step.

### *Family Journey*

Marie was born in 1939 during the final years of World War II. Her father was a talented railroad blacksmith and her mother was a homemaker. Marie was the second to the youngest of seven children. Marie describes her parents as having two families because Marie's older four siblings were much older than she was. "My sister was 16 years older than me. My oldest brother was 12 ½ or 13 years older than me. Then I have a sister that's 9 ½ years older than I am and a brother that's 7 years older." As Marie's youngest brother was starting school, her parents decided to have two more children. Soon they welcomed Marie, and two and half years later her little sister came along. Marie's bond with her family defines her story and has been a thread of joy and fulfillment throughout her entire life

In the early 1940's, it was Marie's father's employment as a railroad blacksmith that provided for the large family. "Dad worked for the Missouri Pacific

Railroad and he was a blacksmith. The buildings that they worked in at that time were called 'round houses.' He was an excellent, an excellent blacksmith. I mean that guy could make even the smallest part for the steam engines under a hot fire. He would use a hammer and pound out the iron piece, he would get it within just a fraction of an inch. It had to fit perfectly." Marie explained that blacksmithing was all her father had ever known, and he had maintained a very successful career during difficult times. Marie's father's career as a blacksmith came with a price. "When the railroad would shut down the round house in a place that we lived, dad would have to follow his work wherever they had positions open. Therefore, that meant moving wherever he could find his work, his trade." Marie's family moved many times during her childhood; as the railroad moved on, so did her family.

Marie and her mother were very close. Her mother's dedication to taking care of others had a great impact on Marie and her siblings. "We were real close to mom. She was a genuine mother and she did a lot of cooking and baking bread several times a week. We would come from school and smell that homemade bread and couldn't wait to get a hot roll with butter on it." Marie remembers her mother as a very loving mom, someone she never felt shy about approaching on anything.

While the country was occupied with World War II and recovering from the great depression, Marie was sheltered from much of the suffering. Marie does remember the impact of war rations when she was very small (3-5 years old). "You had to have rations. You had to have stamps in order to buy sugar and flour and different things for the family. You were given so many stamps depending on the size of the family. So, if they ran out of stamps, then they didn't buy." Marie

recognizes that her parents were probably under financial pressure. "I am sure that money was a worry for mom and dad. He worked for the railroad and he made good money, but it took a lot of money to pull out from the depression." Marie says that she did not know that anything serious was occurring. "Mom and dad were not ones for talking about finances in front of us."

Thanks to her mother's great cooking everyone in Marie's family was always well fed, but clothing was another story. "We would go buy a pair of shoes and that was to last us all year long, compared to what the kids now days have 20-30 pair of shoes in their closets." Marie explains that it was common to hand down clothes from within and among families. "We didn't have a whole lot of clothes. Mother had a good friend that lived in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, that they were very wealthy people. They had one child. They would send us a big box of clothes every so often and we thought we had died and gone to heaven." Marie remembers the pure joy that she and her sister Elaine experienced when the box would arrive. "But we would go through that box of clothes and we were so, so thrilled because it would give us some new changes of clothes."

The routines of Marie's childhood are an important part of her life story and illustrate the fulfillment that comes with growing up in a family. "My mother, she always made sure that dad had a healthy breakfast before he left for work. She was up real early in the day. She dust mopped our linoleum floor each morning and would dust our furniture every day." Marie remembers what an amazing cook her mother was. "She would start dinner early so that she would be out of the kitchen, especially in the summer time. She would get it done early so that the cooking

wouldn't be done in the afternoon." Marie told of how much she and her sister Elaine looked forward to the smell of pies and bread baking when they came home from school.

Marie's mother treasured her home and worked to make each house the family lived in feel like a home. "Well, we knew that when we moved, even though no matter what kind of shape the house was in, that mother would have it all cleaned up." Marie's mother made sure that the walls had fresh paint. She would go to F.W. Woolworths and buy cheap rugs and cheap plastic curtains to hang up at the window.

Marie's mother had special little "whatnots" and she would always put them back out. "It was in a matter of a short time until we were back into the mode of a home. A house is not a home if you don't make it one." She had cups and saucers that she collected and she always put those back out. "My husband, Ron, worked at Dayton Company in Minneapolis at the time before we ever got serious. He had picked out a little green glass squirrel, and it had just a little chip on it, and she always put that back out. She loved it because it was from Ron." Marie remembers her mother's little lamps that she had that had hanging crystals around them. The old rounded top radio was very special to Marie's family. "Just little things like that, that you just think back on and think, 'Hey, it was those things that made the house a home.' Even though we knew that we might not be there for very long, we still knew that mother would have her whatnots and cups and saucers and different things that meant a lot to her sitting out and things that the kids had all given her." Marie

remembers her mother was always appreciative of anything that was ever given to her.

Marie's entire family took pride in their home. "We had our chores to do. We made sure our beds were made and that we picked up after ourselves, our clothes were hung, shoes in the closet." Marie's father had an attention to detail that carried over into their home. "He was a very neat person. Mother didn't have to pick up after him. He always made sure his dirty clothes were in the clothes hamper. He was always meticulous about his things. If we borrowed a tool from him, we knew it had to be hung back where we got it." Marie's mother also believed in organization and keeping their home clean. "She had a place for everything and everything was in its place." Marie explained that she learned by watching her parents' example. "It was easy to learn from them because they were good teachers and good examples. They didn't say one thing and do something else. They lived it in front of us and expected us to be neat and clean with our presentation. We were to clean up and make sure that we looked presentable when we went out of the house. Everyone had a job in the family and we learned to work together."

While living in Arkansas in 1945, Marie's large family enjoyed a few luxuries. The family had a maid at the time. Her parents recognized that when all seven children were home, extra hands made daily tasks easier. "Dad had someone in to help mother because of all the kids being at home at that time. She had someone that came in and did the washing, helped with the cooking and housework." The demands of washing clothes in a wringer washing machine and hanging them to dry required a lot of time. "They would hang laundry out and then they would come

back in and fold everything.” Marie explained that all of the household items and clothing were washed, dried and ironed on a very regular basis. It was while living in Arkansas that Marie’s father purchased their first family car. “I was probably in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. I remember the doors closed to the middle of the car. It was either a Model A or a Model T he bought. You had to get outside the car with a crank and crank it to get it started.” Marie recognizes that it was a rare thing for anybody to have a vehicle at that time. “You walked wherever you needed to go. I don’t know how he raised the money for the car.”

It was during Marie’s young years living in Arkansas that World War II came to an end. In May of 1945, Marie remembers the relief she felt as a child when the war was over and the appreciation felt toward service men. “I remember the rejoicing that went on when the war ended. As a kid, I remember because when soldiers walked by or sailors walked by, we always stood in attention in respect of what they were standing for in the country.”

As the railroad continued to move across the countryside of the Midwest, Marie’s family moved as well. With each move, Marie came to a new house; some seemed adequate for her family, and some houses lacked ‘the basics. “ It was a very rough time. Some had modern facilities like electric and modern plumbing in the house, but then we moved to some other places where we didn’t have plumbing.” It was the family’s home in Salem that Marie remembers having the most primitive accommodations. The house had an “old warm morning stove it was called, and we burned coal. Dad would have to get up real early in the morning to stoke the fire and get it started again because it would be so cold in the house.” The family’s water



supply was supported by a cistern. "A cistern held rain water in it and mother washed with the cistern water. Had a pump in the kitchen and she would wash her clothes with that and we would take baths in that but we didn't drink it. We had to have special drinking facilities, and what we did with that I don't remember . . . it was a rough time." Marie remembers the cold nights when she slept in a feather bed and would get up in the morning cold. "We would about freeze to death getting dressed for school it was so cold in that house."

When the family moved to Falls City from Salem, the house was modern. "We had a two story home there, and we loved it in that house. It was a warm house, forced air heating, so we stayed warm in that house." But as the family kept up with the expansion of the railroad, they would soon find themselves without modern amenities. "We moved to Poplar Bluff, we lived out near a lake there in Poplar Bluff and it was not a very modern house. We had an outside toilet and then we had to bathe in a big number 3 tub. You had to heat your water. Dad finally put in a water heater in that place so that we would have warm water." Marie explained that it was rough, but she loved their place in the countryside of Poplar Bluff.

"It was out on eight acres and we were crazy about that place. It was a good place to get out and work." Marie enjoyed riding horses, but would have passed on the livestock chores. Marie recalled that she let Elaine help with the livestock, and Marie reluctantly helped with the milking on occasion. Marie recalls that her family was very careful with the money. "My dad didn't throw money away other than we had horses and saddles and stuff like that which that was not something he really had to have, but it was something that he enjoyed, it was an outlet for him."

It was the family garden that Marie and her family enjoyed the most. Marie's family always had a garden, but the one outside of Poplar Bluff was their favorite. "We had a huge garden and it was the biggest garden we ever had. We had every kind of vegetable plant that there was to plant. We would get out with a push plow, one of those little hand plows and plow in between the rows." Marie's dad would get the initial plowing done with a horse and plow and then Marie and her sister would go through with a hand plow and help plow between the rows and keep the weeds down.

In the absence of television, Marie's family stayed in touch with the world through the radio and newspapers. "In my later years, when I came in from high school, I would turn on the radio to get songs of the south and Uncle Remus stories. They would be on the radio and they all talked real funny -- the tone inflections." Marie describes herself sitting laughing out loud at that program. Marie loved radio programs. "There was Amos 'n' Andy. I would listen to them once in a while on the radio." Marie also stayed up-to-date on political and war happenings through the radio. "My dad was a strong union democrat, and he said they were for the working man and he became very upset when the union leaned toward the Republican Party."

Marie's childhood at home was shaped by laughter and play. "We were involved in outside activities. My younger sister and I, of course, played together all the time because we were so close in age." Marie's dad always made sure they had a sand pile and her mother would give the girls mirrors to put into the sand pile. The mirrors served as lakes and the girls would make roads in the sand around them.

Marie remembers playing in a dollhouse in the back of one of the houses where her family lived. "We had little play doll furniture that we had back there and we would play by the hours in there." The girls would ride bicycles, race scooters, climb trees when the weather was nice. Marie remembers her family playing a lot of games together. "We would play Chinese checkers, and we spent a lot of time playing monopoly." Marie loved the time her family spent together doing the simplest of things and enjoying each others' company.

Church was of utmost importance to Marie's family. Marie recalls locating a church each time that her family moved within days of their arrival. "We were always there twice on Sunday and then on Wednesday night and then if there was revival meeting, we were involved in that as well." Marie explained how her mother would often host Sunday dinner. "If they had a visiting minister in the church, mother would invite the missionary or the evangelist over for dinner on Sunday. She was always entertaining someone. She was an excellent, excellent cook." Marie recalls her mother cooking with fond memories. "Her food was superior to anybody's you can eat today."

Marie's family made friends easily at each place they lived and enjoyed getting involved in the community. "There was what they called a horse day, horseplay days in Falls City, Nebraska, and we would go down for that. They had kiddie rides, and dad rode his horse in the parade." Marie also remembers community fairs and some involvement in 4H when she was in grade school.

Birthdays and music lessons were special to Marie. "Mother would have a birthday party for us. We would have some of the neighborhood kids we'd invite or

some of the kids from the church.” Marie especially enjoyed music. “I really enjoyed anything having to do with music, I would sit down at the oak piano we had and I’d pick out songs. Then when we would move to different places, I would try to get lined up with a piano teacher but we were never there long enough for me to really get established in reading notes and so forth.” Marie remembers her mother buying a pump organ for \$5.00 when she lived in Falls City. Marie would sit down to that and play for the longest time. She picked up most of her playing by ear.

Marie’s parent’s ability to make friends quickly had an impact on Marie and her sister. “Mom and dad were both very friendly people. Mother and dad, neither one of them ever met a stranger. They were very open with people and no one was better than somebody else.” Marie explained that her parent’s acceptance of all people rubbed off on the children in her family. “We had some neighbors that were good friends, young girls that we played with. I think one of the girl’s names was Maxine. We played by the hours with them and had a good time.” Having a good social life with other adults and children was important to Marie’s family.

Marie met many people as her father’s work took the family across the country. She told of the two maids her parents employed in Arkansas. One of maid’s name was Rosie, and Marie recalls she was terrified of her. “The first maid didn’t have any teeth and she would eat with a knife. I was scared to go in the kitchen when she was in there.” Marie told of how the maid prompted her to eat the starch used for ironing. After some coercing, Marie agreed. “It was okay. I wouldn’t recommend it as our candy treat for today.” The second maid was someone that Marie and her sister adored. “ Her name was Odessa, very, very sweet. We loved her

to death. She helped care for both Elaine and I because the older siblings were either involved in jobs or delivered papers. Odessa was tall, thin, and very stately. We were really crazy about her.” Marie and her sister considered Odessa to be a nice addition to their family.

As Marie moved from town-to-town, it was her siblings that she clung to the most. She and Elaine spent their days together due to their close age. But the next two siblings, a sister who was 9 ½ years older than Marie and a brother who was 7 years older were especially important to Marie. “My sister who is 9 ½ years older than I am -- I worshipped the ground that woman walked on. She was a like a second mother.” Marie remembers Charlotte taking time to nurture and teach her when her mother did not have time. “I slept with her when I was little until she got married. I would stay awake at night waiting for her to come in from her date so I could see her.” Marie can remember crying for Charlotte when she would leave for school. “I would sit on the coach and watch her leave for school, I would cry and cry.”

Marie and Elaine had an older brother who looked after them as well. “My brother that is 7 years older than I am. He would torment us and joke and tease with us.” Marie remembers her brother Don leaving for the Navy when he was 18 and Marie was 11.”We were crazy for him when he came home from the Navy, but then he got married and we didn’t see him as much.” Elaine and Marie treasured the time they got to spend with their brother even after he was married.

Marie’s parents had relatives scattered all over the place and she does not remember spending a lot of time with them. “They live in the Kansas City area, but

they had a different lifestyle than what we did.” Marie remembers get-togethers once in a while for a visit with her extended relatives depending on where her family lived at the time. “We always had a great time when we were together, but it was hard staying in touch.”

The life chasing the railroad proved to be a winding journey for Marie and her siblings. She learned to depend on her immediate family and to treasure the small daily routines that made each place she lived feel like home. At 71 years of age, Marie relishes the memories she made with her family at home -- but school was another story.

### *School Days*

Marie and her family moved many times from the time she was born until the time she graduated from high school. The journey began in Kansas City, Missouri where Marie was born. Soon her family would move to a small town in Arkansas. Marie started her school career as a first grader in Arkansas at the age of six. With only two sections of first grade to service the whole town, Marie remembers that the school was very small. “I didn’t go to kindergarten, I went to 1<sup>st</sup> grade. I had a rough teacher. She was a very, very, very strict disciplinarian and I was scared to death of her.” Marie recalls her unwillingness to participate in class and spent many days in the classroom completely silent. Marie remembers her father going to the school to talk to the teacher. “He never raised a stink or anything like that. He just went and said, ‘Hey, we’re having a little bit of a problem here.’ He would expose the situation.” Marie enjoyed being at home with her sister but hated going to school.

At the end of first grade, Marie moved to Salem, Nebraska. Marie's classroom was a multi-age setting due to the very small school size. The teacher was teaching more than one grade. Marie only spent part of a school year in Salem before it was time for her family to move again. She does not remember any of the children who attended second grade. In the middle of the year Marie's family moved seven miles into Falls City, Nebraska where she finished second grade and stayed until the beginning of her seventh grade year.

Falls City, Nebraska brought a change in classroom size and the continuation of very structured classroom settings. Marie remembers 20 or more children in each classroom and one teacher. "You sat in class and you paid attention and you were required to get that homework in on time. We almost always had homework to do." Marie enjoyed diagramming sentences. "We used to get up at the blackboard and we would have a race to diagramming, as to how fast could you put it, the words where they needed to be in the sentence and I loved doing that." Marie also enjoyed learning math. However, despite the fact that Marie knew she had to learn all subjects, she found history and government to be extremely boring.

Marie continued to struggle with shyness and feelings of inadequacy through her middle school years. "I had friends in church and they would get to come home with us on Sunday and eat with us and then we would play in the afternoon. So I had friends that way. But then the school, it was just like a different world for me." Marie does not remember making friends at school. She relied on her church and family connections to help her develop a sense of belongingness.

During her seventh grade year, Marie's family would leave Falls City and move to Independence, Missouri where she finished seventh grade in the Kansas City, Missouri School District. Marie would change schools again at the start of her eighth grade year to the Independence School District before her family moved to Popular Bluff, Missouri part of the way through eighth grade. "I was too new and it was too hard for me to get acquainted. I don't know how else to describe it. It was a nightmare. I'll just put it that way. It really was. I hated school at that time because of feeling like I was always the outsider looking in." Marie explained that her middle school years moving from school-to-school were exceptionally difficult for her. "Every day I went to school, I was miserable. I'm surprised I was able to pull a B or a C at that time."

Middle school did provide one distinct memory for Marie that she has never forgotten. Marie got sent to the principal's office. "Well, one time, in junior high, one of the gals, oddly enough, that went to church with us, I'll never forget her name, her name was Maryann and she decided that she wanted to get a bad rumor started on me." Marie had never dated and she fully understood the strict expectations set by her parent regarding boys. "Maryann went and told some girls that I was out messing around with the guys from Malvern Air Force Base." Marie remembers being called to the principal's office where she sat outside and 'bawled her head off. "I told the principal I don't even date. My mom and dad won't even let me date." When the meeting with the principal was over, one of Marie's good friends let Maryann know that Marie would beat the socks off of her if she ever told anything like that again. "She knew we were after her so she just hightailed it down the street



and my friend, Bonnie, and I were right after her. When we caught up with her we said, 'You ever do anything like that again, you are going to get the socks beat off of you.'" It was the only time that the quiet Marie came out of her shell to confront anyone. Marie would not discover her "spicy side" until much later in her life.

Popular Bluff, Missouri would be Marie's hometown for the remainder of 8<sup>th</sup> grade and almost all of high school. While Marie enjoyed being in one school for a few years, her family changed houses within Popular Bluff several times. Marie recalls building her first memorable teacher relationship in Popular Bluff. "I had a music teacher in Poplar Bluff that was very excellent in her approach to the students. We learned a lot under her. I sang in the chorus there and found a little place for myself for a while." Marie also liked her 10<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher in Poplar Bluff. Marie remembers her teacher's ability to laugh and interact with the students. "She was sort of one that you could pull the wool over her eyes. We had a guy in the classroom who was always doing something real ornery." Marie remembers the teacher letting the class clown have a little fun before she pulled the students back into the lecture.

At the end of Marie's 11<sup>th</sup> grade year of school it was time to move one more time. She and her family moved to Desoto, Missouri located near St. Louis. It was Marie's senior year of high school and she finally began to find joy at school. "We (Elaine and Marie) both loved that school. They accepted us with open arms. We felt like we had some importance and I started coming out of that reclusive feeling in Desoto." Marie remembers feeling accepted for who she was in Desoto and she considers Desoto High School the best year of her entire school career.

Marie's life at school was changed considerably by her feelings of acceptance. Marie describes her teachers as fabulous and recalls forming some good relationships during her senior year of high school. "I had wonderful, wonderful teachers. My home economics teacher was fabulous. I took home economics that year. She was left-handed so she taught me how to crochet, which I have not picked that up, I don't think, since then." It was the teacher's special attention that helped Marie form a bond while learning to crochet. She says that despite the fact she learned to make a suit that year, it was the confidence that she gained from sewing that really mattered.

Marie's senior year of high school marked a turning point for her. She started to come out of the shell she had felt trapped in all through school. She served on the prom committee and enjoyed the high school sports that the larger Desoto school had to offer. During her senior year Marie says she made the decision to get control of her shyness. "Hey, this is no way to live. I decided to turn the tables." She says that she could see that being pulled into a shell and backward was not getting her anywhere. "I decided if you're going to have friends, you are going to have to get in there and make yourself." Marie became only the second child of her family of seven to graduate. Marie graduated from Desoto High School in 1957.

After high school Marie made the decision to go to college. She attended North Central Bible School in Minneapolis for one year. Her sisters and brothers had always had jobs working as telephone operators, throwing papers and serving the military but Marie was the first to try her hand at college. She describes her parents as supportive of both men and women working. "They wanted us to help make our

way, but going to college was not really something that was really encouraged, especially my dad.” Marie’s parents believed in hard work but the expense of college was not something they embraced, it was just too expensive. Marie made the decision on her own to head off to college and she paid for her college experience all on her own.

Marie’s memories moving across the country to secure her father’s employment brought the experience of being the new kid at school. She remembers the horror she felt each time she found out her family would be moving. “I was so very upset. I would beg him, ‘Dad, do we have to move?’ Marie’s dad would kindly explain, ‘I’ve got to make a living for my family.’ But every time we would move, especially when I came to junior high, late grade school into junior high, it was really, to me, it was crippling.” Marie’s family used their connection to each other and their faith base to recreate their home with each move, but changing schools was something that Marie struggled to face.

Marie’s family had the routine of locating and enrolling in school down to a fine art. “As soon as we moved to a new place, we were immediately enrolled in school. We were not allowed to stay out for two or three weeks. We were immediately put back in school”. Marie describes the enrollment as a routine that she grew to accept. “It was just a ritual with us. When we walked in, we knew that we were going to have to be enrolled and go to school whether we wanted to be there or not.” Marie remembers the school personnel taking her and Elaine down the school hall and showing them to their room. “It was just a ritual. It was something you just had to learn to adapt to it even though you were not adaptable.”

Marie remembers the importance of the first person she met when her family first entered the school building. "The secretaries were always very kind, they would make a special point of offering to help us if we had any questions." Marie remembers often feeling sick standing in the office and praying that she could go home. Marie told of trying to fake being sick so she would not have to go to school.

"I faked it every day. Well, I would try it, but mother would catch me or caught on pretty quickly. Then after I was home for a while she realized, hey, Marie is not as bad as she was letting on earlier this morning." Marie says that it was just being home with her mom that made her feel better. Marie has memories of school staff. "I think they were receiving of us. I don't feel like they rejected us. I don't think the rejection came from them." Marie explained that the schools she attended did a good job during enrollment trying to reach out to the girls.

Each time Marie moved, she remembers feeling like she was crawling further and further into a shell. "I was very, very bashful. I think a lot of it had to do with we changed schools several times when I was little." Marie recalls the stern teachers she frequently encountered scared her. "With my personality, a stern teacher played havoc on me. I was very reclusive in the school. I was afraid I was going to be called on and if I was called, I would be made a fool out of myself." Marie's fear of making a mistake and not pleasing the teacher limited her enjoyment of school.

It was very, it was debilitating to me to move from one school to another. It really affected me to the point where I didn't want to participate at all in class. I had some good teachers. I'm not talking in

a condescending way toward teachers. I just was of the personality that if they were real stern, they scared me to death.

Marie explained that school was different when she was in school. “The kids that I went to school with were all quiet and reserved than what kids are today.” Marie describes the perception of parents that kids were to be seen and not heard. “When we were in an adult setting, you didn’t butt in and you didn’t break into a conversation. You kept quiet. So, I think that was just a different era of raising children than in today’s world.” Marie explains that she thinks kids are allowed to get away with a whole lot more than what we were when we were growing up. Marie’s relationship with her teachers emulated the mindset of parents of the 1940’s.

Marie recalls that she had some very good teachers, but she pointed out that teachers “were strict in those days.” When the teacher said something, you did it and you didn’t argue, you just, there was corporal punishment if you didn’t behave. I was scared to death of being sent to a principal’s office.” Marie recalls that the intimidation she felt from teachers translated into her peer relationships as well.

Marie struggled to find the confidence to enter friendship networks. “I knew I was always the new gal in the classroom. The kids already had their little select groups that they were involved with. They didn’t want an outsider coming in.” Marie believes that her struggle to make friends is the same for children today. “Kids ostracize a child that is new. They have their friends and they don’t want to be bothered with somebody else.” Marie explained that because she could not form social ties, she became very reclusive at school. “I withdrew into a shell and I

despised going to school.” It was the years from 6<sup>th</sup> grade through her junior year that Marie describes as the worst, she remembers “just feeling snubbed.”

The shell that Marie retreated into often resulted in spending time alone. “Out on the school ground, I was by myself most of the time because I was not a mixer. That has certainly changed over the years, but at that time I was very, very much to myself.” Marie’s sister Elaine battled social acceptance as well. “Elaine was battling the same thing, but she never finished high school.” Marie believes that it was the feeling of not fitting in and Marie’s graduation three years earlier that resulted in Elaine leaving high school prior to graduation.

Marie’s years in school were a time of contradiction. The stability and acceptance that she felt at home never waived as her family moved across the country. However, her memories of school were dominated by feelings of insecurity and isolation that she believes came from always being the new kid on the block.

### *Impact*

The most important things in life have not changed for Marie. She still holds her family close to her. “I just valued our family life tremendously because there was a closeness there that there’s not, you don’t see too much of that in today’s family life.” Marie treasures the time of togetherness and family meals she shared with her family. “Our parents wanted to know where we were at, what we were doing, who we were playing with. They had a close tie to where we were at, at all times.” Marie appreciates the investment her parents made in her. “Even when I was in junior high and high school, they still had a close tie to where we were. They wanted to know who our friends were and they wanted to make sure, they were

protective.” It was her parent’s protective spirit that helped the very shy Marie survive the multiple moves.

Marie’s parents understood her struggle but their message of doing your best has stayed with Marie throughout her life. “Dad and I would sit at the table and he would say, ‘Now, Marie don’t you think you can do better?’ and I would say, I’m trying. I would tell him that I thought I was really trying hard.” Marie does not remember her folks scolding her. “They just, they wanted to praise us and make sure that we stayed in school and did the best we could.” Marie grew under her parent’s encouragement and gentle redirection and eventually broke through the wall of shyness.

When the self-confidence that Marie found in high school began to surface in her family, everyone was a little shocked but her parents were encouraging. “I had a sister-in-law that was sort of ornery to Elaine and I. She would get us down and just tickle us until it would hurt.” Marie described the tickling as mean and sadistic. “At one point, when I was in high school, we were down visiting them. Dad was sitting on the rocking chair outside on the porch and Mavis started taking to my ear and almost twisted it off.” Marie decided she had enough. Marie told her sister in law, “‘that’s the last time you’re going to pick on me.’ I took her by both of her wrists and just laid her down on the ground and sat down on top of her and held her down.” Marie says that her sister-in-law was stunned, as she lay trapped on the ground. “My dad was up there just doubled up dying laughing. He said, ‘Well, it finally came back to roost didn’t it, Mavis.’” Marie’s father and sister Elaine took great delight as Marie began to find her “spicy” spirit.

As Marie grew into a young woman she used a little of her new found confidence to start dating. It was a boy from Marie's childhood that would win her heart. "I've known Ron since I was 11 and he was 16 at the time. Oh, I thought he was, I thought he was such a hunk." When Marie was 11 she told her sister Elaine that she planned to marry Ron. "Ron had walked us home from church, Elaine and I, because mom hadn't gone that night and dad was out of town or something. Ron had a hold of Elaine's hand, and I was walking behind them." When the girls made it home, Marie let Elaine know how it was going to be. "I told Elaine 'I want you to know one thing, that's my boyfriend'. I let her know she was not supposed to be holding hands with him." Marie waited along time to let Ron in on her plans.

Ron and Marie "didn't become a number until my senior year in high school when Ron came to see mother." Marie's mother had mentored and helped take care of Ron during his childhood. He had come from what Marie describes as a disadvantaged family. "He would come to see us, travel on the train because his dad was a railroader too, so he could ride for free. He would come spend sometimes a month with us in the summer time." Marie's mother and Ron had a special bond that lasted for her mother's lifetime. Ron cried over Marie's mother when she died.

Marie and Ron began quietly dating while Marie was in high school and later Ron would travel on the train to see Marie in college. Ron soon learned that Marie had found her "spicy" spirit and she was willing to date other people if he did not want to pay attention to her. Finally, over an Italian dinner Ron asked Marie to be his girlfriend and eight months later they were married. Ron and Marie have been happily married for 52 years.



After a year of marriage, Ron realized that Marie was not the shy little girl with the pigtails anymore. He said, "I didn't know I was marrying one that was so feisty." Marie told him, "It's true or false, you made me this way." Marie made one stipulation to their decision to have children. "I told Ron, I hope you don't plan on moving because I don't want to do it. If we have kids, I want to stay where they are going to be in the same school." Ron and Marie have two children, both who attended the same school district their entire childhood.

In addition, to getting married and starting a family of her own, Marie believes that her years working helped her build confidence in herself. Marie enjoyed the years as a stay at home mom, but in 1967 she went to work for J.C. Penney. "I would just go in and out at peak times. Then in 1970, General Motors, had a three-month long strike and so I had to go to work full time." Marie worked from that time on at JC Penney and retired with 30 years of service.

One of the managers there saw a potential in Marie that she did not see in herself. "I think that we're using you in the wrong place in this store. He built me up to a point that I began to develop some real confidence in myself and he put me in charge of customer service and then I became the trainer." Marie spent years training new employees on registers and overseeing inventory. Marie explains, "Hey, this is what life is all about. Don't sit back and wait for life to happen, make it happen I began to build up confidence just from that one manager. Even though it was in retail, it was beneficial to me because it helped me as a person to realize, I do have some worth." Marie retired from JC Penney, but found her need to interact

with people too great to stay home. She has enjoyed part-time employment as a receptionist for the past 13 years.

Recently, Marie and her husband and children had a conversation regarding her friends. Marie smiled as she talked about how they were talking about her funeral and that her family wanted a “big fanfare.” Marie told them she did have a lot of friends and that only a few people would come. Ron and the kids reassured her that she had a lot of friends from her years at JC Penney, church and their neighborhood. “So they were all ganging up on me. (smirking) I tried to tell them that there wouldn’t be a half dozen people show up.” Marie says her family shot down her plans and insisted on the idea that she has friends all around her. Marie acknowledges that she has many acquaintances from her years at JC Penney. But her description of a friend reaches beyond people she has encountered. “To me, a friend is somebody that you take into confidence with things. Now acquaintances, yes, I have a lot of acquaintances.” Marie still enjoys the acquaintances from JC Penney. “I have a lot of gals from J.C. Penney’s and I still meet with them once a month. We meet at Cracker Barrel. We have 20-25 that show up every month, the girls that I have worked with for years and we have a good time.” The ladies of JC Penney enjoy chatting about their families and all the good times they had while working together.

Marie believes that her life friendships have been fostered by church, neighbors and other parents she met through her children. Marie was very involved in her church and served as the organist, she explains that she became acquainted with a lot of people that way. But, friends developed as a result of the after church

Sunday dinner. "We would go out after service or after Sunday morning and have a meal with a family or have somebody over for lunch or dinner. So we began to spread out and become involved with other families that had children." The church friendships developed over time and the young families would often eat out together and spend time at each other's houses. Marie especially enjoyed the trips the families would make with their children to the Lake of the Ozarks. Marie says with laughter now that she's older, she prefers it a little quieter at home.

Marie has a 'key gal' that she has been friends with for 47 years. "We lived next door to them for 10 years and it was like a Lucy/Ethel relationship, I kid you not. In fact, when the two of us got together, we would have more fun." Marie says that her husband got to a where he would run when the two of neighbors got together. "He didn't know what we were going to do next." Marie and her friend found spontaneity in the 30's and by her description they had a ball together.

Marie relishes the time that Peggy and she took off for Arkansas to see family. "We would just have a hilarious time, we would laugh about anything, it was like two kids getting together." Marie and Peggy still to this day we have a good time together, despite the cancer Peggy has faced. "She's my good ol' Arky gal, Arkansas gal."

Marie believes that changing schools robbed her of friendships in her early years and stifled her self-confidence. "If I could have stayed at one school where the friends that I had made at an early age and followed them all through school I would been so much better." Marie says that her shy personality made it difficult to build self-confidence by herself. "I wanted to fit in and make it better, I just didn't know

how to do it.” Marie explained that moving nine times in twelve years was just too much for her.

Marie says that a point came during high school where she had make difficult steps. “I think I just had to get over it. It was a matter of mind over matter.” Marie explained that she had to decide to stop being elusive and not being able to get in and make friends. “You have to decide is that worth carrying on into your adult life or should you just bury it? Sometimes we bury it so that we can’t even remember what happened during those time periods.”

Today, Marie’s bubbly personality lights up the room when she enters. She glows with happiness and walks with self-confidence. “I mean I’m happy with what I’ve accomplished.” It is hard to imagine a time or a situation that Marie could not smile and laugh her way through. Several times during our interview I told Marie that she was a “hoot,” she would laugh and smile with the satisfaction of success.

When I asked Marie what advice she would give to school personnel who work with mobile children, it wasn’t the schools she wanted to give advice to. “Well, I already think the school personnel is overloaded in my estimation. I worked in PTA in grade school with the kids and I was involved. I know that the teachers and the principals have got an awful lot on their hands, even more so now than when I was in school.” Marie describes the challenges of school, as tremendous.

Marie further explained. “ I think where the balance needs to occur is not at the school. The school is already doing a tremendous amount for helping the kids, trying to help them. The failure is in the homes.” Marie explained, “if the parents knew where their kids were, who they were friends with and where they were. They

could have a better control over that. I really do put most of the fault on the parents today.” With a great sense of wisdom she describes the need of expectations. “The kids will be what is expected of them at home. If there’s rules at home that they have to follow, then they will follow rules at school. We have taken away authority from the teachers, from the principals, from the staff across the board, we have taken authority out of their hands.” Marie believes that corporal punishment in schools has a place and that if principals had the right to dish out a few paddlings things would be different. “I think the principal should be allowed to have a paddle and a whack or two on the derriere is not going to hurt that kid at all, it will help develop him.” Marie explains that kids need something to anchor them.

It was important to Marie that people realize that in many ways the schools tried very hard to help her as she moved from town-to-town. Marie says that school personnel often confused her polished appearance with self-confidence. “At that time period, we were always clean and neat and our clothes were always fresh. We may have had three dresses, but I guarantee you, they were clean when we put them on the next time we wore them.” Marie believes that because it was a rough time for a lot of families she thinks that there were just other kids who needed the schools’ attention.

It was friendship and the fear of being called out that caused Marie so much agony. “I can’t remember one friend hardly except that Louise from Falls City that I had in junior high while I was there. I don’t remember any of the kids’ names.” Marie admits that she can remember very few faces from her school years, and moves like the one from Kansas City to Independence are just a blur. Marie

describes moving as awful. "In fact there were times, I wanted to just, hoping to roll, I wanted the earth to open up and just swallow me. That's how bad I hated the schools." Marie believes the biggest price she paid as a child who moved a lot was with her peers.

Marie says, there is nothing harder than being the new kid. "I was ostracized. I was the new kid on the block and they had their own little cliques already and they didn't want another party butting in." Marie explained that she just could not find it in herself to force herself on anybody. "I would not push myself in, I was not a pushy type kid. You had to be aggressive to get involved in some of those groups." Marie says that instead she just withdrew and the more she moved, the more she would pull herself into a shell.

#### Review of Literature 1940's

The 1940's were largely defined by World War II. European artists and intellectuals fled to the United States from Hitler and the Holocaust, bringing new ideas created in disillusionment. War production pulled the United States out of the Great Depression. The expansion of the railroad, automobile and sustaining the war effort provided families like Marie's opportunity to rebuild the economic structures of the country as well as individual families. The memories of war bring back a time of sacrifice and unity that carried the country through until 1945 when WWII came to an end.

The end of the war brought a time of celebration that could be felt in music and in cinema. Big Bands dominated popular music and performers such Glenn

Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman led the 1940's music movement. But it is the individual artists of the era that remain in the entertainment spotlight today. Bing Crosby's smooth voice made him one of the most popular singers, vying with Frank Sinatra, Dinah Shore, Kate Smith and Perry Como as the most influential voices of the era. The forties were the heyday for movies. The Office of War declared movies an essential industry for morale and propaganda (Schatz, 1999). Most plots had a fairly narrow and predictable set of morals, and if Germans or Japanese were included, they were one-dimensional villains. It was movies like *Casablanca* that kept the moral of the country moving forward post war. The 1940's also brought the art of dancing into the mainstream as people across the country jitterbugged their way to the largest baby boom of its time.

Radio was the lifeline for Americans in the 1940's, providing news, music and entertainment, much like television today. Programming included soap operas, quiz shows, children's hours, mystery stories, fine drama, and sports. Kate Smith and Arthur Godfrey were popular radio hosts and the government relied heavily on radio for propaganda. Like the movies, radio faded in popularity as television became prominent. Many of the most popular radio shows continued on in television, including Red Skelton, Abbott and Costello, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, and *Truth or Consequences*.

In 1986, Comer took a look back at the schools of the 1940's to examine the challenges that mirrored the economic and cultural revolution of the period. Comer (1986) identified the unique qualities of the parent and school relationship present in the small town structure of United States at the end of WWII. "Up until the 1940's

the United States was largely a nation of small towns and rural areas. Even the cities were like collections of small towns. There was no television. Transportation was limited.” Comer explains that these conditions created a sheltered atmosphere for student development. “Under these conditions, much of what young people learned about life came to them through emotionally important authority figures and behavior models: parents, teachers, religious leader. These models were more or less in agreement about basic issues” (Comer, 1986, p. 442).

Comer (1986) explains that students of the 1940’s enjoyed the benefit of their parents and teachers teaching the same moral expectations. “The knowledge that parents knew and appeared like they had respect for the people at school had a profound impact on children’s behavior at school. The authority held by virtue of the care and guidance that parents provided was transferred directly to the people who ran the school (Comer, 1986). Comer describes this connection between schools and parents as “cultural uniformity” (Comer, 1986, p. 443).

In addition, Comer explains a reality of the public school system that effected the classroom environment and reflected the job opportunities of the 1940’s. “Many students who would not have performed well in the schools of yesteryear didn’t attend at all or dropped out at the first opportunity. The economy of the day was capable of absorbing them” (Comer, 1986, p. 443). It as possible for students to drop out of school, find employment, provide for their families, and become productive employed citizens.

Florida (2005) further explains the connection between the job opportunities of the 1940’s and the expectations of public schools. Florida (2005) describes the



years directly following the years of World War II as a time when political policy, under the leadership of President Roosevelt, successfully created a growth coalition, which matched business and working-class people and minorities (Florida, 2005). Florida notes governmental policy of the post World War II period bridged the divide between two dominant classes -- business and labor. The result was an industrial society in which great masses of people could participate. However, Florida reports that the expansion of industry such as railroad, steel, automobile and chemical manufacturing left the streets of cities in disarray. Florida (2005) describes the streets of many cities as smoke filled and dirty. As industry boomed, cities became an ecological and public health nightmare.

Under the backdrop of factories, transportation expansion, and the development of blue collar towns, Comer explains that introduction of the television at the end of World War II had an profound impact on parent and school relationships. As households enjoyed mysteries, westerns, humor and news, Comer believes that the flood of information resulted in mixed messages for children. "Young people began to regularly listen to authority figures disagreeing on the air about some of the most fundamental 'truths' -- what is life, death, desirable sexual expression, and so on" (Comer, 1986, p. 443). Comer (1986) explains that the result of the changes in media messages surrounding families decreased the level of trust and agreement that existed between home and school. "The authority of the home is less often transferred to the school, and the authoritarian style of the school became less well-accepted by students, parents, and staff members alike" (Comer, 1986, p.

443). The concept of “cultural uniformity” and “authoritarian style” proposed some problems for the children of the 1940’s.

What happens if the one who knows less doesn’t like the one who knows more and -- in the nature of the immature child -- decides to hurt the teacher by not learning more? What if life experiences have left the student without the confidence to take risks involved in learning? What if academic learning is not the style of the social network of a child’s parents, even though they want their child to succeed in school? (Coleman, 1986, p. 444).

Marie explained the idea presented as “cultural uniformity” by Coleman (1986) as the need for children to be seen and not heard. The message of keeping everyone moving to the same set of expectations was communicated by the rows and desk atmosphere of the time. It was questions such as the ones posed by Comer (1986) that challenged educators of the 1940’s to examine their practices, particularly the commitment to building relationships with students.

Amidst the ending of the war, Teideman (1946) reported that “if pupils and teachers work in harmony, with a mutual feeling in motivation, standing and cooperation, a friendly atmosphere will result conducive to effecting learning” (p. 657). Through Teideman’s work, attention was brought to the effects of teacher personality on the performance of students. “Teachers that are aloof, unfriendly, and otherwise irritate and antagonize their pupils, destroy interests and incentives for learning and promote, instead resentment, unwholesome attitudes and personality disorders” (Teideman, 1946, p. 657).

Teideman's study identified several teachers' behaviors that junior high students in particular reported as interfering with their school enjoyment. These behaviors included in order (1) autocratic, domineering teacher; (2) teacher who ridicules, uses sarcasm, nags; (3) the teacher who threatens, frightens, and punishes to secure discipline; (4) the teacher who fails to provide for individual differences of pupils; (5) the teacher who has disagreeable personal peculiarities; and (6) the teacher who shows partiality to pupils (Teideman, 1946, p. 660).

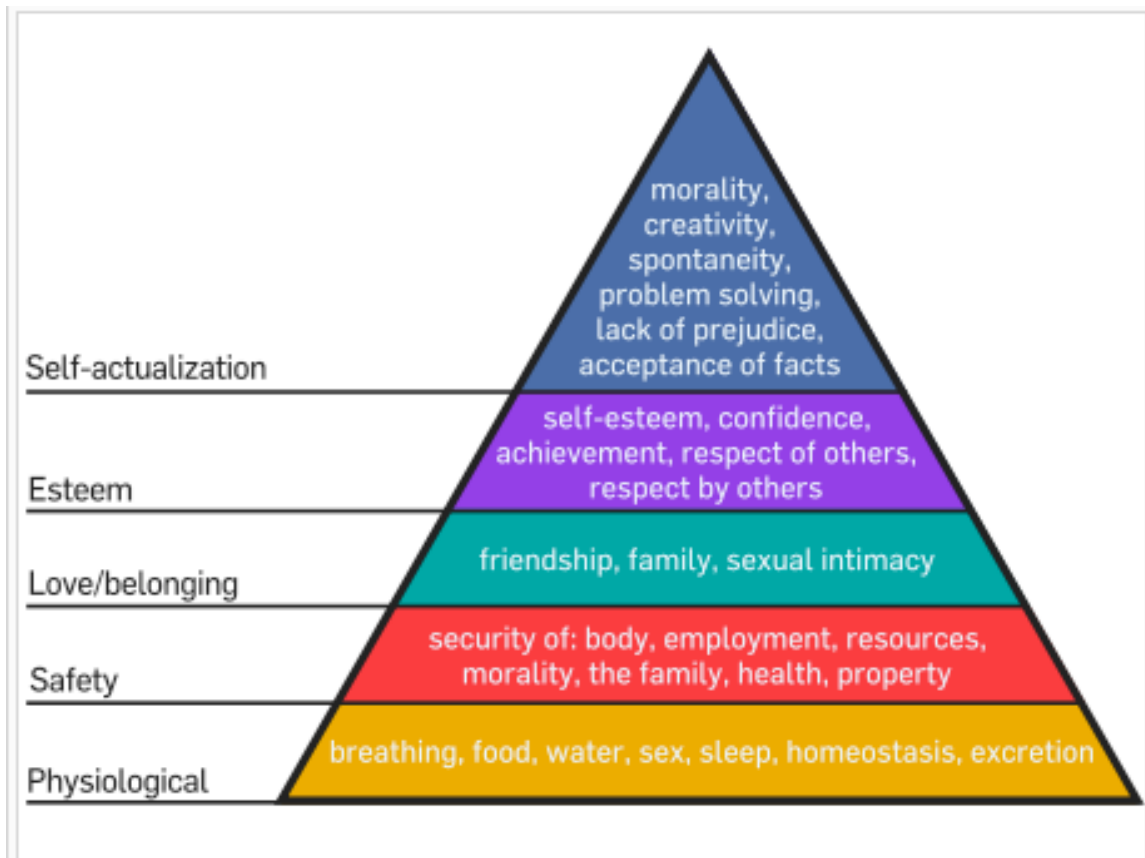
Through data collected from 450 seventh, eighth, and ninth grade junior high students in the early 1940's, Teideman (1946) provided educators with a clear description of what students wanted from their teacher. The Teideman study reported, in general, the best-liked teacher may be described as kind, friendly, and cheerful. Teideman also reported that students were willing to "put up" with a considerable amount of bad teaching if the teacher displayed these qualities.

In addition to students beginning to express dissatisfaction with the atmosphere of school, it was the changing face of America that promoted public schools across the United States to examine their traditional authoritarian style built on "cultural uniformity." Florida (2005) provides context to the impact that post World War II immigration had on the United States. It was immigration that helped power the industrial age and changed the face of America in the years that followed the war.

The economic recovery following the end of the World War II encouraged the softening of immigration policy, and the 1952, Immigration Act eliminated restrictions based on ethnicity but

retained quotas based on national origin. The landmark 1967 Immigration Act liberated our policy further, among other things replacing the national quotas with an annual cap on admissions on immigrants from seven broad segments of the world. By 1978, roughly 600,000 immigrants were entering the United States each year (Florida, 2005, p. 80).

The circle of influence on children through inventions such as the television, the large number of students entering new schools as a result of immigration, industrial- based employment and the innate desire of children to be embraced rather than controlled challenged the traditional mindset of “cultural uniformity” in public schools. Under the backdrop of the Cold War, Abraham Maslow published A *Theory of Human Motivation*, in the Psychological Review of 1943. The work would be published world wide in 1954, through the book *Motivation and Personality*.



adapted from, Maslow(1943)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs serves as a foundational resource for school personnel striving to meet the needs of a diverse, mobile population of students during the 1940's.

Over time Maslow's work was broadly discussed in fields of management, psychology and education. Adler (1977) describes Maslow's research as "an outline motivational hierarchy consisting of five categories of human needs arranged in ascending order: physiological basic needs satisfied by such stimuli as food and sleep; security need for a safe environment free from immediate threat; social affinitive and love needs; a desire for social acceptance; esteem need for enhancement and acceptance of self; and self-actualization striving for full

realization of unique characteristics and potentials” (Adler, 1977, p. 444). He further explains that the key notion in the model is that as a need category lower in the hierarchy becomes satisfied, its determination of behavior diminishes and the next higher need category becomes proponent.

Adler (1977) uses the need hierarchy model proposed by Maslow to describe the immigrant adjustment process prevalent in United States from the end of World War II until the mid 1970's. He suggested that immigrants undergo a state of impaired psychological functioning upon their arrival in a new country. He further explains that no matter which level of the hierarchy their personality development had reached prior to immigration, individuals are frequently pushed by various factors toward the bottom of the hierarchy.

Consequently the primary concerns of new citizens after arrival will be in the physiological and security area. “Thereafter, with basic satisfaction of these needs (what constitutes "basic satisfaction" remains problematic and certainly involves individual differences), social needs come to dominate. That is, concern for social contacts with members of the new society may not emerge until the immigrant finds adequate shelter for himself and his family. Until the immigrant feels somewhat socially secure, he may not evidence a concern for challenging or interesting work” (Adler, 1977, p, 445). Adler explains that it is only when all of these basic needs are gratified and the individual has adjusted to his new environment will they move to the next level on the hierarchy. Individuals facing a new environment must secure gratification of their basic needs before they can access the skills of the next level (Alder, 1977).

## Chapter 5

### Joe Kindergarten Class of 1963

#### *The Setting*

Joe and I first met on a church retreat twelve years ago. He and his wife quickly realized that I was a young, single schoolteacher who had just moved to town, and they took me under their wing. A few years later, I met my husband and he became good friends with Joe. They both enjoy running and often meet during the day run the streets of the town which we both call home. When I discussed my research with my husband he immediately recommended Joe. He had heard much of Joe's story during the long runs they shared and knew he would be an eager participant. Joe and I talked initially about the purpose of the study in passing and he was excited to tell his story.

Joe received the interview questions via email a few days prior to our initial meeting. We met for the first time at his home and sat at the kitchen island. Joe's three grown children, wife and dog would frequently stroll through the kitchen as we discussed the study. At the end of the initial meeting, his wife Jeanette and I sat on the deck, shared a glass of wine and talked about our summer plans. The casual atmosphere of Joe's home and the friendship we had developed over the years made conversation easy for both of us. Joe has never met a stranger. He is eager and kind to get to know others and he had no reservations about trusting me with his story.

Following our first interview session, we met three additional times before the interview tapes were transcribed and reviewed. The interview sessions were

coordinated around Joe's work schedule, a family vacation to Europe, and organizational meetings for Joe's upcoming missionary trip to southern India. With each face-to-face meeting, Joe shared the details of his journey growing up in a military family. Joe's story is told in vivid color. He had no trouble recalling the details of his family's daily life and the adventures of his childhood. Through our interviews, Joe was able to recreate his family's trek across the world, the people and events that made a difference in his life and provide an illustration of the Vietnam Era through the eyes of a child.

From our interviews, the liveliness of childhood jumps out as Joe's adventures unfold. Today, Joe is still a burst of energy to everyone he meets. I admire his ability to make friends, continue to serve others across the globe and use his strong sense of self-confidence to make everyone feel welcome. Joe's story is one of an adventurous boy traveling the world, taking in all of the realities of the social revolution of the 1960's and becoming a man who helps others discover their own dreams.

### *A Family's Journey*

Joe was born in 1958 to a young Air Force couple on their way to a great military adventure. Joe's parents married in their early 20's while his dad was stationed in Kansas and a few years later welcomed Joe into their lives. "My dad was a career sergeant in the Air Force. He retired as a sergeant in the Air Force, he didn't begin that way. I was the oldest of three. I have a younger brother, fifteen months younger than I am, and a sister that's six years younger than I am." The story of Joe, his parents and siblings could be described as the 'All American military



family. My mom worked off and on at various times. She did not work full time until I was in probably high school.” It was Joe’s father whose career in the military provided for the family financially and kept the family moving. “Dad was successful as a non-commissioned officer so he was always going to schools or going on temporary duty assignments.”

As Joe’s father moved for training, service in Vietnam and Guam and then as a part of an inspector general’s team, Joe and his family would relocate to support his dad’s career. “Between my 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade year he spent a year and change in Vietnam, six months in Guam when I was in junior high, plus there were other shorter term things, a month here, six weeks here kind of thing. So there were a lot of times when dad was gone. As I got to high school, his job dictated that he spend more time away. So he would be gone 4 or 5 days and then be home for a week or two, and then gone 4 or 5 more days and home for a week or two and then gone again just because of the nature of his job. He was on an inspector general’s team that everybody hated because they came in and did the big inspections. Much like hospitals have their joint commissions, well this would have been the military version of that for a unit or a base.”

Joe had a two siblings that he shared the ‘military adventure’ with, as he calls it. Joe described his sister as gregarious. “She and I are a couple of peas in a pod which can be dangerous. We did tend to butt heads a little bit. Joe’s younger brother who, is fifteen months younger than he, is quieter but still contributed to the family dynamic of good sibling rivalry. “My brother and I got along fairly well other than the occasional knock down drag out, but that’s to be expected. Little sister and

I had our fair share of rants but she was six years younger. By the time she was in junior high, I was in college, so I was gone. I would come back in the summer time, it was awesome.” Joe remembers the time growing up with his siblings with fondness and fulfillment. He talked about how they always had each other to play with and torment.

Joe did not grow up with his extended family down the street, but he enjoyed seeing them during vacations. “Because we were military, they were, we never really lived close to them. Dad’s parents, paternal parents, were in Minnesota. Mom’s parents were in central Kansas. So, there wasn’t really a lot of extended family around on a regular basis but that was where your vacations went to, you went to see family.” Joe explained that his dad only had so much leave time as a serviceman so his family would take off from wherever they were stationed in the United States and hit the road for Kansas. The vacations created family memories of extended family and a collection of special vacation mementos. “We would usually stop at local tourist stops and we would pick up stuff along the way.” Joe laughed as he thought about the “hysterical markers” his family stopped at and the trinkets they picked up along the way to visit relatives. The lessons Joe learned during his time in Kansas and the trinkets his family collected from vacations became an important part to Joe’s story.

Joe’s mother moved away from her family shortly after she married at the age of twenty. The move came with a new sense of independence and the need for support beyond her hometown connection. The military provided the support she needed to raise three children amidst the frequent family moves. Joe explained that

each base had a child care center and a thrift store. “Mom was a home economics major in college until I arrived. She was always making something. She sewed, she cooked, she baked, we did a lot of crafts.” Joe’s mom kept craft books on hand and encouraged her children’s creativity. “We’d pull them out and we’d look through them and then come up with something and then we’d make stuff.” Joe remembers making crafts for the Christmas carnival and simple gifts for holidays.

Joe’s family life was shaped by his parent’s commitment to keeping their entire family active in sports, church, and community activities. “We were an active bunch. I played sports. They were active in whatever I did. If I was playing baseball, then dad was helping to coach. If I was involved in scouting, dad was helping in scouting. Mom was part of that equation not necessarily as part of the formal stuff but you know she helped repair uniforms for our baseball teams.” As Joe’s interests developed his siblings were never far behind. “My brother is fifteen months younger and quieter than I am, he did a lot of the same stuff that I did. If I was in scouts, he was in scouts. I played ball, he played ball.” Joe’s sister (six years younger) enjoyed Brownies and riding horses. His mother helped with Brownies and kept up with her riding lessons. Joe recognizes that his brother’s participation in sports and scouting was sometimes a decision of efficiency when his dad was deployed away from the family.

The military supported Joe’s families need to stay connected as a family and as a community. “There was always activity on the military bases and the military itself tended to have a sense community.” While living in military housing areas Joe remembers always being out and about. “You were playing with the kids next door,

in those down the street, there was a lot of activity.” Joe explained that on every military base, there is a youth activity center. The youth activity center was the hub for little leagues, scouts and unstructured physical activity. The facilities were equipped with pool tables and basketball courts, racquetball courts and a base gym. Joe remembers spending a lot of time getting to know other kids at the youth activity center.

Joe’s childhood was also shaped by the spiritual support provided by his parents and facilitated through the military. “We were involved in the base chapel program. So there were Sunday school classes and picnics. It was a church life but it was surrounded by military families as opposed to civilians.” Joe also remembers special base chapel events that he enjoyed as a child, like the Easter egg hunt. Joe explained that the military provided programming to encourage community and family life because they knew a happy serviceman was a good serviceman.

Joe’s family embraced each move as an opportunity to learn about new cultures, experience diversity, and build a home. “Every place we went, we learned new traditions. When we lived in Arizona, we learned about the desert and American Indians, We lived in Kansas, I learned a lot about Kansas traditions. We lived in the southeast, I learned about the Conquistadors and the Spanish coming in. We learned the history of the deep south about the Civil War.” Joe also has wonderful memories of living in Germany, his family would go to castles and historical places on the weekends. It was important to Joe’s parents that the family learn about that community in each location they lived. The military encouraged service men and women to be involved in the community, but a lot of it was a result

of parent creativity. “My dad was a young airman and then a sergeant and so he didn’t make a lot of money. Plus my parents had 2 or 3 kids depending on where we were. They were always looking for ways to do things as a family and my mom was really creative in that way.”

Joe’s family had a desire to experience a wide variety of traditions and cultures. As a result, the variety experiences created a love of cooking for the entire family. Joe explained that his mom had a great collection of family recipes. As the family moved the recipe collection grew and she made a point to learn the cooking techniques unique to the area. The family looked forward to trying new foods and adding their favorite recipes into the evening meal rotation. “I think one of the things that my mom was really big on was sharing meals as a family.” Joe explained that sometimes the family would eat out and sometimes at home, but the family always ate together. Joe shared that he did not recognize the consistence of the family meal as something special until he had a family of his own.

While Joe’s family embraced the traditions they learned along the way during their military travel they preserved some traditions passed down through his mother’s German heritage. “We always opened our gifts on Christmas Eve which was a German tradition. Christmas morning was a leisurely morning to get up and start playing with your toys.” Joe explained that it was something his mother enjoyed as a child and wanted her own children to experience.

Growing up in a military family brought special memories of moving for Joe. When Joe’s family would arrive on a new military base frequently there would be a waiting list for housing and therefore there were times when Joe’s family would live

in civilian housing. "It was always kind of fun. We moved one time to Arizona and lived for about two months in a little cheesy motor inn hotel thing, we were all in one big room with this little galley kitchen." Joe explained that the routine of staying somewhere off the base for a while before base housing opened up was all apart of the adventure. "We lived in old duplexes and little houses. My dad was very handy, so often we might have six months, a year living off the base. Dad would pick a place he could fix up and trade for rent." Joe's family always took advantage of base housing when it became available. "There were a lot of advantages of being in base housing. It was usually very good, very clean. It was a part of the serviceman's compensation. So there was no rent or utilities. If you lived off the base, you were given a housing allowance, but that housing allowance may or may not cover depending on the local economy." The routine of moving into temporary housing and trading rent for property improvements is something Joe describes as normal. He says it was all just a part of the deal.

As Joe reminisced about his experiences moving, he remembered the excitement that the moving process brought. "It was cool because you had a whole new set of boxes and the brown wrapping paper. We'd save that. We'd fold it out. It was those big sheets that were like 2 foot square or bigger." Joe's mom would save the paper and add it to the craft supply collection at the next move. "We'd flop those out and we'd have those for doing posters and school projects." Joe remembered packing his room with confidence that when he got to the next place his toys would be there. "There were toys that disappeared and you'd go, 'Hey, where did my so-and-so go?' My parents would come and say 'I don't know, what toys?' And later

you'd learn, they threw them out because we only had so much room." Joe says his parents never threw away anything that he really, really valued.

The discussion of packing reminded Joe of his memories of the "orange curtains." Joe recalled that there were always decorations and keepsakes that stayed with his family. "A home was where you landed and so my mom and dad both would use our stuff to set up the home." He explained that some traditions just surrounded him, "You always had some of those knick knacks from things you had picked up from various places." Joe remembered the cheesy little touristy thing that sat in the corner. "Every time we went to a new place, those came out. Some of them went by the wayside because you were only allowed so much per move, but they were always there." Joe remembers his mother's routines when they arrived at a new home. "Whenever we got to the next house, base housing, rented apartment, or whatever it was at the next duty station. My mom would open up the boxes and pull out the towels, the linens, and the same burnt orange Montgomery Wards net curtains." The military housing accommodation were sparse, therefore it was the family's decorations and keepsakes that triggered a sense of home.

The routine of reestablishing a home and the frequency in which military families moved, created an open market feel to military housing. "We would go buy cheap carpet and throw it out on the floor. Sometimes it was the same furniture that you had and sometimes you would sell to a family that was staying. Then when you got to the next place you would buy whatever you needed from someone else who was leaving." Joe remembers a lot of furniture, carpets and household items being

shuffled among the military families moving in and out. He explained that everybody was moving all the time and so it did not really seem like a big deal.

Throughout the moves that Joe made as a result of his father's service in the military, he met many people and recognizes the importance of individuals who took special interest in him. "When my dad went to Vietnam, I was in the middle of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade when we moved to Kansas. My teacher was Mrs. Avery. She was best friends with my grandmother and I remember her spending time with me". Joe remembers her kindness and how he always felt like she was looking out for him. While in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, at Eglin Air Force Base the stories shared by another mature gentleman provided Joe guidance. "Colonel Holt had been a pilot in World War II and flew in Burma and he share cool stories with me." Joe was in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade and the retired Colonel, started a little bit of a math club for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. "He had these great stories and pictures about flying the Burma hump and dodging vultures and stuff. So, you had these stories as a kid that was kind of larger than life and nice and learning math and having a great time. I just kind of remember that he did some stuff that went above and beyond. In my mind he was doing stuff because he enjoyed it. He didn't have to do anything, he was retired." During Joe's high school years his family was stationed for 3 1/2 years in Germany, It was there he met who he describes as his spiritual mentor. "Marj was her name. I knew Marj through the base chapel program and she was just the kind of person that took kids under her wing. I could go over and sit in her kitchen and talk to her." Joe explained that he felt so lucky to have meet people along the way that took the time to get to know him as a person.



But, there was no stronger influence in Joe's life than his parents. "My parents were the most consistent because that's what you had. You were a couple of years here and a couple of years there." Joe's parent's ability to make friends helped the entire family fit into each place they moved. "There was always a network of friends with my parents. They may or may not have kids my age, often times they would. It was people who worked in the office or people involved in the same things. We had a circle friends." Joe explained that his parents had to make friends fast with other families and describes it as a part of surviving the moves.

### *School Days*

Joe's school years were shaped not only by the places he lived and the schools he attended, but also by the turmoil surrounding the Vietnam War. Joe attended kindergarten in central Kansas and first grade in a small town in Missouri. However, when Joe's dad volunteered to go serve his tour in Vietnam, Joe was in second grade. Joe, his mother and younger brother moved back to his mother's hometown during the deployment. The family's time in rural Kansas built special memories for Joe. While the world at large understood the dangers of war Joe's mother sheltered both boys from the reality. "I think because I was in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and I knew my dad wasn't a combat person, I didn't have a sense of dread or worry about my dad. I never worried his safety. It could have been because my mom certainly did not share any emotions of fear." Joe's fathers deployment is not only a story about a service man and his family, it also about the impact of a community.

Joe recalls that his dad wrote letters from Vietnam to the family everyday. "I remember we got letters every day from my dad. So, on most days of the week, we

were getting letters.” Joe told how in a small farm town everybody knew his dad was in Vietnam. “The postmaster, neat guy, knew that my dad wrote letters every day and it was these airmail, red, white, and blue edged envelopes. There was always a mail delivery that came into the post office on Saturday evening. He would go down to the post office either Saturday night or Sunday morning. He would dump all of the letters out and he would fish out the letter from my dad.” Joe remembered many weeks where his family would get mail on Sunday morning. “The postmaster would drop the letter off on his way to church and we would come home from church and there would be a letter from my dad. He did it because he knew what that meant to us.”

In addition to the letters, Joe’s family delighted in the sound of his dad’s voice. “Somewhere along the line, he acquired one of those small little reel to reel tapes. It would come in a little box with these two reels.” Joe remembers going to a neighbor’s house across the street and borrowing a tape player. “We’d have to fish it through the right channels and get it set up and then we could listen to hear my dad’s voice, which was really cool.”

Joe’s memories of school in Kansas include his second grade teacher Mrs. Avery. He told how Mrs. Avery took him under her wing, making sure he knew what to do and where to go. Joe also remembers Mrs. Avery kindly letting him know the boundaries of his behavior. “She would say no, we don’t do that here.” Joe told how he was fascinated with the Apollo and Gemini space efforts. Joe was moved in 1961, when John F. Kennedy challenged Americans to put a man on the moon.

While the lessons Joe learned at school in Kansas were valuable to his development, it was the stories told by his mother and grandmother that impacted him the most. Joe was aware of the racial tension present in America during the early 1960's as an elementary age child. He explained that he does not remember many specifics, but he knew it was there. "I do remember living at Whiteman Air Force Base and there was a family that wouldn't play with one of my other friends, because he was black. I liked him, I wanted to play with him." While the incident was difficult for Joe to understand, he explained that the military setting sheltered him from daily segregation. "Because of Uncle Sam, you towed the line. In the military, if you were on a military base as a serviceman, you were either in the military or you weren't regardless of the color of your skin."

It was Joe's time in Kansas that helped the second grader sort out his emotions regarding racism. Joe recalled the traditions of his family passed down through the stories told in Kansas. "I remember my mom, my grandmother, telling me stories. In there little town in Kansas you had one, maybe two, black families, but there were Mexican families that worked the salt plant. Consequently, the Mexican families were the ones that were discriminated against. My grandmother and her sister were really involved in the community, so they were allowed to have the keys to the pool." Joe told of how his relatives opened up the pool in the summer time and taught swim lessons to the Hispanic and black families at the pool until noon (prior to the white kids coming). His grandmother formed a deep bond with the Hispanic families and served as their schoolteacher at the Mexican school. "Here's a woman

who's Ingalls like celebrating fiesta with the Mexicans. Basically, you got these basic white Ingalls, blacks, and protestant folks celebrating fiesta."

When Joe's father returned from Vietnam, Joe was half way through his third grade year and Joe found the response to his father's service confusing. "When my dad came back from Vietnam in the 1967 timeframe, there were times when he would not wear his uniform in public." Joe says that there were no welcome home ceremonies and he remembers the absence of anyone saying thank you to his dad. Joe remembers a lot of protest against the war and to be in support of servicemen and the war was an unusual thing. Joe believes that it it's okay for people to hate war, but even as a child he was bothered by the lack of appreciation for servicemen doing their job.

Soon after Joe's father's return from the war, it was time for the family to relocate. Joe's family moved into the Panhandle of Florida in 1968. They found a place to stay in a small town near Eglin Air Force Base. "I remember having a great 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher in Kansas and then leaving to go to Florida and having a not-so-good teacher and wishing that I was back in the other class." Joe explained that the move was the only time he wanted to go back to his previous school because he did not like his new teacher in Florida. Joe described her as young and inexperienced, "she just could not handle us rowdy boys."

The move to civilian housing in Florida exposed Joe to a new level of racial tension that he had been sheltered from. "I remember feeling the tensions, although as a kid I don't think I quite understood it. I can remember driving across the deep south and seeing a Dairy Queen with three restrooms, men, women, and colored."

Joe was 10 years old and living in the deep south when Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. "I remember Martin Luther King's assassination. I remember feeling sad. I remember Bobby Kennedy as well and just feeling sorrow and sadness.

Probably because they were charismatic people."

While things outside of school seemed unexplainable to the ten-year old Joe, elementary school seem to be normal. Joe moved to the Eglin Air Force base school in the middle of his 4<sup>th</sup> grade year. Joe and his family stayed at Eglin Air Force Base for his 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade years . "I was 2 ½ years in the same school. That was the longest jog I would have until I got into high school." Eglin Elementary School brought an opportunity for Joe to grow as a student, an athlete and a friend.

Joe describes himself as a good student. "I was pretty good about doing homework and I could retain information. I didn't have to study. I was a good student." Joe recalled his development as reader came easy. "I could read something once, read it through and then I could pretty well retain the information." Joe enjoyed school and thrived on listening to the teacher, reading and writing and socializing with others. He remembers gravitating to other bright students. "They were reading the same book you were or they were on the same level you were. So, sometimes it was a competition, you were trying to keep up the old SRT or SSRT reading tests. You'd read a story and then you would answer questions and then you would move on to the next level. I liked the competition." Joe also told of his fascination with space. "I was a grade school kid when man landed on the moon and I had my plastic model rockets that I had made. I made the models of the Saturn, Gemini and Apollo capsules. Like model cars, I had model planes and Apollo things

because I was fascinated with that and watching that whole thing on TV, it captivated the nation as well.”

Joe describes himself in elementary school as the skinny kid with big glasses. He explained that he did not feel like he was in the “in crowd,” but he enjoyed playing outside, often with the other kids on the base. “There were woods nearby. I was in the woods always doing something. I was always looking for raccoon tracks and making plaster molds of tracks, building forts and digging in the sand. I’d go fishing, because we were right on the water, so we’d go down to the bay to do salt water fishing.”

Sports were an important catalyst to feed Joe’s enjoyment of competition and provide a network of friends. “Because I was good in sports, I had a built in network around sports teams or informal stuff on the playground.” In Florida, Joe played baseball in the spring/summer and enjoyed Scouts. Joe does not remember any real problems with other kids beyond the routine fist fight when someone did not get there way. Joe does not remember feeling apprehensive or bullied in elementary school and he talked about playing and competing with found memories.

While Joe’s memories of upper elementary school at Eldin Air force base seem stable, the world around the ten year old was anything but. Joe remembers watching coverage of the civil rights movement on TV as a young boy. “I remember my emotions seeing those TV images of the people being hosed down with the fire hoses and the dogs. I remember the March to Selma and people throwing rocks and things and just wondering why.” Joe explained that he had been taught through school and at home that everyone had the right to express themselves. “I didn’t

understand why somebody else would impose themselves on somebody, throw rocks and intentionally try and hurt people. Why other people would be treated so badly. I didn't understand that."

Joe's confusion continued as he watched the 1968 Olympic Games. "I remember the Black Panthers. I certainly remember the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City and the student protest. Two athletes lowered their heads, raised their fists in black power during the National Anthem during the medal ceremony for the women's sprints." The young Joe struggled to understand how his love of sports, acceptance of other people and his father's service to his country could result in this. "I remember thinking and trying very hard just to put that in context and say, barring skin color, what's the difference?" Joe explained that in his life at that point, all of the kids around him regardless of their race were all military kids.

As the political and social issues of the 1960's continued to unfold, Joe moved on to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Eglin Airforce Base. Joe continued to enjoy school and began to develop friendships. "I was outgoing, I was, academically above average and confident in myself, so I was a good, I was good at athletics. I did very well." Joe developed some friendships during his 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade years through Boy Scouts. "I had some guys when I was in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade that I met through scouting. You had kids that were older than you and younger than you and so some relationships might develop." Joe describes the friendship as kids who shared similar interests. His interest in music, band and sports provided him with multiple groups of kids to hang out with, however Joe realizes that he never really had the time to make lasting friends in elementary school.

Joe describes his friendship groups in elementary school as ever changing. “I just think you never really had the time. You made friends, you hung out and you did fun stuff. I can remember in elementary school going through at least a couple of different groups of friends because you’d go back the next year and half of that group was gone.” Joe explained that the friendship dynamics kept changing. “In a military school it wasn’t like you had the same group of kids that were the top dogs from 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 6<sup>th</sup> grade. It changed. Nobody stayed around that long.”

Joe started middle school with his friends in Florida, but soon it was time to move. His family relocated to the deserts of Arizona after nine weeks of seventh grade. During the usual enrollment procedures at Naylor Junior High, Joe met a boy who would soon become one of his best friends. “Our dads were in the office filling out the paperwork at the same time and we were standing on the other ends of the counter. We saw each other standing there and then at lunch we were the two lonely kids standing out on the playground. We just walked towards each other and became friends.” Joe attended a brand new junior high school and stayed at Naylor Junior High until the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Joe encountered a teacher at Naylor Junior High who sent him a strong message about the seriousness of the war in Vietnam. Joe recalls sitting in social studies class during a class discussion around current events and the teacher made reference to the boys in the class going to Vietnam. “He said, ‘Now, when you go to Vietnam . . .’ and he pointed to the guys in the class, ‘You need to know this stuff so you know why you’re going.’ We all kind of laughed about it and then he stopped us dead in our tracks.” Joe remembers the teacher pointing to a chair in the classroom



and telling the class that the boy who sat in the chair had been sent to Vietnam and had been killed. The teacher said, “so if you don’t understand why this war is going on you had better listen up, your potential for going is greater than you think.” Joe remembers feeling stunned by the teacher’s words and he said it made him pause for a long time.

Joe ‘s years in middle school were a time of academic exploration and social development. “I wasn’t the number one student in the class, but I was bright. I was active and things. I participated and I remember trying out for sports and didn’t make it. A scrawny little kid didn’t make the football team.” Joe experienced the open classroom concept of instruction while in Arizona. “So you had a very large room with some partitions with a classroom on one side and a classroom on the other side.” Joe remembers the class sizes being larger and as many as 35 students assigned to one teacher. While Joe was able to start his high school career as a ninth grader in Arizona, it would soon be time for the family to explore military life outside of the United States.

When Joe found out that his family would be moving to Germany during his first year of high school he embraced the opportunity and set out for a new adventure. “It was the lifestyle of people that were around me and it was, heck, I was going to Germany. That was pretty cool. It was exciting and it was what other families did all around me.” When Joe and his family arrived in Germany the grade assignments were different and therefore Joe had to go back down to middle school for ninth grade.

Despite the change in high school placement, Joe quickly found ways to reestablish himself in his new school. Joe describes himself in high school as outgoing and someone who made friends easily. "I was National Honor Society, Student Government, involved in a number of clubs. I think my senior year, I was, I counted one time, I think I was like an officer and in like 4 or 5 different clubs or something like that." Joe's ability to cross into multiple friendship circles enhanced his high school years. "I was an athlete and so I had athlete friends. I was a National Honor Society person, so I had kind of a geeky crowd, I was a musician and so I had musician friends." Joe explained that some groups he could not cross into as easily but he always felt like he fit in. "As silly as it may sound, I always felt like I had a group of friends. Sometimes bigger, sometimes smaller, but I always felt I had a group of friends." When many of Joe's friends graduated at the end of his junior year he had to refocus once more and form a new group of friends.

The expectations of Joe's parents during his high school years had an impact on his success. "I always knew I was going to college. My parents never came home and said, how's your homework or kept track of my studies they figured I had a handle on it." The unspoken expectation of academic performance came from Joe's extended family as well. Joe's mother's family included a few teachers, and an engineer who encouraged Joe to strive for success. The expectations of Joe's parents were also influenced by the social expectations of the military.

Joe's social development was monitored not only by his parents, but by his dad's employer. "When you live on a military base, you don't have to be perfect, but you do toe the line because I was a guest of my father who was a guest of the

German government.” Joe explained that if he were to get into serious trouble in high school he could lose his sponsorship. In other words, all of the benefits that Joe enjoyed as a part of base life were tied to his behavior. “I got an ID card when I lived on the base, I went to the base store, the bowling alley, the gym, the American high school. All of that stuff was part of the benefits for being a service kid. If my sponsorship was revoked, that meant I was no longer able to use those U.S. military services. So, I either 1) went home as in back to the states or 2) I moved off the base.” In addition Joe’s father’s promotions could be tied to his behavior. “Because he was responsible for me and I knew that in my dad’s career, my actions reflected on my father which then reflected on his career.” Joe says despite the harsh realities of the military’s expectations for behavior he toed the line, not because he had to but because he did not feel the need to get into trouble. He and his friends had their own interests and were not pulled toward the temptation of serious misconduct.

Joe admits that living on military bases most of his life made him immune to the dangerous work of being an airman. The reality hit home for Joe in high school when he returned from a school golf team trip. “Waiting for us at the bus drop off was one of the boy’s mom, a commander and the chaplain. As a service kid you know that’s not a good thing.” Joe remembers getting off the bus and his mom quickly telling him it was time to go. A helicopter had crashed that day during military maneuvers and a dozen people were killed, one of those was a classmate’s father. “I remember walking across the parking lot, getting ready to get in my car and I remember him just scream you know, “No” and that was hard to hear.” The realities of military base life brought many wonderful opportunities to Joe, but the

tragedy in Germany was a reminder that military duty is dangerous. “When you’re in the service, these guys practice doing things everyday that the rest of us would go, ‘Oh, that’s crazy’.”

Joe’s high school also provided him intellectual challenge that required him to apply himself to his schoolwork. “I responded best to the group setting. I fed off other people. I fed off the lectures. I could read something and synthesize that and then in the class, that information pulled together.” Joe struggled in classes that demanded independent study, “Because you had to independently . . . there was nobody holding your hand saying, you’ve got a test next week, you better read this material. Your paper is due. Are you doing it?” Joe worked to develop the self-discipline to tackle content areas such as chemistry and advanced math.

While in Germany, Joe’s family dove into the cultural opportunities that surrounded them. “We travelled on weekends a lot. We would go to Heidelberg and we’d go to different towns or different places.” Joe enjoyed the views of castles and quaint towns surrounding the base. The military base continued to provide an outlet for socialization and friendship for the entire family. In addition, Joe’s family carried on the tradition of staying involved in the base chapel and church activities.

Joe’s high school provided him the opportunity to connect spiritually with God and deepen his relationship with other practicing Christians. “I became very involved in the chapel and the youth choir, it was a singing group that toured around various places in Europe.” Joe got involved in Bible studies at that time and reading his Bible. “I did have that faith and that was important to me. My faith guided me, but some of it was the culture of the 60’s and early 70’s.” Joe explained

that his deep spirituality was a part of a movement anchored by the need to express concern for one another. Joe's school years afforded him many opportunities to see the world, gain the acceptance of others and growth both academically and spiritually. Joe graduated from high school in Germany in 1975.

### Impact

Joe recalls that moving was just a reality and was not something that he dreaded. "You knew it was coming. You knew you were going to move". Joe explained that as a little kid, moving did not bother him. Joe recognizes that it would have been harder if he had grown up around the same kids or family and then had to leave. Joe explains that moving is the one constant for military kids, it is not usual, it is the norm. "It wasn't, Holy cow, there's a new kid. It was Oh, how many kids did we get this week? You knew it was going to happen."

Today, Joe is 51 years old. He has enjoyed 28 years of marriage and is the proud parent of three children. "I would say your average kind of middle class American, working for a hospital, college degree, graduate degree." Joe explains that despite the fact he moved a lot, he always knew that he would go on for more education. Joe says that after going to Germany, his family and the other service families from Germany did not really have a hometown to return to. As a result, the families and friends he had come to know spread out all across the country. Joe has maintained a few contacts from high school but has lost touch with all of his junior high and elementary school friends.

Joe explained that his years surrounded by military men and women gave him an appreciation for service that he has carried with him. "We still need to take

care of our servicemen. They're not the ones making the policy." Joe has never forgotten the days after the Vietnam War when his father would not wear his uniform, because of the comments people would make. "It is a fine line for me between supporting the troops and not supporting the war." Joe says that it was not until the 1980's that his father began to be recognized for his service through Veteran's Day events and Memorial Day parades. "It took a long time for those guys to be recognized for their service." Joe's mother shares Joe's sentiments regarding the countries lack of appreciation for serviceman, although Joe explains that his mother rarely talks about it. "She just thought it was just kind of a shame. My mom is kind of quiet in that way. She'll make a couple sentences on something and then she's done with it."

Joe also believes that the combination of military life and strong family roots helped him become a person who embraces all people. "I learned about tolerance and acceptance of others by moving a lot. I grew up on a military base with black kids, Philipino kids, Mexican kids, because they were all service kids and they lived on the base." Joe explains that to him diversity was just always apart of the military community. "I lived in an immigrated multi-cultural community since the time that I was a kid because that was what the military was. It was integrated in to the fifties by Harry Truman, a good Missouri man." Joe says he learned to value diversity and enjoyed having friends from different races.

In addition to growing up in a diverse military setting, it was the stories from his mother and grandmother that helped him grow to serve all people. In a time when the tension between black and whites were are on the rise, Joe's family

continued to tell about his grandmother's efforts to work with the Hispanic families in her hometown. "We all knew we needed change and so we tried to do that. I was a child of the 60's because I was in grade school then, but yet there was still some of that stuff hanging over."

Joe describes his journey across town, states, and countries with the military as an adventure. But, being the new kid over and over brought special memories back for Joe. "Especially middle school, high school, I remember it was a little more military friendly because they were used to the military coming in. It wasn't like, "We got a new kid. Okay, let's see, were do we keep those forms?" Joe recalls that communities close to military bases were prepared for the influx of new students. Joe explained that schools knew they were coming and they had the forms, information and records all ready to go.

Joe's parents would provide the school with some records and grade cards and the school would determine what class to place him into. Joe explained that in some small communities there was only one section of each grade so it was not a big deal. But in other larger schools, enrollment was a time to place the student in a class based on ability. "You would get some place and they would say, "Okay, what have you had? Have you done division? Nope, I don't think I've done division. Okay, put him in this class". Joe describes the process as a form of educational tracking. Joe remembers the challenges he faced at one school, when he got tracked into the slower class and had to 'un-track' himself. "I remember being frustrated at times with that."

Joe explains he experienced a large academic set back due to this one experience with academic tracking common in the 1970's. "We all know those classic studies of taking the below average learners and putting them in a class where the teacher thinks they're all gifted and by golly they become gifted kids or they perform at a higher level." Joe recalls the one move he did not enjoy largely because he was tracked to a lower group. The new school determined that Joe did not know division so they put him with struggling students. Joe stated that he missed division at his previous school by a few weeks. "Well, we didn't get to division for months because they were just a lot slower group of learners so that set me behind for the next year." Joe explained that when he got to the next school he had to work extra hard to catch back up. He still remembers buying the multiplication flash cards and working at home to catch up. Joe says that he believes that keeping high expectations for all students is important.

Despite the fact that Joe was a good student he needed the voice of teachers to come along side of him and encourage his potential. "Sometimes the moving may have put some of those barriers because there wasn't somebody there long term who said, this kid's got some potential, and to stay on me my whole career." Joe says that he was in the top 10 of his class his sophomore year and slipped in the class ranking a little each year. Joe remembers the impact that one of his teachers had on him when he pulled him aside and told him he could do better.

Joe recognizes that the school curriculum, the teachers, his parents and church involvement were all factors in his ability to make good decisions outside of the classroom. "I can't say that there was one place, but it was just a sense of



between Sunday school classes and teachers and my parents I knew what was expected.” Joe admits that he was not a perfect kid, but he recognized that there were rules to follow. “Being a kid of the 70’s, marijuana and hash and those kinds of things never appealed to me.” Joe says that he bought into being a good kid and he believes that the anti-drug messages of the 70’s had an impact on him. “You had TV shows at the time like Dragnet and the evils of marijuana and pot. So, some of those things stuck with you a little bit as a kid.” Joe says he was a “follow the rules” kind of kid and his friends tended to be as well. “I had a social group of kids that I hung around with and I was in a crowd that just wasn’t interested in getting in trouble like that.”

Joe feels lucky to have been embraced into several social circles during his school years. Joe found himself surrounded in high school by jocks, geeks, church friends, and neighborhood friends. Some of Joe’s friends have stayed in touch and Joe is excited about an upcoming reunion where he will be meeting up with 15-20 of his high school friends from Germany. Joe explains that social networking through the internet has opened new doors of finding friends and staying in touch with classmates from the past.

Joe says that the process of building friends amidst changing schools result in two extreme responses. “You either became a real introvert or you had to be somewhat of an extravert to make friends. You didn’t have a year to sort out friendships.” Joe says that building friendship networks on the move, takes flexibility and determination. “You might meet a couple of people when you first start whatever school you move to and be friends with somebody for six months.”

As interests change and kids move in and out, Joe says that he would often find himself in a different group. Joe explains that the rotation of friends was probably faster than they might have been if he had stayed in one spot.

Joe believes that it is important for children to find the right group. “I think when you move as much as you do, there could have been the possibility of you falling into a group of kids whose standards weren’t as good as you wanted.” Joe explains that there is danger in finding yourself in a group that is not the greatest. “I can remember a whole group of kids in there that were kind of on the edge. We would go places and they were picking fights.” Joe explains that he quickly realized he did not want to hang with those guys. “It could have been easy to fall into that, but I think with my mom and other people saying, ‘you don’t have to do that. That’s just dumb.’” Joe says he can not remember when he learned it, but somewhere along the way he figured out that being on the edge was “just dumb.”

Joe believes that giving new students social support sometimes gets overlooked during the school orientation process. “I think it’s easy when a kid gets dropped into your lap and you’ve got to find a spot for them, for schools to feel overwhelmed. You get them into the classroom and give them their bus times and cover all the basic logistics and ask if they need help and assistance.” Joe explains that somewhere in the mix schools forget about social circles. “Maybe that handholding and taking them to a group of kids that you know will accept them and be maybe a good influence. I was influenced because I got into good groups.” Joe recognizes that his parents and teachers did not pick his friends but they did guide his decision. “My mom did not specifically lead me to specific groups and teachers

didn't lead me to certain groups but they watched the friends I was choosing." Joe believes that his academic talent helped him connect with other smart productive people. "But if I had been an average kid, it would be very easy to get lost." Joe believes that students on the edge socially or students who struggle academically can benefit from guidance of adults to find good role models.

During the past 28 years, Joe and his wife Jeanette have moved several times. Consequently, his three children have come to celebrate the idea that home is where you land. "Home is not a geographic location to me, it is where you make it." Joe, Jeanette and their growing family lived in New England, Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois and Missouri during the years when they were raising children.

Joe says that the moves were a result of job changes and because they were just not afraid to move. Joe explained that when he finished graduate school he searched for employment all over the country. "I found a job in Texas. So, we loaded up the moving van and packed it up and you move. People are really the same everywhere. There are quirks, but Americans are the same everywhere."

As Joe and Jeanette moved with their three children they carried on many of the traditions Joe learned from his parents. They have enjoyed being involved with the activities that their children have participated in and continue to find church a key component to their family life. "The church was an immediate group of friends much like the military was when I was growing up. There was a group of people who had a similar belief structure and, whether we like it or not, churches in America are pretty homogeneous." Joe describes church as the perfect place to find people who have like beliefs.

As Joe looks back on his years moving from community to community he recognizes some limitations, but celebrates the adventure. "It may be only 2 years and so that's where you were. You didn't have the luxury of just hanging back and being there you have to get in and enjoy every minute." Joe says that having moved a lot, sometimes he wishes he had a place to call his hometown. "But, then again I wouldn't trade and my kids wouldn't trade the moves that they've had either. Consequently, traveling to other parts of the world and meeting other people, I think that holds me in good standing." Joe believes that moving helped him gain a tolerance of other cultures, other ideas.

Joe explains that moving was just a way of life for him and all the kids around him, that was the way of the world. "At my dad's retirement party, he made a comment about what a ride. That's what it was to me. It was just an adventure and I think a lot of that is due to my parents too. They made that an adventure. It wasn't a woe is me. There were some tears in saying goodbye to some friends that you became close to, but yet it was off to the next adventure, the next place, the next culture, the next food, the next hometown."

### *Review of Literature*

Joe's school career unfolded during the peaks and valleys of the Vietnam Era. In a time described as the Age of Aquarius in the 1969 billboard hit Let The Sun Shine In, the civil rights movement is raw emotions of fear, anger, love and acceptance magnified mainstream America. The United States presidential election of 1968 was conducted against a backdrop that included the assassination of civil

rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. and subsequent race riots across the nation, the assassination of presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, widespread demonstrations against the Vietnam War across American university and college campuses, and violent confrontations between police and anti-war protesters at the 1968 Democratic National Convention (Fendrich, 1993). Amidst all of the events and emotions of the 1960's military families like Joe's were trying to find their way.

Military children face more than the usual challenges of growing up, from moving and re-establishing friendships every few years to worrying about family members who have been deployed. Their stories have been captured through numerous on-line resources including large social networks. The review of other adult stories that experienced growing up in the military during Vietnam further illuminates the experiences recalled by Joe. "Making new friends then leaving the friends behind, moving thousands of miles away to a military base or post you have never heard of before, living in a foreign country and seeing men and women in uniform all around you, everyday" (militarybratlife.com). The stories provide both a glimpse into the loss felt when leaving friends and the excitement of seeing the world. "We saw the world, and were fortunate to have the opportunities we had to visit places and meet people most of our extended families and friends only dream about" (militarybratlife.com). The stories of military children are mixed with regret of not having a place to call home and the appreciation for the support they felt by the military, communities, schools, and their families as they moved around the world.

The role of social connectiveness is increasingly important among military families. Military base life is designed to build social capital across both parents and children. "Life is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of social capital. In the first place networks of civic engagement foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust. Such networks facilitate coordination and communication, amplify reputations, and thus allow dilemmas of collective action to be resolved" (Putnam, 1995, p. 66). The facilitation of social capital by the military occurs through base facilities, activities, and shared camaraderie.

The network of friends that children establish is frequently influenced by the activities they participate in. These activities provide a basis for social networks for both children and their parents. For all families, a child's out of school activities are the key to building parents connections" (Pappano, 2009, p. 2). The connectiveness felt by military youth and their parents is evident in the stories passed down by military children. "Youth and their parents who had better connections to each other, their peers, and their neighborhoods appear to make better adjustments to the challenges of deployment and frequent relocation" (Mmari, Bradshaw, Sudhinarase, and Blum, 2010, p. 1).

The impact of social networks and shared civic purpose extend beyond the benefit of the individual and the immediate family setting. "No doubt the mechanism through which civic engagement and social connectedness produce such results -- better schools, faster economic development, lower crime, and more effective government" (Putnam, 1995, p. 66). The norms and social trust developed through

social networks facilitates cooperation and communication designed for a global good. The military has successfully scaffolded families' ability to establish social networks and facilitate social capital development through programs, facilities, and base support services.

The facilities and support services provided on military bases have created a safety net for children's social development. The ability to create social networks, establish connectiveness and influence the social capital of children has been a successful part of military family life, part of the web of programs, facilities, and individual people building safety nets around entire service families. The following on-line resources are available to US military families as they continue to serve their country and raise children across the world:

### **Federal Resources**

**MilitaryStudent.org** [www.militarystudent.dod.mil](http://www.militarystudent.dod.mil)

MilitaryStudent.Org is DoD's official source of education information. This initiative provides information to facilitate sound decisions on the education of youths in military families. Highlights include toolkits to help parents, installation commanders, and school leaders who smooth education transitions for military children. The site also contains promising practices regarding school transitions and Sesame Street Talk, Listen, Connect bilingual kits to help military families and their young children cope with deployment concerns. The Web site contains pages for children, teens, parents, special needs families, military leaders, and educators.

**Operation: Military Kids (OMK)** [www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/omk.aspx](http://www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/omk.aspx)

OMK, launched in April 2005, is the U.S. Army's collaborative effort with

communities to support the children and youth impacted by deployment. Through a network of community partners, OMK provides youth program opportunities for school age, middle school, and teenaged youth and connects them to support resources where they live. Families and youths can access information about OMK programs and link to partner programs on the OMK web site or by contacting their State 4-H military liaison. A part of the 4-H/Army Youth Development Project, OMK is an element of the Army Integrated Family Support Network (AIFSN) delivery system.

**Military Child Education Coalition (MCEC)** [www.militarychild.org/](http://www.militarychild.org/)

MCEC is a nonprofit organization that identifies the challenges facing highly mobile military children. Through a wide variety of training programs, events, initiatives, and materials, MCEC helps families, schools, and communities prepare to meet the needs of transitioning parents and students.

**Military Child Initiative (MCI)** [www.jhsph.edu/mci/](http://www.jhsph.edu/mci/)

MCI assists public schools in improving the quality of education for highly mobile and vulnerable young people with a special focus on military children and their families. MCI provides information, tools, and services that enhance school success to national, State, and local education agencies; schools and parents; and health, child welfare, juvenile justice, and education professionals. Components of MCI, which is located at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, include best practices, technical assistance, needs assessment/evaluation, and advocacy.

**Military Family Research Institute (MFRI)** [www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri/index.html](http://www.cfs.purdue.edu/mfri/index.html)



MFRI conducts original research on quality of life issues among military members and their families. Areas of interest include satisfaction, retention, readiness, and performance. The MFRI Web site contains research-based reports and educational materials on military demographics and military life issues including moving, marriage and divorce, family separation, and childcare. MFRI is housed at Purdue University and funded by DoD, Office of Military Community and Family Policy, and the Lilly Endowment.

**Military Teens on the Move (MTOM)** [www.defenselink.mil/mtom/index\\_t.htm](http://www.defenselink.mil/mtom/index_t.htm)

The MTOM web site provides tips for kids on moving, making new friends, learning about a new community, and coping with having deployed parents. The site contains separate pages for teens and younger children.

**National Military Family Association (NMFA)** [www.nmfa.org/](http://www.nmfa.org/)

NMFA seeks to educate military families on their rights, benefits, and services available to them and issues that affect their lives. NMFA also works to promote and protect the interests of military families by influencing legislation and policies affecting them. NMFA sponsors a military spouse scholarship program, awards programs to recognize outstanding military families and volunteers, and *Operation Purple Camps* for children of deployed service members. NMFA's web site provides information for military families and those who service them.

NMFA publishes a monthly newsletter as well as a weekly legislative e-mail newsletter.

**Operation Healthy Reunions** [www.nmha.org/reunions/index.cfm](http://www.nmha.org/reunions/index.cfm)

Operation Healthy Reunions provides education and helps to break the stigma

of mental health issues among soldiers, their families, and medical staff members to ensure that a greater number of military families receive the prompt and high-quality care they deserve. In partnership with military organizations, Mental Health America's (formerly known as the National Mental Health Association) Operation Healthy Reunions project distributes educational materials on such topics as reuniting with spouses and children, adjusting after war, depression, and PTSD.

### **Uniformed Services Deployment**

[www.aap.org/sections/unifserv/deployment/index.htm](http://www.aap.org/sections/unifserv/deployment/index.htm)

The Uniformed Services Deployment Web site was developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics to help children and adolescents cope with the difficulties of deployment in the family. The site includes resources for youth-serving professionals and parents as well as for kids.

### **Military Brat Life [www.militarybratlife.com](http://www.militarybratlife.com)**

The Military Brat Life Web site was developed to share Military Brat experiences with the general public and fellow Military Brats about what it is like to grow up in different countries and on military bases around the United States. This site provides a forum for social networking and resources for children who grew up on military bases.

## Chapter 6

Lori

### Kindergarten Class of 1974

#### *The Setting*

I met Lori through my church three years ago. Her husband is the associate pastor for our congregation and her four children are all very close in age to my own children. She and I formed a deep friendship through hours of chasing elementary-aged kids, planning church activities and spending our free time with other career minded moms. When I discussed the focus of my research with her, Lori shared that she experienced moving from school-to-school during her childhood years. We talked (or in many cases texted) about the purpose of the study and she agreed to participate.

Lori received the interview questions via email a few days prior to our initial meeting. We met for the first time in her home. We coordinated the free hour of time through texting clear up to the hour before the appointment. It was critical that the interview occur during the school day and between client calls to accommodate Lori's crazy schedule. We sat on the couch with our feet curled up and big cups of ice tea. We chatted first about the lasted friend gossip and then got down to business. Our deep friendship made the conversation easy for both of us. She was open and candid, trusting me with her story.

Following the first interview, we met two additional times before the interview tapes were transcribed and reviewed. With each of the face-to-face encounters there was an abundance of information shared and series of phone calls

and texts to follow. Lori's story had many blanks; she was often embarrassed that she could not remember things from her early years. Consequently, when the interview was over we would switch back to best of friends mode and she would call me within a few hours to give the scoop on what her mom and sister had to say about the interview questions. From our interviews, a picture of a lively and smart Lori emerged. I admire the resilience that enabled her to sift through the expectations and goals set for her to find her true self. I sensed a deep need to fit in and a deep desire not to have to. Her story was one of a family climb to the top and the baggage that accumulated along the way.

### *A Family's Journey*

Lori was born in 1968 during the height of the Vietnam War to a young determined mother. Her mother was 17 years old at the time and her birth father was young as well. Lori's mother and birth father were married for a short period of time and lived with Lori's maternal grandparents. But the arrangement was short lived and soon her mother and birth father went their separate ways. When Lori was 2 years old her mother remarried. Lori's stepfather, who Lori refers to as her father, adopted her at the age of 5. The marriage and adoption began the journey of a young family on the road to corporate success.

During the first few years of the marriage, Lori and her parents lived in the same town as her maternal grandparents. She had vivid memories of living close to her grandparents in Jacksonville, Florida. "When I was very young, we did everything with my grandparents. I mean, we went to church with them; we lived in the same town that they did. My mom is 14 years younger than her closest sibling.

So in many ways she was an only child and then I came along. It was just kind of she and I and my grandparents.” The family circle that had started with just Lori, her mom and grandparents would soon expand.

Lori’s parents welcomed a new addition to the family at the birth of Lori’s sister. “My sister was not born until I was almost 6 and so I do remember that being a traumatic event for me. I vividly remember saying that I was going to live with my grandparents once she came home.” Her family reminds her even now that she was not pleasant about the arrival of her sister. “I guess I had kind of always been the only child and because of my mom’s situation, my grandparents loved me just as much as my mom had. Then my dad met my mom and of course at that point, I was a growing toddler and young person and so I had all his attention. Then my sister came.”

With the beginning of a new family came the desire for economic prosperity and the need to relocate away from extended family. After serving in Vietnam, Lori’s father had completed a degree in computers and had secured employment with a large technology firm. The family made the trek to Iowa for an 11-month training period.

Lori does not remember much about Iowa. She was surprised and even a little embarrassed that she had very few memories of life in Iowa. “We always knew it was going to be a short-term thing and they would place you after that.” She struggled as she tried to remember what her house looked like, her daily routines, holidays and any of the people she encountered. She chuckled when she said, “I know I went to first grade there, but honestly I do not remember a thing.”

However, Lori's memories of her parents from this short stay continue to be a vivid part of her story. Lori remembers the adjustment that her mother went through in Iowa. "My sister was sick as a baby a lot and we had moved away from everything that was comfortable. She had a sick baby, a husband who was gone all the time, a job, and I was starting school." Lori's memories of her father were encompassed by the demands of an early career. She talked about him working all the time. She described her parents as "young parents in the building phase." But, building came with a price and Lori remembers her parents talking of divorce and the fear she felt as a result. Soon, the 11 months living in Iowa was over and her father received his directives, the family set off for Texas.

Lori was 7 years old when her family arrived in Dallas, Texas and the year was 1977. Lori describes this time, "So I went to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade somewhere. I could not tell you for the life of me where I went to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. We lived in an apartment and I do remember that being a weird experience having always lived in a home or some single family dwelling." The apartment was a part of the company benefit package and was a hub for families with young children. Lori remembered there being a lot of kids around the apartment complex.

Lori's most vivid memories of Dallas proper are the memories of parents on the climb to success. "My dad worked a lot. I think back to that time computers were the first kind of 24 hour day so, he worked all different hours." Lori's mom worked as well. Absent were the memories of family routines for the seven-year-old Lori, but the daily life of daycare remain vivid. Lori described the daycare experience, "I remember going to daycare. I went to a daycare center. So I do remember, you

know, when Elvis died. That was the talk of the daycare center.” When 2<sup>nd</sup> grade came to a close so did the family’s stay in Dallas proper.

Lori describes the move to Richardson Heights, Texas as the first step of “white flight” for her family. The move out of Dallas proper to Richardson was marked by the purchase of her parent’s first home. “I remember eating dinner there. I had my own room that my parents had painted for me. We had a yard and a dog.” Lori’s memories of Richardson marked a change in her memories. She began to recall the visual memories her daily life.

As Lori began to retell her memories of Richardson the details of her story became clearer, even for her. She smiled as she talked about walking to her church that was just a few blocks away and the visits from her grandparents. Lori’s interests also took flight in Richardson. She learned to balance the demands of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade as well as develop into a dancer. “The dancing was intense during those years, I danced four days a week for hours at a time.”

The years of Richardson Heights brought memories of the family holidays and a few vacations. But, much like the other places Lori lived, she also remembers how hard her dad worked to make it all happen. “It is clear looking back on it that my dad had a plan. He was going to finish school and he was going to put in all of the hard time and then he was going to get a house for us and then a bigger house.” The plan set the family in motion again after Lori finished her fifth grade year. Further north and east they would move, to Plano, Texas.

Life in Plano, Texas is where Lori says her real story begins. A story marked by the rewards and costs of corporate success. Lori’s family finally felt at home in

Plano. "It was the first time we had a neighborhood. We knew our neighbors and we looked out for each other. Everyone's kids played together. I remember when my neighbor died across the street shortly after we moved in of cancer and it was a whole neighborhood kind of thing, that was a sense of community, I think." Lori's life of a neighborhood, school and friends developed in Plano, Texas.

In Lori's eyes the move to Plano was all a part of her parents' plan. "When we moved to Plano the whole idea was to move to a better school system and a bigger house. We were a typical American suburban family living in a planned neighborhood." Lori recalled the pattern vividly. She talked about moving to a bigger house, her parents putting in an in ground pool in the backyard and "the underlying need for things."

But the sense of community and accumulation of 'things' would not be enough for Lori's family to endure the stress felt by many young 'builder' families. During the summer between the move from Richmond to Plano, Lori's grandmother passed away unexpectedly. The event brought back the instability Lori's parents had overcome in Iowa. "I think looking back on it, that was probably the beginning of the end for my parents. I am sure the death of my grandmother took a toll on my mom, my dad worked all the time and my sister and I were so far apart in age, I think all of those things started to compound." Lori's parents divorced when she was in seventh grade.

The divorce of Lori's parents sent the wheels of moving in motion one last time before Lori was able to graduate high school. "In seventh grade, when my parents divorced my dad kept the house and my sister stayed with him. I moved to a



different house with my mom but in the same school district.” When Lori was a junior in high school, her mother remarried and she made the decision to relocate with her mother to a neighboring town. The move did not last long and Lori moved back in with her father in Plano prior to the start of her senior year. Lori graduated from Plano High School in 1986.

### *School Days*

In the 1970’s moving was a way of life for many young executives in Texas. Lori and I discussed the progression that she refers to as ‘white flight’ and the impact it had on her as a learner. As she retold the history of the school she attended, the school staff she met along the way and the friendships she developed amidst a changing landscape, Lori began to realize the memories she had lost along the way.

Lori and I discussed each school she attended. In total she attended five elementary schools, one middle school and two high schools. At the age of four, Lori started Kindergarten at Fishweir Elementary School in Jacksonville, Florida . Lori described the school as a mixed, inner city neighborhood school. “My grandparents lived in what would have been considered kind of the old antebellum homes of the inner city.” She remembered the school as racially divided between white and black families.

The stories of Lori’s first grade year in Iowa and her second grade year in Dallas proper are missing from her school memories. Lori does not remember anything about first or second grade. She does not remember the teachers, the staff,

the building or the faces of any of her classmates. She laughed when she said, “I know I went to school, but I cannot remember a thing.”

As Lori recalls the move to Richardson Heights as a third grader her school story starts to take shape. “I remember Richardson as a neighborhood school with working middle class families who all had a strong emphasis on academics.”

She remembered the teachers as young, white and professional. “I remember feeling like it was an important job. They dressed up and always seemed well prepared.” Lori remembers the school sending notes home to her mom saying she was meeting all of the objectives and that she talked too much. Lori described her third and fourth grade years in Richmond Heights as ‘normal’ but openly admitted she does not remember the faces of a single kid until fifth grade.

At the beginning of fifth grade, Lori found herself at Christy Elementary School in Plano, Texas. Fifth grade brought to life friendships and activities for Lori’s entire family. “Once we moved to Plano and got settled, we were involved in a church until my parents divorced. From 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 8<sup>th</sup> grade my parents were youth counselors. I remember attending church functions and school functions and I was also still in dance multiple nights a week.” Lori fondly remembered her family socializing with neighbors and developing family friends.

Fifth grade also marked Lori’s first memories of friendships of her own. “I think by that age you are kind of starting to fall into whatever groups that you fall into and I don’t know if it’s based on just people who look like you or who have similar backgrounds or lived close by but, at that point, I started to have girlfriends.”

Some of Lori's 5<sup>th</sup> grade friendships have lasted through the years and are a part of her life today.

Lori does not remember life as the new kid. "I don't remember walking into the class and them saying, this is Lori and she is new." She does not remember enrolling in school or touring the school. When I asked Lori about school personnel like the principal, the nurse or the secretary she simply said, "I got nothing." Lori acknowledged that moving away from her grandparents must have been a traumatic event for her but she does not remember the move at all.

As Lori and I discussed her transition into middle school, the memories became clearer. She proudly remembered individual students, teachers and daily school life. "I remember our school play in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I started being involved in drama. Our school play was cancelled because it was controversial, something about witchcraft." Lori had memories of the social aspect of school and the freedom that came with changing classes during middle school and high school.

Lori and I discussed what the academic side of school was like. She talked about how her grades were good. "I got good grades but I don't remember having a liking or an aptitude toward one thing or another. I don't remember anyone calling me out or saying you really should focus on this or wow you are really good at this one thing." She talked about her perception that everyone knew she was bright and so they just left her alone. "I got A's and B's. We came from what would be considered a college preparatory household, that was just expected." Lori, remembered being in advanced classes in middle school and then choosing not to be

in high school. “I think the school’s view was probably here is someone who is socially acceptable. I mean, I had a big peer group, I had friends, I did well in school.”

Lori’s recollection of the ties between academics and social expectations of her school played a large role in her high school experience. The culture of Plano, Texas was built on the expectation of success and Lori had no trouble remembering some of the strong academic and social messages. Plano, Texas by Lori’s description “was a tough crowd to run in, both for kids and for parents, lots of keeping up. I remember there being lots of social pressures. All the kids got cars when they turned 16. I remember it being a lot about stuff and where you went and who you were with.” Lori said she felt the social pressures often influenced her lack of emphasis on her own academic advancement.

However, Lori reiterated that going to college was not a choice in Plano. “Everyone in Plano was expected to be successful and go to college. Plano was a district sought after nationwide for its academics, which my parents would say was the reason they moved there. They wanted us to have the best school district. The message was all of the opportunities are here for you and you need to take advantage of them.” Balancing the social and academic expectations of her community continued for Lori even as her parents divorced and her mother remarried.

As middle school progressed and Lori transitioned into Plano High School the development of friendships became an important part of her story. “My friendships ended up being all white, upper class girls who lived in my neighborhood. They liked fashion and hair. I don’t know if that was what drew people together or if that’s just

what you focused on at the time.” Lori admits that her friendships during this period of her life were superficial and she was considered the token smart one of the group. “My friends were all underachievers. As I look back on it, I realize that my best friend wasn’t that bright. We didn’t talk about it much, but I was probably the smartest of the group of people. I think they know that and I know that we just did not talk about it. We shared one goal and that was to be popular.”

Lori recalls the power of Texas football. She told how Plano was all about Friday night high school football. “I definitely remember the football thing. We won the state championship many, many, many years. The whole town came out for Friday night football. Everything closed down, it was a big deal.” Lori told how football played into high school culture. “We had our own little culture of like every Friday night being at the games and making deals with players, who’s going to score for who. There was a rally around that. I had gotten out of drama by then but I still looked at those drama kids and like that was their own culture. I don’t know but I think you kind of have your spot and ours was definitely supporting the hype of the football team.” Lori relished in the nationally renowned school district she calls home, but recognized that Plano had another side.

Lori recalled the national media reporting on ‘... the dark side of the white flight’ that she and her family had been a part of. “The white flight had led to these upper class suburban neighborhoods and then to a string of kids left on their own. This idea that there was a lot of pressure I guess, or loneliness maybe, because our parents were out making money.” Lori remembered the string of high school suicides that plagued Plano during her teenage years. “One of the girls on my drill

team, we had gone to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade together and danced together and then she committed suicide at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade.” Lori remembered the adults around her talking about whether it was worth it. “I remember hearing them say we did all these things. We as parents made all this money, we moved our kids to this great school district and all of that and yet for whatever reason there’s this sense of hopelessness.”

In the midst of high school glory and sorrow, Lori decided to change schools half way through her junior year. She said that there had never been a question that she would stay with her mom. However, this move became the only one that Lori attaches emotion to, “Well it was a big deal. I do remember that. I think at the time the thought was that my parents (mom and stepdad) were moving and maybe this was my chance... I had been to school with these people ever since fifth grade and maybe it was time to try something *new*.” Lori also had one family friend that had already moved to McKinney. He had been a football player in Plano and Lori said she felt comforted that she had a ‘connection’ at McKinney High School.

But when Lori arrived in McKinney, Texas the ‘new’ was not what she expected. “Plano was very upwardly mobile, college preparatory, written up school district all over the country to be modeled after. McKinney was smaller and predominately rural. It was just starting to become suburban so that was the first time I had ever heard of trades or vo-tec.” By the middle of Lori’s senior year she had made the decision to move back to Plano. She returned to the house she had lived in since fifth grade where her father and sister still lived. Lori graduated from Plano High School after attending eight schools spread across three states.

## Lifelong Impact

Today Lori has a family, a career and a deep sense of what it is like to be centered. She enjoys the busyness of her life created by parenting four small children with her husband, meeting the demands of a career and enjoying both friends and family. "I am trying to juggle husband, kids, friends, work and social life." In addition, both of Lori's parents remarried and her family circle has grown to include her parents, stepparents, sister, three stepsiblings and her husband's parents. Lori is still a social butterfly. She enjoys her friends that she calls, "lifers." We talked about the snowballing of friends that occurred throughout Lori's adult life. "Each place that I've lived as an adult over time I've gotten my circle. As I get older it takes me less and less time to get that because I know I need it. I always have a circle and then the circle stays with me kind of forever no matter where I go."

Lori describes herself as a successful person. Lori talked about the tremendous growth across all areas of her life during her college years. "College was huge for me in many ways. It was the first time I started to realize that I was smart." She told of college being a time where she learned to accomplish things independently. "I was on my own, it was a pivotal point in my life, from developing a sense of security, self-worth and self confidence." Lori also recalled that college was the professional gateway into the skills necessary for her career. In college, "I learned I had the ability to take care of myself financially, emotionally and in everyway."

In contrast to the intellectual freedom and determination Lori learned in college, she also learned to rely on others. “It was the first time that I developed true trust and mutual respect through friendship. That was key for me and has been for the rest of my life.” Lori talked about how the depth of her college relationships some of which have carried her during difficult times. Friendships have become something that Lori has learned to hold close to her.

As Lori looked back on moving as a child and young adult, she recounted the effect it has on her life today. She told how she is a person that adapts easily to change. “Because we moved a lot, my ability to adapt today mirrors my ability to adapt as a child.” But moving a lot as a child also had less positive effects on her. Lori is still surprised that she remembers so little from her early elementary years. “It was like nothing in our lives started until we got to Texas. I can’t remember holidays, school, friends or anything about my life.”

This lesson is one that Lori has worked to address with her own children. “I’m more conscious about trying to bloom where you are planted. Not always waiting. I don’t remember things because we didn’t talk about them or celebrate them. So, I feel conscientious about making memories for my own kids.” Lori talked about her determination to give her children family vacations and documenting them through pictures. “I feel very strongly that once a year, it doesn’t have to be big, but one a year we leave and do something together as a family. We take pictures and we make memories of that. We talk about our time together throughout the rest of the year.” Lori says that she recognizes the need for capturing memories for her children that are missing from her own story.



Lori also talked about her realization of who influenced her as a child and the influence she wants to have on her own children. Lori recalls always feeling close to her parents, but at times the closeness was more a result of physical proximity than an emotional bond. "I definitely felt close to my mom. I think that it was physical closeness; I know she taught me to be independent and stressed my capabilities. But, she was going through her own growing up. She was only in her early 30's at that point so she was kind of growing up at the same time." Lori's respect for her father's determination and commitment to hard work is something she holds dear. "My dad worked all the time. But, he did it for us and over time we have grown to be very close." Beyond the influence of her parents, Lori had a hard time coming up with other adults who invested in her.

Lori remembers very little about the influence of school staff on her or her family. "The only person from my school I really remember was a football coach. He ended up getting fired for fraternizing with young women. I remember following the whole thing thinking how creepy it was." Lori went on to say that she did not think that her schools were at all connected to her parents. "I don't really remember but I didn't ever perceive that anyone at school invested in my parents and said, Wow you're a young family who has moved a lot. What can we do to show you that we're here for you and that we love your kids?" Lori said that she was sure that she was just enrolled and checked in and if there was a problem her parents were called. "I bet my mom could not name a single teacher, principal, counselor or anything at any school I ever went to." This is a lesson from moving that Lori has worked to address with her own children.

Lori knows the people that her children interact with at school, church and in friendship circles by name. “As a parent today, I could tell you who all of those people are at my kids’ school. I know the nurse by name. I’ve met her and I’ve talked to her about my kids. I know the principal, I’ve talked to her.” Lori talked about her commitment to keeping the primary influences in her own children’s lives under her watch. “When I was growing up, I spent a lot of time with my friends’ parents. I don’t know if it was a positive influence. Looking back, my parents worked all the time and my friends’ parents were a mess.” Lori shared that being an active presence in all parts of her children’s lives is an important lesson she learned from her own childhood.

The impact of Lori’s family’s climb to success as a part of the ‘white flight’ out of Dallas, Texas could be heard as she explained her perceptions of Plano, Texas. Lori shared openly that she would not raise her family in Plano, Texas. “What I value now is diversity and acceptance. When I think of Plano, I think of an all-white, upper middle class society. I don’t want that for my kids.” Lori admits that the feelings of not wanting to return to Plano to raise her own family are rooted in fear. “I don’t want my kids to feel that sense of social pressure and upward mindset that all that matters is more money and more things.”

Lori’s family’s path to success has many lessons for schools and educators. When we talked about the role of schools in the life of mobile students her first response was, ‘help them find their spot’. She believes strongly that every child needs to feel apart of the something and that kids should be given the freedom and

support to find a spot that feels comfortable to the child. She explained that each child needs to feel truly accepted and valued by school personnel.

Lori also explained the need for strong student and family relationships. “I think it is about finding personal connections. Find that teacher or that, anybody. Any adult who works in schools I think can find a group of kids, a small group of kids that they connect with and get to know as people.” Lori and I talked a lot about the need for the relationships formed at school to be extended to all families. “In my case I was viewed as coming from a good family and pretty smart, consequently my parents and I were ignored.”

As Lori thought about the role of the school in the academic development of each individual child she identified a challenge from her own experience.

“Sometimes there can be too much pressure on kids academically and other times not enough. I think that kids should feel a sense of responsibility and importance placed on their academics. Sometimes they get too much of that from home and sometimes not enough.” Lori talked about the key for schools is relationships. “You have to get to know kids to know what’s the right blend of encouragement verses acceptance.”

The role of the school in Lori’s eyes is to fill the gaps for kids. “When there is too much pressure at home, how do you help relieve some of that fear and make school something that’s fun and not a chore. Find the areas of learning that they enjoy.” Lori shared that in her eyes the kids do not have enough expectations from home set are the students who get the attention from school personnel. Lori believes that the power of schools is to build relationships and find the potential in

each individual student. “If a child is known by an adult as a kid, then you can express what things are hard for you or what things are easy, what things you like and what things you dislike, then you can get counsel and move forward.” Lori determination to know her own children as people is what she describes as the most important lesson for herself as a parent and for the school personnel that strive to serve them.

## Literature Review

### *Gaining a voice*

Lori’s began her elementary school years under the backdrop of the passage of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, which protects student from discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs that receive federal financial assistance, and the Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA), enacted in 1974. The momentum to prepare young women to be self sufficient and independent could be felt across the county. Sporting events such as the 1973 tennis tournament watched by nearly 48,000,00 people where Billie Jean King scored an enormous victory for female athletes when she beat Bobby Riggs made headlines across America. Women coming into the circle of influence was also marked by 1981 appointment of Sandra Day O'Connor as the first woman to serve on the US Supreme Court. Despite the momentum of the women rights movement, “several researchers in the 1980’s and 1990’s suggest that female students in coeducational classrooms received less opportunity to participate and less feedback from teachers than their male counterparts”(Madigan, 2009).

*The rise of a "Boomburb"*

Lori experience in the early 1970's moving from the Dallas proper to the northeastern suburb of Richmond Height and then moving further northeast to Plano Texas was a track followed by many. Plano, Texas has been characterized by many as a city born virtually overnight. The population of Plano Texas in 1960 was 3,695 and by 1980 the population of Plano, Texas had grown to 72,331 (Lang & Lefurgy, 2007). The seemingly utopia was described by Robert Lang and Jennifer Lefurgy (2007) as a 'Boomburb'. Plano as described by Lang and Lefurgy was a rapidly growing community with more that 100,000 residents and was not the largest city in the in the region at the time of its development. 'Boomburbs' like Plano are described by Lang and Lefurgy (2007) to be accidental cities who tend to double, triple or even quadruple in size between census reports.

While the exclusionary suburban development patterns brought great economic gain to a multitude of companies that established their headquarters in Plano, Texas the momentum came with a community price for Dallas proper. The poverty areas of Dallas experienced their greatest expansion between 1980 and 1990, as Plano was for years the fastest growing city in the nation (Jargowsky, 2003). The flight of middle-income and higher-income families to the suburbs has driven a wedge between social needs and the fiscal base required to address them (Jargowsky, 2003).

*The price of success*

In 1982, "the dynamic financial growth and the arrival of new families here in search of better lives has come a disturbing social statistic" (New York Times,

September 4, 1983). In addition The New York Times reported, the suicide rate among young people in the Plano area was the second highest in the nation during 1982. After a cluster of nine suicides in 1983, Dr. Graham Emslie, director of child psychiatry at the children's medical center was quoted by the New York Times as saying "upwardly mobile parents have less time to find out about the problems of their children". Furthermore in 1986, Scott McCartney wrote a piece for the Houston Chronicle explaining some of the problems that parents of Plano students may have been missed in their climb to success. "The academic pressure and the social pressure on kids is much, much greater today, especially in communities like Plano where you have essentially the cream of the crop," said Carole Steele, a mental health counselor. Plano was ripe for this. Larry D. Guinn, director of student services for the Plano schools. This literally is a nationwide problem that kind of snuck up on people. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 6,000 teen-agers or young adults killed themselves in 1984 - one every 90 minutes - making it the third leading cause of death in that age group. From February to August 1983, six Plano youths killed themselves, including three in one week (McCartney, 1986).

*When the population boom is over*

In June of 2010 the Texas Cable news reported that history has begun to repeat itself, but now with African American students. "The number of black children attending Dallas ISD schools has reached its lowest point since 1965" (Hacker & Hobbs, 2010, Dallas Morning News). The report further compares the current movement of black students to the massive white flight from the district in the 1970's. The movement is of smaller scale but over the past 10 years nearly

20,000 black children have move out of the Dallas ISD schools (Hacker & Hobbs, 2010). Spokeswomen for the Black Coalition to Maximize Education, a civil rights group and plaintiff in DISD's federal desegregation case which lasted from 1970 to 2003, stated in the interview with Hacker & Hobbs, "Nothing is gear toward us; it's all geared toward the Hispanics".

Today, Plano is home to many corporations, including several Fortune 1000 companies as JC Penney and EDS. However, the newness felt by fleeing "white flighter" in the 1970's is starting to fade. "Plano is a boomtown from the 1980's and 90's at risk of usurpation by exurbs where growth is just starting to take off" (Lang & Blakley, 2006, p. 17). The growth of Plano, like other boomtowns has begun to slow and its vision for the future is unclear. "Plano's identity is muddled, the city is exploring new ways to create a stable and unique sense of place"(Lang & Blakley, 2006, p. 17). The goal from Plano is to protect itself from the exurbs ultimately deflating Plano's real estate value and thus reducing developers' incentive to build. The mayor of Plano stated, "In essence, we need people and business to choose to stay in Plano" (Lang & Blakley, 2006, p. 16).

## Chapter 7

Lisa

Kindergarten class of 1986

### *The Setting*

Lisa and I met through her daughter several years ago. Her daughter attended the elementary school where I work and Lisa was a familiar face that I enjoyed seeing regularly. In addition, Lisa works at the Dollar Tree in the town where we both live. She frequently waited on me and we would often visit as I moved through the line. When I called Lisa to tell her about my research and ask her if she might be interested in participating she first gave me the principal treatment. Like most parents when I called and Lisa answered the phone her voice changed the moment she realized it was her daughter's principal. She became tense and a little uneasy. I soon explained the reason for my call and reassured her that everything was fine at school she relaxed and eagerly agreed to participate.

When I offered to share the interview questions with Lisa prior to our first meeting she replied, " I don't need the questions, you can ask me anything I have nothing to hide." For each of the four interview sessions we met in my office at school. It was important to Lisa that the interviews take place while her daughter was in summer school, as to not to interrupt her time with her daughter. We sat at a long oak table in my office across from each other for each of the interview sessions and always began our session with an update on her daughter's happenings. Lisa's willingness to welcome me into her life and look beyond my role as a principal made for a mutually comfortable interview experience.



In total we met four times during a two-week window of summer school before the interview tapes were transcribed and reviewed. Each time we met the story of Lisa's life became deeper and more complex. She moved through her childhood experiences, troubling school memories and struggles as a teenager and young adult with ease. Lisa seemed to approach the interview process with the same resiliency that she met each of trials of her life. She would say, "I'll tell you how it is, I'm not going to sugar coat it for you. If you ask me a question and you want an answer, I'm going to give you a blunt answer." Consequently, Lisa's story has a feeling of pure honesty and grit. From our time together, I gained a new respect for what it means to find success and the personal determination necessary to gain acceptance in a world where success is often measured by wealth.

### *A Family's Journey*

Lisa was born 1980 when Michael Jackson's album *Thriller* rose to the top of the charts and millions of viewers tuned into the TV soap opera *Dallas* to learn who shot J.R. Ewings. Lisa's mom was 19 years old when she was born. Her father was thirty-nine years old and was the birth father for nine children. Lisa describes herself as an only child. When Lisa was seven years old her mother at the age of 26 married Lisa's stepfather.

Prior to her parents marriage Lisa remembers her mother's influence. "It was just me and my mom. She is the most respected women in my life. I've never seen anybody so strong, for being 5'2 and 100 lbs." Lisa and her mom lived on their own in a small house near the Park Elementary School where Lisa attended kindergarten

and a semester of first grade. But, when Lisa's parents started dating Lisa and her mom moved a few blocks away to another house. The house was in different attendance area and Lisa was forced to change schools halfway through her first grade year. The move to Foster Elementary brought some friends and a teacher Lisa really enjoyed. "I loved my first grade teacher she was awesome, but all of the second grade teacher were mean and I was worried about going to second grade."

During second grade Lisa's parents were married and after nine weeks of second grade the young family relocated to a different part of town known as the northend. "I was devastated. I had to leave the friends I had made at Foster. I begged, I cried and cried. I wanted to live with my grandma because she lived right around the corner from Foster. I didn't want to move but the decision was made and I could not do anything about it." Consequently, Lisa was enrolled in the second grade at Dawson Elementary School where she would attend school until the mid point of her sixth grade year.

Shortly after the move to Dawson, Lisa's family expanded and welcomed Lisa's little brother. Lisa remembers the impact the expansion of her family had on her, "My parents got married and things changed. It was different when my brother came along. I wasn't an only child anymore. I never was spoiled but it was different having somebody come before me." Lisa's family had begun to take shape.

As Lisa talked about the formation of her family she described her parents as 'awesome parents'. She had no problem remembering the importance of her daily routines established by her mother. "My mom would wake me up and give me a bath before school. She fixed my hair and my clothes we always laid out. She would ask

me what I wanted for breakfast and make sure I had everything I needed for the day.” Lisa took great pride in the fact that her mother or grandmother walked her to school everyday. “At every school I attended my mom always took me to school and picked me up. I never rode the bus, never a bus rider.” The physical presence of Lisa’s mother had strong influence over her during her elementary school years.

Lisa remembers her mom being an active part of Dawson Elementary. “My mom did the school carnival and helped with the school fundraisers.” Lisa and her mother spent a lot of time at the school for activities such as Brownies, basketball practice and school events. Lisa smiled as she talked about her and her mother moving about the gymnasium, the hallways and the school library during parent teacher conferences.

Lisa’s dad also played an important role in her years at Dawson Elementary School. She told of her dad’s relentless commitment to work and his sense of adventure. “My dad worked the second shift, everyday. That man never missed a day of work, I can remember that.” But Lisa also remembers time of great adventure orchestrated by her father. “My dad was a big fisherman, so if it was warm outside we were at Bob’s fishing lake and that’s where we were until we caught our limit or fish stopped biting.” Many of Lisa’s families fishing outings were accompanied by camping and annual road trips. “We went everywhere from Colorado to Illinois to Texas, just driving, going on vacation. Most of the time we took the long way around to our final spot, because that was just dad.” The years of 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade were times that Lisa remembers the importance of family.

From the time Lisa was a small child she remembers the impact of her grandmother. "My grandma Donna is very strong. She's been bartender for 42 years and she has a lot of patience. One of my earliest memories of my grandmother was behind the bar dealing with a drunk guy and just watching her face because she was so calm and he was so irate." Lisa, explained that even at an early age she would look at her and wonder where all of her patience came from.

The young family had it all by Lisa's description during her Dawson years. She remembered her life as a tomboy chasing after her two older uncles. "We were grease monkeys. We loved stock car races, fishing and wrestling matches." In addition Lisa had two male cousins that she shared many childhood memories together. "We were stair steps. We all grew up together. My mom and her sister were really close then." When the holidays came Lisa's family loved celebrated together. "When I was little we always did Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter and the Fourth of July, it was always a family event until I was twelve years old."

During Lisa's third, fourth and fifth grade years she was an active 'tom girl'. She played baseball and some basketball on the school team. But her involvement in team sports came with some important lessons for Lisa. "I learned at an early age that the coach was always somebody's dad so that person got more time than other people. I learned fast that it didn't matter what school I went to or who the coach was or who the other team players were, that's how it was." Even though the team sports Lisa participated in came with challenges, she remembers her elementary as a time of playfulness. "We would play in the neighborhood until it was time to eat and then try to get our parents to back out after dinner." Lisa remembered with

detail the times she would walk the avenue with her friend Michelle. They would ride their bikes and stay on the school playground until dark. "Michelle was the one person who was a constant from the time I moved to Dawson until I had to leave."

At the height of Lisa's elementary glory an event occurred when she was 11 years old that seeming changed everything. During one of Lisa's big celebrations her extended family ties were broken. "My aunt and uncle got into it because my cousin poked my brother in the eye with a stick and it became a family feud for the next five years." The family holidays, times of laughter and adventure Lisa had enjoyed with her uncles, cousins, and aunt came to an end. After the incident her grandmother split her time between adult children. "Starting at age 12 it was just mom, dad, brother and grandma. My Grandma would make her way around, starting Christmas or Christmas Eve. She would do two families on Christmas day... that's how we do it to this day."

The change in family life was accompanied by changes at school as well. Lisa's parents made the decision halfway through her sixth grade year to move to the "country" where Lisa's family would live until the flood of 1993. She and her family moved only a few miles from the northend Lisa had come to know. However, Lisa describes the experience as entering another world. "I can remember my mom saying Girls are mean Lisa, girls are mean, they're going to be mean no matter where you go to school." Lisa believes that because she did not fit in with the popular girls her 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Harper hated her. "There was Stacy, Holly, and Kim. They were the most horrendous girls. You know you watch mean girls. Until this day, you still see them. You know which ones they are walking up and own the hallways." She

talked about the Lisa believes her ability to deal with the mean (and popular) girls was a turning point in her life.

Lisa soon learned that the move to more affluent school brought the feelings of competition off of the kickball field and into the classroom. "At Harper there was always a competition. Who had the fanciest pens, who had the pink notebook paper. I was a competition. I didn't belong there because I was poor. I didn't have money, my parents didn't have money. I knew better than to ask for those things because we couldn't afford it." Lisa explained that her feeling of inadequacy started on the first day of school and never went away.

The change in schools during Lisa's sixth grade her had a lasting impact on her. She stopped caring. "It just all faded. I quit caring and I don't know why...." She talked about how she started to wear black and spent her time alone. "Up until sixth grade, I always felt the need to be accepted and then I quit caring, I think is what happened. I didn't care whether I was accepted anymore, I was my own person. I didn't have a lot of friends because to this day I'm one of those people that will tell you like it is." Academically, the picture during Lisa's time at Ellison was different story. "I went from C's to A's, I did it because I didn't... well I was always studying." Lisa explained that the change in grades was rooted in fear. "Mostly, I didn't want to flunk and spend another year at Harper, I had to get the heck out of there."

As elementary school came to a close, Lisa's communication with her mother changed as well. "There is a lot of stuff I cannot talk to my mom about. With my mom it's more of finessing the situation and it's just a lot easier survive with a lie of omission." Lisa describes her mom as someone who was big on wanting to shelter

me. Lisa transitioned to middle school she told how if her mom did not like one of her friends then Lisa would lie and tell her mom the friendship had ended. Lisa's friends became the primary source of information in her life.

"My mom and I never had that talk you know the talk. Mom and I never had that talk and I think that impacted a lot of the things that I listen to. When my period came it was a big production for my mom but she never said a word about sex."

At the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Lisa rejoined the familiar faces of the Dawson kids at Robidoux Middle School. But, things were not the same. "I had my mom played to where if I didn't want to go to school, I didn't have to and that just gave me an excuse to stay home with my mom or stay home with my dad. I was spending time with people I knew actually cared about me." Lisa had figured out that her mom was busy taking care of her brother and she admittedly took advantage of her parents.

The intersection between Lisa's friends and her parents further complicated her years as a middle school student. "My mom seriously picked my friends. I couldn't go to a friend's house unless my mom knew their parents. She demanded to know where I was at all times." Lisa told how her mother's desire to make sure she did not fall into the wrong crowd made it difficult to make friends. "In seventh grade, I didn't have any friends for the first six months. Then I met Rachel." Rachel was Lisa's friend from the middle of seventh grade until the middle of her freshman year.

Rachel and Lisa's friendship successfully flew under her mother's radar and consequently the girls had "freedom". "My mom would drop me off on Friday night and I'd be there until Sunday night. She didn't realize that her mom was a totally

absent parent. Her mom had went through a divorce and she was never home.” Lisa talked about the girls stealing Rachel mom’s car and cruising the Avenue when they were 13 and 14 years old. “I mean you don’t leave the keys on the kitchen table and a car in the driveway full of gas and expect two teenage girls to behave for the weekend. We had the run of the city.” Lisa explained that she thought because the girls smoked, went joy riding and did what ever they wanted they were “cool girls”.

Lisa’s middle school friendship came with a price. She describes her role in the friendship with Rachel as feeling like a doormat. “I was a doormat. For a long time I had friends that stepped all over me. Looking back now, I’m like oh wow, I always drove the car. It was her mom’s car but she always made me drive. If we would have gotten caught I would have been in more trouble than she would have.” ‘Freedom’ took another form during Lisa and Rachel’s friendship. “I lost my virginity to that girl’s brother. I was 13 and he was 16. I thought it was cool because she was sleeping with his friends so I guess it was just, everybody else was doing it.”

As Lisa’s friendships changed so did her academic success. “I survived the first six months and did really good with no problems and then my grades started to fall.” However, Lisa talked about how she never got comfortable in middle school, “When you can’t socially adjust it is difficult to adjust to actual learning.” Lisa went on to say, that math was just too hard for her. “It just got hard all of a sudden.” Lisa shared that she remembers middle school as an even larger struggle than he days at Harper elementary school. “Middle school was worse.”

Despite the struggles Lisa experienced during middle school years with her parents, friends and academics she maintained her relationship with her



grandmother. "She was always the person that if I couldn't talk to my mom, I knew I could call my grandmother." Lisa's grandmother had a way of helping her reflect on her decisions without pushing her away. "She might say Lisa, I am so disappointed and that would hurt worse than her being mad at me." As Lisa moved from middle school to high school her road to success became increasingly complicated.

"I didn't get really bad until I got to high school." Lisa spent a lot of time in high school trying to figure out how to get out of high school. She talked about the pattern of escape that took over her school days. "If I didn't want to be there, I just got up and left. I would go to the office and call my mom." She also used her behavior to get out of school. "I'd try to do something to get suspended because three days out of school was better than two weeks in." As Lisa progressed through her freshman year her mother took a stand. She stopped coming to pick Lisa up from school and told her she had to stay in school.

Lisa stated that high school was not really about the learning in the classroom, it was in her mind exclusively about trying to find her crowd. "I've never fit in. Regardless of how many people I hung out with or how many friends I had or how many people talked to me, I never felt like I really fit in." Lisa's pursuit to find the place where she fit into high school sent down the road of what she described as trying to keep up with the crowd. "It was all about keeping up with the crowd. Oh, we are going to go skip lunch. We're going to Johnny's house to eat lunch to smoke a joint. Okay, lets go. I was a follower. I don't have anybody to skip school with get Lisa, she'll skip school with you."

Amidst all of the chaos Lisa was experiencing at the age of fifteen the freshman's mother made a critical decision. Lisa's mothers decided to stop coming to the school each time Lisa called. The decision opened a new door for Lisa. Lisa explained that it was her high school in school suspension teacher who finally laid it on the line. "She told me straight up, Lisa you're going to just have to grow up and realize the world does not revolve around you." Lisa describes the conversation as a turning point in her life. Lisa explained, "That was kind of, it was eye opening once I realized what is the matter with me. I'm fifteen years old and where am I going with my life. I'm trying to get kicked out of school. What is the matter with me?" Lisa began to realize that she needed a fresh start.

The conversation with Lisa's ISS teacher set the wheels in motion for Lisa to leave her high school at the age of sixteen and enroll in the Learning Academy. Lisa said, "I loved the Learning Academy." It was at the Learning Academy where Lisa met the father of her daughter and the person she describes as the love of her lifetime, Keith. "It ways always me and Keith in high school." On the last day Lisa and Keith's junior year, Keith got expelled from school. When Lisa returned to the Learning Academy to complete her senior year she discovered she needed ten credits to graduate. Lisa described her last day at the Learning Academy. " When I came back to do my senior year, and I had four credits mysteriously appear that I didn't need before. So I quit. I quit and to this day, I'm still working to on my GED."

## School Days

Throughout Lisa's elementary school career she attended four elementary schools all within the same school district. The schools were located within ten miles of each other. She told how she attended Kindergarten and part of 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Park Elementary. Then she attended for nine weeks of 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Foster. At the end of the first quarter of her second grade year her family moved to the north end and she enrolled at Dawson Elementary. She attended Dawson for part of second grade through half of 6<sup>th</sup> grade. When her family decided to move to the country she moved at Christmas of her 6<sup>th</sup> grade year to Harper Elementary School. Lisa remembers each school she attended including the moments of acceptance and rejection she carries with her today.

Lisa talked about how much she enjoyed her kindergarten and first grade teachers. "I loved my kindergarten teacher and my 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher was awesome." Lisa had a hard time remembering first grade. "Honestly, I really don't remember the whole year. I remember getting in trouble because I didn't finish a paper. That's about the only thing I remember in 1<sup>st</sup> grade." As Lisa looked toward second grade her perception of the teachers began to change. She explained that, "all the potential 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers that I faced were mean so I was actually happy to move. I actually wanted to leave Park."

Lisa described the transition to Foster Elementary at the start of second grade as smooth and 'no big deal'. During her time at Foster and she made some friends from her neighborhood, but before she really had time for the friendships to take flight the decision was made to move to the north end. Lisa explained the

emotion she felt when she found out she had to leave her friends after nine weeks of second grade. "I was devastated."

The move to Dawson brought back vivid memories for Lisa. From her very first at Dawson Elementary Lisa felt like she belonged. "Ms. Gerhardt was the principal. When I first came to Dawson, was awesome. She knew everybody's name. That woman knew everybody's name and within 2 weeks of me being there she would say, 'Hi, Lisa'." Lisa's second grade teacher at Dawson also made an impact on her.

"Ms. Madon. She was the loudest teacher I think I ever had. The most intimidating woman I've ever met in my life as far as teachers are concerned. I made a couple of friends, but I stood out because I didn't start the year there so I was the odd man out." Lisa talked about how she made good grades and really enjoyed school. "I loved playing sports and actually . . . I wasn't the kid in kickball that stood over by the fence. I wanted to play kickball. I was ready, I was ready for recess, I was ready for gym class. I was ready to do the softball throw and track and field." Lisa remembers the transition to third grade and the feeling of satisfaction she felt at back to school.

Lisa explained that life was good in third grade. "I wasn't the new kid in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. By 3<sup>rd</sup> grade I had made those friends throughout 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and those were the kids that I stayed with, running around with, until I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and left."

However, even during the years that Lisa remembers as the good ol' days of school friendships did not come easy for Lisa. "There was always that one group of girls. The kids being so mean to each other. I mean it didn't matter what school I

was in, there was always that one girl that picked on everybody or always that one boy that was the bully, and it was always with the new kid.” Despite the fact that Lisa describes herself during this time as outgoing and a good student she also remember the toll that being new placed on her. “It was never easy to be the new kid.”

In fifth grade while Lisa we attending Dawson Elementary School she had formed a relationship that has impacted her entire life. “Mr. Ackley made my 5<sup>th</sup> grade year the best ever. Mr. Ackley was gay and we all knew it and everybody made fun of him except for me because he talked to me like I was a real person and not like I was a kid. When I was having problems with my actual schoolwork, he would tutor me by himself and then once I did good, I got rewards. I got to come down and I got to make copies for the secretary or I got to run errands for the principal. Even when I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, when I was having problems with my teacher and he helped me. I was a tutor for his 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and I was a mentor to the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders and that was all his doing. All in a matter of two years and then it was like after halfway through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I just stopped.”

During Lisa’s sixth grade year shortly after the family holiday that split her extended family a part Lisa’s parents decided to move to the country. The transition to Harper Elementary was difficult for Lisa. It was event that she found difficult to talk about. “I didn’t go to school for the first three days that I was registered at Harper. I played sick. I made myself sick because I didn’t want to go. The first day at Harper, there was one girl, and she lived in the biggest house, in the “bestest” neighborhood, and nobody was better than her. She told me my daddy owns this

and I was just like, wow.” Lisa told how she went home after her first day at Harper and told her mom, “I hate it and I’m never going back”. The next day Lisa’s mom walked her into school and Lisa said that it made it ten times worse. “Why did your mommy bring you in for? Why did your mom help you come in? You know, kids are evil. They just are.”

Lisa also had vivid memories of her teacher at Harper. “My teacher didn’t like me because I didn’t belong there, that is what she told me. I didn’t belong there.” Lisa explained that during her first week at her new school she had gotten into trouble over a note. “I got in trouble the first week there. I met a group of girls I thought were my friends and we hung out on the playground together. We sat at the same table and ate lunch. Sixth grade girls start writing notes and the whole cuss word thing, you’d write the “s” and the little \* and continue it. The note got found. While my handwriting was on the note and the other girl’s handwriting was on the note too, guess who got in trouble for the entire note?” A discipline incident over two girls passing a note lead to an event that Lisa says will stay with her for the rest of her life.

Lisa’s teacher used the time of redirection for the note to confront her in class about her science project. “I didn’t do the science project. I didn’t do the science fair and I remember her saying what’s the matter with you Lisa? You just, you’re not keeping up and I don’t understand why you don’t want to be here. You just don’t belong here.” Lisa got up and left the classroom. The conversation continued in the hall where the teacher’s words are now imprinted on Lisa for life. “She told me that I didn’t belong there. That I didn’t fit in. I wasn’t keeping up with

the flow of the classroom and told me I didn't belong at Harper." Lisa described her reaction as a sixth grader, "Oh, okay, I don't belong here. So, I'm not good enough . . . at Harper."

When middle school started Lisa remembers feeling ready. "I was determined. I was finally out of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I made it to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I thought I was big stuff". But soon the academic expectations became too much for Lisa. "When we started algebra and I was like, wow. Numbers and math, and letters and math and letters and numbers don't go together." She remembers the switch from 6<sup>th</sup> grade math to 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, "the adjustment was hard". Lisa's parents wanted her to be successful but lacked the academic understanding to help her. "My mom just wanted me to be the best I could be. She always told me I always had the potential to be anything I ever wanted to. I just didn't try hard enough. But my mom, my mom was a worker. She was never book smart. Mom was worldly smart. If I needed help with homework, I had to find a friend who knew how to do the math or . . . my step-dad when he was home but like I said, he worked 2<sup>nd</sup> shift most of the time I lived at home." Lisa said, "I got through 7<sup>th</sup> grade for the first six months and did really good with no problems and then that's when the grades started to fall."

Lisa missed the personal attention of elementary school and found the work in middle school to be overwhelming. "In elementary school, it's more individualized attention. You don't see a different teacher each hour. The change in classrooms is different. I guess you don't feel like you're getting as much attention from the teacher as you need. Especially since they see 300 kids a day instead of 24". Lisa described her teacher in middle school as disconnected. "I don't think they

mean to make it to where they don't seem interested, but they don't seem interested. I think a lot of teachers get burned out after so long."

Despite her struggle to understand Math Lisa found some interest in middle school. "I was more into the electives. I liked my woods class and I liked the home economics class." In addition Lisa fell in love with literature. "I loved English. English and literature, those are my favorite." She said that despite her love of reading and working with her hands she could not keep up. "The teachers were just harder." Lisa left middle school academically defeated. Her extended family ties had been broken and her friendship with Rachel left Lisa feeling unvalued. Lisa was lost.

For Lisa going to school became a struggle. "By the time I got to high school, I didn't care. I was done. I didn't want to be there anymore. I was going through the motions until it was over. I was there because if I didn't go to school, then my mom was going to go to jail." Lisa remembers getting up and being physically ill every morning because she had to go to school. "Going to school was a rough thing. When I was there, I was doing everything I could to get out of class. I think my freshman year, I missed like a total of 76 days of school. I didn't want to be there."

Lisa found the social demands of her freshman year of high school to be too much for her to handle. "It wasn't the teachers, it was the people. I think the politics of high school are completely different from that of elementary school and middle school. Once you get to high school, you've got the prom queen and you've got the jock and the clicks. The struggle to be accepted, you know, it just made academics that much harder." Lisa says that overtime she got burned out.



While Lisa recognizes the struggle she faced with her peers she remembers the impact of her teachers. “When I was a freshman in high school, I had a science teacher who would give me the hall pass at the beginning of class and knew he wouldn’t see me until the end of class. But he gave it to me every day just because he didn’t care. When you see a teacher do that, why be there. They don’t care if I’m here. I’m just another number to them.” Lisa never really connected with her teachers or traditional high school life. “I was not a joiner. I did choir freshman year but I didn’t fit in there either. Not many girls are altos in the choir.” Lisa explained that at 14 she wanted to be working. “I begged my mom to get me a work permit. I wanted to go to work when I was 14.”

Lisa struggle with the academic and social demands of high school came to a climax just before Christmas of her freshman year. “I was suspended my freshman year about 4 days before Christmas break. My friend, Rachel, and I had stopped being friends over some senior girl and for some reason this girl was just adamant that she had to be my friend because she took my friend away, so she had to be friend. I’m like, no. It’s okay, me and you, we’re not the same. You go out and party, are a slut on the weekend and my mom doesn’t allow me to do that.” The argument over Rachel’s friendship escalated, “This girl, adamant and up in my face, and up in my face, so I pushed her. When I pushed her, she got back up and hit me, so I pushed her down the stairs. I got suspended for 5 days and she got suspended for 3.”

By Christmas of Lisa’s freshman year of high school she found herself in the vice principals office. “Mrs. Barton told me, Lisa, I just don’t know why you can’t fit

in here. I just don't know why you can't adjust to high school. Like it was my fault." She was the vice principal of girls. After the fight Lisa remembers being transferred to the principal over boys. "Apparently, my attitude qualified as male, I don't know." I saw Mr. Lambright after that. He always dealt with me after the fight". Lisa talked about her interactions with Mr. Lambright. "He would not look at me. Not just talk to me, look at me. He told me, I'm tired of seeing you in my office."

After a very rough freshman year of high school Lisa returned for her sophomore year. "I missed some school my sophomore years. But I was in in school suspension more than anywhere". Lisa recognizes that it was her ISS teacher that gave her the walk up call to get a plan. "My ISS teacher made it very clear that if I did not get a plan I was going to end up in jail or strung out." Lisa took the advise of her ISS teacher and initiated the steps necessary to enroll in the Learning Academy. "I wanted to go to the Learning Academy because you could go half day and work half day and that work was your electives."

As a part of the Learning Academy Lisa found fulfillment in serving others. "I did like 50 hours of community service through our civics program that was part of our civics program. I did community service at the Food Kitchen. I did the Friends of the Library, the book sale, and that was pretty cool." Lisa also found a place where she could pursue her love of literature and engage in learning that was meaningful to her. "I did a lot of writing and I took the art classes and teen parenting. It was the first time I ever saw a baby being born and that traumatized me." Finally after years of searching Lisa had found a place where she fit in and felt successful.

“When I got to the Learning Academy, I loved it there.” But soon the academic expectation began to impact Lisa’s outlook. “The principal made it hard. She was, for a lack of better terms, she was a hard ass. She thought everybody had to be the best and everybody had to go with the flow and that’s not why we were there. We went to the Learning Academy because it was learn at your own pace. But she wanted everybody to be on the same page and that’s just not how it was.”

Despite Lisa’s struggle with the expectations set by the principal she finished her sophomore and junior year at the Learning Academy. It was at the Learning Academy where Lisa met the man who she calls the love of her life, Keith. Keith’s struggle with the principal of the Learning Academy was difficult. Lisa is still angry over the way Keith was treated. “He got expelled because the principal out there, I mean she expelled 5 people the last day of school, which was my junior year and he was one of them. She told him don’t come back.” After Keith was expelled it was difficult for Lisa to continue her work toward graduation. When she returned in the fall of her senior year she felt like the principal was trying to force her out. “She didn’t want me there. She didn’t like Keith and so she didn’t like me. When I left junior year, the very last day, I needed six credits for senior year. When I came back to do my senior year, I needed ten. I had four credits that mysteriously appeared that I didn’t need before. So I quit. I quit and to this day, I’m still working on my GED.”

### *Life impact*

In Lisa’s life becoming a parent changed everything. Today she is an active parent in the life of her 11 years old daughter. “I don’t think there’s a day that goes

by that I don't spend 90 percent of my day with Rose. If she's not in school, she's with me. If she's not with me, then I'm either running errands for my real dad or she's at my mom's playing while I'm going to the grocery store for us or she's with her dad while I'm doing errands, but most of the time she's with me. She is my family." Lisa stated that her priority right now is to keep Rose in school and on track.

Lisa has come full circle with her appreciation for her mother. She now values her mother's deep desire to protect her. "Being a parent now, I see that completely. I understand. Because, I do the same thing. Rose has never had a sleep over. She's never been to a friend's house overnight. She's went and played, but never overnight." Lisa remembers what she was doing at 11 and Lisa is frightened of the world she is now raising a child in. "Things are a lot different now because 12 year olds are having babies and 14 year olds are having second babies. My 34 year old friend just became a grandma and I'm terrified, terrified of what life holds for these children." Lisa's fear and realization that she was a very naive child with a lot of freedom has had a lasting impact on her.

Lisa believes that her daughter needs information and sugar coating the world will not help her make good decision. "I don't lie to her. If she has a question, I tell her the full answer. Rose, just became a woman and she's scaring me to death I don't sugar coat anything with her. People look at me like I'm a bad parent, but I want her to be prepared. I don't want her to have sex and think it's a bad thing. I want her to know what protection is." Lisa believes strongly that Rose needs to understand what is waiting for her in the world. "She's the only 11 year old child I know who has watched a baby being born. It was not a pretty birth. This was a

violent birth.” After the Rose watched the birthing video she promptly proclaimed, “I never want to have sex.”

Lisa’s commitment to an honest and open relationship with Rose has included Lisa sharing the mistakes she has made along the way with Rose. “I will never lie to her if she ever asks me about anything in my past, I will never lie to her, ever. I want her to learn from those things. Don’t follow in my footsteps, be a better person than me. That’s all I want from her.” Lisa and Rose have learned to take the good with the bad and dealing with it.

Lisa also believes that Rose needs to understand the realities of poverty. “After working at the Food Kitchen at 16 years old and looking back on it now, you can drive down Easton Street at lunchtime and nothing has changed, it’s just gotten worse.” Lisa wants Rose to understand that in her view, “society is completely messed up.” Lisa still values taking care of other people a desire that she first discovered during her civics class. “We took blankets down to the riverfront here 3 or 4 years ago at Christmas time just because those people shouldn’t have to be cold. They shouldn’t have to be hungry. That’s the one thing that I want Rose to know that people are not born homeless. Those people aren’t homeless because they want to be.” During Lisa and Rose’s life together they have become keenly aware of some of the things that happen in life that forces people to have to go there.

Lisa’s relationship with her mother and Keith (Rose’s father) has taken many twists and turns. Lisa describes her mother and Keith as her best friends. Lisa looks back now on some of the decisions her mother made during her childhood with a different perspective. “It wasn’t that she was being a bad mom, letting me stay home

or letting me do what I wanted. It was I knew that my brother was young and somebody had to take care of my brother and so I just kind of did what I wanted.” The birth of Rose brought the family together and Lisa says that she took responsibility for all her actions on that day. “I can fully admit that now, that I was wrong. I have fully apologized to my mother, the day Rose was born, for everything I ever did to her, ever.”

Lisa says that Rose” has seen it all”. After five years of marriage a series of events occurred that rattled Lisa’s world and left Rose in the middle. “Well, Keith and I got divorced five years ago and it was really nasty. I mean the divorce was uncontested, but he was mad at me so he didn’t see his daughter for a year and he got really nasty.” After Keith lost his job the young family lost their house and Lisa says the pressure was just too much.

Lisa reluctantly moved into her mother’s house with Rose. “Because I love my mom and I can see her every day, but we can’t live in the same house together. That’s why I left home when I was 17.” Lisa’s and her mother’s relationship came to a crisis point and Lisa says, “I lived with my mom as long as I could and one day I got tired of it and packed all my crap in my trunk and started to leave.” Lisa’s mom called the police and tried to keep her from taking Rose. “My mom, for the longest time, thought my daughter was hers. Very, very overprotective, not going to let anything happen to anybody but didn’t realize I’m the mom, that I have it under control.” Lisa remembers the time as a monumental struggle, but leaving a difficult situation had become Lisa’s response when trouble came. “It was just like school,

you have to let me make those mistakes because I was trying to make it better for Rose.”

Lisa described the struggle for her and Rose after she left her mother’s house. “I lived out of my car. I stayed with people. There were nights that I stayed places where I would rather not have my child, so she did go stay with my mom.” The emotional struggle that had built up from years of not feeling like she fit in, losing Keith and leaving the shelter of her mother became too much for Lisa. “I got a little bit alcoholic and strung out for a couple of months.” After a couple of months Lisa says she realized she had to get up and make a life for Rose. “I smacked myself in the face and say, ‘What are you doing?’ You’re wasting life. Just because you have one tragedy, don’t mean you can’t fix it.” Lisa says that she was the one that had thrown everything away, but she was still in love with Keith.

Lisa describes Keith as the only love she has ever known. “He’s my husband, ex-husband, the man I’m going to be with for the rest of my life.” After a year of separation Lisa and Keith reunited and have been together for the past four years. Lisa says she feels a sense of accomplishment that she and Rose survived for one year on their own. She says that today she often wonders why she has to always be the responsible parents. “I still feel like that most days. ‘Why does everything land on my head?’”

Lisa says that at times she feels bad that Rose has had to watch the struggle. “At times I feel bad, but at least she knows. She knows what potentially lies ahead if she doesn’t walk the line or do what she has to do or make life good for herself.” Lisa realizes that she is not going to be given anything in life. “Everything in my life is

about making a good life for Rose and for myself. That's what it's all about, making life good for yourself. Nobody's going to do it for you. Nobody's going to hand you a \$100,000 check and say, Here, you go."

Today Lisa works at the Dollar Tree. She has been there almost two years and says that she loves her job. "I work from 9-2. So, I get to bring Rose to school and I get to pick Rose up from school." Lisa works whatever shifts she can get on the weekends, as long as her mother or Keith is home with Rose. Lisa has never taken Rose to a daycare and values her employment both for the income and the ability to be with Rose when she is not in school.

Lisa, Rose and Keith continue to live in the north end and Rose attends Dawson Elementary School. Lisa finds great comfort in the familiar surroundings of the north end. "I know my way around. I know, I can walk in Green Hills and I know all the cashiers. I can walk in this gas station and they know what kind of cigarettes I smoke. I love the north end." Lisa is admittedly partial to the north end. "I like it up here. I like that I can hear the trains down on Waterworks Road." Lisa also feels safe in her neighborhood. "I'm close enough to the police station and I'm close enough to the hospital. If anything ever happens that I can't control, I can just call 911." Lisa is very excited that the north end is getting a new fire station. Lisa, Rose and Keith have found a place to call home.

Lisa has worked off and on to obtain her GED, but the demands of working and parents have posed challenges to her pursuit. "You can't take the books home from there. You have to go there and study so it's all about how many hours a week you actually have in free time to go and go and sit down. They want you to log in



like 20 hours a week and work and take care of a child and have a life. "When Lisa got a full time job she said she just could not pass up the money. "I wish they could just, I wish I could skip the class. If they would just let me go in and actually sit down and take the test, I know I could do it."

Time is not the only barrier standing in the way of Lisa completing her GED. "I don't like the classes. You know, I think that goes back to school. If they would have just given me the tests and the books and left me alone, I would have done it. But it was the whole classroom setting. I still, at 30, I can't do the classroom setting." Lisa went on to explain that she loved reading and writing, but hated school.

The memories from Lisa's school years have stayed with her as she has moved into adulthood. She recognizes the confidence that her fifth grade teacher had in himself and the confidence he worked to build in Lisa. "He wasn't afraid to be himself. He taught me that it was okay to be who you are whether you're black, white, gay, straight, you know, who cares what everybody else thinks about you." Lisa says that it has taken a long time for her to realize that she doesn't really care what people think about her. She believes that the confidence Mr. Ackely built in her has helped her get to develop self-confidence. Lisa regretted never getting to tell her teacher how much he meant to her and the impact he had on her life. Mr. Ackley died a few years ago.

Lisa did get a chance to face one familiar staff member from her past. Mr. Lambright, Lisa's high school principal came in the Dollar Tree. Lisa, asked Mr. Lambright if her remember her and he quietly replied yes. Lisa responded "I'm so

sorry, I'm so sorry for being a bad kid." Lisa said that Mr. Lambright looked at her. He said, "Well, don't you have kids now. You'll remember that one of these days. You'll remember." The conversation ended with Lisa professing her commitment to raising Rose.

Lisa's struggle to make and maintain friendships still plagues her today. "I don't talk to anybody at all that I went to school with except for Rose's dad." Despite the fact that many of the people that Lisa went to school with still live in the neighborhood she Lisa to be confused by the response of her classmates when she sees today. "A lot of the people that I went to school with, if I see them, they don't talk to me, I have to talk to them and I'm like, why? And then there's those people who I did go to school with who want to talk to me, but you didn't talk to me in high school. You treated me like hell all through high school, why do you want to talk to me now? Why would you want to do that? I understand you want to make yourself a better person by moving on but some of those things you just can't get past." Lisa says that the people she went to school with are now just acquaintances.

The road to building friendships has been a difficult journey for Lisa. She says she only has one friend beyond Keith and her mom. "Daniel is like my mechanic, he's my go to guy. If I, if my car breaks down, if my lawn mower breaks down, if I need anything, if I need to talk, I can call Daniel." That's the only friend I have. Lisa says that she does not have any female friends. She says that it was a conscious decision she made during the breakup of her marriage. "To be honest, the last best friend I had from high school, slept with my husband. So that's why I don't keep friends, especially female friends."

Lisa believes that changing schools has cost her a lot. "It made me hate school. I just didn't want to be there. I didn't fit in. That's basically what it comes down to. I didn't fit in and if I didn't fit in, then I wasn't comfortable and it just wasn't worth my while." Lisa believes that she quit trying in the classroom because she could not find her crowd.

The struggle to fit in continues to be a challenge for Lisa. "The first week of a new job it sucks, it's terrible. When I started St. Joe Distributing, it took me two weeks to even talk to anybody. I was there for two weeks before I even spoke one word to anybody." Lisa believes that her need to fit in has improved as herself confidence has grown in her new job at the Dollar Tree. "At the Dollar Tree, I've been there so long. I mean two years isn't a long time but it really is." Lisa takes pride in the fact that she has trained several other employees. "I've been there two years and I've watched twenty people come and go. I've trained twenty people since I've been there and I'm still there I'm doing something right."

Lisa believes that the years of changing schools, struggling to make friends and her inability to maintain her grades left her empty. "I kept telling myself that I wasn't good enough. I let myself fall into that dark depression where I didn't want to get out of bed and I didn't care that I had things to do." The periods of depression have only last short periods of time and Lisa says that she has always been able to pull herself out. "After a week of that I just, I'm better than that. I have to get up, I have to do something. Got to get up, got to motivated." Lisa talked about how she would look in the mirror, splash some water on her face brush her teeth. "It is matter of slapping yourself in the face, looking in the mirror and saying, Yeah,

you've got to do this, you have no choice. Because life's not going to do it for you. No, Mary Poppins is not going to pop up and do it for you." Lisa says she has been waiting for her Marry Poppins for years.

Lisa believes that her ability to get up and make a life for herself and for Rose is what makes her a success. "When I see how far I've made it with her and the crap that I've come through and being homeless and living out of the trunk of my car and bouncing around from place to place I know I am a success." Lisa says that becoming a mother made her realize she didn't want to struggle my whole life. "I don't want my child to look at me when she's my age and say, Mom, what happened to you? you are in the same place you were 50 years ago." Lisa takes great pride in what she has been able to provide for her family. "I don't have fancy clothes and I don't own my own house, but I am successful. I've worked hard for everything I have. I'm not in jail. I'm not out here addicted to drugs and stealing from people. I'm just, I work hard and I deal with life. I think that makes me a success. Waking up in the morning and getting out of bed and taking care of my child, that makes me a success."

Becoming a mother has also shaped Lisa's decisions about future children of her own and the decisions of mothers. "I had my tubes tied when I was 21 years old. I fought, I fought the doctor. She wanted to put me on birth control." Lisa refused the advise of the doctor and had her tubes tied one month after I turning twenty one years old. Lisa says that Rose is the one thing she always knew she wanted. "I wasn't trying to be selfish in only having one child. I was trying to give her a better life. Because you can do a lot more for one child than you can for 2, 3, and 4. I have a better chance of sending her to college since she's an only child. I have a better

chance of buying her a car. She has a better chance of having more things in life because she's an only child. Yeah, just a little bit more spoiled." Lisa proclaims that the decision to have her tubes tied was the right one and one that she will not regret in the years to come.

Lisa's commitment to realistic goals for motherhood often leaves her frustrated with other mothers. "There are mothers who lay on the couch all day and the 5 year old takes care of the 3 year old and the 10 year old comes home from school to takes care of all of them. There are kids who go to school with my daughter who have 5 and 6 siblings and the mother, by four different dads." Lisa says that the irresponsibility of some people bothers her. "Like I said, when I walked into DFS, I applied for food stamps because we're barely making it right now. Keith getting ready to get laid off and I'm working as many hours as I can. So, I applied for a little bit of food stamps." Lisa explained that she was refused for assistance because they made \$96 too much a month. "After they tell me this, I walk out into the waiting room, a woman out to here, 8-9 months pregnant, ready to pop, with three stair steps following her was applying. That just makes me mad because she was there to apply for food stamps and Medicaid and she'll get it. She'll get it because she continues to pop out kids." Lisa says that she does not believe raising children on welfare is always necessary. "I don't think raising your children on welfare is a good way to live. If you have to, you have to. But you don't have to do that. You don't have to keep having children."

Lisa says that she is using the hard lessons she learned moving from school to school to build a better life. "My daughter, she's not going to be a juvenile

delinquent. I'm not in jail. I'm not cracked out. I don't have a needle in my arm. It's okay. If you don't like me, that's fine. You don't have to talk to me. You don't have to look at me". Lisa says that one of the priceless lessons she learned from Mr. Ackley was that "it was okay to just be Lisa".

Lisa's advise to school personnel who work with mobile children is simple. "Just pay attention and stop the bullying." Lisa believes that people at school need to pay attention to "a child who doesn't talk a whole a lot or who talks too much." Lisa explains that, "if a child is starved for attention, they are going to do anything they can. They're going to tell stories, they're going hurt themselves, they're going to make a scene in class." Lisa also believes that attention should start at home. "Parents should be more aware of their children. I don't think parents pay close enough attention to their children." Lisa believes that teacher and principals should take time to get to know every child. "You should know their names. Whether your that student's teacher or not, you spend every day in the same school together. How does any teacher not know every kid?"

Lisa believes that 'bullying is a big issue'. Lisa explained "when we have kids that are killing themselves because they're being bullied at school or cutting themselves because other people have made them feel like they have no other choice but to hurt themselves we have a big problem". Lisa readily admits that she will not tolerate others bullying Rose. "I will be the parent who goes to jail for beating up a 16 year old kid for bullying my child. I hate to say it like that and come off as some kind of redneck, but seriously. You can't, you can only let that go so far before it becomes tragic". Lisa says that bullying has created "a toxic situation

waiting to happen. That's why we have kids who go into schools with guns and bombs and feel like they have no other choice." Lisa believes that bullying is so widely accepted that we "have kids that don't realize they've done anything wrong by picking and poking at these kids." Lisa remembers bullying starting young and quickly becoming a way of life for the bully and the victim. "If a child is bullied from the time that they're in kindergarten until the time they're in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, then they're going to continue to be that picked on person forever." Lisa explains, "people fall into that routine and then it becomes real life. You've got the geek, you've got the prom queen, you've got the weirdo, you've got the stoner and the jock, it's just, that's how school is."

#### Review of Literature

Lisa began her elementary school career as the 1984, the same year that the *Cosby Show* debuted and captured daily life of the perfect American family on televisions everywhere. Shows *Family Ties* and *Growing Pains* had made seemingly everyday families the core of primetime television. In addition, to families moving into prime time the American love affair with the ideal family vehicle was unveiled by Chrysler as the first minivan took to the street in 1984. However, Lisa's experiences changing schools is best captured by the popular 1980's song *Girls just wanna have fun*, by Cyndi Lauper. Lisa spent her entire school career trying to figure out how to fit in and have fun with other girls. "At first glance, the thought of girls not being allowed to eat at the lunch table, attend the party, put their sleeping bag in the middle, or squeeze inside a circle of giggling girls may seem childish. However, girls perceive danger in their lives as isolation, especially the fear that by standing

out (as the new kid) they will be abandoned” (Simmons, 2002, p. 30).

### Friendship: a basic need

In Maslow’s hierarchy of needs created in 1943, Abraham Maslow expanded the theories of human developmental psychology by focusing on the stages of growth. Maslow used a pyramid placing the most basic of needs at the bottom of the pyramid. The lower four layers (or foundational layers) of the pyramid contains individual’s deficiency needs, that is if the deficiency needs are not met individuals experience anxiety and stress that hinder their ability to develop self-actualization. The deficiency layers of the pyramid include physiological (including sexuality), security of position, friendship and love and esteem (Alder, 1977).

While friendship is acknowledged by many as foundational to human development however, the road for girls is often complicated. “In elementary school, many girls feel it’s essential to have a s best friend. Best friends become a sort of currency. The words best friend also means, I have power over you, because I could take my friendship away” (pbs.org/parents). The need for friends increase as girls become more independent from their parents and desire to establish their own identity. “The ability to develop healthy friendships and peer relationships depends on a teen’s self-identity, self-esteem and self-reliance. The need for acceptance, approval, and belonging is vital during the teen years” (focus adolescent services.org).

### *Developing Friendships*

The social and power struggles that begin in preschool get more dramatic, more important and more complicated as girls go into elementary school. Now girls



are moving away from their parents and creating independent relationship on their own (pbs.org/parents). As girls become older the role of friends increases in importance, challenge and emotional risk. "Friendships that emerge during adolescence tend to be more complex, more exclusive, and more consistent than during earlier childhood. New types and levels of relationships emerge, and teens begin to develop the capacity for very close, intimate, deep friendships" (Guzman 2007). From an early age the fear of not having friends can paralyze the life of a girl. "Driven by the fear of exclusion, girls cling to their friends like lifeboats on the shifting seas of school life, certain that to be alone is the worst horror imaginable" (Simmons, 2002, p. 32)

#### *Friendship as a weapon*

Best selling author Rosalind Wiseman (2002), describes in her book Queen Bees and Wannabees the use of friendship as a weapon through the use of teasing, gossiping and reputation impact. Wiseman explains that as she has interviewed girls about the behaviors of mean girls the answers girls provide are consistent across race, geographic location, class and religion. "Mean girls are in every school at all grade levels including preschool and kindergarten" (Randall, K & Bowen, A., 2008, p. 4). Mariee Randall and Allyson Bowen, book Mean Gils (2008) brings light to a reality that friendship development among girls is often about understanding the social dynamics of competition. Girls are in constant pursuit of moving to the top of the popularity chain and at an early age will do almost anything to get there (Randall & Bowen, 2008). The pursuit of popularity often results in relational aggression (RA), or putting conditions on friendship (Ludwig, 2005). "Relational

aggression involves harming others through purposeful manipulation or damage to their peer relationships” (Crick, 1996, p. 2217).

The pursuit of friendship can be exceptionally difficult for new students and girls who fall victim to relational aggression. “Every clique can draw its own invisible lines. Not surprisingly, it is often the new girl in the class who unwittingly crosses them, triggering resentment in her peers” (Simmons, 2002, p113) The unspoken rules of cliques often leads to, “constant conversation about other kids (otherwise known as gossip) becomes the glue of many friendships and can become a real problem. Girls know that they are being talked about by other girls and it worries them” (pbs/org/parents). When girls struggle to make friends they value the ones that they do have like a gold and the stress of keeping a friend becomes defining. The sudden loss of a close friend to popularity is one of the most wrenching experiences for any girl. “One girl’s window to popularity opens and she jumps through it leaving her close or best friend behind. The abandoned find themselves alone with the knowledge they don’t have what it takes to be cool” (Simmons, 2002, p. 88).

### *I just don't fit in*

The salience of relationship in girls’ lives makes their practices of imposing isolation especially difficult. “Girls experience isolation as especially terrifying. Since girls earn social capital by their relationship with other, isolation cuts to the core of their identities. For most girls there is little more painful that to stand alone at recess or lunch” (Simmons, 2002, p. 101). The results of isolation can leave kids standing on the fringe of social life in school. “Teens on the fringe feel like they don’t fit in. They

move away from the comfort of childhood friendships with hopes of joining with a difficult-to penetrate new circle of friends (e.g., cheerleaders, football team, popular kids). This can leave kids in limbo, lacking significant friendships and feeling a deep sense of loneliness. Those feelings can leave kids vulnerable to high-risk behavior, such as drug use, sexual activity, and crime which they perceive as their ticket to acceptance” (Focus Adolescent services). “Every child, boy or girl, desires acceptance and connection. As girls grow up, friendship becomes as important as air” (Simmons, 2002, p. 32).

## Chapter 7

### Travis

#### Kindergarten Class of 1993

##### *The Setting*

Finding a participant for the '90s proved to be more difficult. Two women were approached. Both were participants in the GED program offered through the adult basic education center in our community. The first was 24-year-old who over the phone showed interest in participating, but then would not commit to an appointment. The second was also a 24-year-old female who was the mother of four children. We discussed the study by phone and she did not feel like she could commit the time to participate. At the recommendation of a friend, a third participant was located.

Travis was 23 year-old African American male college student at the local university where I reside when we first met. I had heard of Travis prior to our introduction through watching him play football for the university and reading about his athletic accomplishments in the local paper. I had met Travis a couple of times when he had come my house as a guest of his girlfriend. I had admired his willingness to play with my kids and the kindness he showed to his girlfriend. The few times I had been around Travis I found him to be quiet and a little mysterious. It was Travis's girlfriend who suggested to me that he would be a good participant in the study. She initially asked Travis if he would be interested in learning about the study and he agreed to consider participating.

Travis and I spoke by phone regarding the focus of the research and the role of the participants. He listened thoughtfully, but was very quiet on the other end of the phone. At the end of the conversation we arranged for a face-to-face meeting to further discuss his participation.

At our first meeting Travis brought his girlfriend (my friend as well) and entered my office slowly. He cautiously sat down and slightly slouched in the seat across the table from me. Travis girlfriend sat next to him and tried to lighten the mood by asking about my children and talking about the hot weather we were experiencing. I worked hard to reassure Travis that our interviews would be confidential and that he could chose to end his participation at any time. When I felt like I had explained all that I could about the study I reluctantly asked Travis if he wanted to participate. I was really not sure that he would agree to be interviewed for the study. After a long pause, Travis looked up and told me that his life growing up was complicated. He agreed to participate and the three of us headed out of the school together.

Travis and I met three additional times at my office. He and I chose the location to accommodate his girlfriends work location and the quiet atmosphere it offered during the summer months. Interviewing Travis was slow and sometimes difficult. He would often take long pauses before answering questions and routinely stopped part of the way through his answer to think about his next words. His responses reflected deep contemplation and carefully selected details of his childhood years. As the interview sessions progressed Travis became more

comfortable, he smiled more made more eye contact and the rate of his speech increased.

Through our interviews, a sketch of a young man's complicated childhood emerged. While I am confident that Travis did not share with me all of the details of his journey, I admired his willingness to reflect and trust me with some of the pieces of his story. Travis talent as an athlete, his ability to make friends and the immeasurable gift of hope offered by one individual has taken a boy from the depths of despair to a road destined for success.

#### Family's Journey

Travis was born to a single mother and a father he had very little contact. He was the seventh child and the baby of the family. Two of his siblings had the same father as he did, and three siblings had a different father. Travis early years were spent in a rural area of Florida where he lived with his mother and siblings until he was eight years. Travis describes his father as a loser. "Cause I mean he missed out on a lot and you know some of the things I've done in the past I don't think that I would have done if he would have been around." Travis describes his mother as a struggling mother of seven who struggled with addiction. "Of course being a single mother raising seven kids has gotta be tough. She had a gambling problem, and her priorities were a little distorted but, I mean, she did what she could."

Travis remembers one incident prior to turning five years old that he has never forgotten. Travis's mother took the three children to their father who lived with Travis's grandfather at the time. "I remember before age five was me and my two other siblings visiting my dad, I guess things were getting too rough for my

mom and she took us to our grandfather's house." Travis's mother had a few jobs but struggled to keep the household going. "She would lose it because she's hearing impaired and some of the stuff that they had her doing you know required her to interact with people and when you are deaf that's kind of hard so they'd give her a chance but then they'd see it wouldn't work out so they'd let her go." Travis remembers his mother dropping the three children off to their father and saying she couldn't do it any more, "She told my father, that he would have to take care of us." One week later Travis's mother came back to pick.

Both of Travis's parents are hearing impaired and Travis learned to sign as a form of communication with his mother at a very early age. He explained that both of his parents were born deaf. He stated that it was really no big deal and he didn't have any trouble communicating with his mother. Travis does believe that his mother's hearing impairment sometimes made it hard for her to understand the hearing world and consequently affected her opportunities for employment.

While Travis lived with his mother, it was his aunts who lived near by in his early years that watched out for Travis. Travis's stated he considered himself very lucky that his aunts right across the street. "My mom was never home so we spent a lot of time at my aunt's, you know, they understood their sister's problem, so, they did whatever way they could, to help us out when my mom was not there." Travis remembers coming home from school to an empty house many times. "We'd come home from school, my mom wouldn't be there, wouldn't have anything to eat and so we'd go across the street and our aunts would take care of us."

Travis says his older siblings tried to help but as teenagers they had their

own lives. “Number of times when my mom didn’t come home, we’d have to go to bed and get ourselves up and get off to school by on our own. I was probably six or seven.” Travis remembers eating a lot of fast food from the money he earned from his aunts. He would feed the chickens and they would pay him on occasion. Travis explained that his aunts did not live on farm. “It was just like out in the back yard they had their vegetables, a little hog pen and little chicken coop.” Travis explained that he spent the majority of time without an adult. “Either I had to watch myself or go over to my aunts.”

Travis remembers playing outside for hours and by his description running wild, but his three aunts and their husbands were determined to help little Travis learn to behave. “My aunts, they were real big church goers, I guess. They would always try to you know force us to go to church. It worked for a while and but we’d fall asleep in church.” Travis says his aunt finally gave up after a while; she was tired of spanking him for falling asleep.

The three aunts had raised their children and all of their husbands worked for the railroad. Travis remembers tormenting his Aunt Mirlala’s husband. “We would do things to get him mad and he would chase us around.” Travis says he enjoyed irritating him and watching him chase after he and his siblings. Travis explained that his three aunts and their husbands worked all hours and he never knew who was going to be home. Despite his aunts’ unpredictable schedule, Travis realizes the important role that his aunts played during his early years. “Yeah, they all played a major part in, you know, trying to keep our heads above water.”

Travis also found another safe haven at the local community center. Travis



remember walking to the community center as young as four years old. "Every time it was open I'd be in there, I was there until about six o'clock every day."

Travis enjoyed the activities the community center had to offer and found was to work around their homework expectations. We played basketball, football, baseball, they'd try to you know make up before we could play, but you know I always lied and said I had my stuff done." Travis explained that he really did not see the need for schoolwork; he just wanted to run around and play.

Travis's life from the time he was born until he was nine was marked by the freedom of play and the absence of stability. "If my mom wasn't there, my aunts tried to make sure we had you know, food, clothes, and make sure we were able to shower." Travis explained that as a result of his mother's gambling the house often did not have food or electricity. "We would go without electricity for maybe weeks to months." Travis remembers the darkness of being a house for days without hot water or lights.

The house was very old and had been passed down to Travis's mother by her parents. Travis did enjoy having his own bed. "I had my own bed because nobody wanted to sleep with me because I wet the bed a lot. I'd sleep hard and their wasn't really anybody to and wake me up, and it was hard for me to wake myself up." Travis remembers struggling with bedwetting until he was six or seven years old. "The only thing I remember about that house was the roaches and the rats."

When Travis was eight years old the events of one afternoon took away the support system he had come to rely on. "There was a guy that had came to the house, and I just remember him being in a nice suit, a nice car, and we were outside

playing and he asked us where our mother was and we were like we don't know."

Travis remembers the man explaining that he was from child service. "He was sitting there and he was looking at his watch, and he goes if your mom is not here in the next fifteen minutes we're taking you guys." Travis's mom came to the house prior to the children being taken into state custody, but the event sent the family packing and resulted in Travis's mom moving Travis and his siblings to a town 45 minutes away.

Travis describes his families approach to living as "just winging it".

"They're just taking it day by day. I mean, not knowing what to expect, not knowing what was going on. The only thing I had to really look forward to was going to school, after that it was just a free for all I guess."

### *School Days*

Travis remembers his first day of school at Hickory Grove Elementary School.

"My mom walked me to the bus, but after that it was pretty much blurry." Travis explained that he was a bus rider. "Luckily the bus stopped right in front of my house. Cause if I would've had to wander off and find a bus stop myself I probably wouldn't have gone to school." Travis describes himself during his elementary school years. "Lost, I was lost."

Travis explained that he was shy at times, but after he got comfortable at school he could be the class clown. He admits that he had no real use for homework and was pretty convinced that he should be able to do what ever he wanted. "I guess, I just didn't really care, to be honest. I just, you know, wanted to have fun. I figured it was my way, I wanted to do the things the way I wanted to do them."

Travis remembers getting sent to the principal's office a lot during his first years of school. "That's when they, the paddle rule was in effect, and that wasn't working."

Travis attended Hickory Tree Elementary, from kindergarten to second grade, during the same time period that he lived across the street from his aunts. He remembered being sent to the office for messing around and not listening to the teacher. Travis used his behavior to get out of doing math, he says that he did not like math. It was an incident with another student that would end Travis's career at Hickory Tree Elementary. "I ended up breaking a kid's arm and that's what got me kicked out of that school." Travis remembers the principal saying, "you're too much, you need to find another school to attend."

Travis explains the breaking of the student's arm as an action of imitation. "I was talking to him one day in class and I told him about watching this movie. I told him that I learned how to break an arm, and I said I betcha I could break your arm, and he said, 'no you can't.'" The other student offered his arm to Travis and consequently, Travis twisted it and it broke. Travis says that he loved to watch martial arts movies and he learned the move from a Bruce Lee movie.

Despite Travis's struggle to understand the behavioral expectations of school, he developed a love of reading. "I learned to read at an early age. I mean that's one thing I did like to do. I was real big into the Goosebumps books." He remembers volunteering to read in class and spending time reading during on his own. Travis also loved penmanship. "I loved having neat handwriting. Because my mom, she has good handwriting. Travis can remember having his mother write something and trying to copy it to make it look as good as hers."

After the principal invited Travis to find another school, the second grader and his siblings set off to find another school. Michigan Avenue Elementary would become Travis's school for third, fourth and fifth grade. Travis distinctly remembers the principal letting him know that he was not to cause any trouble at the new school. Because Michigan Avenue was not Travis's neighborhood school, there was no bus. His mother dropped he and his two siblings off to school each day and the three of them would walk the two miles home after school.

The walk home from school would provide Travis the opportunity to wonder off and enjoy rural farm life. "I remember cutting through a cow pasture every day and but I was scared of the horses and cows so sometimes I would take the long way instead of cutting through." Travis remembers walking home everyday regardless of the weather. Rain or shine Travis and his siblings found their way back to their house each day.

After Travis finished third grade his mother moved her family forty-five minutes from the town Travis had enjoyed living across the street from his aunts. Travis and his siblings entered Michigan Avenue Elementary and the principal made a point to provide Travis with a special welcome. "My fifth fourth and fifth grade principal, Dr. Kennedy, I remember on the first day we got there I went to his office and had the same talk that the principal before." He remembers the principal letting him know that he was aware of his prior behavior problems. "You're a little troublemaker and you know we're gonna watch you and I don't want to see you in my office." Travis described the principal as being very tall with a big grey beard, he found the principal to be intimidating. Travis says that despite his warm welcome

on the first day of school, he had earned the reputation that he had been given from his behavior during kindergarten-third grade.

Travis described his neighborhood near Michigan Creek Elementary as safe, but he missed his aunts. “There were a lot more like crime watches and cops patrolling the area, in this town the cops made sure that if you out at night and you were young, they’d either take you home or they’d hold you in the cop car until your parents came and got you.” Travis remembers it being hard only seeing his aunts a couple of days a week, but says that after the talk with child services his mother got a little better at taking care of him. “She made sure she was there to make sure we got to bed at a decent time and made sure we showered.”

It was at Michigan Creek Elementary School that Travis met three important people in his life and started to see ‘the light’. “I started to figure out some of the school stuff, and trying to get the homework done.” Through the efforts of two teachers and the development of a life-long best friend Travis began to find his stride.

Miss Asaved was Travis’s fourth grade teacher and it did not take long for her to decide that Travis needed a lot of structure. “She was a mature Hispanic woman. She was very strict to a certain extent. She’s the one that kind of made me get my act together.” Travis explained that it was Miss Asaved who helped him get academically focused. “She got me on that right path. I felt she was extra strict on me than the other kids, but she considered me as her little project, you know, to see if she could change me.” Travis recognizes that Miss Asaved did just that.

During Cedric’s fourth grade year he also met his best friend. Travis and his

best friend loved sports, and power rangers. “Back then it was the Power Ranger toys. We were in love with the Power Rangers. His parents would buy him toys, and my mom didn’t have the money to buy me the toys so he let me borrow them after he was done using them.” The boys lived only a mile away from each other, but worlds apart. “He was one of the only kids that had a basketball hoop in his driveway so everybody after school would go to his house and behind his house they have a golf course and a lot of us would play football there.” Travis described his friend’s house as a Country club. “I remember the guy who owned it would ride around on a golf cart chasing us when we would be playing football, trying to get us off the green.” Travis remembers trying to spend as much time as he could at his friend’s house.

The first day of fifth grade was a little rocky for Travis. Travis started the day with one teacher, but after a fight in the middle of the day the principal reassigned him to a different room. “The first day of school I ended up getting into a fight and you know I guess you can call it a fight. I punched a kid in the face, give him a black eye.” Travis remembers that his original fifth grade teacher was not in very good health and the principal decided she could not handle Travis so he moved him to a different room. “So they switched me to Mr. Simmons and his class was probably the funniest class I had in elementary school. Everything was a competition, and when we got our work done on time and we were rewarded with a recess. We were probably the only class in school that probably went to recess two times a day.” Travis enjoyed Mr. Simmons and began to discover his love of competition.

Travis natural athletic ability and love of competition took flight in fifth grade

when he was chosen to represent his school at a large regional track meet.

“I guess they took the fastest kids from each elementary school and to a big track meet at Disney Wide World of Sports.” Travis described the event as a big deal, and he enjoyed the day in the spotlight of Disney World. While he ended up getting beat in the race by his cousin, the experience was something he treasures.

“Once I seen him line up next to me I knew I was gonna lose, but it didn’t really matter.”

Travis does not remember being involved in any community or church activities during his first few years of school beyond the community center and occasional church service that he attended while living near his aunts. The one-day track meet at Disney World was the only organized activity that Travis remembers from elementary school.

The transition to Boggy Creek year round middle school was a challenge for Travis. “In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I started getting suspended from school, I spent a lot of time in detention, in-school suspension; I wasn’t focused.” Travis describes his first year of middle school as a time when he decided that acting out was just the cool thing to do. His behavior came with an expensive price. “I threw a stink bomb in the classroom. It was the last two weeks of school and they made it clear in morning announcement and if you got into any trouble during the last two weeks of school that you would be kicked out. So, I pretty much got kicked out for the last two weeks of school and missed a lot.” When grade cards came out he received the news that he would not be promoted to seventh grade. Travis would repeat the sixth grade, while his friends moved on.

The back to school season in the fall of Travis's second time in sixth grade was very difficult. "It was hard, I felt lonely. My best friend had moved on because the way the middle school was set up, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders had a building, the 7<sup>th</sup> graders had a building, and the 8<sup>th</sup> graders had a building." Travis felt very secluded in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade area and all of the friend he had met in the earlier years of elementary school had been promoted to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. "That kind of drove me to buckle down and get my mind right to want to get back with my class". Travis explains that he still hung out with his friends after school and they were very accepting of him.

Travis's mother enlisted the help of his oldest brother (19 years old) to come back home and help get Travis on the right track. His brother had been a successful student and athlete, but becoming a father had detoured his plans of going to college. "He moved back to get a job and started being a man I guess. At the time, he, my mom told him that I was having a tough time in school so he tried to play the father role." Travis explained that the expectations set by his brother help him a little bit to get on track.

However, it was a teacher that helped Travis make it through the tough year repeating 6<sup>th</sup> grade. "A lot of my will to change and to do better, it came from my language arts teacher, Mrs. Wiggins. She was a black lady and she, it was me and another friend of mine that, we had both repeated the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and she had a long talks with us." Travis remembers the teacher challenging his decision making and reminding him of the reputation that he had earned. She would say, "what are you guys doing? This is not right that you are running around causing trouble. You need to straighten up and fly right." Travis remembers the teacher making one comment



he has not forgotten. She said, "You're acting just like the way these people want you to. We knew that it meant". Travis explained that his teacher was not a racist she just recognized that by causing trouble people expected him to continue.

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade Travis joined his first little league football team. "It had started a couple of years prior but it was \$60 to join and I never had the money to do it. Travis got the chance to play little league after he sold enough fundraiser cards to pay for the fee. Travis remembers how much he enjoyed the games when his friends were all there playing and several girls his age were cheerleaders. The football little league coaches would not let the boys play if their homework was not finished. "If it wasn't done, you wouldn't practice and if you don't practice, you wouldn't play." Travis made sure his homework was done, because he did not want to miss out on playing time. But, he admits to only doing enough school work to just get by.

Middle school brought opportunity for Travis and the introduction of the complications of peer groups. "My friends were a little different. There were girls and so much free time. So, it was kind of crazy. It took a while to get used to and being on your own a little bit." Travis continued to apply himself in reading and history, but found Math increasingly difficult. Travis's best friend knew he was struggling in Math and he would meet Travis at the library to tutor him in Math. Travis made his way through middle school with the support of his little league team and his best friend.

In Travis's words, "ninth grade was whole other can of worms." Things fell apart for Travis during his first nine weeks of ninth grade. Travis was playing on the

freshman football preparing for the teams first game. Travis fell during practice and broke his wrist. Travis's mom took him to the hospital the next day and the doctors put a cast on his wrist and told Travis that he was not to play football for six weeks. "I still could have went out and played the last four or five games but my mom started going back to her old ways and was in and out of the house. She never got around to taking me back to the doctor and the trainer wouldn't let me participate." The high school coach and trainer told Travis he could not play without a note from the doctor. "Until I got a note from the doctor saying that I was clear to play they would not let me play. My mom didn't take me to the doctor so I couldn't play". When Travis's football season came to an end, he made a decision that would change his high school career.

"Since I wasn't playing, I decided hey, I'm going to make me some money." Travis had seen his friends handle marijuana from the time he was 9 years old and remembers going into his brother's room to find his brother bagging it. "I would go in my room and see my second oldest brother and his friend with a big pan full of weed are they were putting it in little baggies." Travis explains that it was not a secret in his family. "When I saw my brother doing it, I asked, "What's that?" They didn't try to keep it away from me. They told me. I said, "What are you all doing with it? Selling it to make money." Travis recalls that his mother did not participate in the activity, but she was fully aware of what was going on.

With his high school football career done for the year, Travis made the decision to make money by selling drugs at school. "It was in my locker during PE and one of the kids stole it and I told my brother." Travis says that everyone was

pretty scared of his brother. Travis's brother and friends chased down the kid who stole the drugs and beat him up. The kid told the principal about the drugs and Travis was expelled. "They didn't find anything, but just the fact that somebody said that I had marijuana on campus, they didn't like that so they expelled me."

After the expulsion Travis and his mother were called to a discipline hearing. "It was just me and my mom that went. She didn't understand what was going on. I mean she knew that I was getting kicked out of school so she was just like okay just tell me what I have to do and any paper that I have to sign and let's do it. But, she didn't realize that she could have withdrew me from school and my grades wouldn't have been dropped. But instead, she just pulled me out." Consequently, Travis received all F's for his freshman year of high school and sat at home for the rest of his ninth grade year.

Travis claims that the parents of his friends never realized that he was not in school. Because Travis had already paid for his recreational football league he decided that he was going to play, broken wrist or not. "I ended up taking my cast off. I just cut the cast off and played with my arm broken." Travis remembers the pain he felt during the first game "I went to tackle somebody and I grab them and try to pull them down, it was still hurting pretty bad." It took a couple of weeks for Travis's arm to fully recover and for him to return to his full playing potential.

One night after football practice the 15 year old Travis's life would be changed forever. Travis's football coach offered him a ride home from practice only to arrive at a completely dark, empty house. The lights and water had been turned off at the house.

“I told him, I don’t want to stay here. There’s no lights and no water.” The coach told Travis to go into the house and find some clothes. He took the talented lost athlete to his house and Travis found a home. The coach and his wife had an emotional meeting with Travis and vowed to help him put his life back together. “The coaches wife, my mom she was just, like I can’t believe a mother would do something like that.”

Travis would go back to his mothers to visit, but she never really questioned him about his move. Travis remembers his siblings all going their separate ways. Travis’s father (coach) made it very clear that not being in school was not an option. “My dad was a service manager he told me since I wasn’t in school, ‘You’re going to go with me to work’.” So, I worked with him for a month, didn’t get paid for it. He was like you could be in school right now learning but instead you’re going to be with me working”. After a long month of hard labor and the school year coming to a close, Travis’s dad contacted the school board.

Travis and his father (coach) went before the school board to try find a way to get Travis back into school for the upcoming year. “So he and I went and he pretty much told the superintendent of schools that they were going to let me back in the school for the upcoming school year.” Travis remembers his dad (coach) being very emotional at the meeting, crying and explaining to the school board how much Travis had been through and how he had changed. The school board agreed to allow Travis to reenter the public school system, but he had to attend an alternative school.

Travis describes the alternative school as a jail. They searched us everyday and explained that even a pencil could be considered a sharp object. Travis says that the school made him feel like a 'thug'. Travis stayed at the alternative school for half of the year. "I ended up getting in a fight at alternative school during lunch. Well, it wasn't a fight, I just, I slapped a kid in his face and I got expelled from alternative school." Travis remembers his father (the coach) being very disappointed and making him work around the house.

Travis's father was not going to allow Travis to sit at home, he quickly found a private school for Travis to attend. "I didn't like it because I was the oldest kid there and all of the rest of them were probably in elementary school, but somehow she was able to get schoolwork from my high school." Travis finished the second half of his freshman year at the school and was able to complete the course work to go back to his high school for tenth grade. But, over the summer Travis made the decision to move back in with his mom. "It was the wrong thing to do."

Travis found himself back in the life that he had left behind within a few weeks. "One night, well I decided to go back to selling drugs again." Travis was out with his friend at 2:30 in the morning with a pocket full of marijuana, when the police stopped them. Travis's friends ran, but he froze. "They ended up searching all of us and there it was, so he took me to jail". Travis's mother bailed him out of jail. When his dad (coach) found out he showed up at Travis's house and said get in the car.

Travis returned to his dad's house and started his sophomore year at his regular high school. "The head coach of the football team at the high school, had

knew about me getting expelled my ninth grade year and you know he was like that kid's a mess. They knew I was a good athlete, but they didn't want to deal with me because of what I had done." But, Travis's dad had become a good friend of the high school coach through the little league program his dad had developed. The program was a feeder program for the high school and the connection gave his dad the chance to convince the coaches to take a chance on Travis. "The coach sat down with me and he was like look, I'm going to give you a chance. Any little thing and I'm getting rid of you."

Prior to Travis's junior year of high school he worked all summer to get ready for football season. "I never missed a summer workout." When school started Travis's coaches realized he was ineligible to play. "I remember the coach saying, 'you remember your freshman year when you got expelled, your mom never took care of her part and so you have seven Fs you have to make up'." Travis spent his entire junior year on the sidelines, trying to get academically caught up.

Travis was heartbroken. "I practiced. I did everything with the team except for play on Friday nights." Travis remembers the emotion that swept over him every Friday night. "I cried probably every Friday cause I couldn't play." The experience ignited Travis and during his junior year of high school he became a student, he finished the year with a 3.5 grade point average. Travis believes that a lot of it had to do with his father's household. "He had a son that was a senior and a son in my grade, and they played on the team, they were straight A students." Travis recalls being motivated by their success and realizing that he did not want to be the one bringing home bad grades. "I can't be the only kid bringing home, mediocre grades,

so we kind of made it a competition and that fueled me to do good as well.” Travis stayed out of trouble the summer after his junior year, he attended all of the summer workouts and at the beginning of his senior year of high school he was finally eligible to play football.

“The first day of school I was the talk of the town. The talk on campus, everybody heard that I was able to play and everybody was excited.” Travis’s football season matched his classroom effort. He was named all-city, all-county and all-state as a running back. His grades were so good that he was invited to attend the academic banquet on campus and he received an award for most improved student. Several four-year colleges were interested in offering Travis a football scholarship. Travis graduated from high school with a 3.0 in 2005.

After graduation, Travis ran into an academic barrier that changed his college plans. “I had to the SAT and the ACT to get into school, I took it twice and didn’t do well on it.” The four year universities backed away and advised Travis to attend a junior college. “I didn’t want to go to junior college at first I just could not pass the test so, I was just like I guess I’m not going to college then.” Travis was disappointed and deflated at the thought of going to junior college. “We had to report to camp in early August and the whole summer I was just putting it off. I decided he did not want to play football anymore.” He was determined to find his way on to a four-year university team or not play at all. “I just want to go to a four year school and I was trying to find a way to wiggle my way into a four year school, and it didn’t work.”

The junior college coach contacted Travis’s parents (coach) and explained that they really wanted him on the team. “I ended up finally deciding to go out there

to camp a week late, I didn't pick up the play book in time and so they had to red shirt me." Travis spent his first year at junior college on the sidelines of every game as red shirt freshman. "I didn't like that too much but, you know, I just put it in my mind that, I'm here, might as well make the best of it, get my education, and better myself." While Travis attended junior college for three years, he only played one year of football.

Travis explained that during his first two years at junior college the team he played on was terrible, 0-18. The coaching staff got fired at the end of Travis's second year and the new coaches wanted new players. "They wanted to bring in their new players and I think that that's how it always is when you get to an institution and a coach gets fired and the new coach comes in. They like to get rid of the old players and bring in their own." Travis was looking forward to leaving the junior college after his second year and accepting a scholarship at the University of Arkansas.

"I was supposed to take a math class, college algebra to be exact, in order for me to attend the University of Arkansas. They were the ones that offered me a full scholarship." Travis knew that he was not good at math and so he never signed up to take it. Without the math class, the 'scholarship offers went out the door'. Travis explained that University Arkansas was not the only one that offered him a scholarship but they he was leaning towards. Travis explained that the coaches had shown him a lot of personal attention. They wrote hand written letters and came to visit him several times. Frustrated that he had lost the scholarship to University of Arkansas and was not in the plans for the new coaching staff Travis decided to



transfer to a different school. He soon realized he did not like the other school and came back to the junior college. "I ended coming back, to the school I attended the two years before and I finished, I graduated in May of 2007 with an Associates degree".

Travis was finished with college, but college football was not quite finished with him. "Once I graduated one of my coaches, who still he lived in the area told me he was applying for a job at a four year university. Travis was cautious when the coach told him that if he got the chance he would put in a good word for him. "After the coach got to the new school, he came down and picked me up from Ft. Scott. He had me do a try out here in front of the head coach. The coach liked me and offered me a scholarship on the spot."

Travis spent the next three years playing football at a small four-year university in Missouri. "My experience on the field was, it was great. There was a lot of ups and downs. They brought me in to replace a good player and you know I had big shoes to fill." Travis explained that he tried his best, he was not always successful, but he recognizes that there were also times that he lead his team to key victories.

Off the field, troubles in the classroom once again came back to haunt Travis a little bit. "I was always having to worry about going to summer school to pick up a few credit hours to be eligible to play the next season." Going Travis's sophomore season, he was facing the reality that there was probably going to be no chance that he would be on the field. "I backslid a little bit and ended up failing a class that I had needed to be eligible to play." Instead of staying at school and taking the class he

needed Travis decided to go home for the summer. "My coaches got in contact with me and they told me, I needed to get back so we can figure out how we can get your credit hours so you can be eligible." Travis found himself in the office of the department chair.

According to NCAA rules, Travis could not play with a D on his transcript. The department chair arranged for Travis to take an exam to bring his grade up. "So they had me take a test and I thought I was ready for it and I wasn't. I failed it." Travis remembers begging and pleading with the department chair to give him another chance. "She was hard, she was hard to convince. She told me that, I gave you one chance already. You should've taken care of business the first time. There's absolutely no reason why you shouldn't be turning in assignments and be prepared for an exam." The department chair finally agreed to give Travis a second shot at the test. Travis sat down to take the test on the Sunday of team picture day.

Travis remembers how nervous he was facing a test that would decide his entire college football season. "I studied for it and I knew it, I was kinda nervous but I knew I had it this time so when I went in there, I said a little prayer. Travis remembers praying for God to give him the knowledge to pass this test. The department chair came in and took Travis's test when he was finished. "She told me to sit right here and I'll be back. I'm going to grade your test. She came back in and told said, I hope you're ready to play some football this year. You passed." Travis remembered jumping out of his seat, hugging her and thanking her for the opportunity.

After three very successful years of playing football for the four-year university, Travis is knocking on the door to finishing his bachelor's degree. He has one class to take and an internship to complete. Travis says he is very motivated to complete the four hundred and fifty hours internship and find a way to pass his last math class.

### *Impact*

Travis road to success took many twist and turns. Their were times that he seemed destined to end up lost in the system, but through it all he made it. Today Travis's relationship with his birth mother and siblings has changed. However, he recognizes the impact they had on him. "My older siblings would try to motivate me." Travis's older brother who tried to come back and mentor him had been a former good student and a state wrestling champion. Travis views him as a role model and admires his commitment to his family and career as a truck driver. Not all of Travis's sibling's stories have been as successful as Travis. His older brother who Travis watched bag drugs in high school eventually dropped out of school and has chosen a difficult road.

When Travis thought back to the events and people that influenced him he talked remembered the importance of a man who drove the church bus through his neighborhood. "When I was 16, Brother Ralph drove a big school bus and he'd go around the neighborhoods picking kids up and he would take them to a church." Travis remembers going to church with many of his siblings and friends almost every Sunday in his later years of high school. "That's when I really started to find God. It changed me, you know, the Word of God changed my life certainly for the

better.” Travis explained that finding the Word of God made him realize that he could not go out and cause trouble and he realized that the things he was doing were not pleasing to God.

Today, Brother Ralph lives in Travis’s neighborhood near his home (coach’s house). “Whenever I’m out, you know, fishing in the pond in our subdivision he’ll drive by and he’ll stop and we’ll have a quick chat.” Brother Ralph and Travis reminisce about time when he was younger riding the bus. Travis feels connected to Brother Ralph because he knows Travis’s story. “He knew my whole family pretty much. He asks about everybody. I told him some of my siblings were doing good and some of them you know they were having a rough time.” Travis describes Brother Ralph as someone who he connected with because he showed interest in him.

Travis’s family today looks very different from the one he spent the first few years of his life with. “I wasn’t, the environment that I lived in over there, it is totally different.” Travis describes his family as perfect. “I mean everybody, we would eat dinner together whereas with my mom and my real siblings, we never did that. No one sat at the table. Everybody just got their plate of food and went their separate ways, but it was more of a family feeling with my dad.” Travis still enjoys times when he can go home and enjoy a meal with his family.

Travis says that one of the hardest things that he had to do during his teenage years was break ties with some of his friends and brothers. “The kids that I was hanging out with when I did get in trouble and that was including my brother, my real brother that’s a year older than me, I stopped hanging around with him. I

had too.” Travis found himself one night in a situation with the police and his brother that changed their relationship. “I didn’t know that my brother and these groups of kids I was hanging out with, they were breaking into cars and stealing stereo systems, and one day I was driving with my brother and one of our friends and, you know, we got pulled over by the cops and I didn’t know what was going on.” Travis remembers telling the truth that he did not know anything about the cars. The cop let him go and that was the last time he hung out with brother and the group of boys. Travis described the decision to walk away as very difficult.

Travis views his life today as very positive and believes football had a lot to do with keeping him out of trouble. Travis has an endearment with the game of football and believes that sharing his story with kids may help prevent other kids from choosing his path. “Whenever I get a chance to see or speak to kids that my family has in their youth program I sit down with them and let them know some of my story, tell them I was the same way when I was younger, but you don’t have to do those things. You can, you know, be a positive person all the time instead of being a negative person doing negative things.” Travis wants to help prevent other kids from going down his road. “There’s an easy way to do things and there’s a hard way to do things, I chose the hard way.”

The hard way has come with some expensive lessons for Travis. “The hard way is going to cost you a lot of time and money. Meaning when you get in trouble with the law you’re going to have to pay fines, there’s probation involved, you’re going to have to do community service hours, it’s just not worth it.” Travis explained that if he would have had the mind frame he has now as a child, things would have

been totally different for him.

Travis see himself as a successful person. "Success for me, you know, coming from where I came from, the trouble I've gotten myself into, then to turn all that into something positive I think has made me successful." Travis says that through the interview process and thinking about the negative things he has done has made him realize how much he does not want to be that person.

Travis describes money as a barrier in his life. "The money issue was a big barrier. My family didn't have money just to hand to me money and say whenever you need more just call." Travis remembers how difficult living without money became in junior college. "A lot of times in junior college that's where I struggled the most. You ate three times a day but the last meal was at 5:00 and after that you were on your own, and so there was a lot of times where I'd have to wait until breakfast time to eat." Travis remembers how hungry he was at night after long days of football practice he says that it was a reminder of his childhood and a motivator to graduate

The years spent scavaging for food and clothes has shaped the 23 year-old Travis. "I don't ever waste food because I know, you know, a lot of people are not eating right now. A lot of people could use food, and I figure if you're going to waste it you should be giving it to somebody else." Travis also talked about how his friends sometimes make fun of him for only having a few items of clothes. He explained that he does not see the purpose of having more clothes or shoes than you really need.

Travis's advise to schools that work with children moving in and out is simple, set high expectations. He believes that kids need clear expectations for their

academic and behavior. He also thinks that schools should strive to be a motivator to difficult kids. “Just to be, to be a motivator. You know, have high expectations. “Have activities to keep the kids off the streets and in the classroom where they can learn and having fun at the same time.”

In five years Travis would like to be married and playing professional football as a college graduate. He is looking forward to working the youth and finding ways to give back to his community. Travis realizes that his body will not last forever and at some point his time playing football will come to an end. ‘You know, I’ve dreamed about, you know, what I could do without playing football and there’s jobs out there that I know I am qualified to do.’

Travis has adopted a life motto that he first learned from his wide receiver coach. During a practice he took a piece of tape and wrote a quote on it that he says describes his the lessons he has learned through his 23 year journey to success. The motto reads- You are who you are when nobody’s watching.

### *Review of Literature*

Travis story sounds like a movie, something that most people can’t really believe happens within the United States of America. The thought of a small child wondering through street, living without electricity and water and scrambling for food is an image that most people equate to life ‘somewhere else’. However, in 2009 the blockbuster movie *The Blind Side* brought a similar true story to life on movie screens across the country. The story of Michael Oher, a homeless and traumatized

boy who became an All American football player and first round NFL draft pick with the help of a caring woman and her family captivated audiences. The story of Travis and Michael are not fabricated for entertainment, they are the stories of real children trying to make their way out of poverty and families manage the stress of living without.

In 2004, the Census Bureau reported that 14% of all households with a child under the age of 18 were below the poverty line. In addition, about 1 in 5 households with children included nonrelatives or relatives of the child other than his or her parents or siblings. The poverty rate of households in which children lived without a parent present had a poverty rate of 23 percent. Overall, 44 percent of households with children received some type of public assistance. Including cash and noncash public assistance include the noncash benefits of food stamps; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; Medicaid; rent for public housing; lower rent due to government subsidy; energy assistance; and free or reduced-price lunches or Breakfast. (Kreidart, 2004, p. 6).

When examining the staggering number of children living in homes without a parent and the number of children living below the poverty line the question becomes, what types of capital do children need to 'bundle together' in order to create the safety nets necessary for their development. "Imagine a teenager as a balloon. One minute it's soaring; the next it's floating toward the ground, heading to crash. Suppose there's an adult standing nearby who is willing to reach out and give it a gentle bop to send it soaring again? Better yet, what if there are five adults



standing in a circle holding a thick web made of yarn? The tighter the web, the less likely the balloon can slip through and hit the ground” (Walser, 2006, p.1).

### Financial Capital

It is difficult to read stories like Travis’s and Micheal Oher and wonder if the missing ingredient to their childhood is money. Researchers agree that money does play some role in a family’s ability to provide the basic necessities’ for children. Financial capital is needed to provide an economic base for family life” (Parcel & Dufur, 2001, p. 32). However, the economic changes endured during the first ten years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have put far more families at risk of not being able to rely on financial capital as a resource for overall stability. Toby Parcel and Mikaela Dufur (2001) illuminate the risks posed to families by failure the to create accumulate assets and manage debt.

“The definition of asset poverty was initially proposed to determine the amount of assets needed for a family to meet its basic needs over a specified period of time under tan extreme condition, when no other sources of income are available. Asset poverty takes into account how much a family would need to make ends meet, absent an income-generating job for 3 months (Aratani & Chau, 2010, p. 5). While all American families are found to be at risk of asset poverty households with children are at a higher risk of falling short of the financial demands they face. “Overall, when asset poverty is measured including housing assets, only about one-third of families with children are considered to be asset poor. However, this status varies considerably by family type, and our findings indicate that a majority of African-American children and 60 percent of children in female-headed families grow up

asset poor” (Aratani & Chau, 2010, p. 5). Many families are faced with the daily challenge of not being able to meet the everyday needs of their children.

Aratani & Chau (2010) identify three specific subgroups of families that are at particularly high risk. They report that 80% of African- American families, 77% of female headed household and 60% of families with young children lack the sufficient liquid assets to cope with everyday needs during financially challenging times (Aratani & Chau, 2010). Therefore, as the unemployment continues to rise among poor and blue collar employees more and more children may find themselves living in homes that are unable to provide for their basic needs. “This indicates that the majority of children of African-American, female-headed or families with young children are precariously close to falling below the federal poverty level if their families ever experience a loss of income from earning such as in the event of a parental unemployment or illness” (Aratani & Chau, 2010, p. 5).

The bank account ownership is considered to be a red flag by Aratani & Chau (2010) as to the increased financial stress families living in poverty who are African-American or female headed households may be under. “A large proportion of low-income families, especially African- American and female headed families, are without bank accounts. Among all families who live in extreme poverty (income below 50 percent of the FP), overall, only one-third of families have a bank account” (Aratani & Chau, 2010, p. 6). Aratani & Chau report that nearly when examining families that live in extreme poverty “nearly half of white families have a bank account while only 15 percent of African American families and 26 percent of female-headed families” (Ararani & Chau, 2010, p. 6).

The accumulation of debt in America during the 21<sup>st</sup> century has come with a large price tag for the United States government and individual families. On March 17, 2009 white house reporter Mark Knoller, reported that the National debt hit a record eleven trillion dollars. He further explained that the federal bailout of the financial markets had resulted in \$400 billion in debt accumulation in the 57 days President Obama since took office (Knoller, March 17, 2009). The accumulation of debt not only affects the national government, it also effects the daily operations of individual families. “Between 1984 and 2001, the level of debt increased substantially among low – and moderate – income families, and the majority of low-income families experienced having family debt greater than and or equal to 40 percent of total family income” (Ararani & Chau, 2010, p. 3).

The inability to save money, the lack of family assets and the risks of unemployment have put many Americans families at risk of not being able to provide for their families. “December 2007, the number of unemployed individuals has increased by more than seven million to 15.4 million, making the current unemployment rate 10.0 percent overall” (Ararani & Chau, 2010, p. 10). The lack of financial capital as defined by family assets; debt management and unemployment have created the potential for more children to fall below the poverty line. Some families are at a higher level of risk of bankrupt and foreclosure as a result of both national trends and family debt management. “It has been reported that minority homeowners are at greatest risk of filing for bankruptcy than their white counterparts. As of July 2009, more than 360,000 US properties’ were reported for foreclosure filings during the month, which is a 32 percent increase from July 2008”

(Aratani & Chau, 2010, p. 10).

Likely the most expensive price of debt maybe the psychological toll it takes on individuals and families. “The burden of debt can not only be an obstacle to savings, it can also impact a family’s psychological well-being. “Research shows that debt is highly associated with one’s mental health, and family debts can have potentially negative impact on children’s emotional wellbeing” (Arani & Chau, 2010, p. 7). The pschcylogical toll of trying to provide for the needs of a family has been found to be one of the leading causes of addiction.

Parents working to survive in difficult financial times are at a higher risk for conditions that consequently affect their ability to function as a parent. “Stress promote physiological and behavioral disturbances ranging from psychiatric disorders to immune system dysfunctions. Stressful events also may profoundly influence the use of alcohol” (Anisman, H. & Merali, Z., 1999, p. 241). During times of stress parents may turn to addiction as form of self-medicating the stress they encounter. In the 2007, HBO documentary called ***Addiction***, predominant organizations came forward to try to explain the entwinement of addiction. The [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism](#) (NIAAA), created a documentary aimed at helping Americans understand addiction as a treatable brain disease, as well as spotlighting new medical advancements. As a part of the series, Kathleen Brady, M.D., Ph.D provided insight into the link between stress and addiction.

BLOCK “The desire to stress and addiction produce some of the same changes in

brain systems and so they are intimately connected. Animal studies have shown that the brain changes associated with stressful experiences are also associated with more sensitivity to the effects of drugs of abuse. For people who have addictions, stressful life experiences such as divorce, job loss and conflict are often associated with initial craving and relapse”([www.hbo.com/addiction/print/141\\_stress\.html](http://www.hbo.com/addiction/print/141_stress\.html)).

### *Parental Human Capital*

Children also need to establish human capital and in many cases rely on their parents as a stable source to draw from. “Human capital, embodied in parental characteristics, that children access both through daily interactions with parents and through the expectations that parents set for a child behavior” (Parcel & Dufur, 2001, p. 32). Family social capital reflects the time and attention that parents spend in interaction with children, in monitoring their activities, and in promoting child well-being, including social adjustment (Coleman, 1990, p. 595). “High levels of parental human capital provide assets upon which children can draw to facilitate social adjustment throughout childhood and adolescence. Some of this effect may be due to more educated parents having expectations for certain kinds of social behavior, where such expectations likely include getting along well with others and acting out or exhibiting withdrawn or clingy behaviors” (Parcel & Dufur, 2001, p.34).

“The American family is an important incubator of social capital. Is in families that young people ideally learn to share, cooperate, and contribute to a common good” (better together). The home environment, age appropriate materials and resources also contribute to parental capital. Parents who have a warm parenting

style of interaction with their child in a clean safe home combine to promote social and cognitive wellbeing. “Children’s home environments are also a partial function of material resources, but after a certain level of basic expenditure, home environments reflect parental orientation to providing the types of interpersonal resources that favor child development” (Parcel & Dufur, 2001, p. 32). The work of parents, caregiver, and grandparents to build social capital in their children often extends beyond the parent and child relationship.

### *School and Community Capital*

During a time when financial stress has taken a hold of many American families and the depiction of uncountable additions are spread across the Internet, primetime television, song lyrics and the movie screen children are trying to learn how to become adults. Schools and communities are looking for ways to scaffold the children whose social capital has been jeopardized by financial pressure and lack of parental capital. “High levels of capital investment at home is important for child social adjustment, combinations of investment at school and home are also influential” (Parcel & Dufur, 2001, p. 46). When looking to build resilience and social capital in youth, schools, churches, community centers and sports play an important role in filling in the gaps of social capital for some children. “Compensating effects, involve a trade-off between resources at home with those at school. Children lacking the advantages of at home can compensate in another context. In general, higher levels of capital in one context can compensate for lower levels of capital in another” (Parcel & Dufur, 2001, p. 45). It is the combination of efforts to create social capital that define stories such as Travis and Michael Oher.

“Most American young people are embedded in three types of communities: school, extracurricular groups (which include religious communities, clubs and sports leagues, and informal community of friends) and the family. It is in these three categories of places that young people meet and associate with the most important people in their lives: parents, siblings, friends, coaches, teachers, and mentors. It is in these places that young people learn what is expected of them and what to expect from others, especially adults” (better together –youth and social capital.org).

“The nature of social capital available to young people influences how well, they learn, the odds that they will attend college, whether they commit crimes and the likelihood that they will do drugs or commit suicide. In a nation that prides itself on constant reinvention, young people represent the promise of a stronger America, and their well-being is a leading indicator of the long-term health of our communities. As our young people go, so goes our nation” (Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America. John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University),

In the absence of a parent, it the generosity of individuals, the commitment of communities, and the tenacity of schools, that will determine the social capital of a child.

## Chapter 9

### Historical Multi-case study

#### THEMES

The purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to gain information about post-move functioning of mobile students by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data. In the study, quantitative data was used to measure the collective academic achievement of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing in comparison to the achievement of students who had attended the school for more than one year in Math and Communication Arts based on results from the MAP (Missouri Achievement Program) Test from 2008-09. In the second phase, qualitative interviews were conducted to explore the needs of mobile students through a historical view of the effects of mobility as explained by adults born during five different decades (1940's through the 1990's) who moved a minimum of three times during elementary school years.

The overall mixed methods question for the study is: What is the impact of changing schools on academic attainment and social capital development? Two sub-questions were explored during the historical multi-case study interview process. How did moving affect academic progress? What was the role of social capital when reestablishing social networks at a new location? In each participant's chapter, their story and memories provided descriptions of their academic experiences as well as key components of social capital; financial capital, human/parental capital, school/community capital and creative capital. This context provided themes



common to their experiences and when expectations appeared, the opportunity to explore the divergence.

As participants discussed the context surrounding their frequent moves, the structure and dynamics of their family varied in size, socioeconomic level and challenges. However, the driving force for moving and their connection to extended family were consistent threads.

### *Reason for moving*

Marie, Joe, and Lori's families all moved as a necessity of their father's employment. Lisa and Travis moved smaller distances to a nicer house. Each family believed they were improving the opportunity for their children by moving to a different location. Joe and Lori participated in moves that involved masses of people through the military and 'white flight' out of Dallas.

Marie's family understood that in the years following the Great Depression that they had to do everything possible to ensure her father's employment with the railroad. Joe and Lori's families embraced the chance to move around and see the world. Joe described his families moves as adventures that he did not dread. Lori's family worked their way up the corporate ladder and was able to enjoy increasing material luxuries with each move.

Lisa and Travis's parents approach to moving was much more whimsical. Lisa's mother moved to move in with the man that would become Lisa's step father and Travis's mother moved to avoid the pressure she was feeling from children services.

### *Extended Family*

Moving had an impact on all of the participant's relationships with their extended family. Lori, Lisa and Travis all moved away from relative that either lived with them or in very close proximity. Each of them missed having their families near by and considered leaving their relatives a difficult part of moving. Joe and Marie had not grown up near relatives and therefore they did not long to return to their extended relatives.

By the age of 10 all of the participants relationships with their extended family had declined into an occasional visit, except for Lisa. Lisa's grandmother continued to be an influential part of her daily life into adulthood. Despite the proximity to their homes and the frequency of their visits each of the participants recalled lessons, stories and memories specific to the grandparents, aunts and cousins in their life.

### *Social Capital*

Each participant in the study accessed different sources of social capital to increase their academic success and social wellbeing while moving from community to community. Participant's ability to bundle sources of social capital from the resources (financial capital, human/parental capital, community/school and creative capital) available to them played a role in their ability to reestablish themselves in new surroundings. The importance of social capital was a consistent threads among participants.

*Financial Capital*

For each of these participants, their family's financial capital contributed to the context surrounding their ability to adjust to moving. The ability for Marie, Joe, Lori and Lisa's families to maintain the income necessary to support their families basic needs including shelter, food, and clothing was important. Travis who moved without the security of these items faced additional stress to the moving process. The uncertainty of what the next house would look like was something that all of the participants worried about. However, Travis faced the additional uncertainty of whether or not his family would have a house with electricity, water and adequate food.

Marie, Joe, Lori and Lisa recalled the important role of the family car trips and small vacations and how it made each of them feel connected to their family in unfamiliar surroundings. Marie, Joe and Lori enjoyed the extracurricular activities that their parents were able to pay for at each location they lived. They each described the scaffolding these activities provided them to meet new people and reconnect with their interests. However, the presence of unlimited financial resources did not seem to increase Lori's adjustment over Marie or Joe. It was the connectiveness felt during the activities that promoted the development of friendship and sense of belonging, not the expense or focus of the activity that mattered. The absence of disposable income resulted in Lisa and Travis missing out on organized extra curricular activities.

The financial capital of participants also influenced the home environment they each experiences. Marie, Joe and Lori's families were able to buy toys, books,

newspapers games and models that contributed to their exposure to developmentally appropriate materials in the home. Lisa and Travis did not have the same opportunities for a print rich, exploratory environment as other participants. The lack of financial capital available resulted in Lisa and Travis not having the toys, clothes, spending money that other kids around them had.

The access to financial capital for Travis and Lisa resulted in both of them having large periods of time with nothing to do. Their interaction with peers tended to develop in less structured, less supervised settings. The pursuit of disposable income was a process that both Travis and Lisa found to be difficult and important to their adjustment in new surroundings. It was the pursuit of money that lead Travis to dealing drugs and the absence of money that left Lisa on the outside looking in during her time at Harper.

#### *Human/Parental Capital*

For each of these participants, the social capital gained from their parents contributed to the context surrounding moving. As children who moved across town, states, and internationally all of the participants where influenced by their family's daily routines, family traditions, time investment by their parents with them, and expectations set by their parents. While the influence existed for all participants varied level of human/parental capital was noted during the interviews.

Marie and Joe both have vivid memories of their families eating meals together, spending time together through games and activities and have layers of memories regarding their family routines and traditions. Both of them described the

importance of their mother's effort to make each house they lived in feel like a home. Both of their mothers treasured the household items they would carry from house to house. Marie and Joe's mothers were both very committed to setting up the routines of their family shortly after arriving to a new house.

The expectations for behavior were very clear in Marie and Joe's families made their expectations for behavior very clear and both had less defined expectations for academic performance. Both families drew their parenting expectation from their faith and Joe's family enjoyed the support of the military expectations to convey a message of respect and responsibility.

Marie and Joe shared an emotional connectivity with both their mother and father. Both of their father's careers were time consuming, yet Marie and Joe have specific memories of the activities that their father supported and invested time in (Scouts, sports, church, gardening & horses). For Joe it was the time his mother spent with him and his siblings making crafts, cooking regionally inspired meals together and sightseeing that he remembered as key components to the connection he felt to his mother. For Marie, it was her mother's gift in the kitchen and time spent working together to complete daily routines that Marie treasures.

Lori's parents worked a lot and were committed to financially building stability for their children. However, Lori does not have the same vivid memories of her family eating together and enjoying large blocks of time together as a family. She noted that her first few years there are very few pictures or memories. She says that it was like her family put everything on hold until they got to Texas. Family holidays

and vacations played an important role in Lori spending time with family. Lori describes her parents as “out making money”. The pace and pursuit of corporate opportunity left Lori feeling emotionally disconnected to her parents during her middle school and high school years.

Lisa enjoyed the constant presence of her mother and grandmother. She described their commitment to picking her up from school everyday as important to her.

Lisa treasured the times that her parents took her fishing, camping and on car vacations during elementary school. However, when Lisa transitioned to middle school the activities and routines of her family did not include clear expectations for Lisa academically or socially. She found it difficult to talk to her parents and distanced herself from them emotionally.

Travis did not enjoy any of the stability acquired from parental/human capital gained through family routines, family traditions, time investment or parental expectations until he moved in with his dad (coach). He spent the first 15 years of his life trying to figure things without any direction or the basic support of a parent. It was his dad (coach) that invested time in Travis, exposed him to simple routines like family dinner and family holidays. It was also the coach, who established predictable expectations for behavior and provide the support necessary for academic progress.

All of the participants turned to their parents for guidance and support each time they found themselves in a new community, new school, and among strangers. Marie, Joe, Lori, and Lisa confided in their parents during their elementary years

about the struggles they faced as new students. However, only Marie and Joe continued to use their parents as a source of human/parental capital during their teenage years.

### *Community/School Capital*

Each family's ability to connect with their neighborhood, community, church, families with children of similar ages to their own was also a contributing factor. Marie and Joe both talked about their parent's commitment to getting to know other people, fast. They both remember their parents visiting with neighbors, finding a church and getting their children enrolled in school within a few days of arriving in a new town. Both Marie and Joe described their parents as people who had never met a stranger. Marie, Joe, Lori and Lisa all recalled their parents interacting with their neighbors and the importance of feeling like they were a part of a neighborhood.

Marie and Joe's families were very active in church and community activities. Marie remembered going to church three times a week. Her family loved the interaction they experienced through picnics, county fairs and parades. Joe's family life was deeply entwined with the activities on each military base they lived. The military base shopping, childcare, and community center provided a natural source of community social capital for Joe.

None of the participants interviewed described a deep connection by their parents to the schools they attended. Marie, Joe and Lisa's family participated in events such as carnivals and programs, but did not see the school as a source of family social capital. Lori recalls that her parents could probably not name a single

principal, counselor or teacher she had. However, all four families used grade cards to monitor progress and communicate in writing back and forth with the teachers.

Travis's mother did not access the community or school for support or as a source of social capital for her children. Her interaction with the school was limited to enrollment and when Travis got into trouble. The social capital gained from schools is often facilitated through social interactions, parent and school relationships and individual interest.

Each participant utilized his or her school as source of personal social capital. Joe and Lori were deeply engaged in the social aspect of school and thrived on the social capital they gained through their school connections. Marie and Lisa did not enjoy school and gained very little social capital through their participation. Travis relied heavily of the schools he attended for social capital, in absence of financial or human/parental capital. His performance academically and socially improved during period of time when felt connected to his school. Travis described the teachers in his school career to be ones who set clear expectations for him and how pushed him to work beyond his minimal effort.

In addition, community social capital was a critical source of capital for Marie, Joe, and Travis. Both Marie and Joe increased their connect to other people and found self-confidence through the connection they made at church. The relationships developed through church, community/base social events, and for Joe organized sports gave both of them a sense of belonging. Travis's connection to the community center near his house during his early elementary years, his little



football team and eventually the community member (coach) who became his source of human/parental served as his most significant source of social capital.

### *Creative Capital*

Threads of creative capital or, the ability to create new ways of thinking and to discover unfounded paths of problem solving were a consistent theme among participants. The opportunities accessed by participants including instrumental music, scouting, dance, competition and creative writing were discussed within the stories of participants. For Joe, Lori and Travis their participation in sports (baseball, dance, football) played an important role in their overall social capital development. For Marie and Lisa they appreciation of music and enjoyment of creative writing played a less significant role in their develop, but enhanced their sense of creativity. Joe sense of exploration and problem solving foster through boy scouts also added to his creative social capital social development.

The career paths of three participants reflect their reliance on the problem solving and creative thinking associated with creative social capital. Joe and Lori both work program development careers with heavy emphasis on the utilization of technology, collaboration and idea development. Travis's passion for competition has been the driving force behind his pursuit of a career in sports management. Both Marie and Lisa pursued careers less reliant on creative social capital skills through product retail.

### *Friendship Networks*

The development of friendship networks was dominant to the context of success experienced by participants. Participants seem to have a clear-cut sense of

whether or not they could make friends during their school years. Joe, Lori and Travis all described their ability to make friends as natural and seemingly effortless. Marie and Lisa described the opposite. Neither of them ever found a social network at school. Marie compensated for her lack of friends at school through her siblings and church.

Joe, Lori and Marie were influenced by their parent's ability to develop their own social networks. All three participants observed and participated in their parent's social networks. Joe and Lori were able to transfer the skills necessary for friendship from an early age, it took Marie until her mid-20's to embrace other people and open up to friendships. Lisa's family enjoyed their neighbors and friends, however Lisa distanced herself from her families social network during her upper elementary years. She did not draw friends or skill for friendship from her parent's social networks.

Travis used his athletic ability on the playground, in the neighborhood and eventually in organized sports as a foundation for friendship. He felt accepted by boys and girls for his athletic ability and made friends with ease. In contrast, Marie and Lisa spent long periods of time searching for a friend at school, neither of them reports having a friend until later in life.

Travis and Lisa faced the difficult task of cutting ties with peers who were not good friends to them or how had a negative impact on their personal choices. For Lisa, the ending of her relationship with Rachel sent her searching for new friends. She found herself surrounded by others who used drugs and did not value education. Lisa is still working to find a productive peer group beyond her

relationship with Keith. Travis had to make a break from some of his friends and siblings to give himself a better chance for success. With the human/parental capital he was able to access from his dad (coach), he was able to leave behind destructive behaviors and transform himself into a respectable citizen, college athlete, and active learner.

Joe, Lori, and Travis continue to stay in contact with a few of their high school friends. For each of them technology based social networking (such as face book) have played a critical role and finding, reuniting and maintaining friendships from the past. Lisa and Marie have little or no contact with people they went attended school with. Lisa occasionally seeing people she went to school with around her neighborhood, but rarely initiates interaction.

#### *Academic Attainment*

The frequency of moving for all participants had a varied affect on their academic attainment. All of the participants reported being strong readers from second grade on and enjoying writing. Marie, Joe, Lisa and Travis recognized gaps in their learning as a result of changing schools. Joe missed division at one school and was tracked to a slower class as a result of changing schools. Travis, Marie and Lisa noted their struggle with mathematics. All three of expressed the feeling of being lost in math during their upper elementary years and never regaining command of the content.

The pursuit of education varied from participant to participant but coincided with their level of acceptance in the school setting. Lisa was the only participant who did not graduate from high school. She described upper elementary school as

the turning point for her academically and social. Marie met the minimal requirements to graduate from high school and described school as a nightmare. Lisa and Marie both described school as something that they grew to hate and noted the difficulty changing schools placed on their ability to keep up academically and to fit in socially. Lisa has pursued her GED at times, but describes herself as someone who loves to read and write, but continues to hate school.

Joe, Lori and Travis all pursued high education after high school graduation, but each made the transition to college for different reasons. All three participants felt accepted at school and maintained a peer group throughout their years moving from school to school. Joe enjoyed school and excelled academically throughout his school career, therefore the transition to college was a natural choice to expand his cognitive abilities. Lori's years in Plano, Texas surrounded by the extreme expectation to succeed included the uniform expectation of going to college. While she went to college to appease the social expectations placed on her, she described college as a time of independence and intellectual growth. Travis pursuit of college was a result of a combination of factors. The expectations set by father (coach), the sense of belonging he maintained with his peers, his athletic talent and the determination he developed through working in high school to remain academically eligible provided the foundation he needed to pursue a college degree.

### *Lifelong impact*

Changing schools has had a life long impact on each participant in the study. Each of them view their years moving from school to school differently, but all of them agree that changing schools proposed challenges unique to their experiences.

Joe loved the adventure. However, Marie, Lori, Lisa and Travis all agree that they would have preferred to stay in one school system. Lori and Travis learned to make friends easily and felt like they fit in within a few days of arrival. The scares for Marie and Lisa run much deeper. Both of them struggled into their early 30's to feel accepted and find self-confidence. The road to becoming an adult has taken many twists and turns for the participants, but all of them describe themselves as a successful person.

At the time of the interviews Marie been married for over 40 years and still enjoys investing in her family. She has two grown children and three adorable grandchildren. She retired several years ago and now works part-time because she says she just has to be around people. She has remained active in her church and loves to laugh with her colleagues from JCPennys during the monthly breakfasts. Marie has enjoyed the close friendship of her four closest 'gals' for decades. She shared that developing the self-confidence to create friendships and to lighten up and let herself have fun saved her from the "nightmare' of moving as a child. Through the formation of her marriage, her career at JCPenny, her connection to her church and the blossoming of friendship Marie was able to overcome the shyness that described as 'disabling'.

Joe is currently works as a wellness specialist for a large hospital. He uses his energy, welcoming personality to engage an entire community in wellness. His love of cooking and ability to connect with people has come in handy for his weekly healthy cooking segment featured in the local media. He continues to serve Boy Scouts and has organized a mission to southern India for the past ten years through

his church. Joe has been married for 30 years and spent the past 20 years much like his parents did, chasing kids, cooking meals and making simple family memories.

Lori's life today is crazy. She is the proud parent of four very active children and an executive with a software company. Lori loves to keep up with her friends, chase her kids and spend time volunteering at church and her children's school. She is still a social butterfly; she is on the phone, on the computer, and hanging out with other people non stop. But, today Lori also has found a deep sense of self. She values contemplations, intellectual stimulation and spiritual connectivity. She explained that her biggest regret moving as child is her lack of memories. She does not remember the faces or schools from her elementary years. She recognizes that the lack of pictures and family traditions from the time she spent in Florida and Iowa have taken years from her that she will not regain.

Lisa says that she is happy and at peace with herself. She loves her job at the Dollar Tree and her daughter is the center of her life. Lisa struggles financially, but does not consider that to be reflection of her success. She is proud of the car that she owns and the stability that she has created for Rose. Lisa's school years left her feeling like she was on the outside looking in. She is still looking for a place to fit in, but insists that she doesn't care that she does not have any friends. Lisa believes that moving had a negative impact on her ability to make friends and find a peer group. She is still walking the road in many ways alone.

Travis recently finished his last college football season and is busy working to complete his internship for college graduation. He is not currently enrolled in the math class he will need to graduate, but says he will enroll at some point. Travis

describes his childhood as just wandering around. He recognizes the stubbles that he has made and understands the importance that school, sports, his dad (coach) and church played in his survival. Travis is looking forward to a future as a 'positive person' who wants to help other kids who have been left to wander around.

Despite moving in and out of numerous schools all five participants were able to bundle together the social capital they gained through financial capital, human/parental capital, school/community capital and creative capital to find their way to success. Their insight provides a reminder to all that new students have a lot more to deal with than just academics. Each participant detailed key events, people, and turning points towards or away from academic success. Changing schools test all of them. The memories of the academic and social environments of their childhood have become important part of each of their stories.

## Chapter 10

### Sample Case Study

The purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to gain information about post-move functioning of mobile students by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data. In the study, quantitative data was used to measure the collective academic achievement of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing in comparison to the achievement of students who had attended the school for more than one year in Math and Communication Arts based on results from the MAP (Missouri Achievement Program) Test from 2008-09. In addition, through use of a sample case study insight into the efforts of elementary principals to support the academic and social development of mobile students was explored.

The selection of elementary principal participants was based on school performance data from four urban school districts in Missouri. The criteria for the purposeful sampling of elementary school principals included: principal of the school during the 2008-09 school year, willingness to reflect on the student data representing the overall performance of students attending the school for less than a year in comparison to student who had been in their building all year in Math and Communication Arts, and the ability to share insights related to the efforts of the school to serve mobile students.

The overall mixed methods question for the study is: What is the impact of changing schools on academic attainment and social capital development? Four sub-questions were explored during the sample study interview process:



- What factors outside of school are affecting children changing schools?
- What are the biggest academic challenges for mobile students?
- What are the biggest social challenges for mobile students?
- What programs, school routines or indicators of school culture affect the success of a mobile child?

In each participant's provided a description of their experiences as elementary principals and insight in to the unique challenges of their school socio economic level. This context provided themes common to their experiences and when expectations appeared, the opportunity to explore the divergence.

### *Themes*

#### *Housing*

As principals reflected on the factors outside of school affecting children changing school housing was the primary reason for nine of the ten participants. Principals recognize that families often move to improve the quality of life by moving to a new home or to stabilize their family during economic and social trauma. "Mostly, it's moving to a new home sometimes for a better job and sometimes because of job loss. Divorce also plays a factor in mobility".

Principals serving populations with high socio-economic status report very little mobility. The mobility they experience is from corporate highly educated parents moving into newly established high-end neighborhoods. "We get quite a few people that move in from out of state, realtors tend to show them houses out here in

our area. In fact a lot of times it's to be in our school attendance area, which is really nice thing to have. You've got highly educated people coming into the area". Another principal reported that their attendance area was inclusive of the newest and best homes in the district. "The newest subdivisions are located in our attendance boundaries".

Principals serving mixed socio-economic status schools are faced with the unique challenge of population shifts. "When I came here ten years ago, we were probably less than 10 percent free and reduced lunch. I've gone from probably about 10 percent minority to probably almost 40% minority". The principal further explained the factors that influenced the population shift. "A lot of the housing stock in my area is original suburban homes. The 1,200 square foot, one car garage that are considered starter homes now". I think the quality of the housing stock, as well as the quality of schools, because I know a number of young families we work with will say that they sought out the school specifically when choosing a home. Another principal described a similar section of established homes transitioning into rental properties and starter homes. "Our older established neighborhood is now older adults that have either passed away and their kids are renting the parents' homes to other people or they are families that just have moved up to bigger houses and have kept their little house and are renting". Both principals described a lot of turnover in established neighborhoods because of the number of rental properties.

Principals serving mixed socio-economic schools describe the change in a pocket of established homes nestled in attendance areas with very expensive homes and section 8 housing complexes. "I have a significant part of my attendance area

that will have 200,000 -300,000 homes, combined with a federally subsidized housing complex that generates a significant number of students. A good mix of all". Another principal added, "I think in this area where those houses are smaller starter homes it seems like I'm bursting with numbers in K-2 but by the time that they hit 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade, my numbers in the class have dropped. I think that's because these are starter homes and by the time you have a kid in 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade, they moved on to a bigger house". However, the challenges of blending together families moving within the corporate setting, immigration, starter families and families in poverty come with unique challenges to each subgroup within the school setting. "Within our established neighborhood you will find the house with no windows, that was one of our dads that blew himself up cooking meth and that was three weeks before school got out. We had to call the police because he had a prostitute that was trying to promote service. They were trying to climb into the house. There have been a lot of drug houses, meth houses, in our neighborhood that they came and shut down. We have had a couple of our families that have blown themselves up".

The established neighborhoods and reputation of the schools attract families leaving bordering urban core school districts and new immigrants to the country. One principal describes the changing population of her attendance area, "The majority of our diversity comes from Somali, African, Iraq, Iranian, that kind of Persian, Gulf, that area. I have a handful of like Hispanic kids, a few Asian kids, but for the most part, it is a Muslim population. We have maybe 10 to 15 percent African-American kids. When you look at the numbers, you look like you're a white school, but when you look at the faces, it doesn't feel that way". Another principal

added, “We’re just one extreme or the other. You can have a \$250,000.00 house next to a \$15,000.00 shack. Land owner and hired hands. Families that usually deal with the law come from there and its usually alcohol and drug related and stems to family violence”.

Section 8 Housing The location of Section 8 housing and the quality of the individual site has affected mobility in schools across socio-economic lines. The shift in availability of Section 8 housing outside of the urban core has impacted mixed socio economic schools where new housing has been built over the past ten years. “It used to be that federally subsidized housing existed in the urban core and there were not choices available. I know that there has been a concerted effort to have that diverse stock of housing available across the entire metropolitan area”.

The downturn of the economy between blue collar and poor has stabilized some families and put others on the move. “We do have an apartment complex that surprisingly has turned out, because it’s Section 8 and because of how the economy has changed, the families really are staying there. Because they were brand new six years ago and so they are still in very good shape and they have very strict guidelines as far as they can do pop inspections You think it is a little restrictive but it’s maintained and so that’s not where our big movement comes from”. After they establish themselves they’ll move out of that apartment complex and into other housing, and some of that affordable housing that they can get is not in our attendance area. “I would say the majority of families are hourly employees. I’ve had a lot of students that have doubled up with families. So, rather than moving from apartment to apartment, they have tended to either double up in homes or they

have moved out of state to double up with family members”. The shift of Section 8 housing into mixed-socioeconomic attendance areas and the doubling of families as a result of harsh economic time has posed a unique challenge for principals. “The shift in population, is somewhat threatening for some middle class families, the not in my backyard mentality sometimes surfaces”.

Principals serving low socio-economic populations who live primarily in Section 8 housing struggle to keep families in their homes and consequently children attending the same school. “We have enough parents in public housing that we know oMarie, it’s the end of the month and it’s been three months and the rent is due. We know that they can’t pay the rent, we know they are moving”. Another principal added that the result of moving when the rent is due results in large numbers of poor families moving among public housing units within the same area. “I mean if they are going to keep moving their kids and they don’t understand what that is doing to their kid. They don’t understand how far apart and how far behind that is putting their kid, but they probably did the same thing when they were younger. So it’s a cycle. It’s a vicious cycle. It’s a generational poverty. It’s generational mobility that’s tied to it”. For the schools that serve these mobile families from large populations of public housing the effects on the educational process are monumental. “People can’t fathom what it means to have 70 percent of our students come and be gone out in the school year, in one year”.

### *Refugees*

The placement of refugees within school attendance boundaries is closely tied to housing stock. One principal described the transformation in her school as a

result of refugee placement. “We have free and reduced lunch rate right now is 25%. It, when we opened 8 years ago it was right around 11% so we’ve had a pretty significant jump. Our population is about 20% minorities and we have a large ELL population and that’s just happened within the last four to five years. We have over a hundred children that are non-English speakers and the majority of them are refugees and so that’s been a real challenge for us”. Another principal echoed the scenario. “We have more than doubled our free and reduced lunch rate and currently we have 27 languages in our school. The change is a result of housing placements from the refugee office for families first three months”. The principal further explains the tie between refugee placement and housing opportunities. “We have an apartment complex in our attendance area that’s very affordable and you can walk to Wal-Mart and you can walk to a local industry that hires people that are non-English speakers”. Another principal describes the roles of the refugee offices in school mobility. “There are services available that are a magnet to bring people to the area in terms of social services and the area refugee center respects our ELL program, they will work to find families housing in our attendance area. So it’s kind of that old adage, if you build it, they will come”.

The placement of a family in housing has a ripple effect for the school site. “Within the same community if the refugee centers helps settle a dozen families from Sudan, then as they begin to settle into the American culture, if one of them moves to a duplex in my attendance area, then very often two or three other families will move into that same neighborhood”. The principal describes the shared housing a pattern as a part of the cultural piece. Another principal added, “I think some of

them come through family members or through churches that have helped place refugees. This year we had, I lost 7 of my Somali family kids in the last three months of school because they were going back to their country to visit family. They are supposed to be back in the fall”.

#### *Boundary Changes/District Transfer Policies*

In addition to decision made by families to move in pursuit of housing, participants identified the role of district policy was a consistent thread. Some principals describe closed transfer policies where if you move you change schools while others describe open transfer policies that allow families to attend the school of their choice. Principals within all socio economic levels described transfer policies as political and dangerous to school culture. “The transfer policy has caused, in my opinion, a great deal of problems. We have parents that will lie about their address, falsify documents, go to great extent to get into the school they want to attend”. Another principal added, “principals have asked that that be tightened up the transfers because sometimes people make a decision that they want to move before they even know the culture of the school or have experienced it, just by what they’ve heard on the street”.

Principals who service a high socio-economic cliental viewed in-district transfers as a political maze. “Sometimes people get in because of who they are, that is just the way it is”. Another principal added, “I personally have never denied one. I make the central office deny it because how do I distinguish whether you deserve to go here or someone else? Transfers are not equitable in my opinion”. The pressure to keep high socio economic parents happy is deeply rooted in many district

transfer policies. "I have one of the highest transfers over the whole district up here. I think out of all of my transfers, I think we've denied maybe 3 students". One principal explained, that parent who build multi-million dollar homes just outside of the attendance boundary expect to be able to educate their child at the same school.

Principals serving low socio-economic populations identified redistricting through new boundary lines to be problematic to their mobile students despite some school districts efforts to bus students to their previously attended Title One school. "We redistricted boundary lines and I want to say we had at least 100 that were brand new this year from another Title One school". Another principal servicing a low socio-economic area described the role of restricting. "Over half of our population lives in an area of public housing that we are losing to redistricting and we are gaining a different housing area. We have buses that pick up kids all over town and bring them to our school, because we do whatever we can to keep our kids even if they move". Another principal described their districts efforts to keep kids in their school despite redistricting. "We have several kids that we bring back in cabs because the district has set where we're not going to transfer those kids if we can avoid it". The 'avoiding it' and busing back minority students back to the school they left has left one principal asking difficult questions. "Sometimes I wonder are they busing them back here because it is good for the student or because other schools don't want them. It just seems like the people who are being segregated don't know that they're being segregated nor do they know what to do about it. The people who are doing the segregating and making it happen are the ones who want to be segregated so nothing is done".



### *Academic Challenges*

Principals from all socioeconomic levels identified academic challenges for mobile students. “I think reading is first and foremost that foundation block that mobility can cause challenges for students just in terms of having that consistent instruction and having a solid base”. Another principal indicated that the impact is cumulative. “There are so many gaps in their learning and by the time they’re in third or fourth grade it is next to impossible to catch them up and fill in all the holes”. The struggle to catch students up was explained to be an overwhelming task for many principals. “What’s challenging is when we have a 5<sup>th</sup> grader move in that’s three years below grade level and we only have a year’s time to work with them. So that’s a challenge as it is for any school”. All principals interviewed described the fight to catch students up as a consistent challenge and the driving factor behind academic intervention for mobile students.

### *Assessment*

#### *Finding the gaps*

The first step for many principals interviewed was to find the academic gaps in learning. One principal described the ability to find academic gaps and keep the student in the building long enough to address them as critical to the success of mobile students. “Kids that are in the building less than one year, I don’t think we’ve had much of an impact on them. But I think once you get beyond a year, really if you’ve got a lot of things in place to shore kids up and acclimate them to your community, it shouldn’t have a that big of an impact”. The experience level of the

teacher also has an impact on their ability to find academic gaps. “I would say, I’m lucky that I have veteran teachers so they’re very good at assessing those kids and figuring out where the holes, I think some of our newer teachers sometimes a struggle to figure out what are they missing and then figure out how to find the time to catch them up”.

Structured screening assessments have helped principals scaffold the knowledge level of the individual teacher and locate gaps quickly. “A lot of teachers have been trained in a math inventory process and we use that with the students when they come in. We also use a developmental reading assessment”. An addition principal noted the importance and challenges of school records. “Of course our first thing is to glean what we can from their school records and see what they’ve brought with them”. School records sometimes pose further problems to principals orientating new students.

“I don’t know what we are going to do this year when they come from the inner city. They are not putting kids in grade levels. The superintendent has taken that out and kids will be with multi-age peers working on skills until they master those skills and then they will move at the rate they are successful”. Another principal expressed similar concern; “I don’t know what we will do with those kids when they get to us. I’m assuming we will start with their age and then treat it almost like a home school situation, look at what skills they know and then make placement decisions based on that”.

#### *Ongoing formative assessment*

Across socio-economic levels principals identified the importance of ongoing

formative assessment as an important component to responding to achievement gaps identified through initial assessment. “The professional development that we do just to consistently keep our eyes on kids’ academic progress and we use an assessment wall to track reading we are constantly looking at individual achievement”. Another principal added. “We look at math and reading formative assessment and we track how students perform. We bring it to the table every week and we talk openly about it. We just try to fill the holes for, catch them before it’s too late”. One principal described this rhythm of instruction as monitoring, re-teaching, monitoring, re-teaching.

Principals also noted district-level assessments as a means to monitor student achievement and identify content gaps. “We have a lot of quarterly and mid-year assessments that we do and look at the results for gaps”.

One principal identified the importance of getting kids involved in the monitoring of their own progress. “Our kids know whether they are on track to meet the goal or not. They are used to seeing tracking sheets because they (the student) track all of their own data. They know whether they have hit advanced or proficient or whether they are falling short”. The principal explained that students routinely record their pre-post test progress and compare their performance to their personal goals targeted toward graduating from high school.

### *Seamless curriculum*

Principals noted the importance of a seamless curriculum across buildings as a common thread to the success of mobile students. Some districts have created a seamless curriculum and some districts have yet to take the task on. “It’s not too bad

anymore because we have developed some pacing guides and some order in our curriculum so that teachers are covering things in the same sequence”. Another principal explained that the goal of the structuring the content and pacing of instruction was not to stifle teacher creativity, but to improve mobile student academic performance. “We realized clearly we’ve got to get this curriculum seamless, not to take away teacher choice, we had to do it for the kids that are moving within our town”.

Other principals believe that a constant seamless curriculum is important to mobile student success, but do not currently have district wide pacing and content. “I think the biggest challenge is trying to ensure a seamless curriculum in any particular content. Let’s say that one of my kids move in March, their next school will might be teaching the same content objectives that we’re teaching in April and May. That to me is the biggest challenge”. Another principal added. “What do you do with that one kid when all these other kids are on unit 6 and you’ve got to get this kid caught up by two units? It’s hard to do”. Principals report that teachers struggle to make the grade card reflective of performance when students have not been exposed to skills within the quarter.

Inconsistent instructional format as to the curriculum struggle faced by principals and classroom teachers. “Some people are still using a Basel reader. Some people have really embraced reader’s workshop in a more balanced literacy approach. So, if kids are moving from one building to the next and it’s different, how can they succeed?” Another principal added, “This has got to stop. We have got to be philosophically aligned.”

### *Interventions*

Six principals noted when asked about specific interventions that successfully addressed the academic needs of mobile the importance of relationships. “If you can really build that relationship, and they know that you are going to do whatever you can for them then they are more apt to let you try to help them”. Another principal added that the first step to addressing academic gaps is the formation of a solid relationship. “ We do some tutoring with students, we first have to build that relationship and get to know them, then we go from there”.

Principals across socio-economic lines often use additional staff and supplemental curriculum to address the specific learning gaps of mobile students. “If they are struggling we have an assistance team that meets we discuss concerns about that student, and then we would put some strategies in place. We have some supplemental reading programs that we use with children, it’s on an individual basis based on what that team decides they need”. The employment of at-risk coordinators and remedial reading teachers has been historically an advantage of mobile students within Title One schools. “Our coordinator would meet with the kid at least once a week and they would go over grades, they would go over attendance, they would go over home life. She would, basically it came down to help with their homework, and help with their reading”.

Principals reported the importance of the ELL staff when meeting the needs of a mobile population that qualify for ELL services. “There are a number of things that we do in terms of supporting our ELL students. For example, before we

schedule any of our fall parent/teacher conferences, we will have our ELL teacher mass schedule her case load so that if she needs to bring in somebody for the students from Sudan, we have one interpreter that can be here for three hours and that's what it takes to get all of those families served". Another principal noted the importance of the same ELL support staff working with the K-2 school that feeds into his 3-5 schools. He explained the advantage of the ELL staff working with entire families across multiple school buildings.

So the counselor does a lot with the new students and then our student assistants team, our grade level team meetings, things like that, that's how we track individual students that are academically not performing where they need to be. Teachers report that to me. We have a meeting, and we have a system in place for that and so that I'm aware of all students that are not at grade level in any of the four areas.

While principals across socio-economic lines agreed on several themes regarding the academic impact on mobile students. Several threads surfaced that were specific to the socio economic demographic of the school. Principals serving populations of high socio-economic status reported that their mobile students are often among their brightest.

"In reading, generally they can mesh right in if they're on or above grade level in reading, they just jump right into whatever we're doing and to our way of teaching". Another principal explained that students' initial performance in math typically reflects how well the sending schools curriculum matches the receiving school. "My kids catch up quickly, they may have just missed a few things in math". The Ell students moving into high socio economic schools have a different level of

adjustment as well. “My ELL kids tend to be some of the brighter kids and I think some of that is just trying to survive all of what they are going through with the move. They excel here”.

Principals serving mixed socio economic populations noted the importance of support at home. “With some of our kids a lot of times there is not a lot of follow through at home. There’s a lack of exposure at home. A lot of times many of our kiddos are sitting in front of a TV or they’re playing video games and not doing some of the reinforcement activities that they could at home”. Another principal added that reinforcement at home through reading the newspaper, bedtime stories, and working with simple math activities is important. “Some of our mobile students have follow through at home and some of them simply do not”.

Principals serving low socio economic populations identified several constant factors specific to their demographics. “I think academic challenges are very often tied to attendance. It is not like they move on a Friday and they are in school Monday. Often, kids are out of school 2 to 3 weeks at a time and they are not reading books and they are not logging in on the computer and doing on-line math programs. Every time they move, if they are out of school 1 to 2 weeks, and some kids move 3 to 4 times a year, they have missed 4 to 6 weeks of school”. Another principal added, “Our kids move so much they never establish academic routines. There is an element of non-support for homework and literacy in the children’s homes”.

The alarming turn over of students in low socioeconomic schools was identified as challenge faced by all principals who serve poor populations.

“Constantly, I open up a file and be like My God this child has been to 6 or 7 schools and he’s only a 1<sup>st</sup> grader”.

Another principal added. “Out of our 50 5<sup>th</sup> graders that went on to middle school this year, 13 had been here since kindergarten and the other 37 had come in at some point. Thirteen of them had come just this year into 5<sup>th</sup> grade”. A third colleague noted the same pattern. “We have 17 1<sup>st</sup> graders come just this year. We would joke because when a car would pull in and we would go, “Oh, look, here comes another 1<sup>st</sup> grader that doesn’t know how to read.” And sure enough . . . Out of the 17 we got in, three could read and were on grade level. The rest, we were like are you kidding me”.

Several principals who serve low socio economic populations highlighted the impact of this kind of student mobility on the overall performance of the school. “Our kids who have been with us since kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade they are fine. Average, above average kids just like anybody else in the district. But the ones who haven’t been, have been with us 1 year or 2 years, are totally in another place. They’re still at least a grade level or two behind when they leave again”. Another principal challenged the current perception of school performance in light of her buildings student mobility. “This past year fell in the low achieving but high growth quadrant. So, when the state was here, they were in those schools that are high achieving but low growth and forcing the principals to answer the question, ‘The kids come to you smart but how do you help them? They come to you smart and they leave smart but there’s not a lot of gain in between’. Well, compared to the district, we had almost six times the growth as the district average. Now, a huge part



of that is our kids start so much lower than the average kid in the district". Despite the principals focus of the growth of her students the realities of NCLB do not change. "Are we going to hit that 68 whatever percent. . . we're not even close to 68 percent. We move our kids farther than anyone else in this district, but we are slapped with the label of failing".

### *Social Challenges*

#### *Feeling welcomed*

Principals across socio-economic levels identified several social challenges for mobile students and their families. Establishing a relationship with parents was identified to be the first social barrier to student success. "You can just tell when a student stays at a school from K through 5 especially, those are the families that are so involved and they are invested in their school. I've developed such strong relationships with my families after working with them". In contrast another principal pointed out the effect of moving in and out of schools. "When you get students and families that are just in and out, you don't get to know their parents. Parents don't get as involved with the school when they're frequently moving".

Participants consistently identified making families feel welcome at their school as a central part of their efforts to serve mobile students. "We certainly try very hard to make the child feel very comfortable and welcoming and the same with the parents too. Because I want the parents to know that I'm their resource and they can call me anytime, I'm here to help". Principals across socioeconomic levels identified parent attitude and reason for the move as additional factors to a family's ability to be open to a school's welcoming efforts. "Mobile students still have an

opportunity to be very successful, it depends on if their parents make an investment in their education and how much of a priority it is". Another principal noted, "If parents think hey this is a great place we've moved to. If parents are happy about why they've moved then the children typically adjust quicker and easier". In contrast, "if perhaps maybe one of the parents isn't happy about the move or maybe it was a termination or they've had to move in with a family member because of a job loss, there's a negative factor associated with the move, then that becomes a struggle for the kids".

### *Sense of belonging*

Participants identified students and families need to feel like they belong at the school as a common thread of mobile student. "Not only academically, but socially. They don't feel a part of the school. We know that for students to be successful they need to feel connected to the school, a strong connection". Another principal added, "My biggest concern with mobility is just getting kids to feel secure enough that they are available to learn". Several principals emphasized the importance of the student and teacher relationship. "If they are able to have camaraderie with the classroom and the teacher is someone they can trust and learn from I believe it increases their self esteem and as a result they're able to be more successful". Another principal added, "I truly believe that relationships are the foundation to opening up that motivation within students".

### *Fitting In*

Principals across socio economic lines reported that mobile students sometimes struggle to fit in with their peers. "Trying to figure out how they're going

to fit in with their peers is my biggest concern. It's that whole thing about the Maslow's hierarchy and feeling excepted. If you can't get that done with the kids, then they simply can't learn".

One principal described the challenges mobile students face at her school. "We have a huge population that they go from K through 5. So they form very strong friendships and bonds. I think that it is a little harder to come in as a new student, especially as a fourth or fifth grader". Another principal explained the struggle new students face when trying to find a peer group. "You can't make other students accept that student. I mean you can do all you can, I see that it's very hard on students to change schools often". In addition to the challenges identified across socio-economic lines principals serving mixed socio economic, low socio economic and large ELL populations identified threads consistent among their demographic.

#### *Mixed Socio-economic social challenges*

Principals serving mixed socio-economic populations identified the need for high expectations for all students as a consistent thread in serving mobile students. "We've been able to maintain the same high expectations and maintain that quality of school culture that all of our families expect". The principals explained that because the school culture is very different from some students' home culture it is essential that the school be clear about what is expected. "What I find intriguing is that often times, specifically with federal subsidized housing, the culture of that home community is not parallel with the expectations that we have here at school". Another principal added,

“I see problems on the bus as they are transitioning back from school to the home. The three-mile bus trip represents a passage of one culture to another and that’s where I see some discipline issues just because at school, they know what to expect and what is acceptable and yet at times in their neighborhood, that could be perceived, as you’re not tough enough. So, the kids are really transitioning from one culture to another and I think that’s socially one of the biggest challenges”.

#### *Low Socio-economic social challenges*

Principals serving populations with low socio economic populations reported that mobile students often find their place in social networks quickly. “Our students are very accepting of new kids, because they are all new. Everybody is new. Nobody knows who is new and who is not new”. While students seem to find a place among their peers, the depth of their relationships is reported to be adversely affected by moving. “I don’t see a lot of close friendships with peers because they come and go so much”. Another principal added, “Kids just put up that wall. They can’t cope with the unknown, they know they will be moving again and so they push away”.

#### *ELL population social challenges*

Principals who service schools with ELL students reported that school can initially be terrifying for students. “It’s very traumatic for them in a lot of situations. I can think back to the child that we got last from Iraq and recess was so traumatic for her. Every time we’d get her to the door to go outside she would scream and cry, and it took us forever. She had never in her entire life played outside. Her fear was

every time she was going to go outside she was afraid there was going to be a bomb or an attack and she was going to be in danger of losing her life, because she had never been allowed to play outside". The principal further explained the dramatic social transition refugee students make when they enter their first American school. "They have the struggle of where they've come from and it's so culturally different, and then not being able to communicate, so it's very traumatic for them. We do try and get translators and supports in place for them, but it's got to be difficult".

### *Social Interventions*

#### *Establishing clear expectations*

Principals across socio economic demographics identified the establishment of clear expectations for students and families as a common thread of serving mobile students. "One of the very first things that the kids do is they come in and I meet them and I meet their parents. We have somebody give them a tour of the building because typically they'll come in a day or two before they're able to start". Another principal added, "we'll have a student council member kind of give them a tour and we kind of got a little script where they give them a tour of the building and talk about the program and the expectations and really do a nice overview that really sets the stage that we're here to learn".

In addition to tours some principals host events for new families to their school. "Before the school year begins, anyone that's enrolled over the summer is invited to an evening to come in and we just go through a smorgasbord of information for them about the school district, about the school. We give them information about the community, and we trying to connect them up with some different places in the

community, welcome wagons, those kinds of things. Then we spend, give them time to ask questions”. Another principal described a similar event for her school. “We have an orientation for just the new families. We have cookies and punch, and a video and showcase our school”.

In addition to new student orientations one principal utilized a school directory to help families build relationships with other families. “Our PTA has a student directory and when new families move in we give them a copy of that so that they can look and see, then they can connect up with some neighborhood people as well”.

#### *Principal meeting at enrollment*

Principals across socio economic demographics reported meeting with students and their parents at the time of enrolment. One principal described the importance of setting the stage for academic focus during the first meeting. “I just let them know what it’s going to look like in this building. We don’t have time for foolishness. I have this conversation with them in front of their parents because their parents need to know that we’re not going to act foolish”. The principal explains that the initial meeting serves as a foundation for goal setting and any future discipline problems.

#### *Making expectations public and explicit*

All participants noted the importance of students knowing what is expected from them both academically and socially. “When new students enrolls we walk through the building so they can see our expectations, if you walk to the bathroom, there is a poster that has our expectations and what you need to do. Same thing in

the lunchroom, same thing in the hallways and same thing as you are going out to recess". Another principal added, "We try to make this large community into small communities with our assemblies, with our hallways being grade level hallways, and break our assemblies down into two smaller assemblies and things like that. We break things down so that children don't feel like they're lost in this enormous school".

### *Counselors*

Participants noted the role of the school counselor as a common thread in helping new students acclimate to their new school. "Our counselor does new friends groups and she meets weekly with those children for about six to eight weeks just touching base with them, making sure that they're connecting and making friends". Counselors often use the lunch period to scaffold new student friendships. "They'll (counselors) have lunch with groups of kids and if we know that they need a little extra tender loving care, we'll make sure that they get in that group. In addition one principal pointed out the importance of new students being encouraged to invite a friend to the lunch session. "Sometimes that may include inviting a friend to lunch to facilitate a friendship, because all of the kids love that special attention that I get to eat with the counselor and a friend. That's a good way to support value added friendship".

The utilization of small group counseling was also noted as a common practice to support new students. "She tries to always make a contact with the new kids. If they need a group, they get placed right away. If we know that we have a kid that's really struggling when they come, we try to hook up with staff members

through that invisible mentoring program”. One principal added that the school counselor is a key advisor to teachers who are looking to support a new student. “I think the class room teachers spend a great deal of time and effort just ensuring that we’ve got a good family feel in all of our class rooms so that the kids look out for each other. That kind of protective yoke, if you will, that’s facilitated by teachers and counselors and results in the kids looking out after each other”.

*Low Socio-Economic population social interventions*

Principals who service schools with low socio economic status identified the role of additional staff in meeting the social needs of their mobile students. “One of the first things we do is make sure that families have food to eat because they are sometimes really struggling. I have a snack program here at my school, we just shower them with lots of love and try to build trust with them because they are missing the basics, food and shelter”. Another principal identified the connection between basic needs and academic performance. “Underlying the academic issues is the attendance and home life, the social needs. Our at risk coordinator watches over the extended school day activities that help students build a bond with the school and keeps kids involved after school in a positive environment”. Another principal added the importance of the parent outreach and homeless program staff. “I mean all these things attribute to the academics. For our kids it’s not really so much whether they’re Somali or whether they’re Vietnamese. It’s much more whether they have nothing or they have something”.

*NCLB*



Throughout the interview process participants identified the impact No Child Left Behind has had on their efforts to serve mobile students, deal with federally mandated accountability and adapt to the changing school demographics as a result of school choice, and manage the implications to school culture that accompanies meeting AYP and failing to meet AYP. The challenges of mobility are integrated into the daily efforts of principals to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) and frequently came up as a part of the interview process.

“The one thing that I do think is done that has helped is it has focused the attention on learning. When I think back to even 10 and 15 years ago, those of us that were focused on learning and were vocal about making sure the kids were learning to read, we’re kind of the nerds of the group and we were too serious”. Another principal added, “I do think NCLB has rightly put the focus in on student learning and student achievement”. Principals across socio economic demographics identified the need to set high standards for all students. “I think it’s important to have goals and to be held accountable I don’t think there’s anything wrong with having high expectations, because I think it pushed us to take some kids further than we would have otherwise”. A principal who has been a school choice receiving school added, “we’ve had to serve many more mobile kids because of No Child Left Behind, but I believe in the philosophy behind No Child Left Behind. I think that having high standards for every child is very important”.

While principals overwhelmingly spoke in support of setting high standards for all students, many felt like NCLB had created situations of ‘automatic failure’. “I think it has gone overboard. In terms of expecting ELL students to be proficient in

reading on the state assessment, if they were proficient, they wouldn't be ELL students". Principals consistently expressed concern for the accountability measure set in place for ELL students. "My biggest beef with the NCLB really is our ELL kids. You know, I think to say that in a year you can put a test in front of a child and expect them to take it when they're non-English speaking is absurd and almost cruel punishment".

Principals across socio economic demographics expressed concern for the accountability outlined by NCLB. "I think some of the different pieces of NCLB set us up for failure". Expressions of concern centralized around the sanctions schools face largely related to student subgroups (ELL, SES, special education, mobile students). "The subgroups on our state testing, it is important to keep track of that data and see where those students are performing. We would do that regardless of NCLB, but to penalize a school because of a subgroup and splash them on the front page of the newspaper making the school look deficit is not fair". Another principal added, "we cannot control many of the factors we are being held accountable for including English proficiency, limitations in cognitive ability and kids who move all over the place". An additional colleague added, "You know, they do not all start at the same starting point in this race and they're not all going to end up at the same point. We do our darnedest to catch them up, but sometimes it takes longer than NCLB wants to wait".

*School Choice*

*Sending schools*

Two participants interviewed who serve low socio economic populations had experienced the effects of student mobility as a result of failing to meet the required performance set by NCLB for adequate yearly progress. “ With NCLB when we didn’t meet AYP, we were labeled failing school in the media. There were many buildings in our district that did not meet AYP that were not Title 1 schools. But because they don’t receive Title 1 dollars their name is not thrown out in the media”. Another principal added, “Because we receive Title 1 dollars we had to offer school choice and go through the torture of being labeled failing”. Both principals expressed discouragement that because their school received federal dollars they were required to offer school choice.

The result in both of the Title One schools was a marked by a decline in enrollment and consequently an increase in the already high number of students changing schools. “We have 275 kids and an 87% free and reduced lunch rate. At Christmas time, I want to say we ran about 220 combined ins and outs, about 31 of those kids were school choice”. The principal added, “ it was sad because we lost 31 kids that we had an established relationships with. There’s no forgiveness for mobility. We know that the more mobile you are, probably the lower you’re going to score. But, NCLB doesn’t take into account any of that so it doesn’t matter if you’re mobile or not, you’re expected to perform the same as your peers that maybe have been in the same school forever”.

A second principal expressed concern for his school as a result of school choice. By Christmas of last year he had 110 students come and go out of a population of 220. “We tend to have lots of our families, especially the new

kindergarten parents, who tend to ask for transfers before they ever step foot in our building. The perception is that we serve poor minority students and many families don't want their children to go *that* school, so they request a school choice transfer right away". The principal explained that established families who had previously expressed their love for the school are influenced by the 'failing' label. "We are struggling with mobility with the middle class families, they are now flying out of the building and say, 'Oh, well this is a failing school, I got to go'. Up until this point they were happy with everything going on but once we have been told that we were a failure everything changed". The principal also believes that school choice has created a sense of white flight' within his school attendance area. I think a lot of our families go because I think they are white flight. I think there is racial tension in our community still today and I think that the majority of parents who transferred out of my building would be middle class or upper class who didn't want to be around the black students, period.

Both principals expressed concern for the impact of baring the label 'failing' has had on their school staff. "I think that was detrimental to our families, to our students and to our teachers. Title 1 schools are not easy to work in. If you are not made for a Title 1 school you are going to discover that right away and you go to somewhere else where you can be successful". The second principal added, "the teachers who are in my building love our kids and they love what they do and it's a struggle and it's a headache and you cry at night worry about these kids day in and day out". To add the pressure of the label of 'failing' seems unfair to both principals. "Then to be slapped with a label that says you're not worth anything or that you're

not a good school or a good teacher, it's pretty awful". The second principal added, "I try to get across that I don't want to make it seem like we are better than other schools in the district because we're not. But we're not worse than every other school in the district just because we have high poverty and high minority".

### *Receiving schools*

One participant interviewed had become a school choice site for students who chose to leave their school as a result of NCLB school choice, two additional principals will likely be offered as a school choice site soon and are anticipating the challenges.

The principal who experienced mobility as result of school choice described the experience, "It was not very good, the principal who was there for eighteen years retired and I just as we were named a school choice site". Parent and teachers struggled with the idea of new student entering their school who did live in their neighborhood. "I came in and the parents were not very welcoming to me and they were not very welcoming to the new students that were moving as apart of school choice". The principal faced the challenge of open rejection of students, "there were several parents that who said 'I don't want those kids in our school. They don't belong out here', type of thing. And that's not right". The principal explained that many of the students came from different cultural backgrounds and "it was a shock to the little country school where they have lots of farmers and a lot of wealthy people". The principal described her efforts to help the staff and parents embrace all students including students coming to the school as a result of school choice. The

principal explained that the battle was too big and she had decided to change her career path after two years and leave the field of education.

Two other principals expressed concern regarding their school becoming a school choice site. “Well the biggest impact would be just in sheer numbers because we’re pretty much full”. In addition, “there would be a big concern. With my teachers the concern would be that we are going to do everything we can to help these kids. But who is going to help us out with these students, you know with the extra numbers that we’re going to have. We would need support from the district”. Another principal added, “we get no federal money here, you know, and so that’s the disadvantage of having a wealthy school”. The distribution of staff and dollars was a concern expressed by both principals. “If I have a pocket of disadvantaged students that bring with them no additional resources, I think that’s one of the hard things. Staffing is just purely based on a student head count and does not factor in the needs of students”.

### *Community Relations*

Across socio-economic lines participants identified the impact of NCLB on student mobility and school climate both within their school and within the larger community. “With the economy struggling, people are not as optimistic about their own future, they kind of close in and become much more protective of me as opposed to the ‘us’ in society”. As that occurs, it can create some challenges as a school community. “I think that people’s perception of schools has a lot to do with what goes on the national stage. Everybody thinks congress is awful, but they like their congressman. I think the same thing is true with schools. Everybody wants to

blame public education, but they love their school”.

Principals acknowledged the role that NCLB plays in shaping community perception of their school. “Schools become very cliquy and can easily take on the mindset, if they (students) don’t fit in to our mold then we don’t want them type of thing”. Another principal added, “it’s changing that mentality of people in communities to understand that we have to be accepting of everyone and that we’re here to serve everyone”. Communities pride in test scores can be jeopardized when school choice and mobility are introduced creating a challenge for principals. “This school is very, very proud of their scores and want them to stay high”. Another principal expressed similar concern. “The test scores are not always the most important thing and I just wish that more people would realize that”.

Principals also identified explaining sub group performance as a challenge associated with NCLB, school choice and consequently mobility. “When we don’t make AYP with our black student population for example, and that’s not to say that we don’t have more work to do with our African-American students, I mean we certainly do, but we also have a number of students that are immigrants from Africa that count in that black population and skew those results”. The principal further explained the challenge of explaining the performance without causing discourse in the community. “To be honest with you, that’s a little hard to explain to patrons without it sounding like we’re trying to make excuses. I think unfortunately, it also sets up some bad blood within the community”. Another principal added, “I think just being positive and loving every child regardless of who they are and modeling that is very important. But I wish there was more of an education piece for our

parents within our district. You know I wish our board and our superiors would take, the opportunity to educate people in the community about acceptance and tolerance. It is really hard when you bring in students that parents do not want in their school”.

### *School Climate*

The impact of mobility on individual student success was described by principals to be largely affected by the classroom teacher. “Teacher attitude plays into it as well. You know as a principal, where you take a new child to their room and say ‘oMarie you’re getting a new student’, you can just see the why me look or not again kind of look on their face”. Another principal explained that the teacher’s reaction is not directly tied to test scores. “It is not necessarily about their scores but it’s just, one more thing that they have to deal with. You can tell which teachers want a new student, and which ones are dreading it, and kids that go into that room are just so much more quickly acclimated”.

One principal explained a situation that highlights the concern for school climate in light of the test score driven atmosphere and the importance of teacher attitude. “I’m going to give you a point blank example and it’s a very harsh one and it’s one that makes me cry just saying it. I had a transfer child from a lower socio-economic school here. A staff member did not know I was present she said something about, our MAP scores are going to be reflecting by some of the transfers we have”. The principal explained, “what they were saying, was some of our transfers because they might be from different areas, could score lower. What they were really saying was if we would just stick with our little population up here, our



little kids who go to school every day and who have a home and 2.1 kids per house and a little dog and a picket fence then our MAP scores would be a oMarie". The principal expressed her disappointment with the attitude of the staff member, "this kind of attitude is just not good for the kids". She believes that the pressure for scores has deteriorated the school climate within her building. "No Child Left Behind, puts so much pressure on these teachers to make the score and to perform that they look at their kids differently. They look at them and think about the scores instead of celebrating the child".

One of the principal put the effects of mobility through immigration, NCLB, poverty and corporate in the larger context. "I guess it was different when it used to be the perception that the pie was expanding and people were a little bit more patient with sharing that pie. Now that the perception is that the pie is retracting and shrinking, people become a little bit too protective of themselves and their self-interests as opposed to the societal interest". Principals across socio economic lines recalled the struggles they face with mobility, but only one of them had a system in place for keep track of students coming and going. The focus of principal efforts was targeted toward understanding the need academic and social needs of the student and working to meet those needs.

"Was it a good reason to move, was it a bad reason to move. Was it a happy thing that brought them here, or was it a divorce that brought them here and they have to move in with a relative. All of those things play into it". Another principal added, "attitude matters, not only the attitude at home, the attitude at school. How are we when they come in? Are we excited to see them or are we like oh my God, another

one. I tell my staff know what, it's a child. If that were our family on the other side of the counter what would we want".

Participants interviewed understood the magnitude of student mobility and reflected on the entwinement of mobility with other risk factors. "I just think beyond mobility, the bigger issue is just families and their value systems. Everything is captured in mobility". Another principal added. "If we're talking about mobility of kids in poverty, there's so much more to it than just the mobility. Mobility is just one aspect of it. It hinders students socially and academically and we're accountable for all of that, it makes it tough". A third principal captured the insight expressed by many participants. "There are so many people out there that think, because your test scores are really good you're an awesome school. No. No. That's not always it. You know you could be very lucky and do really well on a test one year, and have very high scores. But I think it's about educating the whole entire child".

## Chapter 11

### Discussion

The United States has a long history of searching for utopian possibilities of public school, amidst a steady stream of population mobility. Horace Mann proclaimed that schools would be able to assimilate the millions of immigrants arriving during the late 1700's, teaching them American values and Christian morals. He promised that schools could end poverty, crime and social injustice. By the beginning of the 1900's the prospects of human perfection, social justice and safety of the United States were tied up in the hands of the emerging public school system.

By the 1940's, Comer (1986) explained that the public schools had entered a perpetual cycle of reform, struggling to fulfill the vision of Horace Mann. With large numbers of immigrants flooding into the country to support the economic recovery from the Great Depression and the impact of WWII, schools found themselves trying to meet the needs of a changing diverse population of students. The economic times of the post WWII era placed different demands on the public school system as a result of the industrial work force structure.

Under the leadership of President Roosevelt, government policy successfully created a job market that unified business, labor and minorities. The industrial economy needed workers and was capable of absorbing students who did not perform well in school or who chose not to attend school. It was possible for students to drop out of school to find employment, provide for their families and become productive employed citizens.

Florida (2005) reports that the economic recovery following the end of World War II encouraged the softening of immigration policy, and the Immigration Act of 1952 eliminated restrictions based on ethnicity but retained quotas based on national origin. The Immigration Act of the late 1960's liberated our country's policy even further. The influential legislation eliminated the restriction based on national origin and lifted the annual cap on admissions for immigrants from seven broad segments of the world. Florida (2005) reports that in the late 1970's, roughly 600,000 immigrants were entering the United States each year.

In addition to new students entering public school through immigration, schools became accustomed to accommodating military families. The military has historically moved families across the United States and abroad. Many children of service men and women attended elementary schools located on military bases. Secondary schools often saw numerous military children move in and out during their school career.

As the economic structures of the Cold War began to move away from hard industrial labor and became more inclusive of science and technology, the expectations placed on public schools began to change. Patrons and school personnel recognized that the job markets within the United States could not accommodate uneducated citizens as it had during the years following World War II. Consequently, the 1980's marked a pinnacle point for the public school struggle with student mobility.

During the 1980's schools continued to be faced with large numbers of immigrants entering the country as a result of the 1960's Immigration Act, however

the booming of the technology era, and the development of a multitude of suburbs, seemingly overnight, placed further demands on the public school system. Immigrants entering the United States assimilated frequently near major metropolitan areas to secure employment. As the cities became more diverse and crowded during the late 1970's, the phenomenon known as "white flight" began to occur in cities across the country. Technology had opened the job market worldwide and suddenly people could live, move and work anywhere in the world without the limitations of travel. Lang (2008) states the dense diverse city environment, the surge of technology and the desire of young cooperate executives to move away from city life resulted in a large population shift to the suburbs. Lang refers to the communities that developed overnight during the late 1970's, as *Boomburbs*.

The public school system has faced a historical struggle to meet the needs of mobile populations. The convergence of large numbers of children changing schools and the inability of the economy to absorb uneducated citizens resulted in political policy designed to force schools to educate every child, at the same pace regardless of their disability, native language, or pattern of school attendance. As the number of immigrants entering the country soared, the development of the world job market through technology evolved, military and "white flight" families stayed in motion, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandated schools to rise up to the vision set forth by Horace Mann.

NCLB has shaped public opinion of public education to equate a simple formula for school quality. The higher the test scores, the better the school. The oversight of policy makers regarding the effects of poverty, mobility, and cognitive

disability is seemly naive to many educators. Ignoring the effects of these critical indicators defies common sense and the results of most research. As the need for school accountability continues to build in political arenas the flow of students in and out of the public school system has never stopped.

As NCLB moved into the center stage of the political arena, the U.S. General Accounting Office (1994) reported that by the end of the third grade one out of six children had attended three or more schools, and that students often changed schools more than once during the school year. More recently Titus (2007), reported that in the United States, about one fifth of the population moves annually and the United States has one of the highest national mobility rates in the world. While some families continue to move within the corporate world and as a part of military life, families that are poor move 50% to 100% more frequently than families that are not poor (Hartman, 2002). Hall (2001) explained many believe that NCLB does not adequately account for the reality faced by the public school system. In the real world, many kids are just passing through.

Given the impact of mobility on classroom instruction and student development, it was important to examine the complexities surrounding student mobility. Therefore, the purpose of this concurrent mixed methods study was to gain information about post-move functioning of mobile students by converging both quantitative (broad numeric trends) and qualitative (detailed views) data. In the study, quantitative data were used to measure the collective academic achievement of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year at the time of testing in comparison to the total school achievement in Math

and Communication Arts based on results from the MAP (Missouri Achievement Program) Test from 2008-09. In the second phase, qualitative interviews were used to probe significant quantitative findings by exploring the needs of mobile students with ten elementary principals. At the same time, a historical view of the effects of mobility was gained from the experiences of adults born during five different decades (1940's through the 1990's) who moved a minimum of three times during elementary school years.

The overarching mixed method question for the study is: What is the impact of changing schools on academic attainment and social capital development?

The following sub-questions were used to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research topic. The quantitative data provide insight into the impact of changing schools in four large school districts across Missouri. The research sought to verify or rebuke the null hypothesis below.

#### *Quantitative Results*

##### *Null-Hypothesis*

There is no difference between the percentage of students scoring at or above proficiency in Math or Communication Arts on the 2008-09 MAP test. Essentially, the performance of the students who attended the school all year (Group A) and the sub group of students who had attended their elementary school for less than one year (Group B) will be parallel to one another at each grade assessed.

The result of the chi-square analysis indicate the p-values at less than .0001 for each grade level are very close to zero and indicate a significant relationship

between time enrolled in a school and proficiency on the MAP test. Therefore, the null-hypothesis was rejected.

There may be little that can be done to prevent mobility when mobility is a result of families' decisions to change jobs or residences. The challenge for the public school system becomes how to create technical solutions to address student mobility and meet the demands of NCLB. Changes in technology, the degree of global connectivity and the flow of immigration in the United States has occurred faster than the public school system's ability to design practical solutions for educating children on the move.

Principals find themselves working to improve student achievement with all students in a school environment judged by how well students perform on standardized tests. The school-centered approach of No Child Left Behind uses standardized test scores to measure society's full range of expectations for schools. The challenge for school leaders working to improve education is to figure out how to meet the needs of students moving in and out, while dealing with the daily depiction of failure captured in the media. Offenber (2004) described the role of the media in public perception and the elevation of NCLB. He reports the current strategy for improving the educational attainment of students in the United States is often expressed as improving schools: if schools had better test scores, the population would be better educated.



## Qualitative

### Sample Case Study

Through interviewing principals from four large school districts across Missouri, a sample case study was conducted to gain insight into the efforts of elementary principals to support the academic and social development of mobile students. The elementary principal participant selection was based on school performance data from four urban school districts in Missouri. The criteria for the purposeful sampling of elementary school principals included: principal of the school during the 2008-09 school year, willingness to reflect on the student data representing the overall performance of students attending the school for less than a year in comparison to students who had been in their building all year in Math and Communication Arts, and the ability to share insights related to the efforts of the school to serve mobile students.

While the overall mixed methods question for the study was to better understand the impact changing schools had on academic attainment and social capital development four sub-questions were explored during the sample study interview process:

- What factors outside of school are affecting children changing schools?
- What are the biggest academic challenges for mobile students?
- What are the biggest social challenges for mobile students?
- What programs, school routines or indicators of school culture affect the success of a mobile child?

Each participant provided a description of their experiences as elementary principals and insight into the unique challenges specific to the school socio-economic demographic. The sample case study provided several learnings summarized below.

*Reason for moving*

- Principals reported housing to be the primary reason students change schools. While some families are moving into improved housing, other families are relocating to a new house as a result of economic stress, job loss, divorce or marriage.
- Housing stock was noted by principals as the primary indicator of student mobility. Areas where new subdivisions are being built created some influx of new families within the school. However, more common were established neighborhoods of 1200-1500 square foot homes now considered to be starter homes and frequent rental properties for former occupants.
- Principals reported that the location of Section 8 housing impacted the student mobility in their school. Principals with high numbers of students living in Section 8 housing reported higher student mobility than those principals who did not have Section 8 housing in their attendance area. The decentralization of Section 8 housing out of the urban core into previously suburban neighborhoods has increased the poverty and mobility in several schools bordering large metropolitan areas.
- The location of refugee offices and resourcesunl impacted the student mobility for several principals. School located near refugee centers and

within neighborhoods with amenities such as walking distance to food and basic needs retail and industries that high non-English speaking citizens are often sought out as locations for refugee initial placements (3 months) by refugee offices.

- Principals identified district boundary changes and transfer policies as a source of student mobility. Principals across socio-economic demographics identified in-district transfers as decision based on entitlement and local politics.

#### *Academic challenges*

- Principals indicated the primary academic challenge for schools servicing mobile students is to find the gaps in student knowledge and finding ways to remediate where gaps occur while continuing to keep the classroom content moving forward. The skill level of the teacher in assessment and individual remediation was reported to be variant and important to the struggle to catch new students up to their peers.
- The use of ongoing assessment was identified by principals to measure progress for all students, but particularly important to the academic success of new students to determine if the learning gaps identified at enrollment are being addressed.
- Principals across socioeconomic lines reported the need for a consistency in the scope and sequence of curriculum. Students who move within districts where teachers are required to teach specific objectives within a given amount of time have less of a chance in missing blocks of instruction due to

the sequence of instruction. Consistency in the philosophical base for instruction across schools within a district was also noted. Students who are asked to adjust to constructivist teaching in one school and then transition of traditional lecture teaching in another school struggle to adjust to the academic demands placed on them.

- Academic intervention available to students varied among principal participants. The presence of tutoring, one-on-one remediation, goal setting and student data collection were noted among participants. The direct academic intervention appeared to be loosely designed in many participants' schools. The constraints of budget and adequate personnel limited the services provided to academically struggling students beyond the effort of their classroom teacher.

### *Social challenges*

- Principal participants identified the need of all families and students to feel welcome in the school. The ability of the school to build trust and communication with mobile families was considered to be essential to student success by participants.
- Principals recognized the need of students and families to feel like they fit into the social network of the school as important to the success of mobile students.
- Several principals indicated the social challenges of ELL students are often a result of cultural understanding and communication limitations. ELL students come to school with a variety of prior experiences and supports.

Principals indicated the need to better understand the needs of refugees and non-English speaking mobile students.

### *Social Intervention*

- All principal participants indicated the need to establish clear expectations for learning and behavior with new students and their families. Efforts to communicate expectations varied among participants but included new family orientations, school tours, classroom buddies, posted expectations within the school building, and assemblies designed to remind students of expectations.
- Several principals identified the importance of meeting with new students and their families one-on-one. The initial meeting was found to be helpful for getting to know the new family and for establishing school expectations.
- Principals described the need to make expectations public and explicit for all students, especially new students. Posted expectations within in the school, news letters, and student progress reports were found to be useful in communicating school expectations.
- Two principals identified the value of students tracking their own progress to meet academic and social expectations.
- The efforts of the school counselor was noted by all participants as critical to helping new students feel a part of the school and establish friendship networks. The efforts of counselors varied among schools but included new student small groups, lunch buddies, and one-on-one counseling.

*NCLB*

- Participants across socioeconomic populations expressed concern for the student mobility occurring as a part of school choice. Title One elementary schools only, (who receive federal funding) must offer students the choice to attend another school at district expense if they fail to meet adequate yearly progress as defined by No Child Left Behind. The student mobility out of schools where they are struggling to meet AYP has resulted in mobility based on the perception of failing by patrons, and consequently declining school enrollment for the schools of two participants. Additional participants face student mobility as a receiving school for students wishing to leave their school based on their ability to maintain adequate yearly progress
- Principals across socio-economic demographics identified the challenge of explaining No Child Left Behind and Adequate Yearly Progress without making excuses for student performance. Principals agree that they should be held to a high standard of achievement, but explaining the performance of sub groups such as special education, mobile students, ELL students, students in poverty and refugees pose challenges principals effort in community relations.
- Principals reported a concern with community members and school parents acquainting school quality with school test scores. The intricacy of state assessments were described by principals as hard to explain and often misunderstood.

A recent article in the Harvard Education Letter by author Laura Pappono

(2009), highlights the struggle of urban school principals for equity across socioeconomic settings. Pappono (2009), states that much of the efforts of school leaders to create school reform has been driven by content. School administrators and teachers in their pursuit to meet the demands of NCLB have spent countless hours hashing out what content kids need to learn. Pappono (2009), points out that increasingly school leaders are talking about social capital as a key ingredient to improving the urban schools.

School leaders are beginning to examine the idea of bundling social capital as a means of helping disadvantaged children succeed socially and academically. The key for school leaders in developing social capital in all students is to find ways to evaluate the financial, human/parental, school/community, and creative capital currently in place for a child and design supports to scaffold under developed sources. It is possible for children lacking the advantage of financial or human/parental capital to compensate in another context (Walser, 2006).

#### Qualitative

##### Historical multi-case study

While the overall mixed methods question for the study is: What is the impact of changing schools on academic attainment and social capital development? Two sub questions were explored during the historical multi-case study interview process. How did moving affect academic progress? What was the role of social capital when reestablishing social networks at a new location? In each participant's story and memories provided descriptions of their academic experiences as well as key components of social capital; financial capital, human/parental capital,

school/community capital and creative capital. This context and themes common to their experiences are summarized below.

- Three of five participants reported moving as a result of their parent's career.

Two participants moved in response parental marriage and better housing.

- All participants identified an adverse effect to there relationships with of the extended family as a result of moving.

Each participant in the study accessed different sources of social capital to increase their academic success and social wellbeing while moving from community to community. The idea that individuals can gain personal benefit for themselves by creating a web of social relationships and ties to increase their own access to information and skills and enhance their own success was a critical learning from the study. Participant's ability to bundle sources of social capital from the resources (financial capital, human/parental capital, community/school and creative capital) available to them played a role in participant's ability to reestablish themselves in new surroundings.

### *Social Capital*

- All five participants benefited from variant levels of financial capital. Social relationships and ties built through little league sports, dance and piano lessons helped some participants reestablish their social capital post move. In addition, opportunities of vacationing, sight seeing, camping and visiting extended family helped participants maintain connectiveness among their immediate family members while moving from school to school.
- Participants benefited from variant levels of human/parental capital. Daily



family routines such as family dinner, time spent together gardening and cooking, and participating together in games and activities helped some participants reestablish their social capital post move. In addition, the emphasis on reestablishing the home environment through the display of familiar items, simple trinkets and family heirlooms was identified by some participants as important to reestablishing a sense of security in a new environment.

- Participants benefited from variant level of school/community capital. School activities such as sports, clubs, and committees helped some participants reestablish their social capital post move. In addition, activities such as church, scouting, community centers, and community celebrations added to some participants' feelings of belonging. The personality and openness to participation in school and community base activities varied among participants and was a factor in the level of social capital gained through both school and community.
- Each participant gained some social capital through creativity. Activities such as instrumental music, dance, and expressive writing was a source of social capital for some participants. The lack purposeful fostering of creative interest was evident for four of the five participants.

The frequency of moving for all participants had a varied affect on their academic attainment. The pursuit of education varied from participant to participant but coincided with their level of acceptance in the school setting.

### *Academic Attainment*

- All participants described their ability to make friends and find a social network they felt apart of to be a critical component of their social and academic success. The absence of friendship and a sense of belonging was a consistent indicator of participants' engagement in the educational process and academic aspirations.
- Expectation set by parents, school personnel and social networks influenced participants goals for academic attainment and dedication to accessing new knowledge.
- Middle school marked a critical turning point for three participants with limited academic attainment. All three reported that the academic demands exceeded their capabilities and that they received limited or no help at home to keep up with the increasing academic demands.

### *Lifelong Impact*

Despite moving in and out of numerous schools all five participants were able to bundle together the social capital they gained through financial capital, human/parental capital, school/community capital and creative capital to find their way to success.

- Participants routinely remembered very little about the physical structure of the schools they attended or the enrollment processes.
- Participants consistently recalled key people who took special interest in them, who fostered their interests or who set clear expectations for them.
- Participants perception of their success at a particular school was frequently

equated to their ability to reestablish their social capital and make friends.

- Participants describe their pursuit of academic attainment to be largely influenced the expectations set for them, their ability to gain a sense of belonging in school, and their ability to keep up academically.

## Recommendations

The learnings from this study suggest actions for professionals in education, policy makers, community members and parents. The recommendations that follow focus on the need for and development of intervention strategies as well as continued research focused on the complex issues surrounding student mobility.

The most significant learning from this study is the need for schools to assess and compensate for gaps in the social capital of mobile students. Educators have often wondered why some students from the poorest of homes can move from school-to-school, obtain their academic goals, and become contributing members of society. The findings of this study suggest that students who are successfully, regardless of their socioeconomic status, race or gender, have tapped the resources around them to create a social capital bundle. Some children draw their social capital from financial resources, some from strong parental support, some from church and community activities and some from deep creative roots. This study suggests that the combination of these social capital sources is the foundation of individual student success.

Schools often find themselves serving mobile students who have holes in their social capital bundle. Children come to school with deficits in one area of social capital and more alarming are the large number of children who come to school with deficits in multiple areas of social capital. This study suggests that the role of the schools is to first find the gaps within a child's social capital bundle.

The challenge for school leaders is to assess the social capital of students at enrollment and provide support in the areas necessary. Caution is to be taken when

presuming that all socioeconomically deprived students have the same social capital needs. Some families, despite their lack of financial capital, have a surplus of human/parent capital within the home. In addition, some poor families have very strong neighborhood and church ties that provide community social capital for their children. The work of school professionals is to develop methods to assess social capital and programming options to support the specific social capital needs of each child.

Schools can increase the success of students by filling in social capital around the areas of social capital a child already has in place. By assessing student social capital, finding the gaps, and filling in social capital around areas of social capital a child already has, schools can create a web or bundle of social capital sources. By compensating with high level of capital gained through school and community capital, schools can help students who have a lower level of capital in another area.

As reported by Parcel and Dufur (2001), schools with active approaches to building social capital tend to include three elements: exposure, explicit teaching, and experience. Exposure connects students to people with new views and ideas. Explicit teaching that spells out and models for students precisely what they need to fit into a different learning and working environment. These schools offer students a wide variety of experiences giving students a chance to practice those skills. Efforts such as civic engagement, service projects, sports, and expressive arts in schools with high numbers of disadvantaged students play a key role in helping poor children access the social capital sources often built into the family routines of middle and upper class families. As described by Abraham Maslow, it is the skills of

friendship, cooperation, and self-confidence that are preemptive to the cognitive demands measured by NCLB and the determinant of academic attainment.

In addition to the significant learning of social capital bundling as a foundation for academic attainment for mobile students, several other learnings were gained from the study.

- At the state level, consistency needs to be achieved in the counting of mobile students. Districts could benefit from understanding the effects of redistricting and school choice school changes currently not reflected in the state of Missouri data collection system. The counting procedures at the state level need to be inclusive of all mobile students and not limited to students who enter a school after the late September deadline.
- Providing communities, governmental officials and school personnel with accurate information regarding the challenges facing schools to make AYP is a critical part of improving the public perception of public schools. Tracking the number of schools a child has attended, the length of time children have been serviced in a building and an inclusive formula to accurately account for a children attending a new school can better equip stakeholders to understand barriers to the public education system.
- State, district and school enrollment records should reflect the gaps in education experienced by a student who changes schools. Some children are missing large portions of their school career in between moves.
- School districts can improve the academic attainment of mobile students by standardizing enrollment assessment procedures. Principals and teachers

- need efficient methods of indentifying the learning gaps for individual students.
- School districts can improve the academic attainment of mobile students by providing all schools with additional resources and personnel to meet the needs of mobile students with high needs. The centralization of support dollars in only a few schools with high needs students leaves principals with pockets of high needs students without the resources necessary to advance their academic attainment.
  - School districts can improve the academic attainment of mobile students by implementing a consistent scope and sequence for curriculum among schools. The standardization of curriculum can minimize the learning gaps for mobile students who move within a school district.
  - School districts can improve the academic attainment of mobile students by implementing a consistent instructional methodology among schools. The standardization of instructional methodology can reinforce clear expectations for learning and establish consistent classroom routines.
  - Schools can improve the reestablishment of social capital and consequently the academic attainment of mobile students by formalizing the evaluation of social capital including financial capital, parental/human capital, school/community capital, and creative capital.
  - Schools can improve the reestablishment of social capital and consequently the academic attainment of mobile students by purposefully scaffolding

missing pieces of social capital and strengthening established social capital on an individual basis.

- Creative capital is often overlooked by school officials and parents as a source of social capital. However, employment opportunities in the 21<sup>st</sup> century require the reconfiguration of current thinking and the development of new ways of thinking. Mobile students can benefit from experiences that develop their creative capital.
- Parents of mobile children can benefit from understanding the disruption to social capital that occurs when a child changes school and practical ways to build social capital in a new community or home.
- School staff including support staff, leadership staff, and classroom teachers can increase the academic attainment of mobile students by creating a sense of belonging within the school community for both the student and their family.
- School staff, including support staff, leadership staff, and classroom teachers must be cognizant of their reactions to new students. Reactions of imposition, dread or frustration must be avoided at all costs, as they are detrimental to the academic attainment and social capital development of the student.
- School staff including support staff, leadership staff and classroom teachers must look beyond physical appearance to establish a students' level of ability and social capital. Students at all socioeconomic levels can have gaps in social capital and learning gaps as a result of changing schools.



- The development of friendship and social networks is foundational to academic attainment. Mobile students can benefit from purposeful efforts by parents, teachers, principals, and community members to help them feel like they fit in and develop friendships.

*Further research*

- Further research is needed on how to develop practical tools for assessing social capital as a part of school enrollment. Schools who serve large populations of children in poverty assess social capital subconsciously. Identifying methods to more uniformly identify the social capital needs of students can bring efficiency to the process.
- The study indicates that further research is needed in specific techniques to adequately build creative capital to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.
- Further research is needed to adequately assess student learning gaps within in school districts and across school districts. Methods of creating instructional continuity for mobile students will need to be better understood to avoid learning gaps in mobile students.

## References

- Alder, P.A. & Alder, P. (1998). *Peer power: Preadolescent culture and identity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Adler, S. (1977). Maslow's need hierarchy and the adjustment of immigrants. *International Migration Review*, 11(4), p. 444-451
- Alspaugh, J. (1991). Out of school environmental factors and elementary school achievement in mathematics and reading. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 24(3), 53-33.
- Alvarez-Mchatton, P. A., Zalaquett, C.P., & Cranson-Gingras, A. (2006). Achieving success: Perceptions of students from migrant farm work families. *American Secondary Schools*, 34(2), 25-39.
- Audette, R. & Algozzine, B. (2000). Within district transfers and student achievement: moving ahead by staying in one place. *Special Services in Schools*, 16(1/2), 73-81.
- Barton, P. (2004). Why the gaps persist? *Educational Leadership*, 62(3), 8-13.
- Bevans, K., Bradshaw, C., Miech, R. & Leaf, P. (2007). Staff and school level predictors of school organizational health: A multilevel analysis. *Journal of School Health*, 77(6), 294-302.
- Black, S. (2006). Stabilizing schools with kids on the move. *Educational Digest*, 72(3), 46-15.
- Bracey, G. (1997). Children in motion. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 78(1), 477.

- Branz-Spall, A., Rosenthal, R. & Wright, A. (2003). Children of the road: Migrant students, our nation's most mobile population. *Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 55-62.
- Brown, R. & L. M. & Gilligan, C. (1992). *Meeting at the crossroads*. New York: Ballantine.
- Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How it is done? *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 97-113.
- Brundage, A. (1989). *Going to the sources*. Wheeling, Il: Harlan Davidson.
- Chen, G. (2008). Communities, students, schools and school crime: A confirmatory study of crime in U.S. High Schools. *Urban Education*, 43(3), 301-318.
- Cole-Henderson, B. (2000). Organizational characteristics of schools that successfully serve low-income urban African American students. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 5(1&2), 77-91.
- Coleman, J.S. (1987). Families and schools. *Educational Researcher*, 16, 32-38.
- Coleman, J. S. (1990). *Foundations of social theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Comer, J. (1986). Parent participation in the schools. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 6 (67), p. 442-446.
- Cook, G. (2006). Schooling the forgotten kids of Hurricane Katrina. *Education Digest*, 71(9), 7-13.
- Creswell J. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, L. & Garrett, A. (2008). The “movement” of mixed methods research and the role of educators. *South African Journal of Education*, 28(3), 321-333.
- Delgado-Gaitan, C. (1991). Involving parents in the schools: A process of empowerment. *American Journal of Education*, 100(1), 20-46.
- Delisio, E. (2002). Department of Defense schools: Their secret weapons for success. *Education World*. Retrieved from [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_issues/issues349.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/issues349.shtml).
- DiCecco, M. Rosenblum, L. Taylor, L & Alderman, H. (1995). Welcoming: Facilitating a new start at a new school. *Social Work in Education*, 17(1), 18-29.
- Eder, D. (1985). The cycle of popularity: interpersonal relations among female adolescents. *Sociology of Education*, 21(6), 154-165.
- Engec, N. (2006). Relationship between mobility and student performance and behavior. *Journal of Education Research*, 99(3), 167-178.
- Epstein, J. L. (1996). Perspectives and previews on research and policy for schools, family, and community partnerships.
- Fields, J.M., & Smith, K. E. (1998). *Poverty, family structure, and child well-being: indicators from the SIPP*. A paper presented at the annual meeting of the Population Association of America (PAA) Chicago, IL., April 1998. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps.html>

- Fischer, M. (2002). School personnel's perceptions of effective programs for working with mobile students and families. *The Elementary School Journal*, 102(4), 317-333.
- Florida, R. (2005). *The flight of the creative class*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Fowler-Finn, T. (2001). Student stability vs. mobility. *School Administrator*, 58(7), 36-40.
- Fendrich, D. (1993). *The legacy of the civil rights movement*. New York, NY: Suny.
- Gibson, M. (2003). *Improving graduation outcomes for migrant students*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. ED-RC-03-2.
- Gordon, J. (2002, April 28). Schools adjust seesaw of racial balance. *New York Times*. Retrieved July 19, 2009, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/28/nyregion/schools-adjust-seesaw-of-racial-balance.html?pagewanted=1>
- Gravetter, F. & Wallnau, L. (2009). *Statistics for the behavioral sciences*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Gruman, D., HaraChi, T.W., Abbot, R.D., Catalano, R. F., & Fleming, C. B. (2008). Longitudinal effects of student mobility on three dimensions of elementary school engagement. *Child Development*, 79(6), 1833-1852.
- Hall, T. (2001). Student movement: The fatal flaw of the Bush education plan. *The Washington Monthly*, 33(9), 23-25.
- Hartman, C. (2002). *High classroom turnover: How children get left behind*. Retrieved from <http://www.ccr.org.chapter16pdf>.
- Hartman, C. (2006). Students on the move. *Educational Leadership*, 63(5) 20-4.

- Hatch, J. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Haywood, T. (1997). Does classroom mobility hurt stable students? An examination of achievement in urban schools. *Urban Education, 32*(3), 354-372.
- Heinlein, L. & Shinn, M. (2000). School mobility and student achievement in an urban setting. *Psychology in the Schools, 37*(4), 349-357.
- Hofstede, G. & Hofstede G. (2005). *Culture and organizations software of the mind*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Holloway, L. (2000, May 25). Turnover of teachers and pupils deepen troubles of poor schools. *New York Times*, pp. A1.
- Humke, C. & Schaeffer, C. (1995). Relocation: A review of the effects of residential mobility on children and adolescents. *Journal of Human Behavior, 32*(1), 116.
- Kane, T. & Staiger, D. (2002). Volatility in school test scores: Implications for test-based accountability systems. *Brooking Papers on Education, 5*, 235-283.
- Keels, M. (2008). Second-generation effects of Chicago's Guatreau residential mobility program on children's participation in crime. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 18*(2), 305-352.
- Keely, K. (2003). Cultivating classrooms with heart. *Classroom Leadership 6*(2), p. 1.
- Keller, M. M., & Decoteau, G. T. (2000). *The military child: Mobility and education*. Bloomington, IN: Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.
- Kerbow, D. (1995). Patterns of urban student mobility and local school reform. *Journal for Students Placed at Risk, 1*(2), 147-169.

- Kerbow, D. (1995). *Pervasive student mobility: A moving target for school improvement*. Chicago, IL: Chicago Panel on School Research.
- Kerbow, D., Azcoitia, C., & Buell, B. (2003). Student mobility and local improvement in Chicago. *Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 158-164.
- Lang, R. & Lefurgy, J. (2007). *Boomburbs: The rise of America's accidental cities*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Lash, A. & Kirkpatrick, S. (1990). A classroom perspective in student mobility. *Elementary School Journal* 91 , p. 177-191.
- Levine, M., Wesolowski, J., & Corbett, F. (1966). Pupil turnover and academic performance in an inner-city elementary school. *Psychology in the Schools*, 3(2), 153-158.
- Ligon & Piredes, (1992). *Student Mobility Rate: A moving target*. Paper presented at the annual American Educational Research Association annual conference. AISD-Pub-91, 33.
- Long, L. (1992)..International perspectives on the residential mobility of America's Children. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54(7), 861-869.
- Martinez, Y. & Cranston-Gingras, A. (1996). Migrant students in the education process: Barriers to school completion. *The High School Journal*, 80(1), p. 28-38.
- Maslow, A. (1943). *A Theory of Human Motivation*, *Psychological Review* 50(4), p. 370-96.
- Maslow, Abraham (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper.

- McCartney, S. (1986, February 23). *Houston Chronicle, Lifestyle Section*, 2(Star Edition), p. 17.
- Midgley, J. & Livermore, M. (1998). Social capital and local economic development: I Implications for community social work practice. *Journal of Community Practices*, 5(1/2), 29-40.
- Mmari, K., Bradshaw, C., Sudhinaraset, M., & Blum, R. (2010). *Exploring the role of social connectedness among military youth: perceptions from youth, parents, and school personnel*. Retrieved from <http://www.springlink.com/content/4020q3p722730067>.
- Nakagawa, K., Stafford, M., Fischer, T. & Matthews, L. (2002). The “city migrant” dilemma, building communities at high-mobility urban schools. *Urban Education*, 37(1), 96-125.
- Neild, R., Stoner-Eby, S. & Furstenberg, F. (2008). Connecting interance and departure: the transition to ninth grade and the high school dropout. *Education and Urban Society*, 40(5), 543-569.
- Nelson, P., Simoni, J. & Adelman, H. (1996). Mobility and school functioning in the early grades. *Journal of Educational Research* 89(6), 365-69.
- Nettles, M., & Perna, L. (1997). *The African American educational data book* (Vol. II). Fairfax, VA: Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute.
- Northouse, P. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.



- Offenberg, R. (2004). Inferring adequate yearly progress of schools from student achievement in highly mobile communities. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 9(4), 337-355.
- Olson, L., & Jerald, C.D. (1998). The achievement gap. *Education Week Quality Counts*, 17(17), 11-13.
- Pappano, L. (2009). Bonding and bridging: Schools open doors for students by building social capital. *Harvard Education Letter*, 25(5), p. 1-3. Retrieved from <http://www.hepg.org/hel/printarticle/423>.
- Patrick K. & Hirshman B. (2002). Study says Florida has worst high school graduation rate in U.S. *Sun-Sentinel News*. Retrieved July 2, 2009 from Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.
- Popp, P. A., Stronge, J. H., & Hindman, J. L. (2003). *Students on the move: Reaching and teaching highly mobile children and youth*. NY: Urban Diversity Series. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED482661)
- Pribesh, S. & Downey, D. (1999). Why are residential and school moves associated with poor school performance? *Demography*, 36(4), 521-534.
- Puentes, H., Herrington, D. & Kritsonis, W.(2008). Student mobility and academic achievement at a selected elementary campus: a case study with national implications *National Forum of Applied Educational Research Journal*, 21(1),55-61.
- Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6,p. 65-78.

- Randall, K & Bowen, A. (2008). *Mean Girls: 101 creative strategies and activities for working with relational aggression*. Chaplin, SC: Youth light.
- Ream, R. (2005). Toward understanding how social capital mediates the impact of mobility on Mexican American achievement. *Social Forces*, 84(1), 201-224.
- Reese, W. (2007). Why Americans love to reforms schools. *Australian Journal Educational Research and Perspectives*, 31(9), 107-119.
- Reyes, P., & Fletcher, C. (2003). Successful migrant students: The case of mathematics. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 18(4), 306-333.
- Reynolds, A. J. (1992). Mediated effects of preschool intervention. *Early Education and development*, 3(2), 139-164.
- Rhodes, V. (2005). Kids on the move: The effects of student mobility on NCLB school accountability ratings. *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education*, 3(3).  
Retrieved from ://www.urbanedjournal.org/articles/article0020.html
- Rhodes, V. (2008). Learning on the go: Voices of highly mobile urban students. *Learning inquiry*, 2(2), 113-125.
- Richards, L. & Morse, J. (2007). *READ ME FIRST for a user's guide to qualitative methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rumberger, R. & Larson, K. (1998). Student mobility and the increased risk of high school dropout. *American Journal of Education* 10(7), p. 1-35.
- Rumberger, R. & Thomas, S. (2000). Distribution of dropout and turnover rates among urban and suburban high schools. *Sociology of Education*, 73(1), 39-67.

- Rumberger, R. (2002). Student mobility and academic achievement. Eric Digest, EDO- PS-02-1.
- Rumberger, R. (2003). The causes and consequences of student mobility. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 6-21.
- Scanlon, E. & Devine, K. (2001). Residential mobility and youth well-being: Research, policy and practice issues. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, XXXVIII (1), 119-138.
- Schafft, K. (2005). *Poverty, residential mobility and student transiency within a rural New York school district*. A paper prepared for the Northeastern U.S. rural poverty conference. University Park, PA: Penn State University.
- Schaefer-McDaniel, N. (2004). Conceptualizing social capital among young people: Toward a new theory. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 14(1), 140-150.
- Schatz, T. (1999). *History of the American cinema: Boom or Bust*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
- Sheldon, S. (2003). Linking school – family – community partnerships in urban elementary schools to student achievement on state tests. *The Urban Review*, 35(2), 149-165.
- Smith, J., Finn, M., & Paine, S. (2008). When mobility disrupts learning. *Education Leadership*, 65(7), 59-63.
- Smrekar, C. & Owens, D. (2003). It's a way of life for us: High mobility and high achievement in Department of Defense schools. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 165-176.

- South, S. & Haynie, D. (2004). Friendship networks of mobile adolescents. *Social Forces*, 83(1), 315-350.
- South, S., Haynie, D., & Bose, S. (2007). Student mobility and school dropout. *Social Science Research*, 36 (2007), 68-94.
- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stavem, J. (2008). Revolving doors of Nebraska Schools: A mixed methods study of Nebraska School wide Title I schools and systematic practices implemented to address the needs of highly mobile students (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Nebraska, 2008). *ProQuest Digital Dissertations*, AAT 3324796.
- Student Mobility. (2004, September 21). *Education Week*. Retrieved June 27, 2009 from <http://www.edweek.org>
- Teideman, S. (1942). A study of pupil-teacher relationship. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 35(9), p. 657-664.
- Texas Historical Commission. Fundamentals of oral history: *Texas Preservation Guidelines*. Retrieved May 4, 2009 from <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/publications/guidelines/OralHisotry.pdf>
- Titus, D. (2007). Strategies and resources for enhancing the achievement of mobile students. *NASSP Bulletin*, (91), 81-97.
- Thompson, B. (2004). Equitable measurement of school effectiveness. *Urban Education*, 39(2), 200-229.
- Tofoya, J. (2001). *March toward excellence: A report of the National Education Goals Panel (selected excerpts)*. Retrieved from the Department of Defense Education <http://www.dodea.edu/communications/news/negp/exerpts.pdf>

- U.S. General Accounting office (1994). *Elementary School Children: Many Change School Frequently, Scaring Their Education*. Washington DC: General Accounting Office.
- Valerio, M. (1999). *Windows into the past: A historical multi-case study of five women who experienced pregnancy as unmarried teens*. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE.
- Weckstein, P. (2003). Accountability and student mobility under Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act. *Journal of Negro Education*, 72(1), 117-125.
- Weingarten, R. (2008, July 17). Stop scapegoating teachers. *USA Today*. News section, pp. 8. Retrieved from <http://www.usatoday.com>.
- Wiseman, R. (2002). *Queen Bees and wannabees*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.
- Zehr, M. (2007). Mobility of Native American students can pose challenges to achievement. *Education Week*, 2(7), 10. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org>.



APPENDIX



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

Name Generational Participant  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Address Line 3  
City, State, Zip code

Understanding Social Capital Development and Academic Attainment of Mobile Students

Date < Insert date >

Dear <Insert Name of Participant >

As a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am conducting a study to gain information about the post-move functioning of mobile elementary students. This is the sole purpose of the study. The results will be of interest and value to school administrators, classroom teachers, and parents of mobile students.

Your experiences and insight as an adult who changed schools repeatedly during elementary school are important. You have been invited to participate in the study because you are an individual who, between the ages of 5-11 years old, changed schools a minimum of three times. Participation in this study will require four interviews, each lasting approximately one hour. Face-to-face interviews with the researcher will be conducted in a private, mutually decided upon location.

Interviews will be audio taped to ensure accuracy. You will be provided with a written copy of your interview transcripts. Interviews are strictly confidential. Tapes will be kept until transcribed and then destroyed. The results will be published in my dissertation as well as in professional journals, or presented at professional meetings. Any information that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential.

Your questions about the study are invited before, during or after the time of participation. If you have additional questions that have not been answered, you may contact the primary researcher Julie Gaddie a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, (816) 671-4250. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Grady, at (402)

## APPENDIX C

472-0974 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for further clarification should you have any concerns about my study. . If you have any question that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), at (402) 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Gaddie  
Principal Investigator  
(816) 671-4250



APPENDIX B

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN  
SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

Name Elementary Principal Participant  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Address Line 3  
City, State, Zip code

Understanding Social Capital Development and Academic Attainment of Mobile  
Students

Date < Insert date >

Dear <Insert Name of Participant >

As a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am conducting a study to gain information about the post-move functioning of mobile elementary students. This is the sole purpose of the study. The results will be of interest and value to school administrators, classroom teachers, and parents of mobile students.

Your experiences and insight as a school leader are important to understanding the academic and social needs of mobile students. Participation in this study will require a one-hour interview. Face-to-face interviews with the researcher will be conducted in a private, mutually decided upon location.

Interviews will be audio taped to ensure accuracy. You will be provided with a written copy of your interview transcript to review for accuracy. Interviews are strictly confidential. Tapes will be kept in a secure place until transcribed and then destroyed. The results of the study will be published in my dissertation as well as in professional journals or presented at professional meetings. Any information that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential.

Your questions about the study are invited before, during or after the time of participation. If you have additional questions that have not been answered, you may contact the primary researcher Julie Gaddie, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, at (816) 671-4250. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Grady, at (402) 472-0974 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for further clarification. If you have any question that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), at (402) 472-6965.

Sincerely,  
Julie A. Gaddie  
Principal Investigator  
(816) 671-4250

APPENDIX C

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN  
SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

Name School District  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2  
Address Line 3  
City, State, Zip code

Understanding Social Capital Development and Academic Attainment of Mobile  
Students

Date < Insert date >

Dear <Insert Name of Participant >

As a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am conducting a concurrent mixed-methods study to gain information about the post-move functioning of mobile elementary students. This is the sole purpose of the study. The results will be of interest and value to school administrators, classroom teachers, and parents of mobile students.

The quantitative portion of the study will include a historical structured records review of the MAP test results from 2008-09. Building grade level MAP data in Language Arts and Mathematics will be derived from approximately 80 elementary schools from across Missouri through public access on the DESE website. To participate in this study, I would like to include the building data from the 2008-09 MAP data for Language Arts and Mathematics for each of the elementary schools in your district. The specific data needed is subgroup of students who have attended their school for less than one year at the time of testing, as depicted below. It is my goal to collect this building level information for all of the elementary schools within your district.

MAP Results 2008-09  
School Name \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C

	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade > one year subgroup	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade > one year subgroup	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade > one year subgroup	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade > one year subgroup
	% of students in advanced and proficient	% of students in advanced and proficient	% of students in advanced and proficient	% of students in advanced and proficient
Math				
Communication Arts				

Please note that in order for me to match the sub group data for each building (provided by your district) with the building's grade level performance (accessed through DESE) it will be necessary for individual schools names to be included in the initial data set. However, all school district and building names will be removed at the time of coding and will not be used in anyway as apart of the final analysis. The results of the study will be published in my dissertation as well as in professional journals or presented at professional meetings.

Your questions about the study are invited before, during or after the time of participation. If you have additional questions that have not been answered, you may contact the primary researcher Julie Gaddie, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, at (816) 671-4250. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Grady, at (402) 472-0974 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for further clarification. If you have any question that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), at (402) 472-6965.

Sincerely,

Julie A. Gaddie  
Principal Investigator  
(816) 671-4250

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE  
GENERATIONAL PARTICIPANT

As a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am conducting a study to gain information about the post-move functioning of mobile elementary students. This is the sole purpose of the study. The results will be of interest and value to school administrators, classroom teachers, and parents of mobile students.

Your experiences and insight as an adult who changed schools repeatedly during elementary school are important. You have been invited to participate in the study because you are an individual who, between the ages of 5-11 years old, changed schools a minimum of three times. Participation in this study will require four interviews, each lasting approximately one hour. Face-to-face interviews with the researcher will be conducted in a private, mutually decided upon location.

Interviews will be audio taped to ensure accuracy. You will be provided with a written copy of your interview transcripts. Interviews are strictly confidential. Tapes will be kept until transcribed and then destroyed. The results will be published in my dissertation as well as in professional journals, or presented at professional meetings. Any information that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that the consent and meaning of the information on this consent form have been fully explained to you and that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. Your signature also certifies that you have had all of your questions answered to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

It is possible that you may become upset when you are relaying an emotional experience regarding changing elementary schools. You may end the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue. In the event of problems resulting from participation in the study, psychological treatment is available on a sliding fee scale at The Family Guidance Center, (816) 364-1501, located in St. Joseph Missouri.

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant. However, you will have the interview time to express your views and feelings to the researcher. There is no monetary compensation for participation. At the completion of the study, you will receive a copy of the final report.

Your questions about the study are invited before, during or after the time of participation. If you have additional questions that have not been answered, you

APPENDIX D

may contact the primary researcher Julie Gaddie a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, (816) 671-4250. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Grady, at (402) 472-0974 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for further clarification should you have any concerns about my study. . If you have any question that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), at (402) 472-6965.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign/date where indicated below.

Signature of Participant

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Approval for Audio taping Interviews: \_\_\_\_\_

Julie Gaddie, Principal Investigator  
Marilyn L. Grady, Ph.D., Advisor

Office: (816) 671-4250  
Office: (402) 472-0974

## APPENDIX E

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANT

As a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I am conducting a study to gain information about the post-move functioning of mobile elementary students. This is the sole purpose of the study. The results will be of interest and value to school administrators, classroom teachers, and parents of mobile students.

Your experiences and insight as a school leader are important to understanding the academic and social needs of mobile students. Participation in this study will require a one-hour interview. Face-to-face interviews with the researcher will be conducted in a private, mutually decided upon location.

Interviews will be audio taped to ensure accuracy. You will be provided with a written copy of your interview transcript to review for accuracy. Interviews are strictly confidential. Tapes will be kept in a secure place until transcribed and then destroyed. The results of the study will be published in my dissertation as well as in professional journals or presented at professional meetings. Any information that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential.

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that the consent and meaning of the information on this consent form have been fully explained to you and that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. Your signature also certifies that you have had all of your questions answered to your satisfaction. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant. However, you will have the interview time to express your views and feelings to the researcher. There is no monetary compensation for participation. At the completion of the study, you will receive a copy of the final report.

Your questions about the study are invited before, during or after the time of participation. If you have additional questions that have not been answered, you may contact the primary researcher Julie Gaddie a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, (816) 671-4250. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Grady, at (402) 472-0974 at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for further clarification should you have any concerns about my study. . If you have any question that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (UNL IRB), at (402) 472-6965.

APPENDIX E

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign/date where indicated below.

Signature of Participant

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Approval for Audio taping Interviews: \_\_\_\_\_

Julie Gaddie, Principal Investigator  
Marilyn L. Grady, Ph.D., Advisor

Office: (816) 671-4250  
Office: (402) 472-0974

APPENDIX F

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT – TRANSCRIPTIONIST

Understanding Social Capital Development and Academic Attainment of Mobile Students

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree that I will maintain  
(name of transcriptionist)

confidentiality of all tape-recorded interviews that I have been contracted to transcribe for the following research project: Academic and Social Development of Mobile Elementary Students.

This means that I will not discuss nor share any tape-recorded nor transcribed data with any individuals other than the researcher, Julie Gaddie or her supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Grady. When the transcriptions are complete, I will return all audio tapes to the researcher and will transfer all electronic files to the researcher. Upon confirmation of receipt of these files by the researcher, I will destroy the originals.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of transcriptionist)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)



## APPENDIX G



University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (IRB) 312 N. 14th St., 209 Alex West Lincoln, NE 68588-0408(402) 472-6965 Fax (402) 472-6048 irb@unl.edu	<b>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</b> IRB #: IRB Decision Date: Date Received: 02/11/2010 Code #: IRB Project ID: 10677 Form ID: 10677 Status: Submitted to Expedited IRB Reviewer(s)
---	---

### IRB New Protocol Submission

Project Title: Understanding social capital development and academic attainment of mobile students

#### **Investigator Information:**

Principal Investigator:	Julie Gaddie	Secondary Investigator:	Marilyn Grady
Department:	Department of Educational Administration	Department:	Department of Educational Administration
Contact Phone:		Contact Phone:	(402)472-0974
Contact Address:	,	Contact Address:	128 TEAC UNL 68588-0360
Email Address:	julie.gaddie@sjsd.k12.mo.us	Email Address:	mgrady@unlserve.unl.edu

\* Student theses or dissertations must be submitted with a faculty member listed as Secondary Investigator or Project Supervisor

Principal Investigator Is: Graduate Student  
 Type of Project: Research

Does the research involve an outside institution/agency other than UNL? Yes

If yes, please list the institutions/agencies:  
 St. Joseph School District, St. Joseph, MO.  
 St. Joseph Public School District, St. Joseph Missouri  
 Columbia Public School District, Columbia, MO  
 North Kansas City School District, Kansas City, MO  
 Springfield Public School District, Springfield, MO.  
 Lee's Summit Public Schools, Lee's Summit, MO.

Where will participation take place? (e.g., UNL, at home, in a community building, etc)  
 Elementary principal participant interviews (10 participants total) will take place in a location convenient for the participant or by telephone.

APPENDIX G

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board (IRB) 312 N. 14th St., 209 Alex West Lincoln, NE 68588-0408(402) 472-6965 Fax (402) 472-6048 irb@unl.edu	FOR OFFICE USE ONLY IRB #: IRB Decision Date: Date Received: 02/11/2010 Code #: IRB Project ID: 10677 Form ID: 10677 Status: Submitted to Expedited IRB Reviewer(s)
---	--

**IRB New Protocol Submission**

Project Title: Understanding social capital development and academic attainment of mobile students

**Investigator Information:**

Principal Investigator:	Julie Gaddie	Secondary Investigator:	Marilyn Grady
Department:	Department of Educational Administration	Department:	Department of Educational Administration
Contact Phone:		Contact Phone:	(402)472-0974
Contact Address:		Contact Address:	128 TEAC UNL 68588-0360
Email Address:	julie.gaddie@sjsd.k12.mo.us	Email Address:	mgrady@unlserve.unl.edu

\* Student theses or dissertations must be submitted with a faculty member listed as Secondary Investigator or Project Supervisor

Principal Investigator Is: Graduate Student  
 Type of Project: Research

Does the research involve an outside institution/agency other than UNL? Yes

- If yes, please list the institutions/agencies:
- St. Joseph School District, St. Joseph, MO.
  - St. Joseph Public School District, St. Joseph Missouri
  - Columbia Public School District, Columbia, MO
  - North Kansas City School District, Kansas City, MO
  - Springfield Public School District, Springfield, MO.
  - Lee's Summit Public Schools, Lee's Summit, MO.

Where will participation take place? (e.g., UNL, at home, in a community building, etc)  
 Elementary principal participant interviews (10 participants total) will take place in a location convenient for the participant or by telephone.

## APPENDIX G



Additional adult participant interviews (5 participants total ) will be take place in a location convenient for the participant.

\* Note: Research can only begin at each institution after the IRB receives the institutional approval letter

### **Project Information:**

Present/Proposed Funding Source: principal investigator

Project Start Date: 03/01/2010

Project End Date: 12/01/2010

1. Does the research involve prisoners?

No

2. Will the research only be conducted in schools or educational settings?

No

3. Does the research involve only the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior? (The use of pre-existing data does not fall into this category.)

No

4. Does the research involve only the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens?

No

5. Does the research involve only studying, evaluating or examining public benefit or service programs?

No

6. Does the research involve only a taste and food quality evaluation or food consumer acceptance study?

No

7. Does the research present more than minimal risk to human subjects?

No

1) *Clinical studies of drugs and/or medical devices?*

No

2) *Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture?*

No

3) *Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means?*

No

## APPENDIX G



4) Collection of data through noninvasive procedures routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves?

No

5) Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis)?

No

6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes?

Yes

7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior)?

No

8) Research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies?

Yes

Does the research involve only procedures included in the previous 8 categories?

No

Could identification of subjects put them at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be socially or economically damaging?

No

8. Does the research involve clinical studies of drugs and medical devices?

No

9. Does the research involve collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture?

No

### **Description of Subjects:**

Total number of participants (include 'controls'): 15

Will participants of both sexes/genders be recruited? Yes

Will participation be limited to certain racial or ethnic groups? No

## APPENDIX G



What are the participants' characteristics?

The selection of elementary principal participants was based on school performance data from five urban school districts across Missouri. The criteria for the purposeful sampling of elementary school principals included: principal of the school during the 2008-09 school year, willingness to reflect on the student data representing the overall performance of students attending the school for less than a year in comparison to the overall school performance data in Math and Language Arts, and the ability to share insights related to the efforts of the school to serve mobile students.

A snowballing technique will be used to identify potential generational participant volunteers. Snowball sampling is described as a method in which initial volunteers in the study recommend other persons who have the potential to meet the study criteria to be invited to participate (Richards, L. & Morse, J., 2007, p. 195). The criteria for the purposeful sampling of individuals who moved repeatedly during their elementary years included: age (moves occurred from the ages of 5-11), representation of a decade born between the 1950's and the 1990's, moved a minimum of three times during elementary school, and ability to share memories, decisions, and insights related to the experience of changing school repeatedly as an elementary school student.

**Type of Participant:** (check all appropriate blanks for participant population)

X	Adults, Non Students		Pregnant Women		Persons with Psychological Impairment
	UNL Students		Fetuses		Persons with Neurological Impairment
	Minors (under age 19)		Persons with Limited Civil Freedom		Persons with Mental Retardation
	Adults with Legal Representatives		Persons with HIV/AIDS		

Other (Explain):

### **Unique Research Methodology or Data Sources**

Will your project involve audio taping? Yes

How long will tapes be kept? Where will they be stored? Who will have access to the tapes? If transcriptions are required, how will transcriptions be handled? Who is doing the transcriptions? Please attach a copy of the confidentiality agreement that transcriptionists will sign.

At the end of three years all transcripts will be destroyed. Audiotapes will be erased after transcription.

Is this project web-based research? No

Is this study utilizing Protected Health Information (PHI; e.g., information obtained from a hospital, clinic,

## APPENDIX G



or treatment facility)? No

Does this project involve genetic data/sampling/analysis, illegal drug use, or criminal activity that places the participant at risk for legal action? No

Does this project involve photography? No

Does this project involve videotaping? No

Does this project involve archival or secondary data analysis? Yes

What are the sources of your data? What is the data?

- School achievement data including overall elementary school performance on the Missouri Achievement Program assessment for 2008-2009 in Math and Communication Arts.
- Elementary School Achievement data including the subgroup of students who have been in the school for less than one year at the time of the Missouri Achievement Program assessment for 2008-2009 in Math and Communication Arts.

Does this project involve biological samples? No

### **Project Personnel List:**

Please list the names of all personnel working on this project, starting with the principal investigator and the secondary investigator/project advisor. Research assistants, students, data entry staff and other research project staff should also be included. For a complete explanation of training and project staff please go to <http://www.unl.edu/research/orr/index.shtml>.

Name	Role	UNL Status	Is Involved In Design/Supervision	Is Involved In Data Collection
------	------	------------	-----------------------------------	--------------------------------

### **Project Description**

1. Describe the research purpose of the project.

*What is the purpose of the study? (Please provide a brief 1-2 paragraph explanation in lay terms, to include a brief literature justification.)*

Given the impact of mobility on classroom instruction and student development, it is important to examine the complexities surrounding student mobility. Therefore, the purpose of this mixed methods study is to gain information about the post-move functioning of mobile students. The study will examine the collective academic achievement of elementary students who have been in a school for less than one year in comparison to the overall performance of the school in Math and Language Arts. In addition, to better understand the efforts of school personnel to meet the academic and social development of mobile elementary students, interviews will be conducted with ten elementary principals. Finally, the study will gain a historical view of the effects of mobility from the experiences of five adults from five different decades (the 1950s through the 1990s) who moved a minimum of three times during

## APPENDIX G

elementary school.

### 2. Description of the Methods and Procedures.

*Describe the data collection procedures and what participants will have to do.*

- School achievement data including overall school performance on the Missouri Achievement Program assessment for 2009 in Math and Communication Arts.
- School Achievement data including the subgroup of students who have been in the school for less than one year at the time of the Missouri Achievement Program assessment for 2009 in Math and Communication Arts.

Data analysis will include a detailed description of state assessment data, the analysis of sub group data in comparison to the total school performance, and interpretation of the findings.

- Personal interviews with ten elementary principals.
- Personal interviews with five generational participants.

Data collection will occur through in-depth, face-to-face interviews with participants. Personal experiences of the participants will vary, and the use of probes will facilitate the process of understanding each person's unique perceptions. Open-ended questions will be used to encourage informants to talk about, clarify, and give examples of their experiences. The interviews will be guided by the interview protocols (attached).

*How long will this take participants to complete?*

Elementary principal interviews will take one hour.

There will be four one hour interviews conducted with each generational informant. The time frame for data collection is late spring and summer of 2010. Interview transcripts will be submitted to participants for review, clarification, and verification. Data analysis will begin with accumulation of the analysis of themes and interpretation of findings.

*Will follow-ups or reminders be sent?*

No

### 3. Description of Recruiting Procedures

*How will the names and contact information for participants be obtained?*

The elementary principal participants are public school administrators whose names and contact information are published public knowledge.

A snowballing technique will be used to identify potential generational participant volunteers. Snowball sampling is described as a method in which initial volunteers in the study recommend other persons who have the potential to meet the study criteria to be invited to participate (Richards, L. & Morse, J., 2007, p. 195).

*How will participants be approached about participating in the study?*

Participants will receive a letter of invitation to participate in the study. (see attached letters)

### 4. Description of Benefits and Risks

*Explain the benefits to participants or to others.*

Research has concluded that when people are able to think about the academic and social wellbeing of the students in their classroom, they are able to find new insights that are meaningful to both the

## APPENDIX G



instructor and to the student.

This study will add to the growing body of literature regarding student mobility. The comparative data and interview data will provide participants, as well school administrators, with an understanding of the effects of student mobility on academic achievement and the overall well being of mobile students. The insights gained through the study will be used to better understand the needs of students who change schools during their elementary school career.

*Explain the risks to participants. What will be done to minimize the risks? If there are no known risks, this should be stated.*

Due to the focus of the study, generational participants will be questioned about areas such as their emotions connected to changing schools that may be sensitive. Participants will be told that they may discontinue an interview at anytime and choose not to continue at that time or in the future without any negative consequences. At each session, the researcher will review the purpose of the study and reiterate that their identity will remain confidential. If a participant becomes uncomfortable during a session, she /he will be told that the interview can stop.

### 5. Description of Compensation

*Will compensation (including money, gift certificates, extra credit, etc.) be provided to participants?*

No

### 6. Informed Consent Process

In certain cases for children over the age of 14, such as UNL students who are 17 or 18, waivers of informed consent can be granted.

*Would you like to request a waiver of consent?*

No

*How will informed consent/assent be obtained?*

The researcher will obtain informed consent in writing from elementary principal participants and generational participants. At the time of the initial meeting with each participant, the intent of the study and consent form will be reviewed to insure clarity and understanding. Each participant will receive a copy of the signed consent form.

### 7. Description of How Confidentiality will be Maintained

*How will confidentiality of records be maintained?*

The researcher will secure all research data in a locked filing cabinet for three years. Only the researcher will have access to the data. Confidentiality of the data will be maintained through coding and generalized geographic locations. Any life events the informants' do not wish to discuss will not be invaded with questions. At the end of three years all transcripts will be destroyed, audio tapes will be erased after transcription.

School district achievement data will be confidential and will not be identified in any way; the names of the school district or individual schools will not be included.

*Will individuals be identified?*



## APPENDIX G



No

*How long will records be kept?*

At the end of three years all transcripts will be destroyed, audio tapes will be erased after transcription.

*Where will records be stored?*

Records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home.

*Who has access to the records/data?*

The investigator and the supervisor.

*How will data be reported?*

Data will be analyzed and reported in the researcher's doctoral dissertation, at professional meetings, and in journal articles.

### 8. Copies of Questionnaires, Survey, or Testing Instruments

*Please list all questionnaires, surveys, and/or assessment instruments/measures used in the project.*

Historical data collected from 2008-09 Missouri Assessment Program (MAP).

Generational participant interview protocol

Elementary principal interview protocol

### 9. Uploaded Attachments

protocol for generational participants.doc - 35328 Bytes - application/msword

transcriptionist.doc - 51712 Bytes - application/msword

school district letter.doc - 61952 Bytes - application/msword

protocol principal participants.doc - 35328 Bytes - application/msword

letter participate generational.doc - 55808 Bytes - application/msword

principal participant letter.doc - 54784 Bytes - application/msword

consent to participate generational.doc - 61440 Bytes - application/msword

consent to participate principal.doc - 59904 Bytes - application/msword

#### **Comments:**

PI Comments

URC Comments

ORR Comments

## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL Generational Participant

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Session# 1

I would like to explore with you your experiences as a student who changed schools a lot. I am interested in understanding the impact that moving has had on your life. I will be tape recording our conversation. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

#### **Interview Questions**

#### **Interviewer**

#### **Reflections**

1. Tell me about your family when you were a child.  
i.e. number of children, parents, birth order
  
2. What about your extended family?
  
3. How would you describe your family's daily routines when you were in elementary school?
  
4. Did your family participate in community activities or church activities? Would you describe these activities?
  
5. What key relationships impacted you during your elementary school years?
  
6. How would you describe yourself as an elementary-aged child?

## APPENDIX H

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Generational Participant

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Session# 2

In an effort to continue our conversation about your experiences changing schools, today I would like to learn about the schools you attended and the relationships you formed along the way. I will be tape recording our conversation. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

#### Interview Questions

#### Interviewer

##### Reflections

7. How many times did you change schools during elementary school career?
8. Would you describe the chronology of your elementary school attendance?  
K 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Were these neighborhood changes, city or state changes?
10. What circumstances led to you changing schools?
11. Describe your reaction/feelings when you found out you were changing schools?
12. What do you remember about the school personnel during the first few months at a new school?
13. Are there any particular school staff relationships that stand out to you (good or bad)?
14. Tell me about making and keeping friends in elementary school? i.e how long, how many friends, frequency of contact depth of relationship
15. What school activities were you involved in during elementary school?

## APPENDIX H

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL Generational Participant

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Session# 3

As a part of our conversation today, I am interested in learning about the impact changing school had on you both academically and socially. I will be tape recording our conversation. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

#### **Interview Questions Reflections**

#### **Interviewer**

15. How did changing schools impact you as a learner?  
in elementary school?
16. How would you describe yourself at the  
start of middle school?
17. How many times did you move from the beginning  
of middle school through high school?
18. Would you describe yourself as an academically  
successful high school student?
19. What subjects in middle school or high school did  
you find difficult or easy?
20. Describe the academic and social expectation of  
your family during this time?
21. Tell me about making and keeping friends in  
middle school and high school? i.e how long,  
how many friends, frequency of contact,  
depth of relationship
22. Describe the academic and social expectation set  
by your friends during this time?
23. Were you involved in community or school  
activities during middle school and high school?  
  
If, yes. What impact did these activities have on  
you?

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL  
Generational Participant

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Session# 4

During our final session together, I would like to learn about how changing schools as a student has impacted your life today and any advice you may have for schools working with mobile students. I will be tape recording our conversation. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

**Interview Questions  
Reflections**

**Interviewer**

24. Describe your life today. ie family, career, education, friendships.
  
25. How did changing schools impact you in the long term?
  
26. What did the adults around you do, that helped you academically, socially and emotionally during your school years?
  
27. Do you see yourself as a successful person?  
  
If yes, what were the key events or people that helped you become successful?  
  
If no, what were the barriers that have stood in your way?
  
28. What advice you give school personnel to help children who have moved into a new school?

## APPENDIX H

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL Elementary Principal Participant

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Interview Session# \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to explore with you your experiences as an elementary principal servicing mobile students. I will be tape recording our conversation. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

#### **Interview Questions**

Tell me about your school. ie. enrollment, location, demographics

How many students moved into your school during 2008-09?

How many students moved out of your school during 2008-09?

What are the biggest academic challenges for your mobile students ?

What are the biggest social challenges for your mobile students?

What programs or routines does your school use to help new students maintain academic progress?

What programs or routines does your school use to help new students establish their social network? ie. friends, staff relationships, parent connection, community involvement

How has No Child Left Behind helped or hindered your school's ability to serve mobile students

#### **Interviewer Reflections**

## Family Moving

	Parents # children	Ethnicity Religion	Family Dynamics	# school moves	Reason for moves	Type of moves	Extended Family
1940's Marie	Yes 6 - youngest	Caucasian active	Strong 2- parent/sibling Bond Mother purposeful with routines	XXX	Father Railroad employment	-Across States -Within States -Within Town	Little connection
1960's Joe	Yes 3- oldest	Caucasian active	Strong 2 parent bond Mother purposeful with routines	6 elem. 2middle 2high	Father Military career	States International	Intermediate limited connection
1970's Lori	Single mother remarried at young age Divorced in highschool	Caucasian intermediate	Father worked a lot Mother preoccupied	5elem. 1middle 2high	Corporate climbing	States White flight out of Dallas	Strong with grandparents
1980's Lisa	Divorced	Caucasian not active	Mother/stepfather Physically present Distant emotionally	4elem 1middle 1high 1alternative	City Migrant Marriage of to step dad, Different house	Within City Different neighborhoods	Strong with grandma Aunt/cousins strong until the family split at 11
1990's Travis	Single 7- youngest	African- American intermediate	Mother physically and emotionally absent – very limited contact with birthfather	3elem 1middle 1high 1private 1alternative	City Migrant Avoid problems- DFS, discipline	Within State -Different Towns -Within same town	Aunts supported until 8 years old

## Financial Capital

	Basic needs met	Travel	Paid Extra Curricular Activities	Reading/age appropriate materials available	Full time employment	Financial Assistance State/federal	Presence of spending money
1940's Marie	Limited income Yes-food housing some clothing	Limited To see relatives	Piano lessons	Yes dolls, playhouse, games radio, newspapers, books	Father yes Mother stayed home	No War food rations	Limited For clothing, shoes Father owned a car, horses and saddles
1960's Joe	Yes-frugal but did not struggle	Yes – cultural vacations, relatives	Scouts Sports	Yes-books, crafts, letter correspondence, Toys, models, outdoor exploration	Father yes Mother worked later part time	Military compensation benefits	Limited Cheap entertainment crafts, free museums, cheap eating out
1970's Lori	Yes-abundant support	Yes-vacations, visited relatives	Dance	Books, toys Daycare provided hours of interaction and materials	Father and mother yes	No	Unlimited Pool, emphasis on the accumulation of things
1980's Lisa	Struggled to secure basic did not have extra money for clothes or entertainment	Yes- car vacations camping, fishing	Limited school basketball Limited brownie troop	books from school	Step father yes Mother some part time	Suspected unknown	Limited For clothing, cheap entertainment fishing, camping
1990's Travis	No – Limited shelter, limited food, limited clothing	No-	Sold fundraiser cards to play little league football	Played outside No written materials noted	Mother intermediately	Suspected – unknown Financial aid in college	Very limited relied on aunts, teachers, coaches, community center



## Human/Parental Capital

	Married Living arrangement	Daily routines	Family Traditions	Vacations	Pictures/Mentos	Home Décor	Involved in school/extra activities
1940's Marie	Yes lived with both	predictable meals together, chores, bedtime routines, board games	Sunday dinner, holidays, birthday parties, garden, horses			Same décor every house, loved dishes, fresh paint and curtains	4-H church piano lesson senior year prom limited vocal music at school
1960's Joe	Yes with both father deployment	Predictable Meals together, crafts, sight seeing, projects, kids activities	Holidays opening packages, traditional Easter egg hunt, Christmas programs Packing boxes	Sightseeing Car vacations relatives	Yearbooks School pictures, vacation souvenirs	Same décor, orange curtain knicknaks	Multiple sports Scouting Honor Society Multiple clubs Base Chapel Base Activities
1970's Lori	No back and forth in high school	Father long hours, ??	Started in Texas, decorations, meals, presents,	relatives	Very few prior to moving to Texas	Started at age 10 richmond	Dance
1980's Lisa	Yes – to stepfather at young age lived with both	Predictable Picked up from school everyday, spent a lot of time together	Holiday gatherings Without extended after 10years Camping, fishing	Camping fishing			Elementary basketball team 2 seasons Elementary school carnival
1990's Travis	No- single absent parent, moved in with coach at 15 years.	None – described routines as winging it.		none			5 <sup>th</sup> grade track meet little league football intermediate school football

## Human/Parental Capital

	Parent friendship networks	Community Activity	Extended family Relationship	Time spent together as a family	Provided guidance behavior	Provided guidance academic
1940's Marie	Strong Never met a stranger, church community	Church	Distant	Daily Extended periods	Strong Clear expectations Consistent throughout Reinforced by religion	Some direction in elementary school Wanted to finish high school limited expectation for college
1960's Joe	Strong Involved with base families	Military base Church Children's activities	Intermediate lived along ways away	Daily Extended periods	Strong Clear expectations reinforced by military implications, religion	Expectation of good grade Expectation for college Hands off with schoolwork (tests and assignments)
1970's Lori	Strong Later mom got busy with own social life		Grandparents + birth -5 Distant when moved away	Daily Limited by work schedules	Loose expectations Large amounts of free time with supervision Busy with own careers and social life Must keep up with 'the jones'	Not as worried about academics as social Expectation of college Did not push to take difficult class or develop cognitive abilities in school
1980's Lisa	Neighbors	none	Grandmother strong Rest weak after family split	Daily Extended periods	Strong supervision until middle school Friends houses unsupervised Unclear expectations for friends, sexual exploration, drug use	
1990's Travis	Absent	None	Aunts strong until age 9 intermediate later years	Absent long periods of time	No supervision for long periods of time Limited expectations for behavior during reactive phase of discipline Overlooked drug activity in the home	None

## Community/School Capital

	Involved in church	Community center	Local Fairs, shows, museums	Elementary school sports, clubs, interest groups	Middle school sports, clubs, interest groups	High school Sports clubs, interest groups
1940's Marie	strong	Church *neighbors	Fairs Picnics parades	4-H church		Senior prom committee Limited vocal music
1960's Joe	Some early strong later	Military base *neighbors	Strong on the base	Military base activities school carnivals school plays/programs PTA events	Sports Clubs music	Sports Clubs Music
1970's Lori	Very little	High school football *neighbors	Parents making money-busy	Dance outside of school	School play Dance outside of school	Football culture
1980's Lisa		*neighbors		Short time brownies School carnival		
1990's Travis	Intermediate with aunts road the bus at age 16	Walking-8 community center *Aunts/neighbors -8		Little league Football inconsistent	Little league Football inconsistent	One season of high school football

Creative Capital

	Enjoyed creative writing	Enjoyed problem solving	Enjoyed Competition	Enjoyed Music	Enjoyed Dance	Career requires creative problem solving
1940's Marie			Yes	Yes		Customer service- no
1960's Joe		Yes	Yes	Yes		Health wellness program designer- yes
1970's Lori		Yes			Yes	Technology management- yes
1980's Lisa	Yes					Customer service – no
1990's Travis			Yes			undetermined

Friendship  
Social Networks

	Parent friendships	Made friends easily at school	Spent time together outside of school	Lasting peer group	Felt accepted	Still friends with HS friends	Spent long periods of time without a single friend
1940's Marie	yes	no	no	no	no	no	yes
1960's Joe	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no
1970's Lori	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no
1980's Lisa	yes	no	no after rachel	no	no	no	yes
1990's Travis	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no

## Academic Experience

	Elementary classroom School	Middle school classroom school	High school classroom school	Successful student in elementary	Successful student in middle	Successful student in high school	Favorite subject/difficult subject
1940's Marie	Hated school – very shy overwhelmed by authoritarian structure	Hated school – described as a nightmare	Hated until senior year	No-struggled to make good grades (est. C stud)	No-struggled to make good grades (est. C stud)	Adequate to graduate – did not enjoy	+Grammar sentence diagraphing, -History and math
1960's Joe	accepted, confident, Engaged in learning	Accepted confident engaged in learning	Accepted confident engaged in learning	Yes	Yes	Yes	+Reading, writing, math  -advanced sciences
1970's Lori	Does not remember much of elementary school	Engaged Socially Unchallenged Academically	Engaged Socially Unchallenged Academically	Yes	Yes	Yes	Liked all subjects  Did not take advanced classes
1980's Lisa	Engaged until 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	Never plugged in	Lost avoided attending, gained little	Early years yes, struggled in math	Struggled math Stopped trying	Stopped trying	+Loved reading and writing +current events -Math
1990's Travis	Lost Going through the motions some momentum in 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5th	Gained some momentum in the second time of 6 <sup>th</sup> grade Fell off in 7 <sup>th</sup> /8th	Struggled in 9 <sup>th</sup> In second 9 <sup>th</sup> /10 <sup>th</sup> Successful 11/12 <sup>th</sup>	Learned to read early Struggled in math	Struggled in math Worked to keep eligible for little league football	Struggled in math had to work very hard 11/12 <sup>th</sup> 3.5 GPA, graduated 3.0	+Liked to read + Handwriting -Math

## Lifelong impact Resilience and Growth

	Describes self as a successful person	Current employment	Married children	Active in community	Active in church	Maintains friendships	Financial Stability
1940's Marie	Yes	Retired after 30 years JC Penny works part-time	Yes over 40 years 2 grown children	retirement group social with other couples Enjoyed serving PTA Grandkids activities	Yes Bible study, social groups	Has large circle of acquaintances  5 friends for over 40 years Treasures siblings, parents deceased	Husband steady employment for over 30 years retired Home ownership Enjoys recreational spending
1960's Joe	Yes	Wellness Large Hospital	Yes 30 years 3 successful children	Scouts Children's activities Social with friends Organizes Southern India Missionary work High school son's activities	Yes Bible study Attends regulary Active with missions	Social Never met a stranger, Reaches out to new families Keeps in touch with friends through social networking	Steady Employment Home ownership Enduring wedding, college, children's career expenses Enjoys recreational spending
1970's Lori	Yes	Management for technology firm	Yes 4 elementary aged children (stairsteps)	PTA, Kids activities, women's groups	Yes Very active support of husband's ministry	Yes Social butterfly -In person -Social networking -on the phone/texting	Recovering from financial strain of career change/job loss Renting, planning to buy Presence of generational money
1980's Lisa	Yes	Dollar Tree	Not married, reunited with father of daughter Live together	Full investment in parenting	No	Very limited Some connections through daily routines, daughters school, facebook Says she only has one friend	No Owns a car Struggles to make bills Living paycheck to paycheck
1990's Travis	Yes	Looking for employment/football opportunity	Single Serious girlfriend	Enjoys helping with father's little league program when he can	No	Has a lot of friends, confides in very few. Present in social networking	No transitioning out of college financial aid system

Resiliency and Growth  
Goals and Lessons

	Influences	Special people	Hobbies						
1940's Marie		Parents siblings	Grandchildren						
1960's Joe		Parents Key adults	Running India Scouting Cooking Spending time with family						
1970's Lori		Parents	Friends Reading Cooking Spending time with family						
1980's Lisa			Daughter Reading						
1990's Travis			Football Reading Spending time with friends						

Principal Themes  
Factors Influencing decision to relocate

	Change in employment Loss Promotion	Divorce Marriage	Location of Section 8 housing	School SES growth	Refugee Center located in community	Building bigger House New subdivision	Industrial Plant
High SES-24%1	Promotion Primary	X Secondary	Some rental 2 apartment complexes small	Doubled in 6 years		Primary	
High SES-10%2	Promotion area promoted by realtors		One apartment complex less than 80 students			Primary	
High SES-25%2			Apartments walking distance to Wal-mart and employer for non-English speaking Appeals to Refugee center for 3 month initial placement	Opened 8 years ago 11% jumped to 25%	Primary Refugee non-English speaking pop. Yes-Office 27 languages in building	Secondary Some moves associated with degree completion at the college	Yes

Influencing decision to relocate

	AYP Impact	Location of Section 8 housing	SES History AYP impact	Refugee Center located in community
Mid SES - 50% 1	Families choosing school over bordering metro school district	Secondary 1 apartment complex (60 students)	Ten year ago less than 90% SES, gone from 10% minority to 40% minority	No - ELL population joining other relatives in rental properties
Mid SES - 42% 2	History of high scores		Became a school choice site	



Factors Influencing decision to relocate

	District Boundary Change	Generational mobility	AYP Impact	Pack and go	Location of Section 8 housing	SES History AYP impact	Refugee Center located in community	Industrial Plant
Low SES-90% 1	Losing large public housing areas, gaining new low income students Segregating poverty and minority population quote	Families just used to moving when they cant make rent, do not understand how far behind kids get, vicious cycle	Families asking for NCLB transfer before kindergarten  Labeled failing  Enrollment declining	Get in a fight move, Cops move, Better deal move	Large number of students from Section 8 housing Move around to different public housing spots P 3 quote	Built 1896 white affluent, now 70% black reversed Losing K-5 sections NCLB, Starting more section of title one preschool	X Katrina Public housing proximity	High unemployment
Low SES-87% 2	Turned over 100 kids in a year from District boundary change	Can't make rent Doubling up, Homeless, Women's shelter	Labeled failing Offered school choice Enrollment declining	Get into a fight with boyfriend	It is all about housing and the boundary lines		no	yes
Low SES-80% 3	Turned over 100 in a year from district boundary change	Loss of job, Foster care, Doubling up Grandparents incassation Move overnight		Jail, Boyfriend Job Evicted,			no	
Low SES-70% 4		Primary Single family rental homes Primary Town homes doubling up	Enrollment growing Kids from 14 states last year	Drugs, family violence in river bottom Meth labs in single family rentals	Secondary section 8 new six years ago very strict		Yes Somali, Africa, Iraq, Iran	River bottom land owners/ Hired hands

Number of students in and out

	Accurate count	Clear method of keeping track	Transfer policy	Transfer policy	Where are they moving from
High SES 24% -1	No "very low"	No	Very fluid Overcrowded Lots of requests – denied very few	Decided at central Very political Only denied 2 – 6 years	Most inside district Some from metro city area to pockets of apartments
High SES 10% -2	No "very low"	No	Special permission just outside of boundary lines minimal requests from poor areas	Central office political loosely tied to class size turned down first ones this year due to numbers	High educ. Overseas doctors, out of state executives Building new homes
High SES- 25% -3	No "very low" 100 out of 700 est.	No	Special permission with app. deadline Very political – parents lie about address, falsify documents	Central office- dangerous based on popularity not facts	Internal refugees, External university finish degrees move on.

Number of students in and out

	Accurate count of in/outs	Clear method of keeping track	Where are they moving from
Mid SES 50% -1	550 total students Guess 15% mobility	No	Shift in housing stock out of urban core quote pg. 7
Mid SES 42% - 2	300 total students Guess 40 students	No	New influx of section 8 housing rentals, within district, out of urban core

Number of students in and out

	Accurate count of in/outs	Clear method of keeping track	Transfer policy	Transfer policy	Where are they moving from	Struggle to identify gaps
Low SES 90%-1	110 in/outs at Christmas  220 total	No	Denying transfers keeps some middle income in school, but forces families to change schools that we could bus	Trying unique draws to keep people in poor schools expressive arts, multi age Quote pg. 5	Most inside district Some from metro city area to pockets of apartments Trade students among 4 title one schools	We cannot keep track of their needs because they move all the time.
Low SES 87% -2	220 in/out at Christmas 275 total (30 school choice)	Secretary notes in system	Closed Move out of area must enroll in new school	Before transfer closed – used to get mad over discipline and enroll somewhere else	Share stud. With 3 other title schools, some out of town for plant work	By the time we figure out there is a problem, they are gone again
Low SES 80% 3	No Est. 250 in/out by Christmas 540 total	Not sure	closed		Low income housing, change in custody, out of town random	I struggle to even know the kids in the hall They change constantly
Low SES-70% 4	Yes 158 in/outs for year 274 total	Yes		Central Office Several kids ride cabs to stay at the school classified homeless	Neighboring Metro area, multiple states and countries	

Academic Challenge/Effective practice

	Internally	Externally	Assessment at Enrollment	Struggle to catch up	Criterion based grade cards	Grade level meetings	Veteran Teachers
High SES - 24% 1	Lack of seamless curriculum no SOS	Work is too hard leads to behavior problems	Within the first few days not required by the district	Struggle to remediate and keep going	Yes-breakdown to reflect gaps		
High SES - 10% 2	Lack seamless curriculum no SOS	Filling gaps from missed curriculum Generally on or above in Comm. Arts, gaps in math		Hard to go back to the content already covered		Track formative assessment Weekly individual student assistance teams	
High SES - 25% 3	Addressed with pacing guides, order of curriculum	Missed content gaps result	Figure out where holes are DRA Math inventory	Hard to help new teachers catch them up		Discuss concerns, put strategies in place, supplement curriculum	High level of formative assessment Skills Extra tutoring Build a relationship

Academic Challenge/Effective practice

	Struggle to catch up	Interventions	Pocket of poverty	Relationship
Mid SES 50% 1	Missing foundational skills hard to catch up	Summer transition from K-2 building ELL teacher-limited translation support	Pocket of poverty brings no additional staff or resources	Teachers work very hard to get to know students and assess their needs
Mid SES 42% 2	No follow through at home Lots of TV, not a lot of reading or reinforcing learning	Academic testing at enrollment, one on one needs assessment	New presence of poverty result of school choice - not everybody wants poor kids in their school	Lack comradareie with classroom, teachers not always welcoming to school choice kids

Academic Challenge/Effective practice

	Internally	Externally	Lack of experiences /materials	Struggle to catch up	Interventions	Tutoring	Relationship
Low SE S-90% 1	Primarily Not ready for school no letters, or name in writing - behind before we	minimal	No experiences at home, no literacy at home lack of rich conversation	Lack district consistency in curriculum P8 quote Alarming 6-7 schools only in first grade	Starting RTI to build in some small groups and individual assessments "very lecture style"	Required outside agency tutoring - parents wanted free babysitting Key school staff hired as tutors	Must have relationship before they will work for you

	ever get started						
Lo w SE S 87 % 2	Primar y	minimal	Cannot get to the academic s Maslow's needs not being met	Frequent formativ e assessme nts monitor -reteach- monitor Pg. 3 quote	Track in weekly grade level meetings look at gaps	Building wide after school tutoring	Kids have to trust you to become academic ally successfu l not easy
Lo w SE S 80 % 3	Primar y	Primary	Work a lot of hours - kids left alone a lot	Behind low move to avoid retention	Weekly track District benchmar ks, District assessme nts	Building wide- kids do not want to stay, parent won't make them	Once they figure out we are on their side they are try really hard, but they are so behind
Lo w SE S 70 % 4		Poor records from outside neighbor ing district p. 8 17 new first graders 3 on grade level		Miss 2-3 weeks between moves, move 3-4 times a year might miss 4-6 weeks of school p.7	At enrollmen t - assessme nts in math and comm. Arts RTI tested every week Kids set personal goals		Principal meets with student several times during first week to build a relations hip Set expectati ons

Social challenges

	Sense of Belonging	Social Network	Language Barrier
High SES - 1	Want to feel like they fit in, some worried about money and if their parents will make rent -		
High SES - 2	Need to feel connected to their teacher and a part of the classroom	Set from Kindergarten can be hard to get into a group "similar school" have an easier time	
High SES -3	Teacher response when you bring a child to the room – dread of not again p. 8-9	University influence kids very used to coming and going very accepting Very hard for some ELL stud.	Scared of going outside quote pg. 5



### Social Network Interventions

	Enrollment and start day separate	Principal's meets	Memos Written expectations At enrollment	Counselor Friendship groups	Small communities within school	Stud. Council/PTA	Use of Translators
Principal 1	X	One on one	X	X			
Principal 2	X	Fall new family meeting	X	New student lunches in the fall X	Assemblies, hallway decor	Service Projects, PTA all school events	
Principal 3		Fall new family orientation-connect to community organizations and info about the school	X	X		Classroom Buddies Student Directory	27 languages new students become translators

### Social challenges

	Making friends	Different expectations at school
Mid SES 50% 1	All students close in SES – not much of a sense of extreme have/have nots Make friends easily	Parents work a lot kids left alone not used to structure Bus trip quote pg. 6
Mid SES 42% 2	Feeling safe and if they are a part of the group the emotional hump is very difficult for kids	

Family Supports Interventions

	Set expectations	Teacher invested	Food – clothing-shelter	Counselor Friendship groups	Care team meeting
Mid SES 50% 1	Student council give tours with a script to set expectation here to learn	Teachers spend a lot of time getting to know the student and their interests		X	Weekly to track student progress but not necessary geared toward family needs
Mid SES 42% 2	Success when expectation for learning comes from home,		Church outreach Clothes and food, school supplies	X	Meets weekly

Social challenges

	Connect with family	Making friends	Anticipate change	Constant change in social networks
Low SES 90% 1	Preschool work to make relationship get them hooked p. 8 quote	Resilient better relationships teachers than with each other Sabotage with peers to avoid rejection	End of school all hell breaks loose much easier to leave if you do not like the person Work to put a wall and be done with it.	Scary to look at class picture in the spring many have moved on. No real peaking order
Low SES 87% 2	Lack safety and consistency “available to learn”	Biggest challenge fitting in with peers	Hesitant to trust no they are moving again	Constantly rebuilding the classroom community
Low SES 80% 3	Work with every family to get them stable whatever it takes housing, food, church, health, mental health	Distant hard to trust	Slip under the radar or over the top behavior isolate themselves	
Low SES 70% 4	We talk to parents everyday. Out of 50 5 <sup>th</sup> graders 13 been at school since Kindergarten	Untreated ADHD and other mental health issues lead to ostracizing by peers		

Family Supports Interventions

	Set expectations	Family community support	Food – clothing - shelter	Counselor Friendship groups	After school programs	Care team meeting
SES Low 90% 1	PBIS So rigid cuts out communication with teacher promotes sit/get	Home school communication or No PTA Strong business partner support	Food bank School supplies Weekend food program p. 16 qoute		High steppers K-Kids club	Counselor, principal, nurse, school communication or meet weekly discuss family needs
SES Low 87% -2		At Risk coordinator, parent outreach	Homeless services Weekend food program	Invisible mentoring Counseling groups Check connect	Extra curricular activities, tutoring	
Low SES 80% -3	Give out handbook	Parent Involvement coordinator (social worker)	Food boxes Weekend food programs	Once a month new student mixer	limited	Weekly meet to assess families in crisis
Low SES 70% -4	Posted expectations, review expectations regularly	Social worker cut to part time from budget cuts				

NCLB

	Pressure to make	Teacher Resent impact of mobile stud. on scores	Parents Response to scores	Principal worried about scores
High SES 24% -1	Yes	Yes	Don't care about scores, care about reputation	Yes, worried losing school reputation Leaving school for a high SES school
High SES 10% -2	Yes Not all starting at same place Front page paper	History Yes But Improved Former title one principal	How to embrace school choice students and "maintain our status"	Worried about becoming a school choice cite, overcrowding Helping everyone feel apart of community
High SES- 25% -3	Good to hold everyone accountable pushed us to take kids farther	No but resent how much they are asked to do to secure the scores	Biggest beef is ELL students pg. 8	Prior to a year not much of a chance at proficiency after a year things to shore up gaps and acclimate

NCLB

	Views	Political implications	Parents Response to scores	
Mid SES 50% 1	Focused attention on learning- gone overboard ELL, migrant students from Africa counted in African American scores	Everyone hates congress, but likes their congressman. Same with schools p. 14 pie shrinking	Did not make minority sub group- hard to explain sets up bad blood within the community. P12 quote	
Mid SES 42% 1	High standards for every child very important should be accountable for results	So many people think good test scores good school Pg. 7	New students this year by school choice (40 students) – teacher not all receptive, parents not at our school response p. 6 “will drop our test scores”	Left school too much pressure to keep scores. High and want them to stay high, wants to embrace every child. Cant deal with the if they don't fit “our mold” we don't want them mentality

NCLB

	Pressure to make	Declining Enrollment	Parents Response to scores	Principal worried
Low SES 90% 1	No way to make when the more stable part of population leaving on NCLB transfer Effect on staff p. 15	Keep encouraging transfer left with the most needy kids and family	Labeled in newspaper failing because Title One status Creating white flight p. 16 do not want to be with black students	Declining enrollment new buildings "district want to mirror population" city does not have 70 minority and 90 poor. Redistricting does not accurately represent population.
Low SES 87% 2	Constant reminder that we need scores to avoid failing	Yes 30 left for school choice "lost 30 kids we had a relationship with"		Does not matter if you're mobile or not, you're expected to perform the same as your peers that may have been in the same school forever.
Low SES- 80% -3	Media loves to make us the scapegoat for poverty	no		constant
Low SES 70% 4	Content with data analysis that shows where they started and the number of students who have shown growth.	Increasing	Parents do not have a clue and they don't care about the scores	Very proud of the growth students made according to state testing We are no where close to making AYP but very proud of growth







