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UMI
Community and School in an Era of Demographic Change:
A Study of Immigrant Minority Group Partnerships
with a Canadian Elementary School

by

Terry Lorraine Shaw

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This study was initiated to identify a process by which a policy could be designed to address relationships within problematic school areas. The premise was that a policy be developed for the study population, school and its community, responsive to the wishes and interests of the stakeholders. The framework for this policy was developed via an analysis of information collected regarding school/community relations between a Canadian elementary school and its immigrant minority community. The data analysis involved the qualitative research method of critical action research with a sub component of critical ethnography.

The study population was purposive: educators of the school community and immigrant minority group individuals whose first language was not English. The sample was stratified: set criteria with respect to cultural background and language were used to determine immigrant minority participants. Representatives of staff, students and parents of the school community contributed to the collection of data for this study. To identify school/community perceptions, expectations and needs, the researcher employed interviews, collaborative focus group sessions and self-reflective narratives with participants.

The information was analysed through interpretational qualitative methods that included the characteristics of language (communication and culture), categorization of patterns, frequency of occurrences, and establishment of relationships. The researcher compiled recommendations into a policy for the school. The significance of the study was the development of a policy created to address relationships within this immigrant minority group school area.
Acknowledgements

The research and development of this thesis is the result of the effort and support of numerous individuals. I would like to thank the following people for the contributions they offered while I travelled through the doctoral journey. The time spent on this project has been both enlightening and fulfilling.

The supervisor of this dissertation, Dr. David Corson, planted the seed for this project and guided me with his knowledge, patience, perseverance and high expectations for quality. His direction, mentorship and friendship have been invaluable and I wish to extend my appreciation to him at this time. Professors Donald Musella and Grace Feuerverger, committee members, have also provided me with their support and I thank them for their guidance.

The work of two fine young sisters, Shyla and Mythri Vijendran must be acknowledged as they contributed immeasurably to the organization of the project. Their efforts covered a broad range of activities, from filing, transcribing and data entry to arranging dates and times for interviews and focus groups. These girls demonstrated a high level of commitment and professionalism to this project and I appreciate having had the opportunity to work with them and to being able to introduce them to the world of graduate studies.

The nature of this study emanated from a diverse population where accommodations for language differences necessitated the assistance of translators. I would like to thank the mother of Shyla and Mythri, Mrs Shuba Vijendran, for her help with transcriptions, interviewing and Tamil translations. I am also most appreciative of her suggestion that I work with her daughters; the Vijendranks are a wonderful family. Marina Lee, Prem Bakshi, Gloria Fung and Jean Mills, all employees and colleagues from The York Region Board of Education, are to be thanked for their assistance with the translation and transcription of the community surveys, interviews and
focus groups. Other members of The York Region Board of Education who are to be thanked for their support, guidance and assistance are Director Bill Hogarth, Research Officer Doug Hamilton, and retired Superintendent Bev Stewart. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge and thank the people who participated in this research as they volunteered their time, knowledge and reflections. Specifically, the input from the staff, students, parents and community members of the school upon which this thesis is created, thank you for being so amenable to the project, your contributions provided tremendous insight and have been greatly appreciated.

Most importantly I thank and dedicate this work to my family whose support and encouragement have sustained me throughout all the trials and tribulations that arise and potentially divert one's focus. My mother and father, Joan and John Shaw, who have always impressed upon me the value of learning; never faltered in their motivation and inspiration. My sisters Patricia and Cathy, and their families, who patiently continued to support me, I thank you, as well. Finally, two special individuals, close to my heart, are to be thanked for their support. I am extremely grateful to my partner, Bill Lawlor, for believing in me, loving me and encouraging me to persevere when the end was in sight. Lastly, I thank my Grandpa; I know he would have been proud.
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## Glossary of Terms

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<td>Asian-born</td>
<td>Refers to people born in the Middle East as well as other parts of Asia. (Statistics Canada, 1997)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Acculturization</td>
<td>The process of becoming adapted to a new culture. A reorientation of thinking and feeling (and) communication. (Richard-Amato &amp; Snow, 1992, p. 79)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bourgeoisie</td>
<td>The people of the middle class. (Gage Canadian Dictionary, 1983, p. 135)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian-born</td>
<td>Refers to people who were Canadian citizens by birth. Most were born in Canada, but a small number were born outside Canada to Canadian parents. (Statistics Canada, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Action Research</td>
<td>A form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practice, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 162)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Ethnography</td>
<td>The reflective process of choosing between conceptual alternatives and making value-laden judgements of meaning and method to challenge research, policy and other forms of human activity. (Thomas, 1993, p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Capital</td>
<td>Those culturally esteemed advantages that people acquire as a part of their life experiences. (Corson, 1990, p. 222)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipation</td>
<td>The process of separation from constraining modes of thinking or acting that limit perception of and action toward realizing alternative possibilities. (Thomas, 1993, p. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emancipatory Leadership</td>
<td>Administrators-withdraw from centre stage by deliberately limiting themselves to making consultative contributions to debate, and by offering their opinions last, rather than first, make it clear that they will accept any decision that is the outcome of a democratic consensus, and that they will do so without reservations or ill-feeling of any kind, agree to leave the implementation of any decision in the hands of those chosen for that task by the group. (Corson, 1996, p. 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnocultural Equity</td>
<td>Providing equal opportunities for individuals regardless of ethnicity or cultural heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding School</td>
<td>An operative school deemed to temporarily use its space with students awaiting the opening of a new school under construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigrant Population</td>
<td>Refers to people who are, or have been at one time, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some are recent arrivals, while others have resided in Canada for a number of years. (Statistics Canada, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-permanent Resident</td>
<td>Refers to a person from another country who lives in Canada and has a work, student or Minister’s permit, or is claiming refugee status in Canada at the time of the 1996 census. Non-permanent residents are not included in the immigrant population. (Statistics Canada, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Not having enough income to maintain a standard of living regarded as normal in the community in which one lives. (Gage Canadian Dictionary, 1983 p. 875)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoeducationalist</td>
<td>An individual who is qualified to administer psychoeducational tests of academic abilities. Responsible for identifying learning exceptionalities through the interpretation of assessment results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Immigrants</td>
<td>Refers to people who immigrated to Canada between 1991 and 1996. (Statistics Canada, 1997)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Surplus Teacher</td>
<td>A teacher who has been declared surplus (excess) to a particular school as per their staffing quota and projected student population.</td>
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Introduction

0.1 Introduction

Apathy, alienation, adversity and anger are all antithetical to the foundation of Canadian society. Proclaiming individual freedom, accessibility and equality, this democratic nation professes to offer a common vision of harmony for all.

At a conference on April 23, 1993, Stephen Lewis stated that by the year 2000 Toronto's population make-up will be close to 50% immigrants (see Figure 0.1 for example). Statistics Canada released the results of their 1996 Census and stated that

The impact of recent immigration trends could most clearly be seen in the big cities. Toronto had the largest immigration population of all 25 census metropolitan areas, with 42% of its population in 1996 composed of immigrants. (Statistics Canada, 1997, p. 2)

With this continued growth and shift in the societal visage will individual needs be recognized? Will this 'Canada of collectivity' provide equal opportunities in all domains: political, economic, cultural and educational? Are the footings of the national structure secure enough, at this time, to support additional construction and modifications? A multi-dimensional,
multi-coloured, societal tableau is evolving that will, inevitably, steer Canada's future course.

Sensitivity and understanding are essential to the task of determining how and where changes should occur in an attempt to alleviate fear, discrimination and confusion.

...the government creates racism in people by restructuring society against its will in a way that generates racial attitudes... What governments designing immigration policies have to determine is where The Cultural Comfort Zone lies, for otherwise they court social upheaval. (Gairdner, 1990, p. 409)

Is Gairdner's (1990) cultural comfort zone an elusive entity? To embark on a quest of such great magnitude is one of overwhelming proportions. Fragmentation of needs into specific areas will narrow the focus and create a more manageable journey. Investigation of singular facets, whether political, educational, cultural or economic, will inevitably entail some overlap and commonalities. Ideally, ensuing results will merge to form a "zone" that could delineate the needs and related resources necessary to accommodate this era of demographic change in Canada.

There will be new opportunities and challenges for The York Region Board of Education as we move towards the 21st century. By anticipating these challenges and proactively developing responses, we can continue to improve the quality of education in York Region schools and continue to be responsible partners in the communities we serve. (York Region Board of Education Superintendent of Employee Services, January, 1993)

Providing an educational system that addresses current changes in society is vital to all students, regardless of locale. To do so in a setting that is undergoing transformation, not only as a result of the natural evolution of time, but as the result of a population metamorphosis, is an additional challenge. "The role of the school in a culturally diverse society such as Canada is complex and problematical." (Mallea and Young, 1987, p. 83)

Multicultural education incurs federal, provincial, and local board interactions resulting in policies and responses to the expectations of diverse groups. In turn, these macrosystem
directives form the basis from which school programs emerge.

The policy of the federal government is to continue to forge partnerships with educational institutions at the school-board and post-secondary levels, with national and community organizations, provincial/territorial and local governments to create the necessary conditions to enhance academic success of minority students to ensure that educational institutions reflect and respond to diversity and to educate all students for life in a multicultural society. (Tator and Henry, 1991, p. 37)

The success of this process for effective partnerships is dubious. Because we are educating in an era of change and instability, we can't assume today's plans will meet tomorrow's needs. (Patterson, Purkey, and Parker, 1990, p. 61)

A multitude of literature debates, challenges, and investigates constructive and effective methods of intervention with multicultural education. It would appear that bureaucratic policies followed by administrative mandates may not be the most effective methods of program or policy implementation. Numerous school boards are presently engaged in strategic planning exercises to review and possibly revise operating procedures. Included in this process is the consideration of site-based management as a tool for decentralization. Essentially, a backward mapping approach to individual school policies and procedures could evolve whereby the needs determine revised policy and/or program.

(backward mapping) ...begins ...with a statement of the specific behaviour at the lowest level of the implementation process that generates the need for a policy ...the closer one is to the source of the problem, the greater one's ability to influence it. (Elmore, 1987, p. 604)

Therefore, designing successful multicultural educational programs and meeting community expectations may best be accomplished at school level, rather than at the summit of an hierarchal structure.

0.2 The Problem and Purpose

The problem, then, is one of investigating community and school expectations for
successful partnerships. The intent of this study was to present a distinctive problematic area within the educational realm of cultural challenges in Canada. Supportive investigation pertaining to the interrelated components of a transitional, diverse, educational community was incorporated into the sphere of the study.

How can we be adequately sensitive to cultural, social, and economic differences, and collaborate with parents who cannot speak English or whose cultural background makes our way of doing thinking and doing things almost incomprehensible? (Henderson, Marburger and Ooms 1986, p. xv)

A Canadian elementary school, located in a diverse community, and its relationship with the parents of the immigrant minority students were the focus of this investigation. Specifically, the focus was placed upon this particular population and their needs within the present system's educational model. Furthermore, the problem was viewed from other perspectives that included the needs of the immigrant minority groups, with respect to culture and language both at school and in the community, as well as cultural group influences that impact upon student progress and achievement.

Political, racial and economic factors were components of the analysis as they pertained to the problem in conjunction with existing factors that impeded partnerships. The information gleaned from this study was used to develop a policy/practices model designed for use within the school to address identified needs.

0.3 Context for the Study

Communication between all system partners is essential in establishing understandings and partnerships. The Board of Education where this study occurred is one of the five largest boards in Ontario, serving in excess of 70,000 students with over 1600 secondary school teachers, more than 2000 elementary teachers and 1600 support staff. At the time of the study
there were 118 schools: 97 elementary and 21 secondary with plans for four new schools to be built in the coming year.

The boundaries of this board of education cover a wide geographical expanse and services students in both rural and urban settings. The history and the growth of the board are reflected by the diversity in the schools with respect to their locations and population make-up.

The Board's objective, in addition to addressing the Goals of Education is stated in its Mission:

The (Board) is committed to developing within each student the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to be a contributing and responsible participant in a changing Canadian society. This commitment envisions schools where the learning of the student is the primary focus. (1997, p 4)

There is a need to develop partnerships by encouraging parents to participate in their children's education. Parent-Teacher groups, School Councils, volunteer work, public meetings, Race Relations Advisory committees and school-based community programs are vehicles through which to promote this relationship.

Parental involvement in schools to enhance student learning was the primary thrust of this study. Specifically, the interaction level of immigrant minority group parents with a school within a central region of Ontario. The problem of minimal and inconsistent parental interaction is one that the staff has attempted to address at this school. A community outreach program developed between this school and a neighbouring one only increased participation at some of the meetings. The progress of attempts to develop school/community partnerships has been negligible.

As a former administrator of this particular school, the researcher held a personal interest in pursuing this study. In an attempt to understand parental, staff and student expectations, levels
of support and interactions, the researcher made enquiries into perceptions and blatant factors impeding the partnership. From the information collected, a policy/practices model was constructed, aimed at improving school climate and community relations.

This policy is written specifically for the school staff who will select facets for implementation, as deemed appropriate. The context of the policy will be shared with parents via school meetings and newsletters. All communication with parents will be translated when needed and will be modified to a language level that is easily understood.
Chapter One: Linkages: Immigrant Minority Group Parents and Their Involvement in North American Schools

A Review of the Literature

A review of the literature reveals that studies have been conducted in the area of parent-school linkages as they pertain to empowerment and student achievement. Further to cooperative partnerships, some researchers have delved into specific profiles with respect to socioeconomic factors, cultural influences, and levels of schooling (for example, private schools, post-secondary, et cetera). An investigation of available studies served as the basis for the development of the conceptual framework of this study. This information was considered in conjunction with writings, policies and procedures in the field of multiculturalism and racism.

1.1 The Canadian Identity

In 1971, Canada became officially, "multicultural" following the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. In 1988, through widespread advertising, the government of Canada proudly invited the people of Canada to "Celebrate the World's First Multiculturalism Act." In 1988 alone, it would spend more than $25 million on multicultural activities...just at the Federal level. (Gairdner, 1990, p. 391)

The stream of immigration into Canada continues to flow steadily. Non-traditional immigrants (not from the United Kingdom, Europe, New Zealand, Australia or South Africa), increased from a level of 20.6% in 1968 to 69% in 1987 (as per Department of Immigration statistics referenced by Burnet, 1992) (Table 1.1). "Canada has been a leading recipient of immigrants and refugees since the end of the Second World War." (Burnet, 1992, p. x)

This increase was slightly more than three times the growth rate (4%) of the Canadian-born population. Immigrants represented 17.4% of the population, the largest share in more than 50 years. (Statistics Canada, 1997, p. 1)
Table 1.1: Country of Origin of Recent Immigrants to Canada by Number and Percentage

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,038,995</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>108,915</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
<td>87,875</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>71,335</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>71,325</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>44,235</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>36,965</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>32,140</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>32,060</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>29,020</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>25,425</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Various immigration groups are settling in different areas of the country. The Atlantic provinces have seen many Lebanese arrive, whereas, looking specifically at Ontario, many Caribbeans and Asians are settling in this province. A significant amount of Asian immigration has occurred across Canada over the years (Figure 1.1).

...The share of Canada’s immigrant population born in Asia and the Middle East increased from 14% in 1981 to 31% in 1996. ...Nearly a quarter of all recent immigrants were born in Eastern Asia, places such as Hong Kong and the People’s Republic of China. The next largest Asian source of recent immigrants was Southern Asia, countries such as India and Sri Lanka. ...the second largest group, those born in Europe, accounted for only 19% of all recent immigrants... The third largest group among recent immigrants was from Central and South America, followed by those from Africa and the Caribbean and Bermuda. (Statistics Canada, 1997, p. 3)
This influx of individuals has increased minority dimensions of the population metamorphosis in Canada (see Figure 1.2). "in the larger society, the accepted definition of Canadianness is likely to be challenged by immigration." (Burnet, 1992, p.7)

Figure 1.2: Immigrants as a Percentage of Provinces and Territories, 1996.
To define our history, the past has to be reconstructed, yet with time, change and the phenomenon of immigration, certain components are rendered irrelevant due to the continued reshaping of our background. To define identity becomes even more complex with respect to our anticipated future.

...in judging cultural identity, the idea of 'personal allegiance' is the central consideration: an individual’s strong, voluntary attachment to a cultural group and to its values, as a result of some real link in the past, should be sufficient warrant of shared identity. (Corson, 1993, p. 49)

Our present discontinuity impacts upon the symbolic-cultural structure of Canadian society. Over the past two decades, since multicultural policies and provisions were established, Canada has continued to be challenged in its attempt to foster a sense of equilibrium while its identity remains nebulous in this era of change.

The transfiguration of our population continues to evolve with our ever-changing demographics (Figure 1.3). Shifts in prevailing immigrant groups alter the dominant symbolic-cultural representations of individual groups, while needs and expectations of the nation create additional challenges for the whole of Canada.

Immigration has a profound impact on the languages spoken in Canadian homes. About 2.8 million people, almost one of every 10 in Canada, spoke a language other than English or French most often at home in 1996. Chinese consolidated its hold as Canada’s most common language spoken at home, after English and French. ...The presence of languages other than English or French in Canada reflects the ethnic and linguistic diversity that characterizes the nation. (Statistics Canada, 1997, p. 2)
Figure 1.3: Population with a Non-Official Language as Mother Tongue, 1951-1996. For 1981, 1991 and 1996, multiple responses have been distributed equally among the languages reported.

Understanding where changes are occurring is essential in determining what attempts should be made to accommodate, while alleviating fear, discrimination and confusion. Asher's (1987) study looked at the home-school connections for minorities and the poor. Her studies suggested that trends in demographics over the upcoming years will accelerate the number of urban families that will be minority, poor and headed by women. In turn, societal demands will change. Caretaking needs will likely be overextended (i.e., grandparents who are needed to babysit in an extended family setting), as will resources. Specifically, Asher found that there was a need between home and school to reduce parent alienation. In order to accomplish this goal, the community she studied revealed a need for support from wider, cooperative arrangements within the community and various organizations. The members of this school community also expressed concern regarding negative media as impeding the bridge between school and families while increasing feelings of isolation. Further to negative media, parents reported that the following were also barriers to increased involvement: language, lack of information on the concept of North American school systems in addition to personal troubles and struggles for survival.

School boards and individual school staff need to be cognizant of the dilemma immigrant
minority group parents face when attempting to establish their homes and jobs, as well as their involvement in their children’s education.

Low income, culturally different parents have traditionally been marginalized through the inflexibility of the school as an institution. (Rudnitski, 1992, p. 4)

A multi-dimensional, multi-coloured societal tableau is evolving that will, inevitably, steer Canada’s future course.

It is not clear in Canada which direction will be followed. The basic question that should be faced is whether "multiculturalism" as a conscious policy will contribute to increasing equality in Canada or whether it will exacerbate and rigidify existing inequalities among individuals and groups. (Findlay, as cited in Wolfgang, 1975, p. 223)

As Ogbu (1974) discussed, governments are pushing to hire minorities, but the difficulties lie in situations where the individuals may only be marginally qualified and/or unskilled, or where language creates a barrier to advancement.

By focusing on differences, this hiring format may result in alienating marginalized groups even more than they already are. It is critical to investigate what the constraints are that create obstacles and barriers to hiring procedures and opportunities for advancement.

...we need to think in terms of the potentials that a given situation has for the people in it, and the constraints on what they can do with it. Both potentials and constraints are constructed histories of the social relationships involved and they also change as social structures change. (Connell, Ashenden and Dowsett, 1982, p. 193)

In attempting to bridge the gap, educators need to appreciate the histories of the immigrant parents of their students and to appreciate the challenges they may face while adjusting within a new society.

Respect for another's culture is sometimes articulated through acceptance of the differences between the dominant culture and those that differ. ... a refusal to pass judgment on the basis of mainstream norms. (Rudnitski, 1992, p. 13)
1.2 Paradigm Shifts in Schooling

In today's climate, educators are faced with decreased resources and increasing expectations. Our times are turbulent, with educators expected to provide, as Patterson, Purkey and Parker (1986) entitled their book, *Productive School Systems for a Nonrational World*. In many respects, the external influences of the nonrational world steer the shifts that occur in our schools. Current fiscal restraints, such as reductions in transfer payments, redistribution of education taxes and shifts in the locus of control, as intimated by The Ministry of Education's Bill 160, are but a few of the significant pressure points. In conjunction with finances and the political distribution of power, accountability and the standards for quality of education are at the forefront of community expectations upon today's schools. Caution should be exercised during times of change. As Corson (1996) states "When reform activities move quickly toward a major restructuring of a school, it is important that the organization is not permanently damaged by hasty implementation." (p. 8)

Further to demands for change imposed by educational and political influences, school systems have been taxed by social pressures and changes in social structures. The scope of school responsibilities has broadened in an effort to address changes impacting upon student progress and well-being.

A gradual loosening of family structure has placed the school in the position of having to assume greater responsibility for the total development of the child. (Goslin, 1965, p. ii)

School systems are not autonomous in their operation. Their organizations are interwoven with political, social and economic structures. Therefore, changes external to the schools can have direct internal impact. With present demands for accountability there has been a paradigm shift from a radical-humanist (activity-based student learning) theoretical framework to one of critical
interpretivism. Schools are expected to interpret their realities with respect to their individual social structures and, in turn, provide programs that meet the demands and pressures of global needs. There appears to be constant pressure on educators to ensure that all students achieve a specified degree of success while enrolled in the educational system. Failures and retentions are considered to be direct reflections of ineffective, negative schools. As Woodring (1983) stated, "If he (the student) cannot learn, or refuses to learn, the school must continue to do its best and will be blamed if he (the student) fails to succeed." (p. 99) Ogbu (1974) offered reasons for school failures beyond those of academic achievement and retention rates to include particular needs for subordinate minorities. Specifically, Ogbu questioned whether the 'school's best' curricula developed in the primarily white, bourgeois setting, in addition to opportunities offered by society beyond formal schooling, address what is right for the culturally diverse children. Pettit (1987) suggested that the parents of the diverse groups have a responsibility to contribute pertinent information.

Parents and ethnic parents in particular have to educate members of the dominant culture to alternative beliefs and different frameworks of knowledge that schools have to recognize to be successful. (p. 6)

Children from subordinate minorities may feel alienated or disoriented in school settings where the programs reflect the 'white' society's established programs, expectations and levels of assessment.

When schools represent an alien culture to students and fail to represent parental interests, students disengage themselves from the school culture and the socio-economic universe it represents. (Firestone, 1989, p. 4)

The present system appears to be one that defines success as a path leading to post-secondary education followed with the attainment of 'white collar' employment positions. Subordinate minority students may develop a sense of defeat in their pursuit of academic and
career achievement if they feel incapable of fulfilling the dominant group's prescribed criteria for success. As Ogbu (1974) went on to state:

If one believes that one will not make it in the wider society because of external institutional barriers, then one may feel that it serves no purpose to try to make it in school preparing oneself for opportunities that will not be available after graduation. (p. 15)

The present educational settings, if organized without establishing provisions for diverse groups, will only serve to meet the needs of a select group, that being the culturally dominant white bourgeoisie as stated by McGroarty (1992),

In classrooms marked by linguistic heterogeneity, competitive learning approaches run the further risk of rewarding mainly those students who know English best. (p. 58)

The complexities of providing resources to meet the needs of subordinate groups becomes complicated even further when, as previously indicated, financial restrictions are imposed. Although it is essential to address fiscal restraints, these actions can hamper the acquisition of materials needed to develop and implement curriculum appropriate to the diverse student populations in the schools.

To survive during these periods of change, educators need to develop an understanding of current assumptions and of the ensuing implications both within, and external to the organization. Provisions for student learning within new educational organizations require direct planning for program application through collaborative actions of parents and staff. Schools are now recognizing the advantages of input provided through the development of school councils for both school program and operational procedures. Many organizations have become engaged in practices to facilitate the transformation of the present system to one that will represent local communities. The formation of school councils is discussed and investigated further, in a section entitled Involving Parents in the School.
With present shifts in educational beliefs and practices, it is difficult to establish a formal, theoretical framework. School paradigms must remain permeable as the institution of education is not a pre-formed concrete structure, nor an objective reality independent of human beings. The system flows and melds with the realities that circulate within and thus prevent the institution from becoming static. Education represents an organizational culture that, as Schein (1985) defined,

...consists of a large set of taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that cover how group members view both their external relationships with their various environments and their internal relationships with each other. (p. 224)

To engage in transformational learning, educators have to be prepared to take risks. The individuals of the organization are, in effect, changing their 'directing paradigm' through a reassessment of their underlying assumptions. By being critically reflective, educators have recognized the need and value of change, a commitment to a new paradigm, one consisting of a new set of rules for educational direction. The challenge to leaders is formidable, considering the significant changes that have been prescribed to meet multicultural and multilingual needs, academic (curriculum assessments and reports) mandates, equity mandates and financial cutbacks.

More than ever, those leading our organizations need to look externally, 'read' what is happening in the world at large, and identify pivotal changes. (Morgan, 1988, p. 16)

Leaders must also be sensitive to the stresses surfacing from change and be equipped to face adversity. “Major transitions unleash powerful conflicting forces in people, and individual psychodynamics of change must be understood and managed.” (Tichy, 1986, p. 31)

These conflicting forces can be further complicated by the diversity and complexity of the setting. An analysis of the environment as it changes, is needed in order to identify what is
required in order to accommodate the players.

An understanding and appreciation of this nation's cultural diversity is absolutely necessary in the design of research and the development of policy if we are to meet the educational needs of all children. (Federal Regional Resource Centre, 1991, p. 4)

Paradigm shifts in education go beyond investigations into the philosophy of current pedagogy. Shifts are occurring in response to a changing clientele, changing societal demands, global comparisons and forecasted employment needs. Schools are powerful institutions that govern student learning and achievement, which, in turn, impacts upon society. If changes to the present system are going to be successful, educators need to identify and address the needs of the changing clientele, that of the subordinate minorities.

Effective educational programs should help students explore and clarify their own ethnic identities. To do this, such programs must recognize and reflect the complex ethnic identities and characteristics of the individual students in the classroom. Teachers should learn how to facilitate the identity quests among ethnic youths and help them become effective and able participants in the common and civic and national culture. (Banks, 1988, p. 93)

1.3 Involving Parents in School

Are parent partnerships with schools, regardless of ethnicity, necessary, important or significant? In PTA Today, Sheri Williams (1989) wrote about inclusivity and the importance of the role of Parent-Teacher Associations in reaching children and families in an effort to attain, "...equity and excellence for every child." (p. 22) Suzanne Zeigler (1987), prepared a report for the Toronto Board of Education entitled, The Effects of Parent Involvement On Children's Achievement: The Significance of Home/School Links. Her findings indicated that, through partnerships, shared ownership and support for children's programs, parental involvement resulted in improved or increased student achievement.

The evidence suggests that no other single focus has the potential to be as
productive for students as the closer linking of home and school, of parents and teachers. (p. 4)

This study supported the school-home partnership through a variety of indicators, such as student attitudes, achievement, attendance and behaviour. To increase the degree of involvement, the study suggested that the responsibility was primarily that of the school's to further parent understanding and education.

General efforts are continually put forth to keep parents informed of their children's education. Parent interviews (to review student report cards) are formally scheduled, in addition to individual teacher/parent interviews arranged to discuss student progress. Other methods of communication involve the school newsletters, open houses, Parent-Teacher Association meetings, and student performance presentations. The frequency, extent and structure of these communications varies from school to school and from teacher to teacher. Similarly, contacts initiated by the parents can and often are equally inconsistent in their regularity. These modes of communication, regardless of their frequency, do not necessarily ensure a partnership, but a transfer of information rather than the beginnings of shared understandings.

Feuerverger (1994) investigated literacy intervention in a school community of language minority students. The primary objective was,

To supplement children's opportunities for reading both in school and at home by providing a selection of books in the school library in the children's home languages. (p. 125)

The second objective was to investigate ways that parents could be directly involved in their children's learning. Feuerverger's (1994) study supported the significance of parental involvement with student success. She cited the work by Ada (1988) who had illustrated an interconnection between a child's development of critical thinking skills and curriculum content that involves reading. Feuerverger (1994) discussed the importance of parental involvement in
supporting student learning and language acquisition. Her research demonstrated an
interconnection of critical thinking skill development where students demonstrated the ability to
apply their learning to areas beyond reading; such as writing skills or "conceptual competence"
(p. 126). This study recognized the contributions of parental involvement as they pertained to
these areas of student learning,

...schools can play a major role in encouraging children’s home language and
culture development... It is a question of encouraging schools to welcome parents
to participate ...and to promote children’s pride in their ethnicity through informal
and formal classroom and library-related linguistic programs. ...This collaboration
between home and school is certainly applicable, indeed perhaps more crucial
within the context of education for minority children. (p. 127)

The study conducted by Zeigler (1987), emphasized not only that partnerships
significantly affect student achievement, but that these partnerships need to be developed through
a conscious, structured effort. Furthermore, the level of policy in-service directing the
development of partnerships, has been shown to be most effective at school level. "...the issue of
...increasing ...partnerships ...can best be addressed at the level of the school and the teachers,
with the support from administrators." (Zeigler, 1987, p. 61)

Renihan and Renihan (1994) conducted a study on meaningful parental involvement at
school. They noted that parent-school partnerships have been receiving serious attention in most
provinces. They stated that in comparison to other countries, the Canadian government has used
a softer approach through "...advocacy, support and community-level planning rather than on
broader political agendas." (p. 16) They also refer to supportive research (Tangri and Moles,
1987) in this field that indicates that parental involvement is related to decreased absenteeism, as
well as improved achievement and school climate. In this study it was shown that many
governments in the industrialized nations place parental and community involvement high on
their educational agendas. The researchers referenced a formal Parent Charter in England that
explains rights of grievance, choice, knowledge of school statistics, et cetera. This document was published in 15 languages, distributed through schools and published in both local and regional newspapers. Renihan and Renihan (1994) listed themes supportive of parental involvement to include societal change and how "...changing circumstances have called into question the appropriateness of traditional models of educational delivery." (p. 17) Other themes encompassed the basic rights of parents to be involved in their child's education and links of involvement to student success, parents as educators and qualities of effective schools. Their research indicated seven qualities of effective schools which they proposed formed a framework to enhance parental involvement. They suggested methods to broaden these themes into supportive action. The themes were: Leadership, Academic focus, Expectations, Climate, Motivation, Mission, Participative decision-making, and Feedback on student performance.

The research indicated that school administrators support these themes and are in favour of enhanced parental involvement. Renihan and Renihan (1994) surveyed 426 principals in order to determine their perceptions of factors that either helped or hindered school success. Effective communication with parents and community involvement were frequently offered as advantageous with lack of parental support and professional isolation as hindrances. The researchers went on to define effective parental involvement as that which is meaningful. In their conclusions, Renihan and Renihan (1994) found that meaningful parental involvement promoted such considerations as,

...appreciation of language barriers between parents and professionals; awareness of staff to parental time constraints; an open invitation for parents to visit the school; announcement of meetings long enough in advance to give all parents a chance to arrange to attend; availability of resource room and other facilities to parents; single, working, custodial parents support groups and child care. (p. 20)

Further research supporting parental involvement conducted by Jackson and Cooper
(1992) recognized that "difficulties of living may be further complicated for parents who are recent immigrants, lacking proficiency in English or the skills needed for employment in an advanced technological society." (p. 30) Jackson and Cooper (1992) studied parental involvement in New York public schools which had been allocated $800,000 by the city comptroller. The purpose of this money was to develop parental involvement programs with the potential for replication which Jackson and Cooper evaluated through their research. Specifically, they studied three schools each with an enrollment of approximately 3000 with more than 50% Hispanic, 40% blacks and the remainder where Asian and white.

This study reflected a new view of parents: "Before the schools can involve parents in school related projects or programs, the needs of parents as people must be addressed." (p. 32) Therefore, one of the programs was created to provide support groups to parents. A self-help or support forum to focus on needs and concerns of parents as people. There was an emphasis on continuity of attendance, approximately 20 parents attended, at each of the schools studied. These projects also strove to increase parent-school partnerships. Two of the three schools had their programs develop and continue into the following year. New leaders came forth to chair the groups and sources of outside support, as needed, increased. In these two schools strong principal and superintendent support was evident. The survey of the parents revealed positive comments about the programs and increases in communication between school, parent and child. The research showed the interest and concern of parents but recognized that basic survival needs had to be met first, such as through these self-help programs. Second, Jackson and Cooper (1992) concluded that,

Schools should also involve community organizations in new partnerships to gain support for the ideas that schools are places where parents are welcome and that the job of educating and socializing young people cannot be done by schools working in isolation. (p. 37)
Their third finding stated the need for finding more active strategies to work with and involve working parents of older students. In conclusion Jackson and Cooper (1992) offered ten factors centred to the improvement of home-school collaboration:

1. Leadership. Visible and active involvement of personnel
2. Accessibility. Open lines of communication
3. Time. Sufficient time to plan and recruit
4. Cultural Awareness. So trust can develop
5. Active Teacher Roles/Involvement
6. Continuity. Continuous and regular attendance
7. Public Recognition
8. Broad-based Support. Involvement of outside community groups
9. Adolescent Focus. Attention to growth and development of adolescents
10. Recognition of Parents as People. Recognition of needs and interests (p. 37)

In summary, there is supportive research to suggest that parental involvement with schools is important. The resulting effects of school/parent partnerships directly influences student achievement, attitude, attendance and discipline. This partnership should be encouraged, nurtured and developed, ideally at the school level. Teachers and supportive administrators can be most effective in creating these partnerships through the implementation of a structured plan or policy directed at a shared understanding with the community.

1.4 Immigrant Minority Group Parents and Schools

As part of our effort to design an educational environment that is maximally
effective, we must not only have a background in issues of language development but must also understand something of the cultural context of teaching language minority students. This necessarily involves a reciprocal process: As we learn more about the complex cultural issues with which language minority students must struggle to become both bilingual and bicultural, we must also examine our own attitudes and systems of cultural belief. Consideration of these socio-cultural issues is an important step toward understanding and appreciating the rich linguistic and cultural diversity that language minority students bring into our classrooms. (Richard-Amato & Snow, 1992, p. 71)

Inclusivity of parents with their children's schools is an objective supported by our current Ministry of Education in Ontario.

Parents are the first teachers of children. They possess the power to make a continued educational difference in their children. (Ministry of Education, Ontario, 1988, p. 8)

Parents have been encouraged to join Parent Advisory Committees at both the provincial level and at the individual school board level. The Board where this study occurred designated staff to investigate and research the development, structure and implications of such councils as a component toward current educational reform. The supervisory officer overseeing this portfolio was charged to take this information and apply it toward the development of a framework whereby individual schools could begin to establish their own local councils. Included in the objectives for the implementation of these councils were processes to enhance shared governance and understanding of school operations. In discussion with the researcher, this particular superintendent advocated Epstein's (1992) continuum model and saw it as a conceptual framework forming the foundation for increasing parental involvement in schools. Epstein's (1992) continuum model is a framework of six types of involvement, summarizing concepts of partnership (Table 1.4). She uses the word partnership rather than involvement as she defines partnership as far more comprehensive. Partnerships, by Epstein's definition, are between school, family and community members with shared interests, responsibilities, investments, and
overlapping influences on children's education and development.

**Table 1.2**: Six types of school, family and community partnerships (From Epstein, 1992).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Basic obligations of families parenting/child rearing (school assisting parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>Basic obligations of schools communicating (school to home) (home to school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>Volunteering and attending school activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>Involvement in learning activities at home (interacting on school work)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>Decision-making, governance, leadership, and school advocacy (P.T.A./P.T.O.) (advisory councils and committees) (independent advocacy groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6)</td>
<td>Collaborations and exchanges with the community (community contributes to the school) (school contributes to the community)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The broader term emphasizes that the institutions share the major responsibilities for children's education and development and that all-school, family and community are needed to support children as students. ...the broader term recognizes the important potential influence of all family members, not just parents, and all family structures, not just natural parents. ...the term allows students to join the partnership as communicators with and for their own families and schools. (Epstein, 1994, p. 1)

Further to the aforementioned definition of partnership, Epstein represents the term through a theoretical model she labels as overlapping spheres of influence. Essentially, the spheres can be pushed together to overlap to create areas for partnerships. This overlap can be caused by forces of time, effort and behaviour.

The external model recognizes pictorially that there are some practices that schools and families (and other spheres) conduct separately and some practices they conduct jointly in order to influence children's learning and development... the school and family share their children. (Epstein, 1994, p. 2)

The internal model of the spheres of influence depicts the impact of interpersonal relations and patterns at either the institutional or individual levels. Epstein (1994) outlines the
numerous forces that impact upon student success beyond those of academic results in class. She looks at the child as a complex, multifaceted individual who will succeed most when balanced connections occur between these factors.

The model assumes that student learning, development and success—broadly defined, not just achievement test scores are the main reasons for school and family partnerships. ...productive connections of schools, families and communities, and pertinent interactions of teachers, parents and students are conducted in order to help students increase their academic skills, self-esteem, positive attitudes toward learning, independence, other achievements ...and other desired behaviours that are characteristic of successful students. (p. 3)

From the overlap of responsibilities of family and schools, Epstein's research revealed a framework of six types of involvement to form a comprehensive program of partnership. The six types of involvement are depicted in Table 1.4. Epstein stresses that to see the six types of involvement occur teachers must organize their plans for action and a policy should be written stating the essential goals for each type. To facilitate the implementation of the six types an action Team for School and Family Partnerships” (p. 12) should be established.

Over three years real progress can be made on all six types of involvement with practices to improve information to parents about child development; increase communication about school programs and student progress; increase and improve volunteers; design better ways to encourage interactions at home about school work; increase parent participation in school decisions; and connect families and students to community resources and services. (p. 12)

Essentially, parents are obligated to provide for their children, provide for their learning at home, to make provisions for involvement at school, as well as become involved in the school's governance; all in conjunction with the school's obligations to provide for the student. Thus, student learning becomes a clearly defined and shared responsibility between home and school.

The involvement of immigrant minority group parents presents additional challenges when language differences interfere with communication and understanding. A parent's lack of
fluency in English can impede effective interaction with staff, as well as in supporting the students when they complete school assignments at home. Further cultural obstacles can encompass differences in values, goals and educational models. As a result there may be tendencies toward miscommunication, mistrust and misunderstanding. The literature indicates that,

Parents from racial, ethnic and cultural minorities, especially those of low socio-economic status, tend to feel less affinity for the schools than those in the mainstream middle class. (Litwak and Meyer, 1974, as cited in Rudnitski, 1992, p. 3)

To understand the factors that impede effective partnerships would assist in lowering interaction barriers between immigrant minority group parents and schools. Stough (1980) conducted extensive parent interviews regarding such barriers. His findings, presented in a highly empirical fashion, revealed a distinction that white parents were more actively involved with their children's education than parents of ethnic groups. The white parents were more likely to discuss school activities with their children plus they indicated a higher frequency of involvement with the teachers. However, Stough only presented the statistical breakdown of the interview questions he asked. It is imperative to question beyond the percentages, to look at the social realities that exist. The task of uncovering these social injustices and inconsistencies fall within the realm of critical action research and ethnography. An investigation into racial and ethnocultural equities are perhaps just surfacing. The Ontario Ministry of Education has recognized the need to formulate policy to address concerns in this emerging area of growth and change. One that is to be reviewed by all stakeholders and one that is to fall within the specific parameters, as outlined by the Ministry. Once the Ministry has reviewed the antiracism and ethnocultural policies of the various school boards, a clearer picture of perceived injustices and anticipated needs may arise.
As previously discussed, parent/school linkages are advantageous to student progress regardless of ethnicity.

...a school that invites participation from parents of a minority community, while respecting that families language and culture, will have a positive affect on the achievement of minority students at that school. (Cummins, 1986, as cited in Ramirez and Douglas, 1989, p. 2)

As further discussed by Ramirez and Douglas (1989), the number of immigrant students has increased dramatically over the past decade. Schools are being presented with an increasing number of children whose first language is not English.

...while Canada has two official languages, many children first learn the language of the home and this can often be neither of these two languages. ...46% of the Toronto school population in 1975 had a language other than English as their mother tongue. (Murray, 1977, as cited in Mallea and Young, 1984, p. 406)

Ramirez and Douglas (1989) went on to report that "...there is a disproportionate school failure of minority children." (p. 3) Understandably, many strategies have been incorporated at a school and at a board level to address student failures; one strategy included is that of parent partnerships.

To establish an effective, collaborative model that could foster this relationship requires an understanding of the obstacles that exist. Language is one of the foremost limitations impeding interactions with these groups. As Corson (1993) states:

The non-standard language of socially marginalized people is still often used unjustly as a 'mirror' to their potential for achievement and to their worth as human beings. (p. 101)

Although resources are often available to provide for language differences, implementation requires tremendous planning, work and time. Due to constraints, effective first language communication is not always possible. This, in turn, can render parents helpless in their efforts to develop an understanding of the school system. "Immigrants are often minorities who have even less power due to lack of language, money and social power base." (Ramirez and Douglas, 1989,
This feeling of helplessness can extend into the family itself when language differences begin to impact upon family dynamics. When reporting on the acculturalization of Asian immigrants in a Western society, Yao (1988) noted,

It is quite common for parents to eat a diet different from that eaten by their children and to speak in native tongue while the children answer in English. (p. 224)

The transmission of information from home to school, within these environments, could then become quite disjointed or fragmented. For example, could an immigrant Asian child in a Canadian kindergarten class effectively relay to his or her parents the daily classroom activities? Could a child in that position even possess the necessary capabilities for language translation: appropriate terminology/vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, values and customs? Bermudez and Padron (1988) described, at length, the importance of home/school linkages. They stressed the importance that the home has in contributing to the learning of the child. "Learning must not be only associated with the school." (p. 83) Educators need to display a level of sensitivity and understanding of the impact each group's culture and values have on both home and school environments. "Cultural conflicts over child rearing and differing system of values also disturb many Asian parents." (Yao, 1988, p. 224)

Just as immigrant minority group parents need to learn about the values and norms within their new environments, educators need to develop an understanding of student backgrounds. "Professionals need to understand the roles .. played within family systems in non - dominant cultures." (Federal Region Resource Center, 1991, p. 20) Developing parental partnerships impacts upon far more than academic achievement. Values, attitude, identity and behaviours are affected by the acculturalization process.
...measuring the effectiveness of parent involvement either at home or in the school by student achievement outcomes is extremely narrow: parent involvement may have much wider effects, such as student citizenship and societal values. (Asher, 1987, p. 17)

Exploring Education Issues of Cultural Diversity was a study developed by The Federal Resource Center (1991) in Kentucky. The researchers identified eight critical areas; "Administration and Policy, Attitudes and Bias, Training and Personnel, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Society and Community, Parents and Families, Funding." (p. 1) Each area possesses numerous barriers that impede parent/school partnerships. With respect to the first area, administration and policy, the research looked at those issues which needed to be addressed to provide an education to children of culturally diverse backgrounds. It was found that schools need to become more adept at dealing with diversity in a general sense, not just cultural. Furthermore, organizational arrangements needed to be formed to facilitate collaboration between the school, the community and supportive inter-agency networks or groups. Essentially, the barriers obstructing the needs of the diverse student population needed to be defined and targeted. The resulting strategies would need to include a clear definition of minorities and a restructuring component that would encompass diversity as an inherent strand of the school’s operating norms. Much of the aforementioned could be addressed through the development of a policy designed at the individual school site that would speak to child care, services, language, curriculum and staffing needs.

The second critical area, attitudes and bias, could cripple progress in a diverse setting if barriers arose. “Lack of skills in English is seen as a disability which results in a concomitant lowering of expectations for school achievement.” (Federal Resource Centre, 1991 p. 2) Other barriers in this area would include lack of sensitivity, awareness, understanding, representation and differing values, beliefs and histories. It would be imperative to exercise caution when
addressing various attitudes or bias that the perception isn’t one of either over or under representation of any one culture group.

Educators must acknowledge that learning takes place within the context of one’s culture. (Sugai, 1988)

With this perspective, educators must come to expect and accept differences in values, expectations and beliefs inherent to different cultures and modify curriculum instruction in order to make it more responsive to student diversity. (Federal Resource Centre, 1991, p. 9)

The research indicated that the third area, that of training and personnel was a major issue for careful consideration. Cultural and linguistic factors are but two components to be taken into account when doing placements. An awareness of learning styles of different cultures needs to be incorporated into training of personnel in efforts to deal with issues of cultural diversity. Ideally, according to this research, much of the in-service for staff should be provided by those representative of the diversity. Other training needs to be identified, including the value of this in-service occurring not only within diverse school settings but at teaching training colleges. Barriers in the organization of training and hiring or placement of personnel would include those needed to provide the in-service. Recruitment of diverse personnel from a variety of disciplines, use of para-professionals, community parent advocates and representatives of culturally diverse service groups could be a difficult task of great magnitude.

The fourth area identified as critical and essential was that of curriculum and instruction. Disadvantaged schools that are predominantly minority were found to be less likely to use “hands-on” or higher-learning instructional methods and were less likely to offer as much opportunity to explore fine arts, practical and life skills, and other enriching curriculum ideas. (MacGiver and Epstein in Federal Resource Centre, 1991, p. 13)

Barriers of appropriate technology, a framework to reflect a variety of teaching strategies to meet the needs, mentorship and a cooperative learning curriculum would need to be overcome in the process of establishing effective, appropriate curriculum and instruction. Instructional
materials would need to reflect the diversity as the teaching and learning activities would match cultural preferences and behavioural norms. The materials and models used would have to be culturally relevant, non-biased instructional resources and assessment instruments. Further, the delivery of the academic services would best be done in the student’s own community, rather than sending individuals to other locations. Delivery should be positive and sensitive to the students’ acculturation development within the educational setting. Culturally pluralistic learning environments are needed. (Federal Resource Centre, 1991, p. 15)

These considerations fall systematically to the fifth concern, identified as assessment. One of the issues noted in the research was that a disproportionate number of students had been referred for behavioural, communication and/or learning problems. It was shown that potential test bias could exist in conjunction with an insufficient selection of assessment tools. The researchers stressed that there was a need for outcome orientation in the evaluative process.

The effective arrangement in addressing issues of educational needs within a diverse community would include the sixth area of society and community. The study extracted the need and value of agency collaboration in supporting students and their families within the educational community. “Creating a collaborative model which can incorporate the knowledge and skills of teachers, psychologists, community agents and others.” (Federal Resource Centre, 1991, p. 17) The study identified the necessary services such as child care, social work, health care and community systems design as critical elements to meeting local needs. Barriers to overcome, if present, could be those of the community view, their commitment to education and the educational community’s view of the population’s needs, beyond the walls of the school. There was an apparent need to blend public and private service, such as business partnerships, in providing services to the community.
The community made up the seventh area of parents and families. Parent involvement encompasses empowerment, in responsibilities to the students and school, through shared decision making, a potential barrier could be that of the school not providing the parents with the means, opportunities or incentives to participate at this level. Ideally, according to this research, parents would be included on program evaluation teams. In other words, the educators may have to rethink what constitutes involvement and thus open the channels for parent participation.

"Professionals need to be committed to enhancing a collaborative relationship with families." (Federal Resource Centre, 1991, p. 20) Thus, parents would need training and encouragement. The study suggested that a room be provided at the school for the parents and that the minority parents themselves would require a leader to ensure that they were seen as visible and as having a voice.

Professionals need to be sensitive to the 'silent period' that occurs during the acculturalization of families from diverse cultures. This silent period is often misinterpreted as nonparticipation. (Federal Resource Centre, 1991, p. 20)

The last identified area of concern was that of funding. The largest barrier in addressing this need is quite apparent, fiscal restraints and/or reductions. Ideally, the educational community would benefit from either an equalization of student expenditures or that of an increase. In this study, the researchers found that overall culturally diverse children are more likely to attend disadvantaged schools. It would serve in everyone's best interest to persevere to find collaborative funding sources or foundations or, perhaps scholarships.

In everyone's efforts to meet the needs of a highly diverse educational community the aforementioned factors must be publicized and actively addressed by all concerned.
1.5 The Multicultural School Setting

In today's pluralistic society, many children are learning together in multicultural and multilingual settings. "Students have an intense interest in knowing about one another's culture but receive very little of that knowledge from home or school." (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 19)

Education is undergoing a transformation, one where immigrant minority students are not viewed as a problem, but rather as a unique group requiring unique accommodations. Multicultural education programs have begun to evolve as a direct result of changing Canadian demographics and government policy.

It is in classrooms that the real issues and complexities are emerging and being confronted. (Willey, 1984, p. 33)

As outlined by Serow (1983), multicultural education is aimed at developing favourable attitudes toward diversity through teaching and modelling values while instilling an appreciation for different lifestyles. Schools possess and exert tremendous power in establishing expected norms for the students. In a Report of the Select Seminar on Excellence in Education (1991), it was found that,

Multicultural education supports a community of learners as they work in a morally sound environment to develop an appreciation of themselves and each other as worthy individuals, as participants and contributors to their own cultures and as productive world citizens. The critical attributes of such an education are: close partnerships with community, goals and activities across the curriculum, detection and decrying of intolerance and injustice, dislodging of notions of superiority based on class, race, gender or religion, supportive administration, valuing and respecting of diverse gifts, attributes and qualities of each individual as a source of cultural richness. (p. 3)

The application of this power through school routines and programs has direct impact on students. Corson (1993) demonstrated this use of power in relation to language use in schools. He outlined ways in which,
...education and the discourse practices that it authorises can routinely repress, dominate and disempower language users whose practices differ from the norms that it establishes. (p. 1)

In designing multicultural and/or multilingual programs, educators need to exhibit a degree of caution to avoid creating "cultural racism" or "cultural invasion" (Neisser, 1986, p. 69), where one cultural group may be given higher or lower status than another. The power that schools utilize to empower cultural groups may be swayed inappropriately if aimed solely toward cultural assimilation. If a school's objective is to have subordinate minorities abandon their ideals while assuming those of the dominant group, then educators may meet with resistance and charges of discrimination.

The prevailing cultural ideology sees social homogenization as a natural goal because it treats deviations from the cultural ideal as deficiencies and imperfections. (Neisser, 1986, p. 68)

There are numerous criticisms and weaknesses with present multicultural programs. In many instances, the programs are being developed simultaneously with the identification of needs arising from changing populations. Many inconsistencies with programs can arise especially if definitions and interpretations of directives vary between boards of education or even between schools within one jurisdiction or district. For example, The York Region Board of Education in Ontario has a language policy that primarily addresses language as it pertains to classroom curricula. The policy emphasises reading, writing, speaking and listening; it has only recently begun to address moving, watching, shaping and viewing. Nor does this policy present in-class directives with respect to meeting the needs of children whose first language is not English.

In general, programs for language minority students around the country appear to lack standardized curricular guidelines. Teachers... feel the burden of overly restricted guidelines that often adhere to a traditional grammar-based approach that does not allow enough focus on the integration of all skills and on the development of higher-order thinking skills. Given the tremendous growth in the number of language minority students in this country and the increasing demand
for guidance in curriculum design, there is a pressing need for continuity in instruction... (Brinton, Sasser and Winningham, 1992, p. 13)

A Race Relations policy developed by this board in 1993 has been reviewed and extended to address ethnocultural equity issues. The present English As A Second Language (ESL) model used in this board does not offer direct support service programs for children up to the first grade, nor does it provide for first language assessments at time of school registration, unless specifically requested.

To be most effective, a content-based ESL curriculum should encompass the sequence and major scope areas of the mainstream curriculum. The topics incorporated should be authentic and important topics for the grade level of the student. ...ESL teachers can coordinate with classroom teachers and consult subject-area textbooks for the grade level concerned. Classroom teachers can identify the most important concepts and skills taught in the subject areas they teach. ...the CALLA content-based curriculum is based on authentic subject matter from the mainstream curriculum that has been selected as central to the concepts and skills that are developed at particular grade levels. (Chamot and O'Malley, 1992, p. 46)

The CALLA curriculum in the preceding reference is defined as ‘The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach’ which Chamot and O'Malley developed in a conceptual framework as a curriculum model that acts as a system to bridge education and experiences of the immigrant learners to the mainstream in which they are immersed (Figure 1.5). This model offers three components consisting of the curriculum that forms linkages to the mainstream plus the integration of learning English with the actual content subjects as well as instruction in the use of learning strategies. To apply this model the program incorporates declarative knowledge, where that which we know is brought in and merged with what we know how to do, procedural knowledge all in conjunction with the mainstream academic program. With these influences working in harmony, the outcome is expected, as stated by Chamot and O'Malley (1987) where, ‘...an interplay between declarative and procedural knowledge leads to the refinement of
language ability." (44) Figure 1.5 illustrates the CALLA model. (Chamot and O’Malley, 1987, p. 42)
Figure 1.4: The CALLA Model: A Bridge to the Mainstream. The CALLA model has three components: (a) a curriculum correlated with mainstream content areas, (b) English language development integrated with content subjects, and (c) instruction in the use of learning strategies. Each of these components is examined separately, following a discussion of the theoretical framework underlying CALLA.

Those interventions that are available require special requests and involve time, personnel
and money that are not readily accessible at the time of registration for all students who may require special services. This situation creates a conundrum for individual schools when new students arrive, with little or no English, and the schools are charged with the responsibility of placing the students in classrooms and programs that will best meet their individual levels of ability. As a result, the individual schools are obligated to make their determinations of a child's placement based on subjective interpretations of the child's communication abilities and previous school records that may or may not be available. Schools are given a list of translators who may be called upon if needed, but there is a cost involved. In addition to the restrictions applied to the accessibility of translators, the situation can be further complicated in that the list is not exhaustive and occasionally schools find themselves in a situation where they are not able to communicate with a newly arrived family, solely dependent upon language restrictions.

Although schools receive multicultural/multifaith calendars outlining festivities and significant dates, classroom programs are left to the discretion of the individual teachers. For example, schools are encouraged to recognize Black History month (February), but specific program outlines are not provided, individual schools who choose to participate must devise their own plans. Facilitating minority language needs, reworking ESL models, and gleaning community input are examples of school objectives that go beyond the academic curriculum offered in a multicultural setting.

To address these objectives, schools need to develop a clear vision for their students and community, in addition to a shared commitment toward shared values in order to establish a clear focus.

Building community requires the development of a community of mind represented in shared values, conceptions and ideas about schooling and human nature. This mind structure provides the community and its members with purpose and meanings that are embodies in duties and obligations. (Sergiovanni, 1994, p.
Once objectives are defined, schools need to identify methods to follow and ensuing implications. For example, the effective implementation of multicultural programs requires comprehensive teacher in-service or training. Regardless of the vehicle used to transmit program information to staff, financial concerns will arise. Teacher-training is not only costly, it requires a significant amount of preparation and time. If it is necessary to hire supply teachers while the regular classroom teachers attend training sessions, a Board of Education may find itself having to cover the costs incurred. School boards are already finding that their resources are being stretched and additional demands are not always feasible due to imposed constraints.

In a multicultural school setting, changing demographics place demands upon staff and school leaders to recognize needed changes through appropriate programs and accommodations. When Rudnitski (1992) investigated economic, ethnic and race barriers, she found that, "Parents appreciated the teachers’ attempts to provide a culturally appropriate curriculum." (p. 10) Rudnitski found that attempts by the school to inform and involve community members were received with appreciation. The community affirmed that identified needs were being addressed by the school. The school utilized a variety of strategies such as increased communications through parent conferences, arranged at times most convenient for the parents, and increased frequency of informal parent meetings. Furthermore, members of the community were asked for input regarding multicultural programs and curriculum. School personnel encouraged parental partnerships by: involving parents in professional development activities that were deemed appropriate, by having parents read and discuss current literature and by encouraging parents to develop a network amongst themselves. Attempts were made to diminish parental feelings of alienation from the school, even communications sent home were written in both English and
Spanish. By inviting parental input, the educators attempted to increase the parents' affinity toward the school through the development of "corporate culture." (Morgan, 1988, p. 69)

The adults in the school community freely share themselves, their time, their beliefs, and their values through their daily actions with the students and with each other. (Rudnitski, 1992, p. 14)

The demands that impact upon the development of multicultural programs are, essentially, from external powers in the form of equity and access policies as mandated by Boards and by the government. These demands encompass a wide realm of disciplines: educational, political, social, and economic. Today's leaders need to present a multidisciplinary approach and perspective within multicultural school settings.

As previously discussed, tremendous variance can occur between boards and within boards in the design and delivery of program. Multicultural and multilingual accommodations are not essential to the daily operation of all schools at this point in time, dependent upon the existing demographic make-up. However, that is not to say that homogeneous school communities should disregard the incorporation of multicultural programs in their schools. But, rather, that many schools of that nature do not perceive such programs as essential to meeting the particular demands of their population's profile. Furthermore, those schools who do display specific multicultural or linguistic needs vary as to the type, extent and frequency of interventions required. Educators need to transmit programs that create an awareness and understanding of the current shifts in demographics, even in those areas where the community profile may exhibit minimal changes in recent years. Programs need to reflect the intricacies of societal changes that will have affects on interactions at the school level and beyond. The scope of involvement and awareness of the participants goes beyond the process of empowering individuals to that of a more comprehensive stage of practice that Carr and Kemmis refer to as emancipatory action.
In emancipatory action research, the practitioner group takes joint responsibility for the development of practice, understandings and situations, and sees these as socially-constructed in the interactive processes of educational life...
Emancipatory action research is an empowering process for participants, it engages them in the struggle for more rational, just, democratic and fulfilling forms of education. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 203, 205)

Significant awareness requires a paradigm shift of the organizational culture itself. The corporate culture, as referred to earlier, is one that drives the theoretical framework of the organization, in this instance it is, The Ministry of Education and provincial school boards which consist of shared values, understandings and directives. Based on the social research of a particular time, the organizational structures can be regrouped or reorganized when changes are mandated. The organizational framework is not static. In other words, as societal values and profiles change, so do beliefs within the organization. The corporation assumes a new culture, one to mirror changing needs and suppositions. Therefore, to construct a meaningful awareness of the changing multicultural/multilingual requirements within today's educational systems, the organizational culture (through critical reflection) must shift to exhibit a new standard of opinion. Although schools are essentially autonomous in their day to day operations, they perform in response to system and Ministry directives. "...teachers...have little professional autonomy at the collective level." (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 9) If significant changes are to occur, schools need to have an organizational foundation from which to perform, one that not only provides the shared vision, parameters and objectives, but one that offers the support personnel and resources necessary to make change happen effectively and in a meaningful fashion. As stated by the Educational Capital Area School Development Association (1991),

Only when the organizational structure of every classroom as well as that of the overall school and school system reflects an educational philosophy that celebrates diversity as a root of the creative human spirit will we realise
multicultural education. (p. 10)

As previously discussed, teacher-training is a crucial component to program development and implementation. To facilitate training sessions requires time, money and personnel. This is where the strength, support and power of the organization are critical. Members of the organization need the reassurance that support is available and that the change process is both necessary and credible. Educators need to be empowered by the organization if they are to be effective change agents actively involved in the process.

The change process travels along a range of graduated stages from organizational values and philosophies through to the simple, one-dimensional mechanics of daily operating procedures. By way of example, one can refer back to the opening discourse regarding the Canadian identity and the impact of the Multiculturalism Act. From this national level one can investigate societal values and philosophies as they pertain to the population metamorphosis. Based on research of needs, policies are written regarding, immigration quotas, employment procedures, equity mandates, qualifying status for unemployment benefits, social services, and other global needs. Values and philosophies are developed with respect to the continuance of immigration policies, and the accommodations required to meet the needs of the newly landed immigrants. These values and philosophies filter through societal channels, for example, as educational needs are investigated and developed (such as student registration needs, language accommodations, program interventions and modifications). Guidelines are distributed from the provincial level (examples include English As A Second Language curriculum guidelines 1988, Changing Perspectives: A Resource Guide for Antiracist and Ethnocultural Education 1992, and Guidelines for Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards 1993) to individual school boards.
These guidelines are then incorporated into operating values and philosophies of the individual educational institutions who, in turn, distribute the directives to the school communities. These directives then become interpreted and designed into site-based programs which are then incorporated into the culture and daily operational procedures of each school. The schools are held responsible for applying the directives of provincial guidelines as they deem necessary. Those who do not feel that the directives have a direct bearing on their particular community may choose to disregard the documents, whereas in a highly diverse setting the guidelines may become the impetus for the creation of essential program, policy or procedures.

On this more basic level where the schools, individually, are responsible for the interpretation and implementation of higher level directives, opportunities may be explored to incorporate changes through the evolution of cultural partnerships. To determine the areas that need to be addressed and possibly modified, educators need to assess what impacts will occur when increased numbers of immigrant minority groups register in their schools and the appropriate actions to follow.

A primary starting point may be that of communication with parents and students. In some instances, schools are functioning in neighbourhoods where English is not the first language of the majority of the students and/or their parents. Therefore, schools in these circumstances may need to develop school-based language policies to facilitate interactive communication. Incorporated into these policies could be an expectation that essential information letters and notices be translated into the primary languages spoken by the majority of the community members. The reasoning for this would be not only to ensure that school information is being transmitted to the parents, but that efforts are being made to build a sense of community through shared values and understandings. The attempts by the school may be
interpreted as inviting, and thus encourage partnerships between school and parents. The school can then use this vehicle of communication as a way to assist new immigrants in dealing with their present situations both in and out of the school.

Immigrants' adaptation difficulties are often increased by their total or partial inability to speak the language of their new country. (Fougstedt, as cited in Muhsan, 1975, p. 51)

The development of cultural partnerships can be further encouraged and supported through the recognition of religious holidays and celebrations unique to the various groups. Schools whose student population is fairly multicultural may find that recognition and acknowledgement of these days will facilitate a sense of affinity and ownership with the school for both the students and the community members. While learning about their new surroundings, subordinate minority groups will feel a sense of pride in the maintenance and sharing of their culture and traditions. However, adjustments require immigrants to seek assistance with respect to required processes for establishing residency, let alone learnings that occur on a day to day basis when one is immersed in an entirely new culture. Partnerships can be further facilitated through interactions that offer emotional and social support to refugees and immigrants during their process of acculturation. Dependent upon individual situations, it may also be necessary to supply extensive resources (such as multicultural educational programs, counselling, testing, evaluation, assessment and health care) all in the immigrant's first language. In addition, changes to curricula and available resources, as previously discussed, are fundamental to the implementation of program. If some resources are offered in various languages which the students can take home and share with their parents, then the school displays to the families a concern and respect for their heritage. Furthermore, a message is also transmitted to the rest of the student body that the school holds the belief that all individuals and groups deserve respect
and recognition.

As accommodations are being prepared for multicultural groups, leaders will need to be strong in their conviction to support and provide for these needs and demands. At the same time, they need to be prepared for possible controversy and conflict that may arise from the changes taking place and thus persevere throughout adversity.

Given the societal commitment to maintaining the dominant/dominated power relationships, we can predict that educational changes threatening this structure will be fiercely resisted. (Cummins, as cited in Hildalgo, et al., 1990, p. 65)

At a school level majority groups may claim that a form of reverse discrimination is occurring, if it is felt that their cultural traditions and structures are not being acknowledged. The schools have a responsibility to establish a balance of cultural awareness for all groups that interact.

Provisions within multicultural schools extend beyond program and communication to the extent of staffing needs and parental partnerships. "...a workplace which reflects the racial and ethnic diversity in the area served by the Board." (Trider and Jones-Darrel, 1993, p. 21)

School administrators are encouraged to fulfil equity mandates. Ideally, qualified teachers representative of the community are hired where possible. However, standard hiring procedures and expectations are maintained throughout the process, regardless of the candidate's cultural representation, to avoid situations of reverse discrimination.

Parental partnerships are also encouraged at various levels. Parent representatives of various cultural groups can be invited: to speak to student groups regarding their particular heritage; to participate on parent councils; to volunteer in classes; to offer remedial classes in their mother tongue, and so forth. The opportunities are dependent upon individual school settings as to the intensity and frequency that parental involvement can be facilitated. However, through processes such as active parent involvement, educators have better opportunities to gain
a stronger understanding and appreciation for the student body they teach, while parents learn more about their children's educational process.

Leaders need to be proactive in establishing a balance of services to the various groups. "Schools must be considered legitimate in the eyes of their relevant publics." (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. 2) The school's goal should be one of "shared values, shared direction, and shared responsibility for the future of the organization." (Morgan, 1988, p. 53) Hanvey, as cited in Smith and Luce (1979), discussed the importance of this balance. In his estimation, the white majority receives minimal recognition for their efforts to make provisions for minorities, while minorities have a reward/support system in place when they interact with the larger society. "...the real value of leadership rests with the meanings which actions impart to others in the actions themselves." (Sergiovanni, as cited in Evers, 1991, p. 126) Once again, this situation refers back to the aforementioned need to define and maintain balance within the organization. Administrators must make every effort to ensure that one group is not the recipient of more attention than another. The culturally dominant group should not be indulged nor disregarded when accommodations are being arranged for subordinate minority groups.

The Ministry of Education and Training issued a resource guide for antiracist and ethnocultural equity education entitled, Changing Perspective (1992), that suggested the development of related policies to address multicultural needs that occur at the individual school board level.

Policies may vary due to the cultural representation or make-up of the individual school, as well as the degree of parental involvement, social conditions and economic factors. Each school represents different needs, which, in turn, should be reflected in the individual policies that are developed if they are going to be truly geared to the population they serve. It is therefore
essential, as Corson (1990) stated, to delineate a process for establishing policy at the school level as well as methods by which to identify essential criteria to support and facilitate parental input.

A wise policy about policy making will mention ingenious but practical ways in which parents can be involved in the design or at least ways they can be kept informed about the stages in policy development. (p. 59)

However, establishing a process that outlines specific procedures and strategies would be an advantageous strategy contributing to school effectiveness. Policies should be facilitated by the leader, but developed by all stakeholders. "In the spirit of collegiality and cooperation, the involvement in expectation setting by those who will be affected is crucial." (Davis, as cited in Holmes, et. al., 1989, p. 123)

Changing demographic trends have accelerated the need for policies that indicate proactive, participative models within school settings. The demands on school leaders are numerous but essential.

Administrators will need to analyze schools as cultural systems that contain informal networks and friendships and will need to use wisely the symbols that are valued by the membership...administration will need to learn how to understand formal and informal organizational communication in different ways than before, as well as how to form coalitions among peers in multicultural settings. (Valverde and Brown, as cited in Boyan, 1988, p. 155)

Further to understanding school dynamics, and facilitating staff coalitions within a diverse school setting, is a need to appreciate each student’s individual make-up. A newly arrived immigrant, minority student may feel alienated or marginalized within their new school community.

Schools and other symbolic institutions contribute to the reproduction of inequality by devising a curriculum that rewards the ‘cultural capital’ of the dominant classes and systematically devalues that of the lower classes. (Mehan, 1992, p. 4)
Bourdieu wrote of this separation between dominant and marginalized groups by arguing that one’s linguistic and cultural inheritance impacts upon these interactions. Cultural capital reflects the many facets of an individual’s heritage: language; cultural traditions; beliefs; social morés and so forth.

The divorce between the language of the family and the language of the school only serves to reinforce the feeling that the educational system belongs to another world, and that what teachers have to say has nothing to do with daily life because spoken in a language which makes it unreal. The world of the classroom, where ‘polished’ language is used, contrasts with the world of the family... (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 9)

Although cultural capital refers to the many facets of personal histories that evolve into one’s cultural beliefs and traditions, language remains pivotal to much of this idea.

Clearly language in general is the key factor in reproducing and maintaining the conventions and traditions of cultures and societies since social reproduction is driven by interpersonal communication. (Corson, 1993, p. 9)

Thus, in a new setting, an immigrant minority child may find daily expectations and interactions quite challenging, compounded by the demands of an alien educational system. Therefore, it would behoove insightful educators to delve into a student’s cultural capital, as required, in an effort to effectively facilitate the child’s process of acculturation. This strategy would be a powerful method by which to overcome intimidating or negative controlling influences by a school’s dominant group thereby decreasing obstacles to learning while increasing a sense of shared purpose and interaction.

1.6 Establishing Policy

“A clear understanding of the problem situation is the starting point for policy research.” (Corson, 1990, p. 66) Corson (1990) presents stages to follow (based on Popper’s formula) for designing policy; "Problem identification ...production of tentative policy ...eliminating error and
Acknowledging the diverse make-up of individual schools by taking action in developing plans or policies at individual school levels is a way of addressing needs at the front line of the organization.

Policies mediate between a school's 'charter' or philosophy' and what really happens in a school; policies say how we will do what we hope to do. (Corson, 1990, p. 52)

Furthermore, the objective of collaboratively developing policies to meet the needs of immigrant minority groups can assign a level of power to these groups that would then enable them to interact more effectively in the larger society. "An interactive, relational, and collaborative use of power outweighs the exercise of power through authority and hierarchy." (Corson, 1993, p. 182)

The members of the minority community working together to voice their needs within the educational system develop a collective power as they unite in their efforts to do what's best for their children's learning. This collective or community power can be channelled effectively into developing site-specific policies that reflect their unique needs. This power is strong in a positive sense when the educators work with the minority community to develop and implement effective strategies. The power of this group combined, is, as previously quoted by Corson (1993) interactive and stronger than that of the institution or hierarchy. The power results from the strength of the members working toward a shared objective or vision. Staff concerns should extend beyond student success in the classroom, and student proficiency in English to the community at large, involvement of parents and the development of shared understandings and expectations.

The school's ability and willingness to recognize the cultural and linguistic experiences that students bring to school that give meaning to their lives encourage all students to develop positive attitudes towards minority languages and their communities. (Common Curriculum, 1993)
To develop an appropriate plan, a set strategy for action is necessary. The basis for this strategy has to evolve from a perceived need to change present procedures to accommodate and facilitate student learning, awareness, understanding and appreciation of needs. This should be done in conjunction with an effort to empower students to assert their rights and to clarify their needs. The strategy is not only for the emancipatory rights of the student but for community members as they interact with societal expectations and demands. Emancipatory rights of students and community members refers to their release from the confines of existing contextual structures. Through collective efforts to state their needs and which direction to pursue, the individuals, ultimately create their own path and are able to "...eliminate oppressive command-obedience relationships." (Corson, 1993, p. 19) The complexities of the educational and ethnic histories of so many of today's students contribute to the need for policies that will strive to break systemic barriers that create the inequitable treatment of one group over another.

In a study conducted by The Federal Resource Center in Lexington (1991), a few issues were determined as critical factors impeding cultural harmony. The factors cited in this study included: administration (where power has become an issue and collaboration is insufficient); cultural bias; insufficient in-service and lack of public involvement and funding. Furthermore, “Lack of skills in English is seen as a disability which results in a lowering of expectations for school achievement.” (Federal Resource Center, 1991, p. 10)

Both the school and the community need to identify one another's concerns and suggestions for an appropriate policy specific to that particular school setting. A form of participatory, collaborative investigation regarding the needs of a particular school community, is considered highly effective in that,

The participatory democratic approach of collaborative action research gives form and substance to the idea of a self-reflective critical community committed to the
Involving community members in the collection of information required for policy development also serves as an opportunity for enlightenment. Where needed, this could provide community members a chance to receive in-service support regarding the school and the educational system; a practical opportunity to be close to the curriculum. A more involved partnership between parents, their personal history and the school program is of further benefit to the student as, "What children actually bring to the school is their relationship to their parents' educational experiences and strategies." (Connell et al., 1982, p. 188)

Educators are encouraged to present their schools as inviting and welcoming environments. Parents should feel comfortable in approaching the schools to learn about the system's structure and programs in an effort to become more active participants in their children's education. Specifically,

...language minority parents need respect, information about the educational system, reassurance from the schools that they can contribute in important ways to their children's educational experience and training in how to do so. (Ramírez and Douglas, 1989, p. 7)

Conversely, the information that the parents provide the school can serve as an historical and sociocultural perspective upon which a foundation for research on policy needs can be developed. This also provides the staff an opportunity to become enlightened regarding community cultural needs.

A task group of parents, teachers, and College of Education professors had determined that any realistic planning to the improvement of home-school communications should be based on data gathered personally from parents. (Strough, 1982, p. 1)

Staff will benefit from involvement in this form of action research in that they will have opportunities to extend their responsibilities, increase their professional autonomy and their sense
of obligation to the community. This sharing of self-reflective information will serve as a stepping stone in devising a policy and action plan to address site-specific needs and concerns.

There must also be 'processes of enlightenment' by which participants in a situation reach authentic understandings of their situation, and a practical discourse in which decisions are taken by participants about appropriate courses of action which are agreed to be wise and prudent. (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 158)

1.7 Summary

Opening the channels of communication to facilitate the sharing of information between community and school was investigated by The Federal Regional Resource Center (1991) in their study of cultural diversity. Although many approaches, such as newsletters, parent conferences and consultations were used to reach out to people in the community, the key to bridging the gap was found to be the provisions made to address language barriers. Language had been recognized as a determinant for forming opinions regarding certain groups with respect to achievement and intellectual levels. Language was also seen to impede communication of programs and curricula from the schools to the parents.

Immigrant minority groups who became interactive participatory members of their school communities through the development of interactions and policies, based on shared values and understanding, will gain power and ownership in their partnership with the school.

...all kinds of power are directed, mediated, or resisted through language. For most everyday human purposes, power is exerted through verbal channels: language is the vehicle for identifying, manipulating and changing power relations between people. (Corson, 1993, p. 1)

With our changing demographics, it is essential that schools be prepared to accommodate children who are new to the country and who have little or no understanding of the English language. Sergiovanni (1994) wrote on Building Community In Schools and he stated that, "...we
want to foster inclusive communities where economic, religious, cultural, ethnic, family and other differences are brought together into a mutually respective whole.” (p. 19) To do so, it may require individual school communities (staff and parents) to develop language policies/action plans which demonstrate a commitment to a shared set of values and objectives which will, ultimately enhance student learning.

...the results of parent involvement include:
- improved academic achievement,
- improved student behaviour,
- greater student motivation,
- more regular attendance,
- lower student drop-out rates,
- a more positive attitude toward homework,
- increased parent and community support.
(Liontos, 1992, p. 14)
Chapter Two: Beyond the Three Rs - Leadership Demands in a Multicultural School Setting

2.1 Power Through Leadership

Rather than a privilege that is ascribed to the individual, power itself is a network of relations constantly in tension and ever-present in activity; rather than possessed and localized in individual hands, power is exercised through the production, accumulation and functioning of various discourses; rather than mere verbalization of conflicts of domination, power is the very object of human conflict; and rather than concerned with conscious intention or decision, the study of power is best located at the point where any intentions of the powerful are invested in real and effective practices. In short, the development of particular forms of language meets the needs of the powerful and depends on a particular exercise of power through discourse practices. (Corson, 1995, p. 6)

The vested power possessed by educational leaders, granted through operational procedures via external influences which permeate the system, is, as Corson (1995) describes, merely formal authority assigned to an individual. This authority accompanies the prestige of an administrator’s role and is ascribed to be used as an instrument by which to manipulate organizational situations whereby the control to either liberate or constrain people and/or issues is seen as paramount. In this milieu, the controlling factor is dependent upon the culturally dominant group, those who determine what is right or acceptable: the boundaries from which power and control is exercised. However, to be effective, the leader’s power needs not only to be acknowledged by others but also seen as an empowering system aimed at seeking consent and agreement. A leader needs to understand how power structures work most effectively, how decision making and value processes can be developed within the organization to support and provide for student learning. “Power is an interpersonal situation...” (Lasswell, 1963, p. 10)

Organizational leaders are charged with exercising their formal authority in order to implement the expectations and demands of operational procedures, mandates and strategies for
increased student achievement. However, "...as long as policy makers raise achievement standards without giving school professionals the resources, staff development, and incentives to meet them, they are unlikely to engage alienated teachers." (Firestone, 1990, p. 4) In a multicultural milieu, the distribution of the leader's power is a vital process essential to engaging staff and community in decision-making, goal setting and policy design. The effective leader in a diverse school community can use power to facilitate collaborative staff efforts toward addressing the unique challenges and needs as reflected by a potentially alienated staff and/or community. Appropriate courses of action, such as setting language policies, initiated through a leader's administration of power, can elicit positive responses and interaction within a school's diverse population. The only way to do so is through discourse; the language of the leader and of the organization is the basis of the power within the relationships. Discord and dissonance will result if the language is not understood and shared by the members of the school community. "...language is the vehicle for this routine activity of power distribution through education." (Corson, 1995 p. 9)

To achieve a shared voice, a devolution of power and decision-making from an hierarchical model to one where responsibilities are distributed to the stakeholders within the organization is required. One of the challenges facing leaders within the multicultural school communities, who want to distribute power in the empowering fashion, is to be able to take the members' decisions and needs beyond the local confines to the broader community.

Post-modernism as presently theorized tends to overlook the fact that whereas more diverse voices are being raised and heard, power forces beyond the local continue to ignore messages that those voices are conveying. This is nowhere more the case than in education, in which often the tendency toward devolution in decision-making has been accompanied by a trend toward inequity in provisions and injustice on a grand scale. (Corson, 1995, p. 8)

Despite all efforts to address concerns and meet the unique needs within a multicultural
school, the leader is inevitably faced with varying degrees of adversity as change evolves. To interact with various cultural groups (dominant and subordinate) when intercultural conflicts arise, while simultaneously fulfilling policy design and mandates for multicultural programs, is a task of great magnitude.

One pressing challenge is that of the gap that can exist between home and school resulting from any number of factors: mis-communication, language barriers, differing levels of experiential opportunities, lack of understanding and shared goals or objectives. It is imperative to design an educational model that empowers all stakeholders in reflecting the needs of the children. If the gap between home and school, with respect to school expectations, is too large there is a risk that children will not be able to achieve to their fullest level of ability. "The experience gap creates a vicious cycle: the wider the gap, the greater the risk of educational distress and failure." (New York City Board of Education, 1990, p. 4) Effective leadership is crucial to the understanding of changing schools and communities. Significant changes that become customs or norms of the institution may then create a footing of stability in the school while promoting cultural partnerships "...employer-school collaborations humanise the work place, increasing productivity along with employee morale as they make clear the employer's commitment to the next generation of workers." (Ascher, 1988, p. 3)

2.2 Institutional Integrity and Change

Effective administrators must be sensitive to the needs and values of the various subordinate minority groups and meet today's demands by facilitating change and understanding at the school level. In his article: How Administrators' Values Influence Their Decisions, Paul Begley (1990) referenced Chester Barnard (1983) as stating that “...leadership involves two
capacities, one relating to technical or procedural expertise, the other a moral dimension which influences the quality of the action taken by leaders." (p. 3) However, Begley then expressed concern that "...advice provided to school administrators by research, especially that emerging from school improvement and effective schools research, typically presents an exclusively rational view of the process, one devoid of feelings and full of unexamined values." (p. 3) The goals of the organization need to be embraced as sincere if the members are going to see their roles as credible and necessary. "True institutional integrity cuts through the barriers of race, class and ethnicity because it is based on human values." (Rudnitski. 1992, p. 11) Educational administrators are empowered to facilitate change when able to critically reflect upon the knowledge research that substantiates and drives program modifications within their own interpretive frameworks of understanding. Self-reflection by the effective educational leader regarding their personal value structure upon which they base their decision-making is integral to the implementation of change.

In turn, educators are able to interpret the history of the action directives with respect to their personal experiences and understandings. Carr and Kemmis (1986) refer to this stage of action research as a period of enlightenment for the individual. Participants can take the information and evaluate it in conjunction with their personal frameworks; how ensuing changes may impact upon them individually as well as collectively with their peers. If all practitioners are given opportunities to process directives for change prior to taking action, they can be given equal responsibility in the planning and development of envisioned transformations to the organization or program. This is not to assume that all participants will personally support the basic theories steering the changes, but, that opportunities for understanding the reasoning underlying the directives, in conjunction with an appreciation for the impact to those involved,
will be considered.

Understanding the nature and the consequences of social action requires understanding the perspectives of others involved in and affected by the action. Action research therefore precipitates collaborative involvement in the research process, in which the research process is extended towards including all those involved in, or affected by, the action. Ultimately, the aim of action research is to involve all these participants in communication aimed at mutual understanding and consensus, in just and democratic decision-making, and common action towards achieving fulfilment for all. (Carr and Kemmis, 1988, p. 199)

2.3 Profile of an Effective Leader

A research study conducted by Hamilton, Ross, Steinbach and Leithwood (1991) investigated the socialization experiences of school administrators in a large suburban school district. The study involved the participants in communication and reflection of the promotion process they had been engaged in as aspiring educational leaders. The results of the inquiry revealed a set of preferred leadership attributes favourably recognized by the area's board of education. Essentially, the identified elements resulting from their study can be considered applicable to effective leadership in any school setting, regardless of the population make-up. Therefore, in a diverse environment, a leader who demonstrates the traits and characteristics as listed in this study, would be in an even better position to attend to additional challenges that could be present. Table 2.1 demonstrates a compilation of 23 characteristics profiled by an effective educational leader, as stated by the findings in the aforementioned study by Hamilton, Ross, Steinbach and Leithwood. (1991, p. 28)
Table 2.1: Characteristics of an effective school leader

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<td>1</td>
<td>practises instructional leadership</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>considers all factors (i.e. holistic perspective)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>knowledgeable about policies, procedures, and legal issues</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>is a life-long learner</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>promotes staff growth (i.e. motivating, empowering, sharing information)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>demonstrates humanitarian behaviour (caring, concerned, etc.)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>is a good communicator</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>is collaborative (i.e. facilitates cooperative work)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>displays decisive leadership (i.e. secure, confident)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>is goal-oriented</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>provides motivating leadership (i.e. makes things happen)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>is a good building manager (organized)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>provides a student focus (i.e. stresses the importance of children, individualized programming)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>is a systematic problem solver</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>fosters a positive school climate (i.e. nurturing, safety conscious, etc.)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>is change-oriented (i.e. acceptor and seeker of change, risk-taker)</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>is a policy-developer</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>promotes action (i.e. turns thought into action)</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>has a sense of humour</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>provides an appropriate model (i.e. leads by example)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>has high performance expectations</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>practises M BWA-&quot;management-by-walking-around&quot; (i.e. visible, available)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>is flexible, open-minded</td>
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NOTE: The most frequently mentioned characteristics overall are listed in bold type.

The aforementioned qualities illustrate a leader who would be capable of working with a school community in an effective manner. One who could exercise power in the empowering fashion as previously discussed. However, additional challenges in a multi-ethnic setting require not only the qualities listed but a particular style of emancipatory leadership whereby a critical approach to policy making can occur.

The following comprehensive description of an emancipatory leader by Corson (1996),
illustrates the skills, attitude and knowledge required beyond those qualities listed earlier that primarily address more routine administrative responsibilities.

...administrators can begin to practice what I call 'emancipatory leadership':
*they withdraw from centre stage by deliberately limiting themselves to making consultative contributions to the debate, and by offering their opinions last, rather than first.
*they make it clear that they will accept any decision that is the outcome of a democratic consensus, and they will do so without reservations or ill-feeling of any kind.
*they agree to leave the implementation of any decision in the hands of those chosen for that task by the group.

Administrators concerned to make the process as democratic as possible could use this emancipatory form of leadership throughout the critical policy making process. Later they might extend this form of leadership to other aspects of their work, since it seems wholly consistent with professional collegiality and equality. (p. 8)

Thus, an effective, emancipatory leader is one who could recognize the unique characteristics of a particular school community and develop a sense of direction and purpose to best meet the needs of the students.

2.4 Challenges of the Multicultural School

Leadership in a multicultural setting presents administrators with the additional challenge of providing for literacy development where the language of instruction is not that of the immigrant minority group population. "...minority language students are 'empowered' or 'disabled' as a direct result of their interactions with educators in schools." (Feuerverger, 1994, p. 127) The leadership of the school administrator is critical in the development and implementation of a program that will thus empower the students to achieve both academically and socially. The leader of the school has to possess an understanding of the circumstances that interfere with the teachers' ability to deliver program to these students as well as to the plight of the students in their attempts to comprehend, interpret and interact within the constructs of the
curriculum. As stated by the Education Capital Area School Development Association (1991),

"Often simple misinterpretations of language or actions begin a downward spiral for children, particularly minority children—a spiral that accelerates with a spin that may carry them further from the mainstream of society." (1991, p. 7)

Effective educators in a multicultural school setting need to model multicultural perspectives "...model acceptance of cultural differences" (Federal Regional Resource Centre, 1991, p. 10), fund and encourage multicultural experiences while attempting to tap into available resources to provide the necessary in-service for both staff and community. Providing for the needs of immigrant minority students is best facilitated when the administrator has an understanding of the learning processes of language acquisition and empathy for the child placed in a new environment.

How schools define their role in relation to ethnic communities has an impact on the degree to which minority students are not only academically successful but also culturally confident as they manoeuvre within and between socio-cultural worlds struggling to find voice, meaning and balance in their lives. (Feuerverger, 1994, p. 127)

2.5 Strategies to Identify and Address Leadership Demands in the Multicultural Setting

Educational administrators are trained in understanding and applying strategies in relation to operational procedures at the school level. They are not, unfortunately, trained in managing or leading in a fashion whereby the unique characteristics of the school setting are clearly identified and then comfortably incorporated into the running of the school. With the inception of School Councils and their mandate to write school-based constitutions, educational leaders are provided opportunity to formulate more comprehensive insights of their particular school community. Further to council activities, administrators are responsible for the development of school profiles and plans. The implementation of the strategies used to write school plans and profiles
place the leader into an investigative role whereby that individual is charged with gathering information through and from a variety of sources within their particular school community. This collection of data, from observations, personal experiences, individual and group interviews, serves to show the numerous venues where leaders can extrapolate information unique to their school community that reflects the specific demands placed upon administrators in a diverse setting.

Ideally, the effective educational leader would best serve the school community through an analysis of the data in a context whereby systemic barriers that impede ethnocultural equity within the organizational structure could be identified.

In embracing anti-racism and ethnocultural equity, we commit ourselves to positive and equitable outcomes in all education programs and services for all our students. We are committed to preparing students for a society in which diversity is recognized, respected and valued. We will, therefore, assist students to define, detect and reject all forms of discrimination. (York Region Board of Education, February 3, 1997, p. 4)

In his study, School Leadership in Canada: A Profile for the 90's, Paul Begley (1993), and associates, illustrated indicators of success when working toward ideal practice in all facets of school leadership. Included in the framework is the area of Culture Management (p. 18) where awareness of cultural differences and similarities are gradually integrated into the culture of the school, encouraging and fostering tolerance and acceptance to the stage where the leader, "...collaborates with students, staff and community to create and promote a culture in which unique needs and cultural diversity are respected." (p. 19) From this point, a policy or practices model could be designed as a strategy to address ethnocultural equity concerns in a fashion that would strive to dissolve the barriers through the provision of directives and exemplary practices.
2.6 Summary

Cultural pluralism is the very essence of Canadian education. It means that every ethnic group has the right to preserve and develop its own language and culture within the Canadian context. Minority group children necessarily live in a bicultural setting; they are immersed in the culture of their home and their ethnic community and are brought into contact with the mainstream society by way of the school system and the media. (Feuerverger, 1994, p. 125)

It is the role of the effective educational leader to demonstrate the necessary skills needed to analyse the uniqueness of one's particular community and thus develop appropriate strategies to carry the school forward. In a multicultural setting, the educational leader is faced with a population whose experiences do not consistently reflect those of the majority, the white bourgeoisie school system.

The issues surrounding multiculturalism extend beyond the parameters of the educational institution. Leaders of our schools have to recognize the immediate impact of multiculturalism as it affects curriculum, as well as the broader impact within society.

...multiculturalism has become a central discourse in the struggle over issues regarding national identity, the construction of historical memory, the purpose of schooling, and the meaning of democracy. Giroux (1997) as cited in Feuerverger (1997, p. 40)

Designing practices, models or policies that mirror perceived needs is but one way the leader can begin to provide for the immigrant minority students while simultaneously implementing a supportive and integrative curriculum. Ultimately, the educational leader will provide opportunities to increase student learning and experiences for the marginalized individuals in the school. "Leaders of the cultural programs should be persons who should be perceived to be and are in fact knowledgeable about and open to culture groups at school." (Stough, 1982, p. 17) By increasing opportunities to broaden experiences, the leader attempts to create a foundation of shared knowledge for all students upon which to enhance and encourage
student learning.

An emancipatory school leader is a visionary, one who possesses the integrity and strength to incorporate change for the benefit of the learners. Despite difficult challenges, the skills and attributes of the effective leader are not unique to a particular setting, but are, rather, inherent characteristics. In a diverse community, language and cultural differences play a role in determining the direction of the school which in turn, broadens the complexities of the leader's role. The effective educational leader, then, recognizes the need for intervention, identifies the areas of concern in conjunction and consultation with staff and takes action to ensure that policies and practices models are put into place to support and further student learning.
Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study was about relationships between the stakeholders in a diverse educational community whose shared goal was that of student learning. In this process, a conceptual framework for guiding inquiry about a need for interactive relationships between the school and the immigrant minority groups, during an era of demographic change, was developed. This framework also drew heavily on concepts and evidence found in the field of qualitative studies reflective of more humanistic, interpretive, linguistic and subjective strands within its foundations.

...every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and ways of knowing that world made by the researcher using them. ...No technique or method of investigation ...is self-validating: its effectiveness its very status as a research instrument making the world trackable to investigation, is dependent, ultimately, on philosophical justification. ...research methods cannot be divorced from theory. (Hughes, 1980, p. 13)

3.2 Study Research Methodology

A review of research methods in education, as they pertain to this study, led to the adoption of a critical action research format with a sub-component of ethnography. The data collected for this study was gathered through both qualitative and quantitative means. The ensuing goal was to apply this input toward the development and enhancement of partnerships within a multi-ethnic school and its community. The methods utilized in the data collection included individual interviews, focus groups, narratives and surveys. Language translations, transcriptions and translator services were incorporated where necessary.
3.3 Organizational Context In Which the Research Was Conducted

The school identified for this study was chosen for the following reasons: the predominantly immigrant minority group population of the area, the researcher's level of comfort and familiarity within this particular setting and a desire to further enhance linkages through communication and interaction to support student learning, as expressed by both staff and parents.

The school had a traditional North American format, in that classes were arranged by grade based on age rather than on skill level or acquisition. The grades ranged from kindergarten through grade eight, with children, on average, starting school at five years. In the Ontario school system student registration in kindergarten and, where available, junior kindergarten, are optional choices for parents.

Within the organization of the school, there were 33 children placed in self-contained special education classes and 38 identified children who were receiving resource-withdrawal support where the special education teacher would either assist the child in the regular classroom setting or withdraw the child for a period of time during the day to assist in areas of academic need. The special education services within the school were supported by the special education classroom teachers, as well as by two diagnostic and resource teachers, referred to as DARTs. One DART was charged with the responsibility of overseeing the special education services for the school. These responsibilities included assisting regular classroom teachers with the planning of programs as well as modifications to programs and teaching strategies in order to meet the needs of regular and identified exceptional pupils.

The DARTS also assisted in the co-ordination of an in-school team. Members of this
team usually included DARTS, a guidance counsellor, an English as a Second Language teacher, a school administrator, the individual child's classroom teacher and, where necessary, a psychoeducationalist and the child's parent.

This in-school team met once a week to facilitate the sharing of information between regular classroom teachers and various support personnel regarding the concerns and needs of particular children. This team would determine strategies to pursue in an attempt to support the child where needed.

Further to those students who were identified as exceptional and supported through the special education services in the school there were, at the time of the study, 302 children receiving extra help in the form of remedial assistance. This particular group included two children who were hearing impaired, one visually impaired, 14 who were receiving speech pathology through a home care service and two who were under observation for physical therapy needs. Beyond the aforementioned students, the office records showed that 256, of the total number of students in the school, were receiving English as a Second Language program support when this study occurred. The occupational breakdown of the 54 staff members used in this study is shown in Figure 3.1.
Six teachers and two caretakers were members of visible minorities, all remaining staff were Caucasian. The Parent/Teacher Advisory Council consisted of four staff representatives with a Caucasian parent chairperson, others parents and community members attended on a voluntary basis.

Many extra-curricular programs were offered at the school which included student instrumental bands, sports and student conflict mediator programs, which were conducted during recess time on the playground. All programs were offered by school staff during their non-teaching times.

At the time of the study the school was in its fifth year of operation. The community, located in an urban area, consisted primarily of single family dwellings and one subsidized apartment complex that was in its initial stages of occupancy. The preliminary process of data
collection for the study involved gathering the aforementioned information from school files in addition to a survey that was sent home for the parents to complete.

3.4 Data Collection:

3.4.1 Survey Development and Design

The reason for supporting the school information with this survey was to develop a broader construct of understanding regarding the community profile. The survey was sent to 462 families, representative of the total school population of 712 students. The format included a covering letter, addressed to the parents. This letter detailed the objective of the study, as that of a tool by which the school could amass more information about the community, to ultimately enhance or strengthen efforts to meet the needs of the students. This overview stated that each individual's participation was voluntary, anonymous, and that the survey had been approved by both the director of the board of education and its research officer, as well as the superintendent and principal of the particular school (APPENDIX A i-iii). Prior to the distribution of the survey the document was field tested with six staff members, including the school's administration and the board research officer. These participants commented on the instrument with respect to question content, format, applicability, potential bias, readability and clarity.

In addition to serving as an explanatory introduction to the survey process, the covering letter also included a proposal to those parents interested in providing additional input to the study through participation in either an individual interview or as a member of a focus group. Respondents to this section were directed to indicate their interest in participating at this level by returning a tear-off section to the school, under separate cover, in a sealed envelope.
Furthermore, there was a place on the return form to indicate which language the individual would be most comfortable conversing in during a focus group or interview session.

3.4.2 Administration of the Survey

Considering the multi-ethnic nature of the community, it was necessary for the researcher to consider the communicative language needs of the target group. Thus, having conferred with the school officials, the survey which had been written in English was also translated into Cantonese and Punjabi, which were chosen over the original choice of Hindi (APPENDIX A iv-vi). The school’s administration and the researcher felt that the majority of parents would feel comfortable responding in any one of these three languages.

The translation of the survey was completed, in each instance, by teachers employed with the same board of education. The researcher felt that these individuals would best understand the language and context of the study as it needed to be translated for use within an educational community. It was also necessary to employ the assistance of board employees when translating the interview tapes to English in order to ensure that the information gleaned was not taken out of its proper context.

The staff at the school asked those pupils responsible for taking the survey home to their parents to indicate which language would be most appropriate or preferred by the family member who would complete this instrument. Based on this information, the surveys were then distributed accordingly, to the families. The breakdown, by language, of the numbers of surveys distributed, returned and from which interviews were requested is shown in Figure 3.2.
In order to accommodate as many requests as possible, some parents chose to join a focus group instead of setting up a one-to-one interview.

As with the organization and administration of the surveys, it was necessary to employ the assistance of translators for the focus groups and interviews. A teacher on staff at the school interpreted the focus group that was conducted in Cantonese, a teacher from another school performed both the interpretation and translation services for the Hindi and Punjabi sessions. Another board employee translated the tapes from the meeting conducted in Cantonese. It is of interest to note that the scheduling of the interviews and focus groups was also conducted with the assistance of a former student of this school who had volunteered to help with the study. This student and her sister contacted the community members throughout the study when assisting
with the meetings and the transcriptions. Their mother also played a significant role, as she was responsible for the administration and translation of one of the student interviews which had to be conducted in Tamil. Direct community involvement was of tremendous help in cultivating links between parents, students and the school by creating a shared sense of purpose and ownership in the study.

Each classroom at the school received the number of surveys as requested, and in the participant's language of choice. All surveys were sent to the parents via their eldest child in attendance at the school and included a blank return envelope for the survey, in addition to one for the interview or focus group reply sheet.

The survey design was developed through perceived areas of concern as suggested by staff and parents. The content and format of the final document was reviewed by staff, parents and the research officer at the board of education. Once the surveys were returned, a graduate research student at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, The University of Toronto, and the aforementioned former student from the school that was studied, assisted the researcher in the scrutiny and analysis of the data. Each question or request for information was initially coded by hand as per the level and category of the response. This information was then entered into the computer and statistically analysed by SPSS for Unix Release 5.0, Solaris 2.2.

The interview process was enhanced by an additional data collection process referred to as focus groups. This format usually involves six to twelve respondents whereby all participants focus on a particular topic with the group leader, the researcher. Various factors can impede this format: background noise that could obstruct recorded responses; inaudible voices; too many people speaking at one time; as well as linguistic difficulties where translators may be involved
which means that both questions and comments may be filtered through a few people before responses are fully recorded. However, the focus group format is beneficial in that a comfortable setting is provided where respondents feel at ease to disclose their personal perspectives. An added benefit occurs when the dynamics of a particular group spark further discussion thus exhausting the views of the issue or topic.

Where required, translators assisted the researcher in the facilitation of the focus groups arranged for this study. The translators were then hired to interpret the transcripts. Results of these groups are discussed within the findings of the study which are reported in Chapter Four. The final research method, the narrative, is where respondents are invited by the researcher to write of their personal educational histories.

This is a self-reflective process where an individual can record a free-flow of thought and comment. This method offers people a chance to write their personal story, privately, knowing that their views are not being heard or judged publicly when applied to the researcher's analytical process.

Clandinin and Connelly (1991) outlined elements of narrative to include the following: experience; time; personal knowledge; reflection and deliberation. Experience refers not only to the moment-to-moment experiences one encounters, but to the experiences each person has lived that impact upon why they do what they do and how they will interpret future experiences. Time, then, intertwines with the personal experiences as an element of the present and as a vehicle that has transported former experiences to the present. These experiences of time and event, are then revealed through one's personal story, the narrative. To further support the context of the story, one's personal knowledge becomes critical to the telling of the story. Personal knowledge differs
from experience in that the person's social and cultural influences impact upon their interpretation of events. Individual history perceptions are based upon one's personal constructs; how they have been shaped by cultural beliefs and societal influences. For example, what may be considered socially or morally acceptable by one person may be completely rejected by another.

Thus, to incorporate narratives into research requires an understanding of personal knowledge as it impacts upon experience and interpretation.

The final elements of narrative are reflection and deliberation. These elements act as links within the narrative model, linking the past through to the future. When the individual reflects upon an event they are looking ahead to the future because they are seeing how the previous experiences affected them as they continue to move through to the future. Deliberation, on the other hand implies past considerations. Both methods work together to form a tentative framework for future actions, "Deliberation and reflection are methods for charting a meaningful though uncertain course in social affairs." (Clandinin & Connelly, 1991, p. 263)

When individuals write of the stories of their lives, they illustrate a biographical image to the reader, or researcher, that reflects elements of a situation which may otherwise not be apparent. In this study, the researcher had been an employee at the school that was investigated and was therefore able to contribute a personal narrative account to the collection of data. Furthermore, participants from each group were invited to write their personal stories, or narratives. In each instance, the invitations to record narratives were declined as interviews and focus groups were preferred. However, one young lady, a former student of the school who worked closely on the administrative organization of the project with the researcher, volunteered to write her personal educational history. She had been a student at the school during the time the
researcher worked there as one of the administrators and a year after her graduation came back to assist with the study. When asked if she would consider recording her story, she willingly agreed and, without direction, chose to write in a 'Dear Diary' format. Her comments and her narrative are included in Chapter Four which illustrates the results of the investigation.

3.4.3 Coding Schemes

All components of the data gathered from the interviews, focus groups and narratives were sorted into files where categories were divided and then sub-divided according to content. The original codes for the interviews and focus group sessions changed once the information was classified and categorized. The changes in the codes for the information are listed under the subheadings for each group. The researcher's original codes addressed the focus of the study. As more data were gathered it was necessary to expand the codes to include other topics or issues that participants discussed. The original codes served to establish the primary focus for the study; the ensuing subcodes that developed streamlined the data into a more meaningful sequence from which the Language Policy was created. This policy is located in Chapter 5. As stated by Glesne and Peshkin (1992), "By putting like-minded pieces together into data clumps, we create an organizational framework." (p. 133)

Each of the codes and sub-codes for this study were labelled and then colour-coded. Each transcript was reviewed and individual statements or comments were highlighted, accordingly. In instances where overlap occurred, one comment applicable to another code, the other colour was drawn beneath the statement. The statements were then extracted, as per the colour designation, and listed under each subheading. The subheadings were then reviewed and sorted with respect
to the original primary headings, or codes and applied to the study in conjunction with information gleaned from the quantitative data collection.

3.5 The Interviews:

3.5.1 The Parents

As stated, 124 school community parents indicated an interest in participating in interviews or focus groups to discuss the needs of the students, their families and the school. To accommodate these people, the researcher employed the assistance of a former student from the school to help set-up convenient times and groups. Her assistance was most helpful, as in many instances, the parents who were contacted knew of this young lady, or her family, and the response was most favourable. In an effort to meet with as many individuals as possible, the meetings were arranged for daytime, weekends and evenings. Also, some participants willingly changed their original request for a one-on-one interview to participation in a focus group which assisted in accommodating as many interested individuals as possible (APPENDIX B i).

For some of the individual interviews or focus groups, it was necessary for the researcher to employ the services of translators. As previously mentioned, the people chosen to translate for these sessions were, for the most part, educators themselves. The researcher felt that their understanding of educational settings, jargon and parent needs would be most suitable for meetings of this nature. However, in one instance, with a student focus group conducted in Tamil, the researcher relied on the assistance of the aforementioned young lady's mother, who had previously worked in the school as a helper during the noon hours and was therefore known to many of the staff, parents and children.
For these parent interviews, the schedules revolved around the participants' availability to come into the school for the meetings. All interviews and focus groups were recorded with a tape recorder and then translated and transcribed, as necessary. During the interviews, the researcher either asked the questions at that time and had the interpreters do immediate translations, or, the questions were given to the translators in advance in order to administer directly. In each situation, the researcher was able to convey each of the questions that had originally been set out for the meetings and each session resulted in a positive atmosphere where all individuals had an opportunity to contribute to the data collection. The questions that were proffered for each interview had been developed by the researcher in conjunction with the staff at the school along with the research officer for the board of education (APPENDIX B ii).

As discussions and conversations evolved during the interviews further questions or probes were put forth by the researcher, in an effort to elicit as much relevant information as possible.

The interview questions were arranged under four headings:

1. Family Profile,
2. Parent-School Partnerships,
3. Parent Educational Support at Home, and,
4. Parent Involvement At School.

Once all interviews and focus groups were completed, transcribed and coded, it became apparent to the researcher that nine categories of responses had evolved from the elicited
responses. Thus, the responses were coded under the following headings:

1. Background Information
2. School Organization and Management
3. Staff
4. Staff Development
5. Supervision: Safety and Discipline
6. Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy
7. Communication and Participation
8. Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

Although overlap occurred within these categories, the nine, as listed, served to differentiate the data collected. They are subsequently analysed as listed above, each category has been coded with respect to content, comments, concerns and recommendations.

3.5.2 The Students

As with the parent interviews, translators were needed in order to meet with the children who were interested in participating in the study. Fifteen children volunteered to take part and each submitted signed parental information prior to sharing any information. To conduct the interviews, the researcher had some of the staff at the school who could speak the language needed, plus some of these individuals were also ESL teachers with whom the children were familiar. In addition to the teachers, a former student, referred to previously for her assistance
with the organization of the study, conducted one of the student focus groups and she wrote and submitted a personal narrative, as well. This young lady's mother also ran one of the groups, which she conducted in her first language, Tamil. Each interviewer referred to the same list of questions for the children (APPENDIX C i). In all, the children's interviews were conducted in Cantonese, Tamil, Hindi, and English. All children required parental consent to participate in interviews or focus groups (APPENDIX C ii).

The themes coded for the information gathered from the student sessions were categorized into the following headings:

1. Background Information
2. School Organization and Management
3. Supervision: Safety and Discipline
4. Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy
5. Communication and Participation

3.5.3 The Staff

The parents and students were invited to meet with the researcher and participate in the study on a volunteer, confidential basis. Further to these two groups, staff, or personnel, from this particular board also received invitations to take part in the information gathering phase. The term staff is one that encompassed individuals including, and in addition to teachers. Also included were the school's administration and two board of education superintendents: one responsible for the school in the study area, the other responsible for the regional implementation
of school councils. As with the aforementioned groups, the data were gleaned through both interviews and focus groups. However, in these instances, it was never necessary to hire the services of a translator or interpreter. Questions for school personnel (APPENDIX E i).

When reviewing the transcripts of the staff sessions, the following codes were determined:

1. Background Information
2. School Organization and Management
3. Staff
4. Staff Development
5. Supervision: Safety and Discipline
6. Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy
7. Communication and Participation
8. Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

3.6 Problems Impacting Upon Research Process

Four problems associated with the study should be mentioned. The most evident obstacle to this study was language. The information could not have been collected without translations. The process of translating correspondence, surveys, interviews and focus group responses required tremendous time, organization and cost. To conduct a study of this nature in subsequent schools, it is recommended that a translator list be in place, if possible, and that the school or the school board be prepared to finance the project. In addition to the time in locating and co-
ordinating translation services for data gathering, time was also a primary consideration when organizing transcriptions. However, the process is vital to the analysis and coding of responses. Therefore, wherever possible, the individuals providing the service should have knowledge of educational institutions and related terminology.

A second problem was that of facilitating and co-ordinating meetings for participants. Essentially, as much as possible was organized during the school year in order to access school files, personnel and students. However, many of the community and parents interviews were conducted during the summer months. Cancelled interviews that had to be rescheduled and occasional situations where participants did not arrive for their meeting created other limitations. Furthermore, meetings scheduled outside of instructional times required the researcher to apply for a permit from the board of education in order to conduct the meetings in the school facility.

Third, staffing at this school necessitated some backtracking in that approval for the study had to be obtained whenever administration changed. This occurred, unexpectedly, twice during the data gathering process. Both times approval was granted but prior to giving their permission each administrator required a presentation and background information about the study in order to determine the value of proceeding with the work. Although administration and staff were, overall, supportive, there was one antagonistic staff member who created an additional challenge. The researcher and the principal of the school, at that time, were cognizant of the problem and worked together to resolve any difficulty that arose. The situation was discovered when the researcher found that this one teacher had not sent home the surveys with the designated pupils. The researcher then contacted the students and personally distributed the questionnaires. Future correspondence continued to be administered by the researcher or by other staff, outside of
instructional time with this individual.

A fourth problem involved the researcher personally. As a full-time educational administrator, all work in preparing the study was conducted on a part-time basis. The lack of flexibility in hours in addition to commitment to work contributed to the complexity of organizing interviews and focus groups. However, working in the educational milieu was most advantageous in knowing how to access materials, personnel and facilities.
Chapter Four: Results

4.1 Survey Results/Findings

Information gleaned from the survey provided the researcher with a snapshot of the school community. The survey served as a vehicle by which to launch the qualitative investigation with this particular study group.

The first component of the survey essentially asked respondents to express their satisfaction, or lack of, with specific facets of the school program and operating norms. The areas presented are listed in Table 4.1. For each variable, the majority of responses fell within the 'satisfied' category. However, upon closer scrutiny of the spread of the response frequency, some areas surfaced as bordering on a level of satisfaction to dissatisfaction (Table 4.2). Looking at those areas and investigating why there is such a close response margin would only serve to assist the educators in expanding their awareness of potential needs or concerns in the school. Of the aforementioned categories, the areas that reflected this narrow margin were: the school's homework policy, the students' use of computers, and the amount of extra help children receive at the school. Further to these concerns, the highest scoring level of dissatisfaction, with a frequency of 33 and valid percentage of 16.5%, was the question which asked if parents were satisfied with information received regarding the school's curriculum detailing what students are expected to learn.
Table 4.1: Survey of variables of school program and operating norms.

School Program

* Student progress in: English, speaking, reading, writing; mathematics; other subjects
* Information sent to parents from school regarding program
* Extra help, or remedial sessions, for students
* Student use of computers to support program
* Student use of library to support program

Operating Norms

* Frequency of school to home contact/communication
* Reporting of student progress
* Reporting of school's homework policy
* Reporting of school's code of behaviour

Table 4.2: Areas most frequently reported at a level of dissatisfaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Information you receive about school's curriculum (what your child is expected to learn)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The amount of extra help that your child receives at school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Your child's use of computers as part of the curriculum?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The school's homework policy?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The parents of this school community have a forum whereby these concerns, or other issues, could be heard, the school's parent-teacher group. Figure 4.1 illustrates the community survey response regarding levels of participation in the parent-teacher group. The three most frequently
cited barriers to participation are provided. Lack of ability to speak English was given by 39.3% of respondents as the foremost reason for non-participation. When asked if they would attend the meetings were they to be offered in their own language, 31.1% of the responses indicated yes. From the quantitative data gathered at this time, concern was raised with respect to first language use and the need to be able to converse and understand the English language. This is one of the areas that was investigated further through the analysis of the qualitative information gleaned through interviews and focus groups with the participants.

Language and communication preferences reported through the survey indicated that children and school letters/newsletters are the main vehicles transmitting information to parents. The responses showed a preference to have the school communicate more frequently with the home and that the information be written in the parents’ first languages.

The next area of inquiry on the survey investigated the level and degree of parent involvement in decision-making at the school. The results were varied, 16.8% of the people reported that they were not informed, did not know, nor knew of any areas where parents were included in decision-making. Following this, 12.7% cited fund raising as an area of involvement and 10.0% said curriculum, although they did not elaborate as to how or in what capacity they participated in curriculum issues. Taking this further, in the next question, participants were invited to say where they felt parents should play a more active role in decision-making. Most often, 8.6% they said that they were not sure, the second most frequent response was in the area of discipline or punishment and the third highest response area dealt with standards for program and curriculum.
Moving on from involvement, parents were then asked to reflect on ways in which they felt the school could be improved. Despite previous answers and suggestions, the highest number
of replies, 14.2% indicated that they felt all is well with the school, no suggestions for improvement. Concerns, as reported in the survey and in order of frequency are listed in Table 4.3. In addition to those items seen as concerns, parents were asked to state factors they saw as strengths. They also were invited to suggest areas for change or improvement. These responses are also shown in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Suggested concerns, strengths and changes.**

(I) **Concerns**
- Supervision - During lunch hours and recess breaks
- School Rules - Less violence and use of foul language
- Higher Ethics - Incorporate school uniforms
- Safety - Install fences on schoolyard boundaries
- Curriculum - Need more homework in English and Mathematics
- Standards - Expectations for student achievement should be raised

(ii) **Strengths**
- Teaching Staff - Motivating, co-operative, inviting
- Extra-curricular sports
- The Survey - An opportunity for parent input

(iii) **Changes**
- Translations of letters sent home
- Multicultural Programs - Increase fluency
- Multiethnic Staff - More representative of community
  - more staff being able to speak the first language of the community
- Fundraising Activities - Less often and less expensive
- New Student Orientation - Formal process should be implemented
- First language classes should be offered at the school

The last section of the researcher’s survey requested parent background information in an effort to finalize the snapshot of the community. The results of this portion of the survey revealed the highest number of immigrants were born in Hong Kong, India or Guyana. The most frequently reported first languages were: Chinese, English, Punjabi, Arabic and Guyanese. The
three reasons given for locating in this area, stated most often were: housing, relatives and place of employment.

In addition to being asked to report their country of birth, respondents were asked to state when they had immigrated to this country. The highest response level was 22.1% for immigration to Canada falling within the years of 1973 through 1978. Those who did not initially speak English when they arrived in Canada stated that they learned the language primarily from contact with others either from work or via day-to-day conversations, the reported response level was 31.7% followed by acquisition of the language through school, night school and English As A Second Language classes (ESL), 14.1%.

Most stated that English, Cantonese or Punjabi are spoken in the home and that 29.9% of their children attend language classes outside of the school. The majority of the respondents indicated that these children attend these language classes for Chinese, Korean or Gujarati. The participants were also asked to state the reason why they had chosen to settle in this particular community. Most respondents also stated that they worked outside of the home. The occupations were spread over a wide range as shown in Table 4.4. A review of the range of occupations illustrates positions that in most instances, do not require post-secondary education. When conducting the study the researcher observed that the educational experiences of the community members were quite different from the Canadian system. This topic is discussed within the interview results section of Chapter 4. Furthermore, most parents did not report personal educational qualifications beyond the secondary school level. The list of occupations is thus presented to demonstrate a snapshot of the community; who they are and what they do for a living. Many of the jobs reported could require shift work, which further supports parent
responses stating lack of time as one reason for minimal school-parent participation.

**Table 4.4: Occupations**

- accountant
- public servant
- electronics quality controller/electronic technologist
- dress maker/seamstress
- shipment driver/shipper/receiver
- health care aids/nurse/medical clerk
- manager of service department
- self employed
- assembler/finisher
- day care provider
- optician
- home maker
- waitress
- dairy worker
- driver (taxi/truck)

**4.2 Survey Summary**

Essentially, the survey portrayed this school community as multiethnic, composed of individuals primarily of Asian, South Asian and West Indian descent. Although the school community indicated an overall level of satisfaction with the program offered to the students, areas of concern were brought to the forefront. The issues that surfaced included both language and accessibility as barriers to parent-school communication. Furthermore, the amount of homework assigned was considered insufficient; program standards, or expectations, were perceived as being too low; the supervision of students outside of classes was not felt to be enough; and fundraising programs were considered to be unreasonable.

The respondents, overall, reported a strong level of regard and support for the teaching
staff. However, suggestions were made with respect to hiring practices, that more staff be able to speak languages representative of the community and perhaps be members of the various cultural groups. In addition, concerns were expressed that a more inclusive multicultural program be offered at the school from teaching first languages to teaching about various cultural traditions and beliefs. The survey responses did reflect a community interest in the school and a desire to be involved and contributing to decision-making, although where these contributions could occur was somewhat nebulous. The parents who responded indicated that they would like to be more involved but were not able to clearly indicate how or where this involvement could be most effective.

The researcher’s objective in administering the survey was to develop a framework of the community profile upon which to build the qualitative investigation. The community clearly stated that they saw the survey as an effective form of communication and they demonstrated overwhelming support of continued investigation into the dynamics of their school community through interviews and focus groups conducted in their language of choice, where possible. Specifically, 124 of the 212 respondents requested inclusion in these forums. A study into ESL, ESD and AFL program needs in Ontario schools conducted by Cumming, Hart, Corson and Cummins (1993) showed a need for future analyses to collect information on this domain at the level of individual students and or the school. To conduct the focus groups and interviews in a newly developing multiethnic community such as the one in this study was most timely and an effect conduit for gathering perspectives and concerns representative of the diverse population.

Initially, 124 parents indicated an interest in participating in an interview or focus group. Once contacted, individual circumstances resulted in arrangements being made for 10 interviews
and five focus groups. A total of 36 parents participated in these sessions. One focus group was conducted in Cantonese, one in Punjabi and the others in English.

Student interviews and focus group requests resulted in the formation of four groups: one held in Cantonese; one in Tamil and two in English. There was also one student narrative and another submitted by the researcher. Although all participants in the study were invited to submit narratives, only this student and the researcher chose to write ‘their stories.’

The other population involved in the study was the school staff. All of these interviews were conducted in English. On two occasions, two teachers chose to be interviewed together, whereas the other fourteen participants met with the researcher on an individual basis.

In total, 70 people contributed to the focus group, interview and narrative research components of the study. The breakdown and coding process to identify each group and the participants within each is illustrated in Table 4.5. When reporting the results of the study, the researcher has used these codes to identify any statements quoted from the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.5: Identification of individuals by Language and Type of Participation.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents (P)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus Groups (F)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punjabi (P)</td>
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<td>PFP-1</td>
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<td>PFP-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFP-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.3 Interviews, Focus Groups and Narratives

4.3.1 The Parents

4.3.1.1 Background Information

During both the interview and focus group sessions, parents were asked to state their country or place of origin. Those mentioned most frequently are illustrated in Figure 4.4. It is of interest to note that none of the parents involved in the interviews or focus groups were born in Canada.
Figure 4.2: Parent places of origin.

Many of the parents recounted experiences of their personal journeys in arriving at this particular Canadian school community. Often, families left their homelands for reasons of political unrest and departed as refugees.

One family told of their route here which started in Iran, then they went to Germany, followed by France, then England and at the time of the study they had just recently arrived in Canada. They reported that they had left their homeland due to a revolution and the fact that life was not very comfortable or accommodating for women. Therefore, the family left and followed the aforementioned journey in search of a home and employment. Throughout the discussion, this family explained how they learned about other cultures, traditions, languages and religions in their travels. Although they did not report the exact amount of time spent in each country, the evidence shows that none of the locales were home to this family for an extended period of time.

They registered their child, who had been born in Iran, at the school when at the grade
five level or, the age of ten. Circumstances that brought them to this specific community were newspaper advertisements for rental housing in the community. The majority of parents interviewed concurred with this scenario; one where, immigrant minority group families travelled from their country of birth to this community and endured many hardships through extensive travels and complications with numerous relocation situations, in conjunction with language and employment struggles, as well as a search for affordable, rental housing. Children arrived at the school speaking not only their first language, but in some instances, with a degree of ability in languages of other countries they had resided in throughout their travels.

During the time that the researcher worked at this school there was one six year old child, for example, who arrived speaking Arabic and German, but had no knowledge of the English language. Fortunately, a teacher on staff spoke German and was able to assist when necessary. This, though, was not always the case. Another student who registered in grade one at the school during this same time period had arrived from Vietnam. The child, his mother and grandfather had led an extremely simple, poor life in an area of Vietnamese countryside isolated from cities. The country, climate, city, buildings, traffic, school and the English language were all alien to this family. No one on staff, nor any of the students at that time spoke Vietnamese. The challenges involved in introducing this child to the school were numerous.

New student orientation, as mentioned in the list of concerns in the survey was not always easy to facilitate. An observer of this community would see, aside from one subsidized apartment building, a neighbourhood of single family homes. Upon closer scrutiny, as revealed by the parents and the school registration records, most of the families rented these homes. Furthermore, many homes housed more than one family, often extended in nature. In these homes other
relatives, for example, grandparents, who do not have the English language, and do not work outside of the home, also resided.

Frequently, parents reported similar circuitous routes in reaching this particular school district. The school office reported that as many as 40 student registration changes occurred during one term, which would indicate a transient pattern of residency in this neighbourhood. Supportive of these findings are the results of a study conducted within the same general region of this particular investigation. This study, by Cumming, Hart, Corson and Cummins (1993), was administered to 20 school boards to analyse immigration patterns and second language programs in Ontario schools. One of their interviews reported the following:

Our teachers of ESL tell us that the clientele is changing. The kids are tougher to deal with: they’ve been out of school longer, they are traumatized by the fact that they are recent refugees from war-torn countries, and the trek to get here may have taken them through 4 or 5 countries. So the nature of the profile of these students in our ESL classes has become a more needy student ...most of our clients are in a severe acculturation process and dealing with all the stresses of just coming to school. They are very, very needy people and needy families. A few years ago, most of our immigrants were from highly educated groups. Now many are people who have never been to school, such as Somalis who come from an oral, nomadic tradition. Others have gaps in their education, such as people from Bosnia (p. 20)

As with the survey findings, the parents reported during the interviews that they essentially chose this particular neighbourhood for reasons of affordability, most stated that they rented and many spoke of more than one family living in the same home, whether related or not. Also, similar to the survey, comments were shared regarding a desire to live near places of employment and near other relatives. The families who had experienced many hardships in their journey to this community maintained a positive attitude in their outlook toward their present situation. Although many were frustrated with a lack of employment opportunities the general
feeling was one where uprooting the family had been worth the risk because, as one parent said, they had "left a country full of trauma.”

Many parents discussed their religion and the importance of maintaining their heritage even while some chose to learn about Christian culture, if that was not their particular belief. From another perspective one parent stated,

My father, he came from liberty (in reference to a country with freedom of expression) and he said religion is not very important. The human being is more important than religion. I grow up with that kind of father. If my child grows up and she chooses to be a Christian, it doesn't matter to me. If she wants, she can be. PFE-9

Further to discussing religious and cultural heritage, the parents reflected upon their own educational upbringing. The comments ranged from those who had received their education in democratic British models to autocratic systems that were very structured; where discipline included spanking and the teachers were solely in charge of not only teaching, but the administration of discipline.

These patterns were not exclusive to those particular areas, but were brought forth most frequently during the interviews and focus groups. Many of these parents commented on high expectations placed upon students to show respect to their teachers and to achieve high scores in exams for acceptance into certain schools or in order to progress in their schooling on a yearly basis. Some parents from various countries in Africa discussed segregation issues in schools and placements as well as exclusionary practices where those who could not afford to go to school were unable to attend. Many of the parents in general felt that their homelands were lacking in appropriate resources in their schools.

The researcher had spent nine weeks in a Caribbean country conducting research on a
West Indian educational system where many practices similar to those brought forth by the parents in the study were apparent. In the researcher's situation, children who attended government primary schools were expected to complete rigorous exams whose results determined secondary school placement and eligibility.

Visitations to many of these schools revealed an inequity of services and resources with some areas possessing far more materials than others. Overall, these facilities and resources offered far less than the school of this particular study. Classrooms and curriculum in the schools observed were very structured and discipline was quite strict. Teachers were still, in some of these schools, administering spankings with tree 'switches' although the general understanding was that only the school's principal was supposed to have the authority to administer this form of consequence. Racial segregation was also evident regarding education and housing, although the workplace demonstrated subtle acceptance of all working in harmony.

Essentially, the parents' background information revealed a diverse range of immigrant minority groups who had, for the most part received education in their homelands. The models of education, standards and student management varied from no schooling to structured autocratic models, to interactive systems similar to that found in Ontario schools. The majority of parents represented in this study described the autocratic models most often where teachers were responsible for instruction and discipline. There was an understanding between home and school in these countries that the school's responsibilities for the child did not necessitate direct parental involvement.

During the interviews and the focus groups, parents discussed areas within their school community where they felt changes could occur to better the learning environment for the
students. The following report of the results was generated from both the focus groups and the interviews. The researcher combined the data into one section, entitled, The Parents, because the categories of responses were the same from both research formats. The identifying codes following each quote indicates whether the comment was stated by a parent during an interview or by a parent who participated in a focus group.

4.3.1.2 School Organization and Management

In many instances, parents discussed facets of the school regarding the organization of the school facility, the management of the building and of the people; the staff and students. The school's administration; a vice-principal and a principal, were the two primarily responsible for the running of the school from this perspective.

As leaders of the school, they are the individuals charged with ensuring that everything possible is done to provide the best learning environment for children. These two individuals are paramount in motivating staff and community to work collaboratively toward the shared goal of student learning.

When discussing levels of parental involvement at the school, the topic of decision-making arose. Parents recognized that school councils, as mandated by the Ministry of Education are, at this time, advisory boards to the school. However, current directions are going towards broadening the jurisdiction and authority of these groups. The goal is to have the councils become more active in school operations. The parents, for the most part, as supported by the survey findings, did not consider themselves members of the school's parent-teacher group, let alone a school council. With respect to decision-making powers or interests within the school
the feeling of involvement was minimal, virtually non-existent. The tone of the conversations was one where the parents did not feel it was their place to intervene at school level operations. The running of the school, from hiring of staff to disciplining children, for example, was seen as the role of either the school administration, the school board or the Ministry of Education, not the parents’.

As stated by one parent,

Decisions about the school should be made by The Ministry. PI-6

Although the view expressed was that decisions should be made by the educators the parents did discuss areas where they felt their input would be beneficial. They spoke of offering suggestions regarding school purchases for books, furniture and computers. They also saw their involvement in fund raising as an activity related to decision-making, with respect to expenditures or purchases for the school of various additional resources. In addition to monetary decisions, the parents indicated an interest in being included in making decisions about uniforms, curriculum and report cards. There was apparent interest in having a voice at the school, but many were not aware of how to step forth to be heard. Some indicated that they felt the opportunities had not been extended or that formal invitations should be sent inviting them to attend related meetings. The interest in their children and working together with the school was apparent to the researcher.

Throughout the interviews and focus group discussions, parents expressed a most favourable feeling toward the teaching staff. They stated that they felt most welcome in meeting and speaking with the teachers. The following statements reflect the positive attitude parents held for the staff.
The teaching staff is great, friendly and approachable. PI-6

Another parent stated,

The teachers are very nice. They make me feel comfortable whenever I come and pick-up my child. PI-9

Although one parent stated that he didn't feel that the school should hire people who can speak 54 languages, the composition of staff, best suited for an ideal learning environment, was a topic of discussion. Specific comments regarding cultural representation reflective of the school community were offered. The following quote is an example of one such comment.

...should have more teachers that can relate to students. For example, more black teachers because of the black students. This helps to be a role model for the kids. PI-8

This school community represented a diverse group of individuals. The parents acknowledged the multi-ethnic makeup of their school community and addressed areas of concern as related to student learning, self-esteem and understanding. Some parents did not feel that it was necessary for the school to increase the percentage of staff representative of various ethnic groups. However, many expressed an interest in increasing the kind and frequency of multicultural awareness activities at the school. An example of one parent's sentiments in this area follows. Essentially, the parent wants the child to, first and foremost, live as an integral member of Canadian society while maintaining and valuing their cultural heritage. The following quote was stated by a parent who felt the child’s heritage was important, but secondary to their sense of being, and living, as a Canadian.

We don't want our children to be Indian-Canadian, we want them to be Canadian-Indian. PFP-4

This issue, multicultural classroom programs for student learning, is discussed further in this
chapter, within the section entitled, Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy.

4.3.1.3 Staff Development

The area of staff development was not discussed at length during parent interviews or focus groups. However, the subject did arise with respect to discussions about the school's multicultural population. The parents expressed an interest in developing a stronger multicultural awareness program in the school, which, inevitably would be a staff responsibility. In order to broaden the programs already in place an increase in staff development activities offering teachers the necessary background information would be necessary. Resources, aside from the teachers, were acknowledged, as well. In other words, the parents realized that other individuals, other than certified teachers, could be called upon to present information about other cultures. These avenues are discussed and explored in an ensuing section of this report that delves into classroom specific needs, entitled Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy.

However, when discussing the area of staff development, as the following quote states, parents felt a need to have teachers informed of the various cultures represented in the school. This quote intimates that the reason for wanting increased staff awareness is not just for the classroom, but for daily interactions with the children. The feeling was one of necessity; to understand and be sensitive to the needs of these children, teachers require a knowledge base of cultural traditions, values and morals.

Teachers should learn about different cultural backgrounds and have the ability to look at sensitive areas. PFE-1
The parents appreciated the extra time and effort required for staff to learn about other ethnic groups, in conjunction with programs they prepare and teach everyday. However, they were most sensitive to their children's needs and wanted to see a school where so many newly arrived children would feel comfortable and supported by staff. One mother observed the adjustment her family experienced when they arrived in this country; the difficulties experienced during stages of acculturization.

When you come here it's a big shock, you have to adjust. It takes some time. We try to teach our kids this. They're stuck in-between. PFP-5

Increasing staff development on multicultural education was also seen as a need by the staff. Acquiring this knowledge was seen as necessary in meeting the children's needs, as well as answering their own personal, professional inquiries. Connecting staff development to multicultural program implementation, is discussed later in this chapter in the section on staff interviews and focus groups.

4.3.1.4 Supervision: Safety and Discipline

Parents felt that issues managed by the school administrative staff were conducted fairly and that there was evidence of follow through, or closure. Some parents, but certainly not all, were aware of the safe schools policy for this board of education. Those who were familiar with the policy stated that they supported the conditions outlining those behaviours deemed unacceptable, as well as ensuing consequences. Whether parents were aware of this particular document or not, supervision, safety, violence and discipline were prevalent topics of discussion with the participants. Essentially, the comments focussed on supervision and disciplinary
standards for those periods of time when the children were not in class, such as recesses and the lunch hour. Requests for increased teacher supervision were expressed as a perceived need to address concerns in this area. This statement, by one of the parents illustrates the feeling of insecurity felt by others, that the schoolyard is not a safe place for their children.

Kids always have fights. I look out during break one time and there were no teachers, I was stunned. I don't like how the school is free, with an open yard. There needs to be more security. PI-7

This parent felt that increasing the number of teacher supervisors would be a way to address safety concerns. The researcher would like to mention that the school's population was over 700 and the number of students in the playground at any one time was significant. The logistics of student supervision were discussed at length with both groups; parents and staff in an effort to identify areas where intervention could relieve the problems occurring on the schoolyard. Some suggestions made by the parents to address supervision and disciplinary concerns included; volunteer parental supervision; a detention room; plus investigating the possibility of adding more staff. The parents felt that these strategies could also be advantageous not only for increased supervision but for purposes of reducing class sizes which were felt to be too large. Other methods to address student supervision, while in the schoolyard, are discussed in the report within the section on The Staff.

Issues of safety and discipline were not limited to the playground. Although the playground was seen as the key area for safety concerns, classroom discipline was also brought forth as an area of concern. As mentioned previously, comments from interviews, focus groups and surveys indicated that parents were favourably impressed with interactions they had experienced with staff. Yet, when discussing discipline in the classroom, the parents tended to
compare their own educational experiences with this school's system. Basically, many of the parents had been educated in systems where teachers were responsible for discipline methods which were felt to be extreme, including physical intervention, something they did not want their children to experience. Conversely, there was also a feeling that discipline methods used in Canadian classrooms were too relaxed, that more structured and rigid expectations were needed. This quote describes a practice some parents were familiar with from their own school days that they did not want their children to experience.

I remember if we didn't bring the timetable, we had to bend down and had to have the teacher smack us. I don't want that here. PI-2

In learning about this school system, the parents were anxious to know what the expectations for discipline were as well as the consequences. They spoke of the school norms, in their places of origin, where parents did not get involved with school discipline. The school personnel were expected to supervise all discipline which was supported by the parents, but the parents would not become involved at the school level. However, that is not to say that follow-up would not occur at home. Some of the parents in the Chinese focus group explained how going to the school was seen as a negative, in the sense that others would assume the only reason you had been summoned to the school was because your child was in serious trouble. One parent expressed the situation in the following fashion,

There's a rule where we come from; parents don't talk to the teachers about the punishment that was handed out to the child. If a kid went home and complained about the punishment, he got more punishment from his parents. PI-3

The parents of this particular school community appeared to be equally as hesitant in working with staff when disciplinary issues arose. However, as reported by the teachers, as cited
later in this chapter, there was a sense of support even though, in many instances, the parents were not visible.

4.3.1.5 Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy

During both the interviews and the focus groups, parents spoke at length about the school curriculum. Within this domain, classroom curriculum, extensions to program, homework, and present pedagogy were discussed. Classroom curriculum refers to subjects taught to the children on a regular basis; such as English and mathematics. Extensions to program can be defined as enrichment activities, or topics of interest, related to curriculum. An example of an extension to program would be a situation where a guest speaker is invited into the school to conduct a presentation to the children on a particular topic.

Prior to program content discussions, the parents spoke of their interest in students' daily work and assignments. Specifically, many parents expressed their views about homework as a crucial element to their child's schooling. In addition to concerns regarding academic progress and development, many parents expressed a preference for homework as a means by which to steer children away from television; a way by which to keep children from getting bored. It is of interest to note that, as previously mentioned, many parents have jobs that require long hours of employment, plus an earlier observation had been noted that very few children are seen socializing or playing outside of their homes after school each day. The concern about homework could be interpreted as not only a reinforcement of academic learning, but an activity to preoccupy children during the evenings as supported by the following comment.

This year he doesn't have much homework and he complains to me that he has
nothing to do. PFC-3

Or, as another parent said,

I want to see my child come home with work so she doesn't watch t.v. all the time. PI-6

Not all of the parents declared homework as an alternative to television. This parent also
intimated that there could be an advantage to learning if a child was directed to complete work at
home.

If the child does 10 more exercises at home than watching t.v. the child learns
more. PFE-10

In addition to requesting that their children be given more homework and on a regular
basis, some of the responses focussed on student use of organizers or agenda planners. At this
school, planners could be purchased for the children registered in the junior and intermediate
grades. Purchase of the planners was optional although their use was strongly advocated by the
staff. Some staff used them as an integral organizational tool and insisted that the children record
their assignments on a daily basis which were given a grade in some instances. During the
interviews, the use of these booklets was discussed and some parents stated that they felt the
planners were effective vehicles for recording assignments. One parent stated that their child
was, through the use of the planner, in a better position to complete work and develop good work
habits.

Although planners were mentioned as viable tools for tracking homework and
assignments, many parents indicated that they had difficulty in helping their children with their
work. Various reasons were offered as the obstacles impeding parents from helping children with
their work; language differences, being unacquainted with the syllabus, and being unfamiliar
with current pedagogy were the main factors suggested in addition to not knowing what the school's homework policy stated. Some of the parents discussed their level of discomfort in helping their children with their homework because they, themselves were not familiar with the content of the subject area. Not having been educated in this country themselves placed parents at a disadvantage if they had not acquired background knowledge required by the children in order to complete their work. For example, with respect to a geography class assignment, one parent stated.

...do not know the subject matter and it's time consuming to learn it. If you ask an immigrant to count all the provinces they will have a little bit of trouble. PI-3

Further to not being aware of subject content matter, the parents went on to discuss the syllabus with respect to objectives and expectations. There was consensus that this information had been not clearly transmitted to their homes. The parents were not sure what the children were expected to learn in each subject area for each grade level. This impeded their ability to further support the students with their homework after school hours. As one parent, who wanted to help said,

The kids come home and I look at their homework (but) I don't have a list of objectives or standards from the kids. PI-7

Not all parents felt their role was one to assist children with schoolwork in the home. There were feelings that schooling was the responsibility of the educators, that expectations placed upon the parents to help were unreasonable. One parent expressed these sentiments by stating,

Teachers need to be held accountable for their classes, parents don't have time for their kids. This is a multicultural area, my kids can't get their homework done because their mother is from another country. She is not familiar with the context. PI-10
This feeling of being unable to sit and help the children with their schoolwork, because the teachers should be solely responsible, or because parents were not familiar with content, was also exacerbated with pressured feelings regarding time. Many parents, as previously discussed, were required to be absent from the home for extended periods of time due to employment responsibilities. This lack of time was cited as a barrier to helping their children, as well. One man spoke of his work schedule,

I work in the afternoons, when the children come home, I take off. It is very hard for me to stay home and help them with their homework. PL-4

The parents also suggested that they experienced difficulties in helping their children with homework because they were not aware of the pedagogy presently in practice. Activity-based learning centres, experiential learning opportunities and process writing styles, which includes inventive spelling, were a few styles alien to many of the parents. However, one parent did say that she understood the system here, she described it as being more interactive. Her child's teacher had invited her in to observe the class one day and from her observations, she said she had gained an understanding for this system. Another parent felt that his family had made the right decision in moving here because the education system was not as rigid as the one he had experienced, he preferred the educational model his children were being exposed to.

The parents spoke freely regarding their understanding of curriculum at the school. Repeatedly, the use of computers was something the parents supported, but they expressed concerns that the children were not accessing them enough. Requests were suggested that the children be able to use computers on a more regular basis and that programs in different languages be made available for those who could benefit. Many of the parents said that they did
not have this technology in their homes but would like their children to have the exposure and the skills.

The area of Special Education was another focal point for discussion. Various culture groups define Special Education differently than in the Ontario school system. The researcher had previously conducted research on one of the Caribbean islands investigating their educational system at both the elementary and secondary levels. The special education component of this particular system was viewed far differently than the Ontario system. The island's program would be comparable to programs offered to developmentally delayed children in Ontario. The Ontario system of identification, placement and program design is far more comprehensive and the services are far more diverse than those found on this island. This comparison is of interest to this school community as there were many parents who had experienced systems with minimal special education support. As a result, when the teachers at this school approached parents with concerns about the children's learning progress, there was a reluctance to pursue intervention of any sort. The parents were not well-versed in the wide spectrum of services available for children with severe low-functioning needs to those with gifted capabilities. The teachers at this school had a predetermined, negative stigma to overcome in some of their interactions with parents regarding exceptional students. One parent who met with the researcher had a child the staff had identified as requiring intervention. This little boy had been experiencing tremendous difficulties and his academic progress had been minimal. The child was in the third grade at the time of the interview. His father was reluctant to pursue recommendations made by the school, as illustrated by this comment made during the interview.

I don't agree with special classes. My son is not disabled, he just learns at a slower
pace. If they asked him to write an 'A' and he can't then they think he is disabled. He is excellent one-to-one but quite slow in a group. PI-2

The current levels of achievement were also confusing to some parents. When teachers reported on student progress, the terminology included levels of achievement as 'developing' through to 'mastery'. Some of the parents felt that the terms were not clearly defined and that achieving mastery intimated that the child was not expected to continue to work in that particular skill area. The following statement is a reflection of that sentiment.

This new way of having a kid do a project and saying he has mastered it so now we should leave it alone, I tend to disagree. PFE-7

Language was suggested as another hurdle to overcome in order to help children with their school assignments. Some parents expressed concern with their ability, or lack of, to assist their child with French homework. Most stated that they did not have a satisfactory comfort level in the language to be able to support the children with their tasks. One parent reported that he felt that he had to force himself to learn French in order to be able to help his child. The general feeling was one of concern, while, at the same time, an appreciation for the subject. Parents recognized future benefits for their children if they developed a command of the French language since they were living in a country where it was one of the official languages. Language homework was one concern, another was that language differences could affect learning levels at the school, in any subject. Specifically, some parents expressed concerns about the expected levels of achievement; were standards lowered in an effort to accommodate language needs? The following statement by one parent demonstrates this feeling.

Could it be, as we have talked about for this school, are the teachers adjusting curriculum a bit because of difficulties with language? Are there a lot of people moving in and out so there isn't consistency to program? PI-3
The whole area of language, as a concern for student learning and parental partnerships at school, generated significant discussion in all interviews and focus groups beyond the area of curriculum. A report on the parents' comments and concerns with relation to language needs and the multicultural focus is presented as a separate section located after this next segment on Communication and Participation.

4.3.1.6 Communication and Participation

Various vehicles of communication were discussed during the interviews and focus group sessions. Those who went to the school, daily, to pick-up their children reported a level of satisfaction regarding teacher-parent communication about student progress. However, for many who were not able to be at the school on a regular basis, there were concerns about the frequency of communication between school and the home, as well as the methods used. The parents felt that the teachers should telephone them more often to share information about: their child's progress; school curriculum; code of behaviour and homework policy expectations. Some parents stated that the only information they received about their child's progress was via the report cards. The parents also expressed an interest in having the teachers visit their homes, to meet with them personally.

Aside from in-class information, the parents wanted more communication regarding parent-teacher meetings, notices of upcoming meetings and summaries from those that had taken place. There was also an expressed desire to see newsletters sent home on a more frequent basis, outlining school policies, expectations, upcoming functions and similar information.

The issue of language was brought forth at this point in the discussions as a perceived
need, critical or important information sent home in their first languages would be tremendously appreciated. This topic is discussed separately in the following segment entitled, Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus.

Throughout the discussions, work obligations, time and language were suggested as impeding barriers of communication and participation. The parents also stated that they had received sufficient notice or invitation to participate in school activities at various levels. For example, one parent, when discussing increasing heritage awareness at the school, said that she would be more than willing to offer cultural presentations, but had not been asked. Others even offered to go to the school to teach the staff about their traditions or religion, but requests for their services had not been advertised.

Although many of the parents indicated an interest in becoming more involved in the school, they often identified babysitting of younger children as a major obstacle. Some parents said they would be more likely to get involved in school activities, or attend meetings, if babysitting was provided. At this particular school there is a private child care centre whose staff have, upon occasion, stayed after hours to offer their services for minimal costs. However, these arrangements have been sporadic and it is a service that cannot be guaranteed. This is a situation where the school may want to follow suit of other schools in the area who have offered certified babysitting courses to some of the older students in the building.

Babysitting services was seen as one measure to facilitate increased parental participation. Another motivator suggested by a few parents, on different occasions, was that of a pot luck dinner. It was felt that many evening meetings are scheduled for a time when a community meal could be accommodated and thus increase parental involvement, while at the same time promote
a sense of community. This social time would be a way by which people in the neighbourhood could get to meet others who live nearby.

The suggestions tended to revolve around out-of-class functions. A degree of hesitancy was evident when parental involvement in the classroom was discussed. Essentially, many parents said they did not feel comfortable in the classroom setting for many of the same reasons they offered regarding curriculum and program. The main factors were; a level of unfamiliarity with work being taught in-class; computer technology and language barriers. For the most part, at this point in time, the parents suggested that their services in the school centre on support to program as presenters regarding cultural differences or as translators wherever possible. Even further to those suggestions, they spoke of possibly offering language classes to students, outside of the instructional day. They also spoke of many homes where grandparents are available during the day to come in and help wherever needed, such as in the teaching of various skills like crafts, crocheting and so forth. These individuals could also assist with the teaching of first languages or with the arrangements for special events like a multicultural celebration.

The participation with the school was also seen as an opportunity for the school's administration to reach out to the community. One opportunity could involve occasional afternoons where those community members who are available could go to the school and have an afternoon information session with administration. This could serve as a vehicle for sharing in-depth information about curriculum, policy and special events. Parents were receptive to meeting with school personnel, but the timing of meetings was a concern. Due to demands of work and family, changing meeting times to fluctuate between days, evenings and Saturdays was suggested by numerous parents.
Overall, the parents voiced an interest in school activities. They said that they wanted to establish frequent communication with the school and participate wherever their services could be of benefit. They suggested areas where these issues could be addressed. Further to identifying areas of involvement, the parents singled-out components of the work being done by the researcher as offering opportunities to enhance communication. The interviews and focus groups were welcome forums for the parents, as stated by this individual,

"This is the first time we've had a meeting like this (the focus group) and it's really a wonderful idea because I think there are many parents who have come to this meeting who want to get involved in the school but didn't really voice that. I think that by having this type of meeting, the school is also aware of the parents that are involved and I think that the parents are also aware of how easy it is to actually get involved with their child's school. PFE-3"

Earlier in the discussion, language was identified as a factor impeding both communication and participation between home and school. The language strand permeated all interview and focus group meetings. The comments, issues and concerns as they affect the school-community partnership and as they impact upon the multicultural nature of the school are reported in the following section of this study.

4.3.1.7 Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

As parents and educators struggle to meet the learning needs of the children in this school, issues of language continually hamper progress: in communication with children; communication between home and school; in the provision of appropriate program materials; in the maintenance of multicultural awareness or appreciation, and in the development of a sense of shared understandings and community. The information in this section attempts to provide an
overview of the critical areas, identified by the parents, that are affected by language, in one way or another. The parents maintained an expectation for their children that they would strive to do their best in their studies and in their interaction with others. They acknowledged the multicultural make-up of their community and hoped that their children would be able to develop a sense of community with their peers.

Overall, the parents were pleased to be in Canada and they were appreciative of the work the schools did on behalf of the students. They expressed a desire to instill this same appreciation for education in their children. Moving here, for many, they said, was a cultural shock but they did not expect schools to change to meet their standards, cultural background or heritage. However, they did suggest areas where programs could be enhanced in an attempt to support newly arrived students. For example, they commented on the children's lack of knowledge of basic Canadian geography and surrounding landmarks that contribute to the understanding of material taught in the Ontario schools. Basic level, introductory classes were suggested. Classes, small in number with a simple mandate, to provide new students with basic facts and skills that would be age and grade appropriate. They went on to suggest additional language classes be offered, as well. During the Gujarati focus group discussion, the parents suggested that these basic level curriculum and language classes be offered at the school, during the summer months or on weekends, or in the evening.

Another suggestion was to have a cultural representative on staff, who would be a qualified teacher trained in ESL. The parents recognized the need for these classes as, at the time of the study, almost two-thirds of the school's population was receiving ESL support at one level or another. In many families, English was not reported as the mother tongue spoken in the home.
Parents even spoke of additional languages spoken at home, different from their mother tongue, and not English. One parent reported learning Spanish in school while living with grandparents who only spoke Hindi. Another spoke of a Swahili background plus a capacity to speak an additional three languages. One father reported Farsi as their first language, although his family spoke Turkish and his wife spoke Spanish. He described their situation as follows,

Our children speak together in English and speak to their mother in English, although sometimes Farsi-they know both. I like for them to learn their language. Children were sent to American school in Spain, so they also speak Spanish and English. We (the parents) had to learn Farsi, Arabic and English in high school.

Others spoke of children attending language classes on weeknights or weekends, at locations other than the school. Punjabi, Arabic, Gujarati and Cantonese were some of the languages mentioned. In some situations, the parents reported that the children received language tutelage from grandparents living in the home. In looking at strategies to meet the children's needs, some voiced sentiments that first language acquisition or maintenance should be conducted through the home and the focus at school should be on learning English. A comment was made to the effect that parents should also be responsible for teaching their children English so that the English-speaking students at school would not have to wait for those who speak other languages.

Parents should be encouraged to teach their children English at home. It is not fair to the English-speaking kids to wait for the others.

This sentiment was not expressed by any other parents, rather the converse since their comfort level with English was of concern. Other suggestions to address language needs included: intensive language classes at the school during the summer months, weekends and
Friday evenings, in English or in first languages; teacher or parent-led classes in translation of program, a remedial format, conducted at recess, lunch hour, after school or, if possible, during the day; offer ESL to kindergarten and grade one students; enlist volunteers to translate information to be sent home; and place more emphasis on language in the school's curriculum, and, offer a month of intensive English and academic support to newly arrived immigrant, minority group students.

4.3.1.8 Summary

Essentially, the results of the interviews and focus group sessions with the parents indicated that the majority value their heritage and their language. They wish to see their traditions and beliefs maintained within their family unit. Furthermore, they expressed a desire to have students learn about their own heritage as well as others. Regardless of the ethnic mix in the school, there was consensus that the parents wanted their children to acquire the English language and to meet the academic expectations placed before them at the school. Numerous suggestions to address concerns and issues within this school community were offered throughout these discussions in the following areas:

- school organization and management;
- staff development;
- supervision, safety and discipline;
- curriculum;
- and language needs.
Each of the strategies put forth require consideration by all stakeholders. To review the suggestions and apply any or all effectively requires a process that could facilitate implementation. A policy or practices model is one such vehicle. The research identified specific actions within each of the aforementioned categories. These, in conjunction with those derived from the student and staff data will be summarized at the end of the chapter, illustrating concrete needs that can be melded into a policy with directives for action and implementation at the school.

4.3.2 Students

4.3.2.1 Background Information

The fifteen children who offered to participate were all from the junior and intermediate levels, grades four through eight and were representative of the school's diverse community. The students either reported their place of origin as another country, or that their parents had immigrated to Canada prior to their birth. All of the participants, then, were either immigrants or first generation Canadian in their families.

I came to Canada with my parents and two sisters. I was raised in Sri Lanka in the Northern province. We left the country due to a political problem. ST.FT-1

The countries of origin reported throughout the meetings with the children included Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Trinidad, Jamaica, Korea, Hong Kong, Iran and Nigeria. In the majority of responses, religion was cited as a vital element to their families. Most children stated regular attendance at a place of worship, and many reported participation in language and/or religion classes, outside of the normal school day. Almost all of the children reported that they had
siblings, and in some cases other relatives who resided with them, as well as their parents. Others relayed that their parents were still in their place of origin which made it difficult for situations that required parental approval, and, to complicate the situation even more, some stated that they 'skipped' (did not attend) classes, upon occasion. Of these children, some reported that their out of country parents would come for brief visits but that they, the children, found themselves having to be the decision-makers for their parents because of language difficulties and a level of unfamiliarity with the area. Furthermore, some of these students described setting up their own organization outside of the school for peer mentoring and tutoring in their first language. They were even in the process of developing their own publication.

One newcomer stated appreciation for telephone calls received from the teacher to their home, which in turn, resulted in contact with a social worker. The researcher, when working at this school, was directly involved in one such situation. A teacher of a grade four class reported to the administration that she was concerned about a student in her class. She had found this child to be seeking attention on a continual basis, far more than others in the class. She had also noticed that any notes sent home to be signed by the child's parents were returned to the school with an older sister's signature. The school's administration spoke with the older child, who also attended the school, to investigate the situation. This child explained that her parents were gone for awhile because they had to return to their business in Singapore. She went on to say that it was not a problem because there was an older sibling, in Canada, who was in attendance at a university. The school's administration discovered that the older sibling did, in fact, attend university, but it was located two hours away from the family home where the youngsters resided. It was also discovered that this older girl only returned to the home on weekends. The
younger children explained that a lady down the street did their shopping for them when it was necessary. They also revealed that the parents had left them some money which they had used to order pizzas for dinner upon occasion. The children had been looking after themselves in every aspect, including their laundry. Physically, they appeared listless and tired. After meeting with the children, the administration requested intervention from the Children's Aid Society (CAS). The agency responded and began by having the children relocated to a neighbour's home. Next, the CAS contacted the children's parents to confirm if they were returning to Canada and when. The agency then continued to monitor the situation for this particular family on an ongoing basis.

The children spoke quite comfortably about their families and the events that had brought them to this school community. They freely discussed political hardships experienced in many of their countries of origin; the difficulties of acculturation as a newcomer, often without the ability to converse in English. They also referred to the 'baggage' that they perceived any children brought with them when they arrived.

4.3.2.2 School Organization and Management

The children were very specific in their responses regarding the school organization. They discussed a range of topics from the comforts of the building to the availability of learning resources. The majority of children voiced a desire to have more computers in the school, plus increased access to the machines and the Internet. The feeling was that a computer should be available in every class in conjunction with a computer lab.

The pupils discussed the available resources in the school library. Repeatedly, they
requested a wider selection of books be made available in different languages.

The music program was reviewed; an interest in increasing the supply and selection of instruments was put forth and the children also said that they would like to see a wider variety in the selection of music played in the classes.

The remaining comments were aside from in-class support. Specifically, the students suggested that more trips be offered, that indoor activities, such as crafts, sewing and piano lessons be presented during the recesses, that the school implement a hall monitor program and that the students start an annual yearbook. The children felt that the school spirit needed to be nurtured and that additional extra-curricular activities and clubs be formed.

Hence, aside from the above comments and a desire to see gym classes lengthened, as one student stated, "Everything is good." ST.FE-1

4.3.2.3 Supervision: Safety and Discipline

The students also spoke of the moral tone in the school and surrounding community. Many of those interviewed spoke of a perceived level of violence between the students. They talked about swearing and fighting in the playground. The numbers of people involved in the fights were seen as excessive and the causes of the fights included not only personality conflicts but issues surrounding religion and race. These conversations went further to included talk of weapons. Some students stated that they felt that a few pupils were bringing knives into the school. The researcher was involved in an incident where a student in the eighth grade was found to be threatening other students with a large knife. The situation resulted in the arrest of the child, in addition to a suspension under the school's safe school policy. The child was also on probation
for another occurrence that had taken place away from the school grounds.

The researcher had also experienced the large fights these children referred to in their discussions. One such incident involved approximately 200 children who were taunting two children, at the centre of the crowd, to hit one another. Other times, large groups had 'swarmed' children in an effort to take particular items, such as a leather coat, or to intimidate a particular child verbally. These occurrences did not happen frequently, but they did result in parent and staff efforts to control behaviours and discipline. The initiation of a student conflict mediator program was one example of a strategy implemented to address these concerns.

Students should feel confident, know how to respect each other, learn to take orders and be more polite in their conversation. Values, morals and good habits should be taught from the start and should keep to it. ST.FT-2

4.3.2.4 Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy

During the interviews and focus groups, the children were asked to offer their impressions and recommendations for the school. They were encouraged to express their sentiments on any aspect and to feel comfortable to state areas of satisfaction, as well as issues of concern or dissatisfaction.

When looking into the matter of the classroom, the children, in some instances, said that the present teaching pedagogy they were exposed to was quite different from their previous experiences. Their reasons for this included different school systems, varying cultural traditions and language. Some reported that the teachers spoke too quickly for them to grasp not only the concept being presented but the actual language of instruction. In addition to listening skill weaknesses, these children spoke of difficulties in trying to participate and respond in class
programs. They found themselves being shy, quiet and passive because they were afraid of saying anything wrong, although in some of their cultures staying quiet, they reported, is a sign of intelligence. This was not the reason given for their lack of involvement. During the focus group with the Cantonese speaking children, it was stated that:

In Hong Kong it is not customary to read something and respond 'in your own words'. The expectation is to locate and copy appropriate sections of the text.

Students also discussed the ESL classes in the school. Some stated that they were not in favour of these classes because of a stigma attached to these supportive programs by their peers. The ability level of the content being taught was also criticized as being too low for the age group it was intended for. Many said that they already knew how to spell some of the basic level words presented in class and that the ESL here is the equivalent of the English that is taught in Hong Kong. Although, they did say that very often the English that is taught to students living in Hong Kong is conducted or taught in Cantonese. Yet, according to some, all exams and texts are written in English. These students went on to say that in Chinese schooling, the more one can memorize, the better. (Regurgitation in mathematics and spelling is seen as a strength).

What these children wanted were 'helper notes'. This was a strategy one of the ESL teachers had provided to some of these students. Here, the teacher proffered scribed notes from the science textbook which, in turn, alleviated the extent of individual reading demanded of each child. In addition, these 'notes' brought the elevated speech of the textbook down to a level they were able to comprehend. Students involved in these interviews, though, did express a certain amount of discomfort with those ESL teachers who refused to let the children speak anything but English, at any particular time. However, these same teachers offered initiatives that were
appreciated by the pupils in their tutelage. For example, they had been given opportunities to visit and interview resident senior citizens from the community which offered the children a chance to learn about the experiences of others while at the same time being able to experiment with the use of their acquired ability in English.

Conversely, the students expressed a desire to have older students assist them with communication, in general, to help facilitate expression between all levels, a bridging process. Further to having the support of 'mentor' students, these children identified a need to have the staff become more aware of how to deal with the members of their community. They suggested that the teachers be guided in how to interact and work with different levels of community action groups. One example they cited was that many children may look Chinese but they are not Chinese and staff need to respect these differences.

The students reflected on their academic experiences within the various subject areas. Aside from language difficulties and comments about teachers speaking too quickly, the children spoke of content levels, expectations and individual teaching techniques as administered by each staff member. Some of the older children felt uncomfortable with the rotary structure, too many teachers were seen as overwhelming in that they had to adjust to so many different approaches and expectations in an already new and unfamiliar situation. The children's comments mirrored those of the parents; that the teachers were well-liked and respected. Some teachers were seen as too strict, too demanding, or, conversely, not strict enough and too relaxed in their approach. Overall impressions were that the staff was caring and that they supported the children in their efforts at school.

Furthermore, the students identified time, language and insufficient information as
barriers to parental participation at the school. These factors mirrored those from the parent interviews and focus groups.

My parents are not willing to join because of language problems. ST.FC-4

A few children reported that their parents did assist them with homework; others noted that their parents volunteered in the library at the school, carding and shelving books.

However, the majority of children reported that their parents were not able to come into the school, nor were they able to assist with homework because of the aforementioned barriers. Some children did mention that they had older siblings at home who, occasionally, helped them with assignments.

In continued discussions about academics, one pupil stated,

The school work (here) is different. This system of teaching is more creative, it lets the student think independently instead of spoonfeeding and book work alone. ST.FT-1

The students were asked to speak about their views on their academic programs at the school. As in previous discussions, French was a subject area of concern. The children voiced repeatedly that they found the subject to be somewhat confusing during their initial adjustment to the school and community. This was an observation from children who did not have English as their mother tongue. The other subject area that was brought up most often was that of sex education. The comments focussed on this area as one that had not been taught to them in their countries of origin. However, the feeling was positive, they felt that the classes were most worthwhile. Similarly, the pupils stated that they enjoyed the physical education classes that were offered.

From there, the children discussed the logistics of the school's teaching model. They
expressed a desire to have fewer teachers than those they worked with on the existing rotary schedule. Also, they felt that the relationship between the students and the teachers was valuable; that teachers should instill confidence in their pupils. Regardless of the topics of discussion, the students who participated in these sessions reported a level of satisfaction with their learning environment. As one child observed,

Yes, it is different and I like it here. There are more challenging projects and assignments, the subjects are more interesting. ST.FT-2

4.3.2.5 Communication and Participation

Under this heading, the children spoke of their parents' level of interaction, as well as their own adjustment to the school and community.

As previously reported, most of the children indicated that their parents were not actively involved in the school. Of the reasons listed, one pertained to lack of information; the feeling that families were not aware of school needs, or activities. Insufficient information shared between school and home hampered effective communication and interaction, as reflected by one student's observation,

My parents aren't involved in the school because they aren't informed. ST.FE-4

Reasons why some parents do not consider themselves to be informed of school activities warrants action on the school's part to apply strategies to address these concerns. A policy, with defined directives, investigates this concern and others that arose during the study. This policy, as presented in Chapter 5, attempts to present the community with a guideline of actions to further enhance and support partnerships and student learning. It has been designed based on the
concerns and needs as identified by the community. Some barriers cannot be influenced for change, but alternatives have been suggested where situations are fairly restricted. One such example is that of time. The children highlighted time as a barrier to parental involvement. Parents are busy, work awkward or long hours which, in turn, hamper their attempts to get involved in the school. One child expressed this factor in this manner,

My father tries his best to be involved, but since we're new immigrants it's hard to find the time; working day and night. ST.FT-2

A third, significant factor felt to impede parental partnerships was language. The children, like their parents, recognized the difficulties created when language barriers existed. This quote reflects a child's observation regarding parental involvement and barriers to effective communication.

My parents? No, they are not involved. They are too busy; they work and my mom can't speak much English. It is difficult for her to communicate. ST.FC-3

Thus, the three barriers to parent participation, as identified by the children were: information, an understanding of the school system and its operating norms; time, working schedules reduced available time to attend school meetings or functions; and language, an inability to communicate or receive information effectively due to a lack of proficiency in the English language.

The parents also identified information, time and language as barriers to partnerships. A need to set strategies in place to facilitate these factors was discussed but solutions were not readily suggested by either group, the children nor their parents.

In addition to analyzing their parents' level of involvement at the school, the children reflected on their own adjustment in becoming part of this school community.
With reference to starting at the school, many children reported feelings of isolation and alienation. However, in each instance, they went on to tell of eventually reaching a comfort level with the school and their peers. The following quote by one student demonstrates her level of comfort with her adjustment to the school. Within her comment one can read that she felt comfortable, but that she was the one who changed in order to become part of this particular community.

I didn't have much problems with the school. It was easier for me to adjust here because we move a lot. I felt welcome; it helped because there were a lot of mixed people. I had to adjust to the school; to the fashion and the ways. ST.FE-2

Conversely, the quote from the next student demonstrated a feeling that others had to get used to her differences. The particular young lady who made this comment belongs to an ethnic group where she is expected to wear traditional dress wherever she is. Whereas, the previous comment was made by a young lady whose family has chosen to wear western-style clothing.

The students teased us, the way we speak and dress. The language and the weather was a big barrier, as we are not accustomed to these. But, later, we got used to it and got over it. ST.FT-1

The last comment this child made, "...got over it" refers to getting over the teasing by the other children. Some of the children reported that they adjusted fairly quickly to the school because they had previously met some of those already living in the area, via their ethnic or religious groups. Therefore, in some instances there was a degree of familiarity due to existing cultural group socialization. The following quote was made by a student who had a support network in place for their family.

We stayed in a community with many Tamil people, so we didn't miss cultural and traditional affairs. ST.FT-1
In conjunction with cultural support groups, some children stated that the fact that the community was so diverse actually made them feel more comfortable. There was a sense expressed that because so many students were undergoing similar adjustments to the new community, that many had something in common. This shared sense of adjustment created a comfort level for some of the children, as shown in this child's comment,

I felt at home mingling with community as it was an immigrants' colony; everyone in the same position. ST.FT-1

This sentiment was not expressed by all children; the adjustment was not smooth for every new student. The multicultural mix was perceived as an obstacle by some who did not have their particular group represented in the population. The following comment illustrates a situation where one child felt awkward at first but took the situation in hand and applied his own strategy for making friends.

At the beginning, there weren't many Indonesian kids. I put race aside and tried to look for kids with good personalities. ST.FE-2

Student comments on racism varied, some talked of being teased because of: their country's history; their style of traditional dress; their first language; or their inability to speak English. Regardless of the adjustment difficulties, the children often reported how supportive and welcoming the staff had been upon their arrival. The following child's statement reflects a feeling that had been expressed by the children and by their parents, as well.

I felt lost and lonely but thanks to the ESL classes we were able to come a long way. The teachers, too, treated us very well which made us come out of our shells slowly. ST.FT-2

The final theme of data collection formulated as a result of the student focus groups addressed concerns and comments with respect to language needs and the perceived impact upon
their schooling.

4.3.2.6 Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

In a school community as diverse as this, inevitably, the number of languages and dialects spoken are numerous. As previously mentioned, interpreters were employed to assist with the data gathering in this study for both parent groups and children. During these discussions, the children explained that, although many of them speak English at school, they use their first language when in the home. Some families did report, though, that even if English was not their mother tongue, they were trying to speak it as much as possible in the home.

Some first languages reported by the children were: Chinese, Tamil, Urdu, Hindi, Iranian, and Korean. Further to speaking these languages at home, some of the children reported that they attend heritage language classes outside of school hours, at another location. They attended these classes to either learn or improve and maintain their ability in their mother tongue.

Although many of these children were enrolled in the school's ESL classes, they did express an interest in setting-up a student mentor program. Essentially, the children felt that other students who were familiar with the school would ease a newcomers' transition to the school. The children felt that these 'mentors' could assist with orientation to the school, as well as act as a translator, where necessary. As stated by one child,

If the girl or boy can't speak English, whatever language they do speak can set-up personal helper who speaks their language. ST.FE-6

The parents, too had spoken of student helpers, or a more in-depth orientation program. With the numerous languages spoken in the school, a program such as the one described may not
be able to facilitate every new registrant but could be considered as an action strategy to incorporate in a school-based policy, as previously suggested.

The children expressed a desire to have opportunities to speak their own language; arrangements could be incorporated to facilitate this, perhaps as an extra-curricular activity or a remediation, academic group. These possibilities will be discussed in Chapter 5, in the organization of a school language policy.

4.3.2.7 Summary

Throughout the discussions, the children spoke of that which is of value to them. They spoke of believing in themselves and learning to respect one another in this educational setting. The children felt that within this educational milieu they were being taught not only to believe in themselves and their accomplishments, but to be able to take what they had learned and apply it to their lives beyond the school setting.

Furthermore, functioning within this diverse school community, the pupils expressed an appreciation for being able to learn how different people live; their customs, language, cultural traditions and beliefs. The children felt they were being encouraged to avoid racism and 'put downs' by making every effort to treat each individual fairly.

In reviewing the information the children contributed, the researcher was able to identify specific needs that, addressed in an action format, could further support student learning and parental partnerships in this school community. Factors from each of the themes identified in the data are summarized with the data from the parents and staff at the end of this chapter. An analysis of the factors, placing them into action strategies for the school follows, as the
4.3.3 Student Narrative

4.3.3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, the methodology for the study was explained. At that time, it was mentioned that all participants were invited to complete a narrative account of their personal story in this educational setting. One child, ST.N-1, chose to submit her 'story.' She actually wrote two submissions and chose to organize her information in a 'Dear Diary' format. (Appendix Di). Throughout her story, she has taken the reader from the time of her birth to her graduation days at this school. The following excerpts demonstrate the issues and highlight concerns brought forth by her peers, the representative student population. The narrative is an in-depth, reflective perspective that presents data from a very personal, experiential base. Information gleaned from the material has been organized into the same themes as those for parent and student data. As with the children and the parents, the information from this narrative will be summarized at the end of Chapter 4 in conjunction with all information. Furthermore, significant strategies, from this narrative, will also be placed in the strands of development for the Language Policy, as deemed appropriate.

4.3.3.2 Background Information

This first section describes a journey typical of many of this school's student body, one full of change and a determination to forge ahead with one's life and one's family.

I was born on October 23, 1980 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. My parents were also born in
Sri Lanka. My mom was born and raised in Colombo and my dad was born and raised in Jaffna. We lived in Sri Lanka, but because of communist problems (war) we decided to leave Jaffna, our home.

My parents decided Nigeria, Africa would be a good place to live, we moved there when I was at the age of one. After about eight months I had a new sister. My mother hired one maid and one nanny to look after us. Even though Nigeria was great place my parents were still not happy with the educational system, health care and resources. They found it lonely because they didn't have any family living over there. I remember my dad telling me that he had to go for an hour long drive just to get milk powder (milk wasn't pasteurised).

We then went back to Colombo, Sri Lanka (this area didn't have communist problems). I stayed with my grandparents while my dad and mom went to India. Like before, the place did not appeal to them.

I think it was in 1983 when my family went to England. My parents really liked England and decided to make their life there. Since half of my dad's family and most of my mom's family were living there, also since my dad had gone to a university in England, we thought we were a shoe-in. But that was not the case, unfortunately we had been rejected because there were to(o) many immigrants coming into the United Kingdom and there was no space for us. We returned to Nigeria disappointed.

We lived in Nigeria for another year. I don't remember much about Nigeria. I do remember my ...nanny's son. ...I remember him coming home after school in his white shirt and black shorts (uniform). My dad said that in Nigeria Blacks and Whites were treated differently. There would be separate schools for whites and coloured. The white schools had better facilities, better resources, etc, while the black people had to sit on the floors and work.

...I guess this was the year my dad asked for residency in Canada. I guess he heard Canada was a good country. Well anyway, we moved to Montreal, Quebec, in 1984. There my sister and I attended preschool... I think my parents found it difficult to speak French and adjust to Quebec lifestyle because we moved to Scarborough after one year.

...I went to a Catholic school because my mom thought it was the nicest around here. Even though I am Hindu, I knew more about Catholic religion than mine. I never before spoke or understood Tamil. My mom decided to enrol me in language classes.

Most of my class were whites, there were a few coloured people in my class but
not many. I didn't seem bothered by this. In fact I never heard any racist comments when I was there.

...I went to the school for a year and a half. Now I was at the age of seven when we moved to our new house...

...I found this school (a holding school while the one near her home was being built) unlike my old school, very multicultural. I remember seeing all the Indian children staying together in a group speaking their language, the Chinese, the Jamaicans, etc. doing the same. This made me feel a little odd since I couldn't speak their language.

After one year I was transferred to_____. At this school there were more white people than coloured, in fact there were very few coloured people here. Like my Catholic school there was no racist comment, the teachers and students didn't treat me any differently. ...I stayed here for one year and then I was transferred to _____ (the school of the study).

Since the school had not been completely built yet, the _____ students went to school and stayed in portables. ...we transferred from the portables to our new school, _____, in May. ST.N-1

4.3.3.3 Supervision: Safety and Discipline

The excerpt from the student narrative, ST.N-1, provides the reader with a look into the community through a child's eyes. The concern for safety is clearly presented, in the school and in the neighbourhood. The suggestion, by many interviewees, to maintain a student conflict mediator surfaced again in this stage of data collection. As with other suggested strategies, this factor will be incorporated into a practices model; a school-based Language Policy. Further to student conflict mediator programs, consideration will be given to requests for additional extra-curricular programs. Children engaged in activities, as suggested, would be in a secure, supervised environment; a factor to consider when addressing safety issues.

When we came here there was a lot of construction going on. After a year or so
everything here was built. I felt very safe in my neighbourhood. ...I began to see kids smoking late in the nights at the park, I heard houses were getting robbed all the time... I was in grade six and it was the week before Hallowe’en. The elderly man across my street was murdered! That was a major surprise for everyone. What was even worse, we found out two weeks later it was the murder(er) was the person next door. Our community no longer was considered safe. STN.-1

"Safety at the school." During grade 7 & 8 many of the parents were concerned about the safety of their kids. I remember when I was in grade eight there was a small fire in the boys’ bathroom... Some of the children would get scared when older boys would bully them for their money... STN.1

Other impressions and recommendations by this student included: support for the student conflict mediator program; extra-curricular activities; sports and clubs; cultural days and arts days.

4.3.3.4 Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy

This student (STN.1) reported similar comments as her peers: a desire to see more extra-curricular activities; a broader selection of materials in the resource centre; access to computers and audio-visual equipment.

Field trips, guest speakers, were appreciated while fundraisers and arts days were identified as worthwhile activities. The arts days included elective workshops for the children offered by both staff and guests which focussed on various components of the arts, music, media, drama and other creative venues.

4.3.3.5 Communication and Participation

This student (STN-1) relayed stories of schools where she was made to feel quite welcome and others where racial comments were heard. Upon arriving at this particular school,
she had already met some of her peers while attending the holding school, which alleviated some transitional difficulties for her.

I had a class of 30 students in grade four. This school was very multicultural compared to my former schools. It wasn't hard for me to make new friends since I knew some kids already...

"New Kids" There were new kids coming and old kids leaving. I've basically grown accustom to it. People who came from different countries we called them Fresh off the Boat. There were many different people coming here Chinese, Indian, Africans, etc. ...One of these new kids became my closest friend. Hodo, was somewhere from the middle east (bad memory) the country started with an "S." She was Muslim, even though she did not wear a shawl around her hair she was still a strong believer. Well anyway, she came here in grade seven. She had a strong accent but she didn't have to go to ESL. She had no problem making friends and adjusting to the kids. What really astounded me was why she came here. Like me her country had communal problems. Of course I was only the age of one when we left Jaffna, Sri Lanka, therefore I don't remember what happened. She would tell me stories about how scared the children were. Whether or not if the bombers will come today or tomorrow. Most kids liked her because she was nice and had a great personality. ST.N-1

In keeping with her peers, these comments were reflective of students who had supportive networks prior to moving into the school community. The comments, and her actions regarding another new student, further support a student mentor/orientation program.

A further benefit to the narrative methodology, is the additional information regarding the child's personal history. This material could help teachers better understand their students: stress levels; ability to focus; communication barriers and so forth.

4.3.3.6 Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

The child (ST.N-1) who wrote this particular narrative observed an increase in the ESL needs and program at the school while she was in attendance there. At the same time that many
of the students were receiving ESL lessons, numerous students, this young lady included, were sent to language classes after school hours to either learn or maintain their mother tongue. This was discussed by many of the children who participated in the aforementioned interviews and focus groups. As demonstrated by the following excerpts, she recognized the need for supportive programs and saw how the students were able to benefit from the intervention.

I knew this boy he came to Canada when he was in grade 7 (from Hong Kong). He was very poor in speaking English, whenever he did speak no one understood him. I think it is because of the ESL program that made him what he is today. Now he can speak English quite good with few mistakes.

I remember this new kid coming into our classroom that year ...he was from Ghana. I remember he having this very strong accent. I think because of this he had to go to ESL classes. He seemed to fit in quite quickly, making new friends, etc. ...

We had a lot of new kids come into our school this year. Most of them were new to Canada. Therefore, the ESL program had to be larger. There was one Spanish student who couldn't speak English. Since no one in the school spoke Spanish, the teacher assigned a person to use the Spanish dictionary to communicate to her in Spanish. It was hard for us to try and be her friend because she didn't understand a word we said. I guess this made her feel uncomfortable. ST.N-1

4.3.3.7 Summary

The researcher knew this student, ST.N-1, when she attended the school. A quiet and polite young lady who did not speak unless spoken to. Her words, as entered in her diary, reflected her appreciation for learning and the extras that teachers brought to the curriculum. Her illustrations demonstrated her personal awareness and growth as she grew within the educational system.
Grade eight I had Miss. ...She was a really good teacher ...She made us understand the material instead of memorizing it. That was one of the things I learned.

She, as many others who took part in the study, revealed an understanding and empathy for the experiences that many of their peers had endured; of hardships they went through as they became acculturized in this community. There was also evidence of an appreciation for school experiences and activities that otherwise, either through their personal background or family history, they would not have experienced. In many ways, these children spoke of their academic and historical perspectives through eyes of those much older. They presented as maturing, insightful adolescents to this researcher, throughout the duration of this study. As with the data gathered from the student groups significant points from this narrative, as they contribute to an action-based policy will be presented in summary at the end of this chapter.

4.3.4 The Staff
4.3.4.1 Background Information

Teachers representative of each grade level, kindergarten, primary, junior and intermediate, participated in interviews and focus groups for the study. In addition to teachers of the regular classrooms, staff from the special education department, the library and ESL were interviewed, along with the head secretary and two principals of the school who were working there during the time periods of this investigation. Beyond the immediate school, other personnel from the board of education were involved. Two Supervisory Officers were interviewed. One of these individuals was responsible for the research, development and initial stages of implementation of provincially mandated school councils. The second supervisory officer was
based at one of the board of education area offices. This individual was responsible for overseeing numerous elementary and secondary schools, one of which was the school in this study. This person also had a board-wide portfolio which included the following areas: Race Relations and Equity, as well as chairperson of an ESL and ESD selection policy for learning resources which served to identify race/gender and equity issues and biases in literature and thus responsible for drawing up guidelines to provide rationale for the choice of all learning resources.

Some of the school's staff and administration had had prior experience in multicultural settings, one of the principals had worked in a core area of a larger metropolitan city before coming to this school board. However, for many of the teachers interviewed, the diverse milieu in which they worked was a relatively new experience for them. The following quote illustrates a teacher new to a diverse school setting.

...I started teaching 23 years ago ...from a small rural setting, this is very different from my background. SI-4

4.3.4.2 School Organization and Management

Upon entry to a school in this board of education, parents registering their children are required to produce specific documentation and complete numerous forms (APPENDIX E i). One document, the Entry to School Form, requests a range of information: name of parents or guardians and their relationship to one another; full address; home, business and mobile telephone and pager numbers; child's complete legal name; child's address; custody information; sex; birth date; and, if applicable, preference of time and program for kindergarten. Another form is an application for direction of school support which inquires about occupant status, school
support, right to French language schooling and, once again, identification including name and address. Further to these forms are some emergency forms where parents are to indicate: an emergency contact if the school cannot reach them; name and telephone numbers for the student's physician and dentist; the health card number; any medication the child requires or medical concerns; if the student uses the bus transportation; if the child stays at school during the noon hour; as well as a section to grant permission through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to release the child's name and, or photograph for various school-related activities or functions.

The information requests listed are standard procedure for all new students who register to this Board of Education from within Canadian boundaries. The individual who registers the child is also asked to show the child's birth certificate and health card. The procedures are more complex for registrants new to the country. In addition to the above protocol, these families are, depending on individual circumstances, required to produce passports, proof of private insurance coverage, immunization records, visa or landed immigrant status and may also have to register their information with the area school board office. The following comments reflect procedures and problems encountered by the secretaries who were responsible for the registration of students at this school.

We ask them if they have a birth certificate and the immunization record. If they're from another country, we have to see their landed immigrant papers, and the parents landed immigrant papers. If they're refugees they have to go up and see the area superintendent first and have it cleared. Then they come back to us with a letter from the superintendent. Do you have to ask them for tax forms? Yes, and we have to insist now that they fill out two big forms. One listing all the people who live in the house, even if they're living in the basement. People change their taxes and we don't know. We don't know about it until the tax department comes in and sends a list of who isn't paying public school (support). Now when they
register, we get them to fill out another form, that taxes are to be changed. That's another chore, doing the tax form. SI-14

The plethora of forms, in conjunction with language barriers, equalled a complex registration procedure. The school had only two full-time secretaries to deal with all the procedures required when new families arrived. The head secretary did say that when necessary, or possible, a student would be called from class to assist with translation. A significant complication would be in the explanation of the forms, as the children were not familiar with the context, nor would they necessarily have the vocabulary. This secretary suggested that if board translators were not available then a formal parent-network should be constructed. For example, she stated that if Cantonese was the language requiring translation that other Chinese who could translate forms for taxes, testing, placement or Board information could be of service in the school's office.

Subsequent to established registration procedures are the unexpected twists that arise which question or test the norm. In this school and in this school area, illegal status was one such complexity. The area's superintendent explained how this affected school registrations.

The Education Act had been changed to allow the registration of children whose parents are in Canada illegally, which runs contrary to the Immigration Act of Canada, I might add. It gives the Canadian immigration Federal authorities a great deal of upset that our provincial law usurped a federal law which it ought not to do because the Immigration Act clearly states that illegal immigrants cannot attend school and our Education Act says they can. SI-7

Thus, the whole issue of illegal alien status was an additional area that this school and its community had to be aware of. The superintendent illustrated situations where these occurrences were known to the school board personnel.

The illegal alien part, to give you an example of one of those. A mother who had
come to see me. It was the end of summer. A Chinese mom had two of her children attending schools in our area. She had come to Canada as an entrepreneurial, Chinese business immigrant; she had come on a work visa. She had invested somewhere close to two million dollars to grocery stores in Ontario. She had, unfortunately, come at the beginning of the recession and she lost her shirt. As a result of losing all that money and her business failing, she had no back-up and she was still here on a work permit. Her work permit expired last Spring and she was not entitled to renew it because she had no logical reason to be in Canada. Her children had been attending school because of her work permit. ...I asked her the same questions all over again,'Do you have status for yourself?' No. 'Does your husband have status in Canada?' No. She said, 'I can pay you a little bit'. I said that there was no provision for a little bit but that it sounds to me as though your children are certainly in Canada illegally. In which case I let them in to the school at no cost and she was just overwhelmed. SI-7

This example depicted what the superintendent had explained with respect to the change in the Education Act to permit students of illegal status to attend schools. However, many situations were not as evident as this scenario. When at the school the researcher had more than one occasion to try and track students who were supposed to be registered at the school or to locate children who were suspected to be residing in the neighbourhood, but weren't in attendance. This difficulty in locating children and in assuring parents or guardians that the children were free to attend school was not unique to this school. The superintendent described many of these situations when interviewed. The following excerpts illustrate that which the schools busied themselves with on a daily basis.

Sometimes we find out about children, for example, who are being kept at home and the attendance counsellor will go and find them. A neighbour may report them, some of them may call in anonymously, 'Do you know there is a six year old next door, or a ten year old child next door who is not going to school?' So, we send our attendance counsellor to check and more often than not it's because of an illegal and they don't want to draw attention to themselves. They don't want people to know that they are illegally in Canada. We try to encourage them to come into the school to register the children but they don't want to do that because they don't want paperwork and they don't want anyone to track them. SI-7
Earlier in this study a case was described where the Children's Aid Society was contacted by the school to investigate a family situation where the children were in their home fending for themselves without their parents in the country. This phenomena was reported more than once throughout the study. One cultural group identified as having students that were either illegal or alone was the Chinese community. The welfare of the children is the first concern; there have been times in this community where gangs have conducted house invasions in situations where they know that children are living on their own.

However, this superintendent's comment demonstrates implications for registration procedures.

One of our biggest problems right now is Hong Kong parents who get landed immigrant status who arrive in our area and either buy a house or drop their children off with somebody who may not even be related, and then go back to Hong Kong. Technically, those children are not entitled to attend school in our area without paying the fees, because their parents aren't resident in our area or in Ontario. They may have landed immigrant status, but they don't pay taxes, they don't (necessarily) have a home here they just drop their children off with somebody without legal guardianship. So, there's no judicial authority to make decisions on their children's behalf; either educational, legal, medical or whatever.

Another issue that arose during the discussions about registration dealt with implications for student safety and well-being during the school day. The language barriers and the inconsistency in registration information often complicated daily procedures affecting student program. The children were to be in class at a specific entry time each day. Subsequent to their arrival, staff recorded student attendance and submitted their lists to the secretaries. At that point, the secretaries checked each attendance form to ensure that all students were accounted for, safe and sound. This checking procedure often required a tremendous amount of office time. The
head secretary reported that even with two full-time secretaries, the attendance check could take as long as two hours to complete. Assuring student safety and welfare was compounded when outings were scheduled.

When teachers go on a field trip and it (field trip attendance list) shows whether people have their Health Cards or not, because people who come here as landed immigrants or refugees don't get a health card. Unless they have private insurance, they can't go on field trips. When a teacher books a field trip now, we just automatically run a list, so they can spot who doesn't have it and go after them. SI-14

Student placement, as mentioned earlier, was a challenge because of language and previous educational experiences. The secretaries also recorded and kept on file the names of children eligible for ESL support. The concern that was brought forth was regarding this support. In some circumstances, families shied away from the program as they felt a negative stigma was attached, or they felt it wasn't necessary for whatever reason. However, the converse was known to occur, as stated by the head secretary.

I wonder, too, with the ESL. I print out an ESL list every month, at the end of the month, and I noticed these children who were on it I thought that was really strange because when the father came to register them, they were born in Canada. His children are on an ESL list and they were born here and they'd (the parents) been here for 20 years. Where do you draw the line? SI-7

The special education and ESL teachers were kept busy continually trying to identify and place students according to ability levels.

A final area of concern in regards to school organization pertained to lengthy student absences. The researcher recalls many instances where parents would withdraw their children from the school for extended periods of time, most often to engage in a trip to visit their place of origin.
...you have a child who arrives in September but leaves in October only to return in April. What do you do with a child who has missed the very foundation of grade one and is obviously, in April, not reading, printing nor able to recognize letter sounds? SI-11

Although the responsibility during these absences was left with the parents; teachers compiled packages of school material together for these children. Unfortunately, the children would miss significant amounts of classroom program when absent for lengthy time periods. The researcher and a colleague from another local school, who shared this concern were directed by one of the school area superintendents to design an explanatory letter outlining legalities and obligations by the board of education with respect to extended student absences (APPENDIX E ii). The letter was basically created to protect school personnel from accusations of negligence in meeting student needs, plus it clearly delineated registration implications. However, documentation of an absence did not address or resolve concerns surrounding student learning and the possible impact upon standardized test scores. Various results for this school have revealed lower scores in language-based assessments.

The complexities of registration procedures in this multicultural school setting were voiced by the staff and supported by the area superintendent. Workshops about registration procedures were offered to the office staff and support was offered by the area office. However, the inequities between schools with respect to staffing quotas and work load responsibilities were apparent when one considered that some schools within this Board rarely had such complex registrations to process or track. The office staff at this school felt the added pressures and expressed an interest in seeing some sort of formal intervention or support to alleviate the extensive procedures that consumed time and thus reduced their availability to address other
4.3.4.3 Staff

Pursuant to the initial years of operation of this school, the superintendent of this area recognized the need for cultural or ethnic community liaison staff. A board employee of Asian descent was then placed centrally within this superintendent's jurisdiction to assist schools wherever possible. Also, a staff member with Caribbean heritage was added to this roster soon after. The school of this study was able to enlist the services of these two people for reasons of a very serious or legal nature; for example, if parents needed to be informed if the school had grave concerns about a particular child's welfare or rate of learning progress. The staff acknowledged the need for these community liaison individuals, but they also recognized the limitations placed before them when accessing their services. For example, a child who may have required immediate medical care presented a dilemma when staff attempted to convey this information to the parents in a prompt and articulate fashion. In these circumstances, teachers and office staff would either call upon the services of the 'in-house' staff member, if the language needed was Cantonese and if the teacher was available. Otherwise, students in the building would be called upon to translate because of their ability in a specific language although this was not always possible, nor practical, if the language was not represented in the school, or if the information was confidential.

There are limitations and you can't use students to accommodate all of the different languages we have because we don't have that many students available in the various languages. SI-15

Further staffing issues were discussed throughout the interviews and focus groups.
Additional staff was voiced as desirable; more teachers equate to smaller class sizes, thus offering more individualized assistance to children. However, the teachers recognized that staffing allotments for schools are based on a pre-determined formula. Despite this, there was a feeling that the unique design of this particular school warranted additional staff to address extensive ESL and cultural needs. There was also an opinion, similar to those expressed by the parent groups, that staff representative of the multiethnic make-up of the school would serve to benefit other staff, students and parents in: communications; cultural understandings and role-modelling opportunities.

We administer multicultural schools blindly and I think we teach in multicultural schools blindly. I think we could learn to get our eyes open to what we should be doing. We could and should do a lot of things differently. SI-9

The understanding of board hiring procedures were seen as essential to the effective operation of a school system, but aspects of policy and procedure were considered detrimental to the effective operation of individual schools; specifically, restrictions on the number of available staff, as previously discussed. The procedures for allocating staff, when surplus situations arise, were seen as defeating ethnocultural equity objectives, as expressed by two of the principals of this school:

You have to follow board procedure which is seniority and program needs. ...we hire as many as we can representative of the community, we hire people that other people probably wouldn't hire because of accent, because of foreign background, because of whatever, ...they're excellent teachers and we get robbed because people see that they prove themselves in our area and people realise that they have to upgrade their multicultural staff so they (other school administrators) actively solicit some of our teachers. If some of these teachers happen to be junior because we've hired them but they have to be declared surplus, they get snapped-up by some other teaching area who has seen their teaching performance and they haven't had to take the risk (by) hiring them in the first place. SI-9
You look for a bicultural teacher who understands the system as well as the cultural values. ... You have to look at protecting those teachers in an area where in fact a high need exists for them. We have not, to date, done that and we should do that. Recent examples, teachers were surplus to the school (and) because of their short period of experience, seniority did not allow me to maintain those teachers. As a result the loss of the teachers was significant in the loss of individuals who were representative of the community which would have in fact have been very valuable. SI-10

The staff who participated in the study recognized systemic barriers to changing the staffing model. They felt that unless change to the institution itself occurred, then processes, or practices, would require modification to meet the needs of this school community.

In response to the projections that Toronto will be 50% immigrant population by the year 2000, does that mean that Canada and Metro Toronto have to respond in a way that will accommodate the 50% population or are we more likely to see the institution staying much the same while incorporating the 50% in a more active way? SI-19

The product isn't going to change so much as the process.

4.3.4.4 Staff Development

Understanding the peculiarities of the population they work with was seen as crucial to understanding how to look at in-house strategies and modifications necessary to alter current practices. Teacher attitudes and observations focussed on understanding family and heritage values; recognizing the components of effective staffing, as well as gleaning information about the impact ethnic traditions and beliefs could have on teacher interaction and student learning. Examples of their observations were primarily categorized as faith, diet, gender and class.

A couple of girls are not allowed to go swimming (with their class) because they don't get into a pool with boys. Those are things you have to learn and respect... you can't say anything about their religious beliefs. SI-13
Staff found that diet and faith differences, as well as gender biases, impacted upon classroom program and treatment of the children during a regular school day. Increased awareness and sensitivity to different group norms were of primary importance.

...we had to try and identify the meat, not just for allergy reasons but for religious reasons, some of my kids wouldn't eat it. So, it does change what you do. SI-3

Staff had observed the differences in gender expectations or norms. These differences were noted for both the children of the various ethnic groups in the school, as well as those shown to female staff. The researcher, in the early days of her employment at this school, once met a father who had come to discuss his child's placement. As an administrator of the school, the researcher invited this gentleman into the office and extended her hand. This man, politely, stopped his conversation, looked at the proffered hand and then kindly refused and explained that he was 'not allowed' to shake a female's hand as per his religious or cultural beliefs.

The staff expressed an awareness of gender differences but were not necessarily in favour of the discrepancies in treatment between the sexes. Staff also experienced contradictions in the expectations placed upon each gender.

...There are gender differences... the parents can become upset when they don't advocate mingling, yet, the system (educational) is committed to group participation and instruction. In turn, students show up early and leave late in order to be able to socialise with others. The school staff has a heck of a time getting them to go because when they go home they are separated by sex and faith... they are committed to their homes. SI-8

There was a prevailing attitude of frustration; teachers wanted to teach all children to strive for success and to make choices in their lives to meet their individual needs. The difficulties in this community were apparent when teachers felt that the parents of some cultural groups did not support equitable choices for all students regardless of gender. The following
comments stated by the superintendent of the schools in this area reflected that this issue extended beyond the elementary school age level to older adolescents in the secondary panel.

The other problem we have with students is the attitudes of girls. We have many bright young women... where we run into difficulty with girls is convincing parents that the girls should be allowed to take advanced courses that could get them into University. You have to be really careful and you cannot generalize over groups because the parents have different aspects of respect for education for girls. But, very often, we find that the girls' needs aren't nearly as well met as the boys' needs. Some of the faiths...because the girls aren't allowed to socialize with boys...the girls are sent abroad at the age of 15 to be married and that has created for us, in many instances, suicidal situations and the school guidance staff has to be very cognizant of that and be very careful they don't interfere with what is a cultural value for the family and what is appropriate for the school. There is the whole issue of child abuse and child rearing practices where you have a whole different attitude about what is appropriate for raising kids. So, we have severe difficulties with young women who may be abused and who are not free to express themselves because they are frightened culturally and they are frightened in other ways, as well...the school has to be really careful that they're not injecting a western point of view on eastern culture that will cause great difficulty in the family. It is a very delicate situation; some of the needs for the children are to be able to put a foot in both worlds...SI-7

The researcher employed the assistance of former students of this school to assist with certain aspects of the study. One of these students, a young lady, mentioned, incidentally in conversation that her parents were of an arranged marriage. The researcher and this young lady spoke of the circumstances surrounding the parents' situation. The girl stated that her parents had told her that over time they had grown to love one another and although they did not negate their cultural tradition of arranged marriages, they approved of 'love' marriages for both their daughters, if and when that time arrived. Although mentioned in a casual situation, it is examples such as this that the staff members discussed in the interviews which illustrated the need to be aware of cultural expectations, stresses and demands placed upon some of the children in their classrooms.
Another situation that demonstrated a western society's perceived suppression of females was that of two ladies who helped at this school during the lunch hour. One of these ladies would meet with the researcher, when time allowed and talk about her personal experiences that had brought her to Canada. The following excerpt from the researcher's narrative is an example of cultural differences within this school community.

She and the other lady were sister-in-laws both of arranged marriages to twin brothers. The brothers had organized the weddings to be held as one ceremony and neither of the women met their husbands until the time of the service. Veiled and not permitted to look at the men, neither woman had met one another prior to this day. This particular lady explained that prior to the wedding, she had been living in Pakistan leading a somewhat liberal life; western style clothing, attending university and free to travel about. Over time, her parents had passed away and her older siblings, when approached about an arranged marriage, felt it to be in the best interests of their youngest sister. This lady felt obliged to follow the directives of her older siblings, married this man and moved to Canada. The two men, their wives and the men's parents lived in one of the homes near the school. The women were permitted to leave the home to work at the school specifically during the noon hour. They were only allowed to wear identical clothing, this was an attempt to avoid possible feelings of competition or vanity. To get exercise, the men had purchased two treadmills so the women wouldn't have to go outside to walk. The one lady had mothered a child; but the one who spoke to the researcher had been unable to, despite numerous tests and forms of medical intervention. All family members were expected to raise this child as their own and all monies brought into the house went into one bank account. The situation even extended to one where routines and locations to sit in the home were assigned for each person. This lady would sometimes sit and cry in my office claiming that her siblings had no idea how rigid a life she had been married into. She feared telling them, or of leaving her spouse as she worried that extreme consequences would befall her. She was concerned for the young girl, her niece, already not allowed to go on the swimming outings with boys and already expected to cover her head with a hijab (something her husband wanted her to do but at the time she was adamant that she would not cover her head until she was much older).

The child she spoke of was a quiet, lovely youngster in the second grade. Her traditional, ethnic clothing was not an uncommon sight in the school, her deportment was exemplary and her absence from swimming classes was not unheard of. Yet, what of her home life did her teachers understand, what impact did her family customs and beliefs have upon her learning? These were questions
worthy of consideration. RN-1

Intracultural issues tumbled out from the multiethnic differences. Not only did staff express concerns for student learning as impacted upon by cultural expectations and differing norms, but for the extent of diversity within the particular population. With so many students and so many cultural beliefs and traditions, staff discussed the implications of having so many groups with varying and sometimes conflicting norms. Issues of intracultural and interracial disturbances were shared by those who met with the interviewer

The intracultural things are sometimes more difficult to deal with. They have nothing to do with teaching... where Chinese parents do not want their children to associate with West Indian children. Or, you have Greek kids who want nothing to do with Chinese or Black kids. Or, Greek kids and Macedonian kids are set against one another by their parents with 3000 year old arguments... SI-7

Staff development was acknowledged as a need by those who participated in the study; a need for staff and others, as well.

I remember going out for yard duty on the first day and looking around, going there's no white kids here and I felt scared. I was thinking that I hoped these kids liked me and would accept me for who I am. ...now when I look outside I see all these happy children and I don't see colour. We need to educate the teachers, and not just the teachers, other people out there. SI-1

4.3.4.5 Supervision: Safety and Discipline

The researcher often intervened in disciplinary situations that arose between students. Aside from typical incidents of name calling and pushing, students had occasion to taunt one another about their religions or race. More than once, children would pull turbans from another child's head and the 'victim' would report feeling ashamed or embarassed. Sometimes it was necessary to call an older student to the office to help a younger boy replace the turban.
As reported in the student interviews, incidences of discrimination happened, as well. One case in particular was the grade eight girl written of earlier in the student narrative SN-1. This young girl was the only white child in her grade level and shortly after her arrival at the school she was engaged in an argument with another student. This situation continued to fester to the point that other students joined in the 'bullying' of the white girl and racist comments became the focus of the name calling situations. Despite teacher and administrative intervention, the situation never seemed to be resolved, although the frequency of incidents lessened. However, the discomfort felt by both the child and her parents reached a level where the parents stated that they felt uncomfortable in the community and wanted to move; eventually, they did relocate. This example represented other, similar situations that had taken place over time and had become to be referred to as 'white flight'. This issue of reverse discrimination, that of Caucasian children in the 'white' educational system being the minority, was a concern stated by staff, as well. They realized that these occurrences happened, in addition to other ethnic group conflicts, but felt at a loss as to how to intervene. Upon one’s entrance into the school, the discriminatory behaviours would not be readily apparent, but their existence surfaced periodically. At the time of the study it was difficult to determine which groups could be considered dominant, but Caucasians were the marginalized race within the 'white' system according to staff perspectives and accounts related to the researcher. The needs of the white student in a multicultural environment were considered as important as any other. As one participant stated,

...you have to appreciate that they need support, too (white children). Just because a teacher is white, if they're (the white student) is in a community where there's not another white person for 14 streets, they can't talk or network, and that's important, too. So, what's happening is that they are packing up and leaving, it's called white flight. SI-7
This board of education has established a policy to promote safe schools which details consequences for unacceptable behaviours in the schools. This particular policy is extensive in nature in that issues as complex as drug, alcohol and weapon use are addressed. Further, the policy stresses a zero tolerance for situations that jeopardize the safe environment of the school setting. Incidents of racism are included this policy. Staff are aware of the policy and are charged with sharing the contents with their students and their families, on a yearly basis. When staff know of racist situations, they intervene and the appropriate consequences are implemented.

What's unique also are the differences within a particular ethnic groups based on class, religion, etcetera. So that any kind of racism that does occur is quickly dealt with, we have a zero tolerance policy on the kind of racist remarks the students may make to each other. SI-9

In this school community, the supervision of children was considered paramount by parents and staff. Issues of discipline and safety became more complex when cultural differences arose. The staff felt they had to be cognizant of potential difficulties in order to manage situations appropriately.

One staff member spoke of attitudes toward learning as more than a focus on specific course criteria. The feeling, as shared by many of the staff interviewed, was one that advocated high expectations, challenge and achievement, in conjunction with a joy for learning.

You can like school and find the challenge in school that's going to teach you about life, that if you work hard you will achieve and you will build yourself-esteem from that. You will find it to be a challenge, and when you achieve, there's no greater feeling on earth. I think school should be very challenging and have a lot of fun. SI-6

Staff also conveyed a perception that many of the parents, Asian in particular, held high expectations for student learning. However, the educational systems that these parents and their
children were used to differed from the school board in which they were now immersed. The transition to a new system was seen as one factor impeding student progress and thus limiting or complicating parental expectations. In essence, the staff felt that these students came from systems where expectations were based on different objectives and pedagogical styles. Some students were faced with inordinate amounts of structured, rote learning in conjunction with demands to excel and to be as 'error-free' in all work, as assigned.

I think that most countries they come from have tougher educational systems than we have. I've spoken to them from India to Hong Kong to Guyana to Trinidad. If they didn't do the work they failed. They sat in rows and it was structure, structure, structure. Kids have to work, there's no game. It's down to business, this is your job. SI-6

A concern regarding the level of academic program at the school was also raised throughout the parent interviews, as mentioned earlier. One parent, who participated in the Cantonese parent focus group stated, "it seems that everything here is easier or slower than in Hong Kong." PFC-4 However, the translator, who was also a teacher, explained that the Canadian system stresses basic concepts rather than rote learning which is why the children may appear to be doing things seen as meaningless by these parents. However, the children are actually in situations where they are learning to apply that which is taught, the concepts that they have learned. Following this, some Chinese parents voiced concerns as parents of ESL students. As one parent stated,

I need to know about the topics so that I can do follow-up work with my child at home. Chinese parents like this. PFC-7

Clearly, throughout the study, both parents and staff expressed concerns for student learning. Both parties want what is best for the children and they want the academic programs to
represent high standards. However, the obstacles impeding effective implementation of program continued to permeate the interviews and be the focus of discussions.

Upon investigating academic thrusts for this particular school population, the staff then went on to focus on special needs unique to this student group. The characteristics of this immigrant, minority group population brought with it concerns for student learning beyond the program level of a regular classroom.

The following statements demonstrate the staff's sentiments; their feelings of frustration.

...classroom teachers want to meet the needs of the children but feel that they can't. I think that's what creates the move towards the support staff... Please help me, I'm not meeting the needs of this child in the regular class; they're just sitting there, what can we do for them? SI-11

Personally, I feel that we're all just playing games. We're playing games with the parents, the parents play games with us. I mean we have kids in grade eight who can barely read at the grade six level. My biggest fear is that by the time they get to grade 12, the high school diploma is just going to end-up being a piece of paper. It's not just really reaching a certain level of education. SI-6

What I found with (this) school is that most teachers will outright admit that they don't cover everything that's supposed to be covered in the grade (curriculum). There's just no way it can happen. The span (of student academic ability) in the classroom is just too great. SI-18

The staff reported that they recognized the importance of being patient with new students and their unique circumstances. However, this group of individuals also spoke of a level of frustration that accompanied their roles. Their frustrations ranged from cultural awareness to identifying students with specific learning needs.

A lot of kids are leading bicultural lives. They go home and still have their cultural standard to live up to. SI-9

This cultural dichotomy was eluded to earlier when teachers referenced gender differences and
expectations placed upon females, of some ethnic groups, to suppress their socializing with boys and other students.

The special education teacher who oversaw this department felt the frustration of the school's support staff, hired to identify and meet the needs of children with learning exceptionalities. Immigrant minority group children arriving at this school with little or no English were difficult to identify for regular class placement, let alone those who required Special Education support. As one staff participant stated,

For some of our students who have language difficulties, it's not even so much a learning problem or literacy. It's the way in which they acquired language when they were very young and they were learning their first language. A lot of our families are very transient, mobile, they stopped-off in other countries before they came to Canada. So, the children began to learn their first language and its interrupted, by the time they come to Canada the child can be very confused. SI-10

In addition to language, other obstacles included the level of student achievement, ability and understanding. The following excerpt from the interview with the school's superintendent serves to illustrate a significant component of the identification process in special education and the complexities that have surfaced, in some instances.

Our difficulty now is that we are now beginning to receive students who are disadvantaged in that they are not literate in their first language. So we're getting more and more students who don't have literacy in their own language; they can't read and write in their own language. They come from war-torn countries where, for one reason or another, there is a war and the teachers have fled or have been persecuted and the kids have either had no education for years or there has been spotty education. Or, it's been done by someone who is not a teacher. Aside from the fact that they are not literate, they may have learning problems and we hadn't been seeing that in our population before. So, they may really have learning disabilities or some handicaps. ...that created a problem because there was such a pressure from anti-racist groups that we felt we were misidentifying English As A Second Language students as Special Education students. As a result, the teachers in our area have bent over backwards to not identify some of the students who do
not speak English as needing Special Education. ...We are now finding that we do have students who have learning problems, as well as having no English. They (the students identified as being illiterate) are not taught in their first language because we don't have the teachers who speak their first language. SI-7

Further to the aforementioned scenario, high numbers of students, large classes, minimal resources and language differences were the barriers cited most often. The special education staff were expected to support the regular classroom teacher's program and in doing so, they stated that they felt unreasonable expectations were evident, or that the regular teaching staff held unrealistic timelines for the implementation and scheduling of this intervention. The complexities of implementing curriculum became even more difficult for staff to administer when so many children exhibited special needs. The task of intervention, as illustrated by this teacher's comment, could be ominous.

We have a high number of students in our school who need to be served but the difficulty lies in the expectation of staff (that) seems to be that if a child comes to a team (the in-school special education team) that a number of follow-up services are forthcoming and that this is a bit of a misunderstanding. ...In a population of 700+ children, with anywhere from 2 to 8 children looking to be needy in a classroom and there are approximately 25 classrooms, you can see where the school team can't possibly meet all the needs. SI-11

4.3.4.6 Communication and Participation

The participants offered their perspectives regarding the population make-up of this particular school community and discussed the history of the area. One member of the immediate surrounding area had conducted research around the history of the community. The locale had originally been an old historic farming community, a village that had minimal diversity or
multicultural representation. Yet, over a 15 year time span, this lady had seen numerous changes.

She spoke of areas where black ethnic groups had moved into a predominantly white area and had, in time, moved out. She reflected about other areas where the change had moved from one of homogeneous representation to one of great diversity, as reflected by the study. However, despite the influx of various cultural groups, she stated that,

There are invisible barriers... a reluctance to join and work together. PI-1

The supervisory officer responsible for this school district reported that the first school for this specific board of education had been built in the area in 1980. Since then, new schools had been built on an annual basis as the needs continued to flourish as based on an annual growth rate of three to four percent. The data demonstrated that the number of Caucasians in this district were minimal, 3% were reported as being Anglo Saxon, 10% Central European, 10% Black, 50% Asian, and 30% South Asian. This superintendent relayed that 60 countries were represented, supported by 35 dominant languages, the least of which were English. The representation of the population revealed that many were sponsored immigrants or refugees (primarily Somali, Ugandan, Chinese and Fujian) and that the ensuing families were then first generation Canadian. Comments were also offered which indicated that the socio-economic strand of the original immigrant population group had demonstrated a change over time.

The first wave, well, they were well-educated, came on an entrepreneurial basis and therefore contributed to the Canadian economy. This group then sponsored other relatives and as a result ended-up with families who have a whole range of problems; everything from multi-handicapped children to learning disabled and children who are having difficulties with school and behavioural problems. SI-7

The staff discussed the population make-up of the community, then, as one that was extremely transient and diverse in nature. One staff member, responsible for student registration
stated,

The community is a highly transient one and it is not unusual to transfer anywhere from 25-30 students out of the building and receive 25-30 students. SI-14

Staff were concerned about how the various cultures could not only adapt to their new surroundings in the Canadian educational system and society but interact cooperatively in a neighbourhood where so many ethnic groups prevailed. A concern was voiced regarding changes in ethnic groups and perceived needs regarding language.

The West Indian influx has diminished and there seems to be an increase in the number of Asian students coming to our school. The Asian student is, quite frequently, one who does not have any English or has very little English, some of which may have been learned in a school in Hong Kong or parts of China. SI-14

Further to cultural or ethnic differences and moves in and out of the community, the staff interviews raised concerns regarding absentee parents or guardians. As formerly mentioned, the researcher was involved in a situation where students from one family had been left alone to fend for themselves when their parents had returned to Singapore. In this situation the CAS (Children's Aid Society) was needed to intervene in an effort to ensure the well-being of the children. This situation is a concern with staff with respect to parent involvement and communication. As one individual explained,

We have a lot of children sent here from other countries for the opportunity of a Canadian education and are living without their parents. The guardians tend to be aunts, uncles, or grandparents. Another situation is where the parents bring the children here and leave them under the care of an older sister or brother while they (the parents) leave to look after a family business back in their home country. All of those situations make for a very unique community in that you don't get the same parental involvement right from day one because you don't have parents, you don't have a regular community with family, parents and so on. A lot of children who are on long-term absences from the school; a high number of students who just sign out with their parents for anywhere from one to six months. SI-11
The staff who were interviewed also reflected on the unique and special needs of this particular school community. They recognized the essential needs of these newly arrived families such as housing, food, and employment in an alien setting with respect to both culture and climate. Thus, interaction with the school was perceived to be secondary in importance. The staff understood the difficulties impeding parental involvement from this perspective.

Most of our parents, they didn't go to school in the Ontario system and they have very little knowledge of it. They have very little knowledge of even the workings in the classroom; the way we place our desks (and) how we relate to students. Getting them (the parents) into the school is very difficult. SI-1

Further to the basic needs that each and every family strives for upon arrival to a new community, the staff went on to discuss the needs and differences of the children they worked with in terms of language and academic histories. Even those children who were born in Canada often presented as non-English speaking students. One staff member reported,

We have students who were born in Canada but whose parents speak absolutely no English at home. ... You see a birth certificate that shows they are Canadian born yet they are lacking in the English structures. SI-14

The staff repeatedly expressed their concerns for the children they worked with in the school. Ultimately, they shared the same objective for the children to provide for their well-being and learning. The community profile is that of a very mixed group but one that the staff expressed a strong desire to work with.

(They are) fiercely protective of their children, which I think every parent should be and they should fight for their children. What they need to learn is, we're with them and we're fighting for their children, too. SI-3

In describing the living arrangements of this neighbourhood, staff reported that most homes were single family structures, housing, in some instances, three to four families. They
illustrated situations supportive of the understanding that many basement apartments existed, as well as individual room rentals, none of which involved lease agreements. The transient nature of the community was attributed to multiple family arrangements where newly arrived immigrants would 'bunk in' with other families until they were in a position to locate work and housing of their own, elsewhere. One staff member observed the situation as one of convenience for future gain.

...we have many transients, not because they are poor but because they stay in basement apartments or one room until they can make enough money to go elsewhere. There may be two or three families registered in the same house, and they may be living in rooms. SI-9

Staff concerns about student learning evolved from their interactions with families living in conditions as described above.

So, when we're talking about children who may have no place to do homework or study, and we're talking about all night at a donut shop that may be the only place where they have a table to work on. The donut shop, if it is run by Chinese, will understand and appreciate why they (the students) need to be there. SI-7

In this example, the researcher received similar information from a police officer who worked in that community. The following excerpt from the researcher's narrative outlines the situation.

This particular officer was of Asian and Caucasian descent. Although born in Canada, his parents had sent him to Hong Kong for much of his schooling. The officer's parents wanted him to learn both the language and the culture. Upon return to Canada and his employment with the police department, this gentleman had been assigned to work in this community because of the liaison services he could offer to the Asian population. He frequented the school upon occasion and also met with the Superintendent of the area. He concurred that many Asian children, in particular, would work late into the evening at a local, Asian-run, doughnut shop, for the aforementioned reasons. It is of note that most of the students were of a secondary school age, older than the children in attendance at the school studied. However, siblings of some of these students would be part of
those groups doing homework and other assignments in these late night coffee shops. RN-1

The researcher was once told of a family situation where there were so many people in the house, that the child could not find a quiet place to work. Two staff members, upon visiting a child's home found that her work space had been set-up directly behind a television in the basement. Her school supplies were tucked beside the wires leading to the television. The staff members worked with the child's parent to establish a location more conducive to study, but it was still limited by confines of the defined space.

...there are multiple family groupings in one home. One child has nine to 12 people living in their home. You never know who the guardian is, with whom you should be discussing the child. SI-3

In conjunction with the quality of working conditions in the homes, staff voiced concern regarding the level of student-parent interaction that occurred outside of school hours. The staff expressed an understanding that for many of the children, their time spent working on school assignments with their parents was either minimal or non-existent. Staff were cognizant that many parents were unable to spend much time with their children helping with school studies due to work commitments. Often, parents were reported to be working very long hours which necessitated leaving the home early in the day and returning late at night. Extended family situations left numerous children with other caregivers where, in some instance language barriers impeded educational support for the children, in addition to a lack of understanding about the Ontario educational system. The following quote illustrates that staff are aware of family circumstances.

It's a struggle for a lot of the parents to get their feet on the ground over here. They're probably not around for the kids as much as we would like them to be. It
may not be their fault and there may not be anything they can do about it, but it means the kids are left a lot with other caregivers that may or may not be the kind of people that they need to rely on after school, and for their kind of needs (educational needs). SI-13

The researcher worked at this school at a time when one single parent family arrived with very little resources at their disposal. This parent was fortunate to find employment even though she was not able to speak any English. The school staff saw this lady ride an old bicycle to the school each morning with her small son perched on the handlebars. She would drop the child at the school and then cycle many miles to her job. This lady persevered with the bicycle even in inclement weather, to the extent of light snow. At these times she would cover her hands with a pair of socks and continue on her way. Because of the late hour of her return, the child had been instructed to walk directly to their home at the end of the school day. Once there, he would enter via a side door and descend to the basement to be cared for by his invalid grandfather until the mother arrived.

This situation further supports the staff reports of children who were cared for by members of the extended family as well as individuals who lacked the language and academic understanding to support the children with their continued learning beyond the school day. Many of these families were also unable to provide experiential, incidental learning to which the majority of students in a white bourgeoisie system are exposed. Trips to local public libraries, the zoo, farms, the museum, theatres, concerts and other cultural events are but a few examples of accumulated experiential learning opportunities that many of the children and families in this neighbourhood had not been able to enjoy for reasons of time, money, language, logistics, or basic awareness that these activities existed. This teacher’s comment demonstrates the restricted
experiences some children had even with the environment.

At the Science Centre there was a squirrel in a tree and one student asked if that was a skunk. Being in this community restricts the experiences you have. SI-3

Staff concerns for student learning and educational support from the home were raised when detailing the profile of this communities housing and existing family structures. Staff recognized that their level of awareness and understanding was critical to their level of intervention with the families as well as the expectations placed upon the children for assignments and program extensions. The following quote reflects the sentiments expressed by many staff,

You've got a lot of learning to do to work in a school like this. You have to learn a lot about other cultures and be very understanding and accepting. It makes life interesting. SI-16

Further to staff awareness, they also discussed the degree to which they themselves needed to receive information about the community dynamics. Both staff and community member attitudes were identified as vital to developing a shared understanding and knowledge base to further facilitate student learning and growth.

Staff expressed their perceptions and concerns regarding parent involvement or partnerships at the school. This quote demonstrates a feeling shared by many staff; that parent involvement is dependent on a level of comfort.

...parents are frequently invited into the school to view a childrens' concert, or to have some part in seeing their childrens' work, meeting the teacher, and in those cases the parents come out in great numbers. I would suggest that there is a lack of intimidation on those evenings where they're invited and there doesn't have to be any kind of real input on their part. I would suggest that until the parents feel security with themselves, having to do with the language, having to do with the comfort level that exists within the North American institution, that they themselves may not feel particularly comfortable coming into that setting. SI-9
Essentially, the staff felt that there was a feeling of satisfaction with the school from the parents of their students. They spoke of a sense of mutual respect even though there were apparent barriers to communication and minimal representation of parents within the school. These sentiments in conjunction with representative staffing needs, were shared by the school's area superintendent, as stated below,

I think that most of the families really appreciate a need for an education. ...partly by their background, they respect education, they respect educators. Of all the areas of this Board (of education) I have the least difficulty with parents and that's not because they're not concerned but it's because of their own country background to appreciate education for the importance of it to their kids. SI-7

This sense of community rapport and respect was illustrated by the following comment a teacher made during one of the interviews:

I find in this community the school and teachers are really respected, a very good community to work with. By and large you have most parents behind you, often they'll come to an interview and it's parenting skills they're in need of help. They really look at you as an authority and they expect that of their child. We often hear (from the parent), you tell my son to do something and it will be done... SI-4

Although there was a feeling of mutual respect between the teaching staff and the parent community, the lack of an interactive partnership was still stressed as a concern. At the time of the interviews, parent volunteers were practically non-existent. The busiest area of the school for parental involvement was the library. The librarian had recruited volunteers from the community to assist with 'administrivia' tasks, such as carding and shelving books. The librarian felt that the response had been favourable, yet the numbers were still minimal. However, it was felt that individuals felt less intimidated to assist in the library, as they were not having to interact with others verbally on a regular basis where a lack of proficiency in the English language would
hamper their efforts. As one teacher stated:

I'm sure in our community a lot of children teach their parents English. SI-2

A second reason suggested for parent involvement in this area was that an understanding of the Canadian school system, how it operated, what the curriculum was, or the method of delivery in the classroom was necessary. In other words, the expectations placed upon volunteers in the library were straightforward, non-threatening, helpful, and did not require direct interaction with students and other staff in a language with which many were not familiar. The librarian was also able to form a committee that was made-up of staff, parents, administration and community members to review and discuss the appropriateness of books, videos and other resources in the library. This group, as supervised by the librarian became involved, at an entry level, in book selection and buying which entailed investigating cultural and language needs for the students in their library. Another benefit of this volunteer program was that family members, other than parents, became involved at various times, occasionally, a child's grandparent would participate. One downfall as expressed by this librarian was a tendency by these volunteers to be somewhat inconsistent in their commitment to adhering to schedules that had been developed. The librarian felt that there was a certain amount of inconsistency and expressed a wish to see more volunteers in the program, in addition to a more consistent record of attendance and availability. A principal of the school acknowledged the efforts of this librarian, to promote parent partnerships, as commendable, an activity that was not as prevalent elsewhere in the school.

The librarian has been quite instrumental in bringing parents and community in to assist in the selection of books ...there seems to be some involvement at that level but not at the classroom. SI-9

As with other areas of observation offered throughout the interviews, staff listed language,
cultural traditions and understanding of the present school system, as well as individual
employment commitments, as key factors impeding active parental involvement at all levels
within the school. Staff understood the barriers but still placed tremendous importance on home-
school partnerships.

...the parents need to get more involved in the school. A lot of parents work long
hours or for whatever reason they have not become that involved. I guess, too, in
that area they need to learn that a school in Canada, or certainly this part of the
world, represents the hub of their community and I think we need to do something
about making sure that that happens so we can reach out to them. SI-5

Staff viewed parent involvement as a challenge both as far as helping the child with work
at home and with actively participating in the child's learning at the school. One teacher indicated
that staff felt that a lot of the responsibility for generating parental partnerships was, "put on us to
solve the problem." SI-6 The teachers felt the frustration in trying to generate parent
participation while at the same time they were cognizant of the value of this partnership.

We have to get parents more involved in our school system in this country. ...It
has to be informally...every single parent just wanted to come in, sit beside me and
talk to me... They just want to talk to you and know that you are an individual, a
person that cares about their kid. If they understand that, that that is where you are
coming from, they'll feel so much better about it ...I think if they just get to know
you and understand a little bit more. Involved parents offer their students the best
chances of making it. Parents as partners, the best combination possible. SI-2

One statement a teacher gave summed up a primary reason how parental involvement at school
benefited the advancement of student learning.

We do need the parents to (help) keep the emphasis on track. We need parent
input so that they in fact direct us more appropriately to the needs that they feel
are important for their children. SI-4

Further to this concept of parental involvement, the following statement by a principal of
this school demonstrated that the same premise of shared understanding between parent and
school extended to benefit student learning beyond the four walls of the classroom.

The parent who is involved in their child's schooling results in better achievement for the child. I think that the whole demonstration of the parent being interested is a motivator. For the administrator it gives the parent an opportunity to share ideas with administration, who, perhaps, doesn't know the community feelings and often times you do things, such as field trips, that may or may not be accepted by the community. ...Parents can be sounding boards to know whether or not we're moving in the direction the community would like us to move. SI-9

Staff input inevitably discussed parent involvement as crucial to student learning. At the time of the study, Parent Councils were introduced through the Ministry of Education as a mandated component of schools to be implemented across the province. Parental involvement, partnerships and councils were the focus of a significant segment of the staff interviews.

Although each school was directed to formulate parent councils, now referred to as school councils, as per the provincial directives, one superintendent of schools for this board had been given the responsibility of overseeing this mandate for the entire region. The researcher interviewed this superintendent to investigate not only the path these councils were intended to take but to discuss the intricacies of organizing these structures in multiethnic communities such as the school studied.

The essential construction of a council, as detailed by this superintendent, SI-8, was to include members of the parents community, teaching and non-teaching staff, school administration and community representation, The parent group were to be an elected body, larger in number than the school personnel and chaired by a parent member. The primary function of councils, as this superintendent stated was to be at an entry or low level advisory capacity. A level of input to support the principal of the school but a group without decision-making powers. The role was seen to be more of one to heighten community awareness and
involvement in the local schools, in conjunction with essential educational foundations, as determined provincially. This superintendent felt that the councils would, perhaps, be asked to design profiles that would illustrate their communities identity and outline the leadership qualities and characteristics they wanted for their schools. Furthermore, he felt that the councils would bring new energy, new strategies, and ideas to the schools while enhancing partnerships, communication and networking. He expressed his vision of the councils as follows:

The composition of the school councils will be flexible, so it reflects the community. ...We are making a positive impact, which has improved student achievement. ...The more input you get, the better the decisions you make. ...These changes are for student achievement and school effectiveness. SI-8

This superintendent listed areas where he saw these councils contributing to the operation of the schools. He felt that they could get involved in: curriculum program assessment; school accountability; selection of principals; school budget; involvement in community support agencies; student behaviour; the school calendar and the school profile. The idiosyncrasies of the multicultural school setting were discussed in the context of school leadership, as it pertained to the implementation and support from school councils. Race and gender were two factors under consideration that were seen as possible impediments to council support of school leaders, if not addressed in an appropriate manner.

The community want a multicultural staff but they want an administrator sensitive to the needs of the community. SI-7

Specifically, the superintendent of this particular school area stated that the parents seemed to be quite accepting of female, white school leader as long as the leader demonstrated sensitivity to the community.

However, she did recognize expressly that gender is not a problem, ...when I say
that it's not a problem, it tends to be male dominant, many cultures are male dominant. But, the female administrators I've had managed to deal with it and overcome it. SI-7

As illustrated previously, the researcher had cause to experience cultural differences between genders when the one student's father explained that he could not touch her hand. At this point in time, the principal of the school was male and both the researcher and the principal observed a noticeable tendency for fathers to approach the male administrator before the female. At the time of the study, a school council was not in place. There was a Parent-Teacher Liaison Group but the membership had very few individuals. There had, at one time, been a handful of people on the executive. One parent, a father was quite interested in motivating the community, but met more times than not, with minimal response. This person was representative of the neighbourhood and over time, he became more involved in the politics of the larger community and withdrew from his work at the school.

After his departure, the position became most difficult to fill. Communication with the parents? A gap that, if anything, is widening. The level of parent involvement hasn't increased over the past seven years. SI-9

Despite efforts by the school to solicit volunteers, the response was practically nil so the school's administration attempted to facilitate these meetings without a representative parent executive. The model was more of a drop-in, open house format where those who attended were welcome to become actively involved in directives or school projects. This format was received as invitational and non-threatening, but was also non-participatory and non-committal on the part of the parents. Finally, a parent came forth to serve as the president of this parent-teacher group. This person was an unemployed, single mother, she had two children at the school and she was Caucasian. Obviously, she was far from being culturally representative of the majority of people
in the neighbourhood. This lady worked diligently to attempt to communicate with the other families. Meetings, although poorly attended, were scheduled on a regular basis, As well, she worked closely with the researcher, who was employed there at that time, to develop, write and produce a parent-teacher newsletter. They christened this newsletter as 'Links' (APPENDIX E v, Links and Letters), hoping to form stronger links with the parents. The two worked with other parents they approached, when possible, to have this newsletter translated into other languages. The primary languages were English, Cantonese, Gujarati and Hindi. Upon occasion, they were able to enlist the assistance of parents who spoke other languages, such as Urdu. This newsletter was still in operation when the researcher moved on to another location. However, the school council was still at the initial stages of Board implementation and had not, therefore been developed at the school. Subsequent reports implied that the parent who had overseen the parent-teacher group discontinued her services due to personal circumstances. The administration at the school, shortly after this lady withdrew, found that targeting and telephoning specific parents was one fairly effective way to encourage parental participation in this liaison group.

Even though we don't have parents who come in and complain, we don't have a lot of parents who will come in and give us their time in terms of discussions, unless it's a specific issue (and) they are invited personally. SI-15

Regardless of attempts to support participation, parent involvement continued to be of concern to this school staff. The interview comments of one of the principals of this school expressed this feeling:

I'm concerned that we don't have a parent voice when it comes to some of the more significant involvement that parents may have in the school setting. Parent council begs the question whether or not we will have a response from the community to involve themselves in a council in a way where they are advisors (In a way where they are) taking a significant role in decision-making. The
resistance of the community has been strong in that area of advising, or participating in a way other than being seen. SI-10

Aside from the details to address in establishing school councils, the staff acknowledged, during the interviews, that the basic premise for parental involvement was ultimately to enhance and support student learning. The difficulty in building these linkages was seen as the primary challenge for all members of this school community. A challenge well worth the effort.

...to help parents understand and be part of the decision-making. it's important that they have the same understanding or as much of an understanding of what is going on. To some extent that is not possible because you're talking with people who don't have an educational background (from this area). The best way to help the child is to have everybody on the same wavelength. SI-18

4.3.4.7 Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

In the interviews, staff observed the importance and influence that family heritage and cultural values played in this educational community. Student needs were of foremost concern to the staff, but keeping these needs within perspective as they fell within the family hierarchy, were identified as a priority factor impacting upon program implementation and community partnerships. However, a distinct void in this area was noted by staff. To be effective educators, they expressed a need to be able to understand and communicate with their community.

Resources to facilitate these interactions were both minimal and restrictive.

A staff member who is Chinese is called upon frequently to communicate with Chinese parents who speak little or no English when they register their children in the school. We also use this same staff member, frequently, to get information from Chinese students who come to the school without much English as this staff member is empathetic to children of her culture. SI-9

The researcher enlisted the assistance and support of this particular individual upon many
occasions. The liaison services were greatly appreciated, but the time and effort required reduced the teacher's available time to address day-to-day teaching responsibilities. This person was always most congenial and helpful but did, periodically, express a degree of frustration when trying to fulfill all expectations placed before her. To place this in perspective, one staff member discussed this issue during an interview and stated that the school population consisted of approximately 300 students of Asian heritage, yet there was only one staff member capable of facilitating communication with many of these children and their families.

The staff members shared their perspectives on language needs in so far as classroom planning, preparation and program implementation, as well as subject timetabling and staffing. They also looked at the ESL structure as it functioned within the school and as it was perceived by the students' parents.

One of the problems we face... are parents who refuse their students (children), immigrant, landed refugee or whatever, to take ESL programmes because they are afraid they will reflect on them badly. The status is that they don't want to be labelled as ESL because that is a negative. SI-11

Although this was not considered a regular occurrence at the elementary schooling level, the problem was one that the area superintendent of this school saw, more often, in the secondary school panel.

Parents, once they hit secondary, don't want ESL because it is like special ed., so they don't record them (register that the child needs ESL) and they don't allow them to take it. So, they enrol in all the advance courses even though they don't have the facility of the language. So, they struggle or fail because they just can't make it ...they are afraid it will reflect on them badly in University. SI-7

Concerns with language needs in the classroom at the elementary level were expressed as affecting student learning primarily in the area of language arts. The teachers felt that many of the
children were impeded because of a lack of foundation in the basic skills of English and that while trying to learn such, other factors were added to the confusion. One example stated was the fact that French classes were a part of the regular curriculum. In the existing service model, the children in the first grade were expected to participate in the French language classes while at the same time, they were not eligible for ESL support from the support staff. The following comment by a grade one teacher illustrates the level many students were by this stage in their schooling:

I had a boy from Sri Lanka who only spoke Tamil. ...He was an only child whose father had been here six years but he had just arrived with his mom. ...he had no English at all... very quickly learned classroom routines. He can be disruptive... he's very opinionated and independent. I take him out and work with him on his own and read big books and simple books. His writing is only at the labelling stage... draws pictures and labels them afterwards. SI-4

The time required by this one teacher to work with this student while teaching the others was a concern.

There were some children in grade one that needed some very specialized help. Otherwise, they'd sit the whole year (and that) would have been a waste for them. I'd think in a case like that you'd maybe have to change the rules a little bit. ...the problem, I think, with our ESL is not knowing where they're (the newly arrived immigrant minority student) at because we can't test them for the first couple of years. So, we don't know the level of literacy they have attained in their own language. SI-4

In ESL classes, offered to older children, groupings of students with similar needs or like abilities are formed, or the support staff work in the classroom with the regular teacher. A model that this school tried to incorporate wherever possible; but the high student population in need of support, as referenced earlier, restricted the level of additional service to these children and their teachers.

I think that you can build some ESL support in if you have teachers who recognize ESL strategies. The more teachers you have with ESL training the better off you'd
be. It would be good for any teacher to have ESL. SI-11

The consultant for the ESL schools in this area of the board of education explained that staff allocations for ESL are capped at each school; no more than four teachers specifically assigned to ESL are permitted. However, she felt that rather than changing to a free range, arbitrary number, or staying with the existing one, that a cap should be designed on a percentage base, as per school population. Furthermore she indicated that a variance should be built into staffing formulas to allow for schools with exceptional circumstances. This particular school was, at the time of the study, and continues to be, one of two schools in this board of education with the highest ESL needs. This consultant concurred with the previously stated figures, that this school had 300 students eligible for ESL, from those who had arrived within the past five years.

However, communication barriers and other related difficulties, as they pertained to language differences, were sighted as significant and serious concerns. The superintendent of schools for this area provided, in the following statements, a pictorial view of the language base for this community:

The community is made-up of many families who do not have English as a first language. I would say that the majority do not have English as a first language. ...We have, in this area, 1700 students who need English As A Second Language (that is) higher than Special Education (needs), about 7 to 10% of the population.

In our area, the major languages are certainly Cantonese and Mandarin, and Mandarin is the business language (then), Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu and some Tamil and then a smattering of many other languages. ...up to 35 languages, we also have Farsi, Tagalog and some I have never heard of before. ...The largest international language classes (offered outside of school hours) in my area would be Urdu, Hindi and Gujarati. SI-7

In an area as diverse as this one, the repeated concern for translation services was
explored.

We say to the children, do your parents speak English? What language do you speak at home? That is just everyday language for us now, just to ask that. SI-14

As previously discussed by staff, there was a shared feeling that the individuals available for translation were being called upon too frequently, that unreasonable demands on their time impacted upon their designated teaching assignments and efforts in other areas of school activities.

A discussion was held regarding the overuse of those staff who are called from their regular duties to help with translations, placement, testing, parent conferences, et cetera, because they speak another language. Otherwise, the Board has an ESL administrator, assigned to a Superintendent, who is responsible for first language assessment. SI-7

However, the need for translators from the educational community was cited for two primary reasons: one was a concern for confidentiality and the second because of educational jargon or terminology that a parent translator may not be familiar with nor able to translate in an interview situation.

Parent interviews (can be) difficult because we need translators, but we're not always aware of the need until they arrive. Often time, they bring a relative who says they can speak English but they're not really any better. Or their child (is brought to the interview), they try and translate to the parents (but) they don't have the vocabulary for translation. SI-1

It is of interest to note, that when the ESL administrator, for this school area, sent out a request for staff available to offer their translation services, only six submitted their names. The reason for this lack of involvement is unknown, but discussions did arise during the interviews that many of these individuals felt overextended in their role of translator, plus the additional stipend was not a tremendous sum. The task of finding translators was further complicated by an
increased need for cultural representation. As stated by one staff member:

We have this lovely family who came to us from the Orient and they speak Haca. We haven't, through the Board, been able to find anyone who speaks that. We have, though, found someone in the community, a couple of people, but (they) are not Board sanctioned. However, this does permit us to converse with the family. We found a grade eight student who spoke the language and someone in that student's family came in. ...The little girl (for whom this translation was required) in this family needed to have her eyes attended to (and) eventually got glasses. SI-11

Communication with parents was seen as essential for the same reasons as the need exists with most schools: academics, testing, placement, behaviour concerns and so forth. However, when trying to convey basic messages to parents in this community, staff found language intensified and complicated even the most commonplace interactions. The Head secretary for this school ran into situations of this nature on a regular basis. She stated that:

When you need to call home, language is a difficult thing. Sometimes we have to put a sick child on the phone to talk to the grandparent. Or, we try to call the parents at work to see if he (the child) can go home, because we can't send the child home without parental permission. Communication is hard. SI-14

The following comments reflect areas most schools would consider common place and self-evident to families in their communities, issues not necessary to communicate in a formal fashion. Whereas in this school, staff were continually having to reach-out to the parents to share this information as illustrated by the following two statements,

Translation needed for specific documents? Absolutely! You cannot fly a legal process to a parent without their understanding. If you're trying to get special education or psychiatric assistance for a child you have to have those parents understand. The report cards; the safe schools policy; behaviour expectations; homework policies at the school; standard ordinary things; the start and stop of school; lunches (routines); weather precautions; especially for a lot of our foreign families; clothing, these kids don't know how to dress for the cold. (Some) parents... drive their children to school and keep them in a parked car until the bell
rings and then drive to school at recess and kids come out to sit in the car in the parking lot so they don't get cold. Those are cultural things that need to be taught and trained. SI-7

Newsletters are fine (for communicating the aforementioned items), but they (the parents) can't read them that well. (The parents) don't know much English. SI-15

When discussing language as a concern, staff observations centred not only on communication with the families but on the importance of understanding, communicating and acquiring language to enhance student learning. Some concerns revolved around the level and availability of resource materials, methodology and interest levels appropriate to the various age groups. The following quote illustrates how one teacher explained their starting point of language and literacy intervention.

...children new to the country, English is very weak. I work with the ESL teacher a lot and basically use wordless picture books so the child can 'tell' the story in their own language. Essentially, you take them through the whole learning process of learning English as you would with a young child. SI-4

The staff did acknowledge that they felt the initial syllabus in English studies offered at the school were presented with a strong language base that would be advantageous to the newly arrived student, who did not speak English as their first language.

The primary program is language rich, especially kindergarten and grade one. The teacher is working very hard to teach reading skills to those children who can't read English. The whole program is geared at language richness. Everything in the room, the decorations, everything the teacher does, develops language and grammar, syntax usage and so on. The higher you go in the grades the higher the expectations on the kids as to what they are expected to be able to respond to. SI-3

In conjunction with a language-based classroom program, staff expressed a need for dual language materials where appropriate, primarily in story books. They wanted to meet the needs of
the children in a direct fashion, at a level conducive to student learning. Caution was expressed in regard to supporting the student to a degree of perhaps holding them back from progressing at a pace needed to be successful in the system. As stated by this school's teacher-librarian,

Intermediate ESL students take out picture books? Lots of them. They're the most problematic because, as you know, it takes five to seven years to catch-up with your peers in your language skills, written, oral takes two years. You don't have those years when you're intermediate (students in the grade seven and eight classes). Your whole future may be jeopardized because you may not be able to get through high school and attain the kind of marks that you should be able to get. SI-18

With the classroom teachers who participated in the interviews, it was quite evident that there were numerous concerns for student learning as impeded by language barriers. Significant factors identified from the data collection are summarized at the end of this chapter. These concerns have been incorporated into action strategies in a school-based language policy. The objective of the policy is to provide the school with, as previously stated, guidelines to address areas of need.

4.3.4.8 Resources and Special Provisions

Although language was voiced most often as an issue requiring intervention and in-service, cultural differences and religion were also of the utmost concern. When the researcher met with the school's area superintendent, she explained the Board of Education's policy regarding the recognition of religious holidays.

Specifically, the Board policy directs schools to recognize and acknowledge 13 significant religious days (APPENDIX Eiii Significant Religious Holidays). Therefore, no major school event can be scheduled to occur on those days, such as exams, tests and projects. The
schools have to be sensitive to that and organize their events accordingly so that no student is seen as being disadvantaged. Yet, as she stated, "accommodating for faith is really interesting because no faith can have primacy in the school. SI-7" To cite an example, where accommodations were necessary the superintendent referred to a situation required for Muslim children in the schools.

Staff need to be aware that many Muslim students, from age about nine up, don't eat during the day, at all, from sunrise to sunset for Ramadan (a religious observance). They also need accommodations for prayer times during the day...therefore need designated spaces (areas within the school)...students may need to leave a class to pray and then return. SI-7

The researcher's experience at this particular school involved situations where it was necessary to make accommodations for similar circumstances. For example, fasting children were given the option to sit in a separate area during the lunch hour if they felt uncomfortable sitting beside peers who were not fasting. This was one example where staff new to the school, and to a highly diverse area, required a degree in-service to become familiar with the unique needs of this school community. However, no such seminar or workshop was offered at the time of this study. The following situation described by this school's area superintendent reflected a particular need to have staff aware of religious needs in circumstances that could potentially be abused. This scenario also supports the notion that students of all ethnicities need to be aware of the differences between groups if there is to be a shared understanding and respect for one another. Otherwise, misunderstandings, teasing and conflicts could arise unnecessarily.

We deal with church leaders and with the mosque leaders and the temple leaders. So, we have good information about what is appropriate and what is not. After Ramadan one year, a whole lot of students suddenly decided that they would become Muslims, especially during prayer time. So, several of the students went to the school principal to say that they needed Friday afternoons off to pray,
because they had just become Muslims. Not to overreact to a religious request, the school investigated through the temple and found out that these young men were running a D.J. (disc jockey) service and Friday night was their big night and they needed time to set-up their equipment. ...we got that one settled quickly. SI-7

Other issues, of a more sensitive nature than the scenario depicted above, were cited as areas requiring staff awareness applicable to classroom activities and programs. Situations where individual students could feel ostracized by their peers or excluded from opportunities to interact in academic experiences or social activities. The following three statements made during staff interviews served as examples where in-class programming could be detrimental to some students if their religious needs were not taken into account.

When the students did presentations on recipes, they had to bring in food for everyone to share. Unfortunately, it happened during a time when they were fasting, the Muslim group (observing) Ramadan. I have to make sure I do it either earlier or later on in the school year. It comes up in (class) discussion. During the period they'll (Muslim students) be fasting and that sort of thing, they seem to handle it pretty well. SI-3

It (religion) does end-up having an impact. They (the administration) announced that there would be an area (designated) for anyone fasting. The whole question of what was happening, my whole class nearly fainted when they heard that kids couldn't eat for a whole day. A couple of my students are fasting and have the option of eating. We had a staff meeting and we agreed that this would be a good area (to offer in-service sessions to staff and students). SI-5

Something that I've experienced this year, spelling words, not religious spelling words but associated with Christmas. One student came back to school the next day with his paper all ripped-up. (He was) Muslim and his father wanted him to have nothing to do with Christmas. (When the) child was cleaning out his desk for the holidays he pulled out two Christmas cards that other students had given him. It was obvious that they (the Muslim children) were adopting some of the (Christian) ways. I did not speak to the father, because the father did not initiate the conversation. I just ended-up dropping the dictation with the whole class. SI-4

Another area of concern that was brought forth during the interviews focussed on student needs socially, as they pertained to interaction between cultural or different religious groups.
Earlier, staff described the occasional occurrence of 'white flight' where a Caucasian family had felt alienated or isolated or discriminated against to a degree where they eventually moved away from the community. In some of these circumstances, the reason for moving may also have been due to a feeling that familiar network groups were not available. In the following example of white flight, another aspect is shown, one where religious differences created a feeling of alienation for a child on a social scale, as detailed by the superintendent of schools in this particular area.

We do have difficulties, however; the cultural difficulties. One of my schools had very few white children in it but had a family of Dutch background who elected to attend this school because it was multicultural. They wanted their children to attend the school. Finally, this family had to move as it was hurting them to see what was happening to their white daughter. She had close friends at school, so there was no question of racial differences. She got along well at school and loved the kids. But, when it was time to go home, everyone went to their own home and played with their own faith, culture and religions, and she was never part of it. She was not invited to participate in the other homes because that was separate. So, this family very reluctantly felt that they had to move so their daughter could relate to someone. White flight; the white families moving out, feeling uncomfortable in many cases because they were being outnumbered by everyone else. SI-7

The staff recognized that their school community differed from many others and that due to unique needs, in-service for all stakeholders, staff, students and parents, would be of benefit. When asked if standard procedures for dealing with cultural and religious differences were outlined in the school's handbook one teacher responded,

No, a teacher coming into this environment would find it quite amazing. Our motto is learning from each other and you do really learn. SI-14

Inevitably, in all interviews, the staff discussed cultural areas where they felt they could benefit from additional guidance. They indicated that this information was offered by the board
of education and from members of various cultural groups.

4.4 Summary

Throughout the interviews, the staff put forth various suggestions, recommendations and concerns. When analyzing the transcripts, the researcher centralized this information under the following headings:

1. Background Information
2. School Organization and Management
3. Staff
4. Staff Development
5. Supervision: Safety and Discipline
6. Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy
7. Communication and Participation
8. Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

A summary of the issues from each theme is reported below. Successive to this information is a summary of the results for each group: the parents, students and staff. This information is presented in a table format illustrating significant indicators for each of the aforementioned themes. Thus, this table is the framework for the language policy; a practices model designed to address the specific features brought forth from the study, located in Chapter Five.
4.4.1 Background Information

The majority of staff present as a homogeneous group. The majority of participants were born and educated in Canada. For many staff, working in a diverse school community was a relatively new experience. All divisions of the elementary school panel; primary, junior and elementary, were represented by those interviewed. School administration and support staff also participated in the interviews.

4.4.2 School Organization and Management

Registration procedures were seen as complex because most forms are written in English and there is a need to have these documents translated for the many registrants who do not speak, read or write English. The office staff does not have the facility to do the translations nor are there sufficient staff available in the building. The secretaries also felt overwhelmed with the additional time and paper work required to process immigrant or refugee students. The suggestions that came forth included additional staff, or a central clearinghouse area; such as one of the board of education offices where new registrants could go for assistance and to have documentation processed.

Further to registration, concerns were brought forth with respect to tracking and monitoring tasks: the determination of illegal immigrants; absentee parents; expired visa students, students on extended absences from school and the determination of the authenticity of various legal documents, such as passports and health cards. Each of these tasks require time, personnel and a specific knowledge base; to facilitate these needs the secretaries felt additional support was essential.
A final area identified as a concern for school organization involved class placements. When new students registered, staff found that language, previous education and attitudes toward components of program, such as special education, complicated the task of student placement. Often, children were placed in a class based on class size and the child's age. However, upon occasion other factors surfaced that staff had not had time to uncover. Such concerns included children who had come from another school system where they had been placed in a special education class but upon their arrival here, parents had chosen to keep that information confidential; language differences also blocked information of that nature.

4.4.3 Staff

Staff issues encompassed:

* a request for additional staff to meet the language (ESL), special education and class size concerns;

* an increase in staff representative of the community to further facilitate communication, liaison needs and role modeling purposes;

If we had our druthers, we would certainly hire teachers who speak Mandarin, or Cantonese, or Somali, or Tamil, to teach the students how to read and write in their own language and then switch them over to English. SI -7

* more men on staff was seen as a need; not only because there was an imbalance in the number of males to females on staff, but because staff felt that some of the groups in the community would consider interactions with men more appropriate due to their cultural beliefs;

* an increase in central office staff made easily accessible to the school for purposes of registration and translation was considered a significant need.
4.4.4 Staff Development

The most significant point that was voiced, repeatedly, was a need for staff in-service sessions. Specifically, workshops about faith, diet, gender and class beliefs, or traditions, for the various cultural groups represented in the school community were requested. The information from in-service workshops was felt to be essential to the understanding and effective interaction, or communication, with this population group.

Staff stated that the board of education should provide for these sessions, either at the school or other board locations. Suggested presenters for these workshops included both board personnel and community representatives; which could encompass parents, agency representatives or other individuals.

4.4.5 Supervision: Safety and Discipline

Safety and discipline issues were often discussed from a racial perspective regarding incidents where derogatory racial comments had been made between children. Students had been known to enter into conflict based on religious comments, teasing about cultural beliefs, and even situations where one child would pull another child's turban from his head. Staff indicated an interest in being proactive towards student management through the implementation of cultural awareness workshops, as well as a student conflict mediator program. This particular program had been initiated but it was felt that a more consistent, formalized program was needed.

The staff also referred to the board of education's safe school policy and supported the need to ensure that the information was communicated clearly to the parent population. The policy clearly defines acceptable behaviours and consequences for unacceptable activities.
4.4.6 Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy

Staff comments reflected concerns that program levels of expectations were lowered, in some situations, in order to make accommodations for language differences. They also commented that, in many instances, it was not possible to complete all facets of the syllabus within the course of a school year; not only because of language difficulties but also as a result of extended student absences.

Follow-up to curriculum implementation, via parental support was cited as a concern, the staff did not feel that the students were receiving assistance with their homework nor were they always provided with the best learning environment in their homes. These concerns were based on an understanding by staff that many children lived in homes which housed more than one family; that parents worked long hours away from the home; that living accommodations were restrictive in offering workspace for the children and that parents did not understand the Ontario educational system, or syllabus, enough to assist their children.

Other curriculum issues arose from concerns about program completion. Some teachers stated that if the curriculum was not covered during the school year and children were not demonstrating tremendous progress in their ESL classes then they should be considered for retention, rather than promotion, to the next grade level.

A final concern was voiced for smaller class sizes which, in turn, would allow the classroom teacher more flexibility in dealing with newly arrived students to become more familiar with their schoolwork and setting.
4.4.7 Communication and Participation

In wanting to help community members adapt to the school system, educators discussed various strategies they felt would address specific needs. Included in these recommendations were:

* smaller class sizes to address individual student concerns
* in-service workshops for parents on topics such as the board of education's policies and procedures, as well as school-based policies on behaviour, communication procedures and homework
* workshops with a parenting focus were also recommended. Topics such as cold-weather dressing and how to access community services and agencies were suggested
* personal invitations to parents to attend various functions at the school. For example, a few of the parents seen as more visible on a daily basis could be approached to participate in or help with the organization of a school-community meeting, assembly, or other activity
* the formation of parental focus groups and communication grapevine to share information between home and school, where necessary

The results of the information collected during the interviews that revolved around community communication and participation mirrored those factors that arose from both the student and parent sessions. Specifically, three areas of need were identified: time, information and language. Each one of these factors were seen as barriers to effective home-school communication. The strategies suggested by the staff further support the formation of a school-based language policy to address the identified needs.
4.4.8 Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

Language needs were identified as a prevalent concern throughout the entire study. When the researcher met with staff, they identified a plethora of areas where language differences created complications to communication between home and school, as well as to student learning.

Some areas where language impeded effective school-home communication were discussed previously, under Communication and Participation. Staff recognized that even communicating basic information: such as suggested items children should bring to school with them, let alone reporting on progress, or pursuing intervention for children with exceptionalities, could be a difficult process. The aforementioned recommendations focussed primarily on parental communication. When looking closer at language as it affects the classroom and student learning, the staff identified further areas where intervention was considered required. To address overall language needs for daily school operations, the staff identified an in-house translator as an ideal solution. The difficulty in addressing all languages, at any time was acknowledged as an unrealistic goal. However, a suggestion to keep the school's language and cultural profile at the forefront when hiring new staff, was a strategy supported by many of the participants. This was further supported by the area ESL consultant who had discussed the possibility of recommending a change to the board of education's staffing formula to better serve diverse communities, such as this.

In-class, or program language needs were of concern to the staff. They acknowledged that some of the newly-arrived families had a preconceived perception of what special education and ESL services were at the school. There was a feeling that these programs were considered
shameful or that they carried a negative stigma to them. This issue was discussed in the parent results section where some parents felt that these services were only for the severely-challenged students. The teachers wanted to communicate the value of the programs to the community and clearly delineate the range of services available to support student learning. In conjunction with support services, staff voiced concerns about first language acquisition in a setting where children were, often, speaking one language at home and another at school while simultaneously expected to study French, as part of their syllabus. A suggestion was put forth that basic skills classes should be offered to these children, where necessary. The concept put forth was where the child would attend a basic skills class, only as long as required, to attain a level where they could function within the regular class setting. The basic training could encompass language, as well as academic skills.

As previously discussed, staff were concerned about program implementation, student success and retention. To accommodate such a wide-range of language and ability in the classroom, program content had had to be modified, or not completed by the end of the school year. In this venue, staff voiced concern regarding placement of children based on age. Alternate grouping arrangements were discussed, such as cross-grade or vertical groupings for some subject areas where children would be organized according to present levels of achievement and ability. To incorporate a new model, of this nature, would require a reorganization of schedules and resources.

Items of this nature fell within the final theme of the interviews, Resources and Special Provisions.
4.4.9 Resources and Special Provisions

As outlined in the preceding section, to change the organization of class groupings to reflect achievement levels, would require additional resources. Throughout the interviews, the resource teacher-librarian, spoke of inviting parents and staff to assist in the selection of library resources reflective of the community. Further to these materials, if classroom groupings were modified, additional texts, perhaps at a high interest low vocabulary level would be needed.

During one of the interviews, classes for children, in their mother tongue, were suggested as a means to further facilitate language development. This, too, would require additional materials to support the program.

The theme of resources and special provisions encompassed other areas of need; such as additional types of in-service workshops. The staff discussed a need to learn more about religious beliefs of the community members as they could affect the classroom. The teachers spoke of children who required prayer areas in the building, as well as time from class to attend these areas. They gave examples of Muslim children who were, for religious reasons, required to fast during the day, at a certain time of the year to recognize Ramadan. Knowledge of these needs and provisions for them were seen as issues that a specific guideline, such a school-based language policy, could be referred to when necessary. A policy of this nature could also assist in the orientation of new staff, when hired to the school, or when supply teachers are called in to work on a temporary basis.

The teachers also recounted incidents where they had tried to match their classes to those at other schools for purposes of communication and shared learning opportunities. Unfortunately, one teacher in particular found the experience to be particularly negative. She had paired her
class with one at another school and the two groups had corresponded with one another, via mail, all year. At the end of the final term, the children from the study school travelled to their pen pals' school to actually meet one another. The teacher spoke of an awkward meeting, one where her highly multiethnic class met with a homogeneous group within a fairly homogeneous school setting. The diverse group became the target for some derogatory comments and the experience was most uncomfortable for both groups, as well as the teachers. The recommendation, then, was that other schools receive in-service at varying levels. The staff felt that cross-school intervention was necessary for both staff and students in broadening cultural awareness and appreciation.

In conclusion of all interviews, the researcher reviewed the summary of data gathered from each group, as well as material from the survey. This information was then culled and sorted according to the aforementioned themes. The significant issues are summarized under each heading in Table 4.6. This framework of suggestions and strategies has been organized into a school-based language policy in Chapter 5.

4.4.10 Overall Summary

Each of the headings have been summarized according to each group: Parents, Students and Staff. Significant issues are listed for each group as they relate to the headings by a related code: Parents (A), Students (B), and Staff (C). As an example, a statement from a student summary pertaining to Community would be coded as B7: B representing the student, 7 representing the subheading Community. Table 4.6 (a summary of the framework for language policy) lists the headings and the participants according to the designated codes. Following the table are the summarized points in note form.
Table 4.6: Framework for Language Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading</th>
<th>(A) Parents</th>
<th>(B) Students</th>
<th>(C) Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background Information</td>
<td>A1*</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Organization and Management</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Development</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>B4</td>
<td>C4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision: Safety and Discipline</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>B5</td>
<td>C5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy</td>
<td>A6</td>
<td>B6</td>
<td>C6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and Participation</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>B7</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language: A Multicultural Focus</td>
<td>A8</td>
<td>B8</td>
<td>C8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources and Special Provisions</td>
<td>A9</td>
<td>B9</td>
<td>C9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Code for Headings

1-Background Information
2-School Organization and Management
3-Staff
4-Staff Development
5-Supervision: Safety and Discipline
6-Curriculum: Program and Pedagogy
7-Communication and Participation
8-Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus
9-Resources and Special Provisions

Code for Groups

A-Parents
B-Students
C-Staff
1. Background Information

(A1) • Primarily refugee or immigrant minority group individuals
  • English *not* mother tongue for majority of people.

(B1) • Either refugee or immigrant minority group individuals or first generation Canadian.
  • English *not* mother tongue for majority of people.

(C1) • Primarily Canadian-born individuals
  • English is first language for majority of individuals.

2. School Organization and Management

(A2) • Opportunities to give input, i.e., books, curriculum, resources, expenditures

(B2) • No response in this area

(C2) • Central office assistance with registration procedures and translations
  • Assistance with tracking and monitoring of documentation, extended absences, absentee parents
  • Improved methods of new student class placement and orientation

3. Staff

(A3) • Hire staff representative of community

(B3) • No response in this area

(C3) • Increase total number of teaching staff at school
  • Increase level of multiethnic representation
  • Appoint community liaison staff
  • Increase the number of men on staff

4. Staff Development

(A4) • Provide staff with multicultural in-service workshop

(B4) • No response in this area

(C4) • Provide staff with multicultural in-service workshops
5. Supervision: Safety and Discipline

(A5)  • Increase student supervision at recess and lunch breaks
      • Enclose school ground boundaries
      • Enlist parent volunteers to assist with supervision
      • Implement a student detention room

(B5)  • Maintain student conflict mediator program
      • Initiate a Hall Monitor program
      • Concern for neighbourhood safety
      • Concern for in-class safety re: taunting, weapons and extortion
      • Increase number of supervised extra-curricular activities

(C5)  • Continue to communicate Safe Schools policy
      • Continue with student conflict mediator program
      • Increase community awareness
      • Implement pro-active anti-discrimination programs

6. Curriculum: Programs and Pedagogy

(A6)  • Communication requested of school syllabus and pedagogy
      • Communication of board and Ministry of education expectations and student-progress reporting methods
      • Communication of homework policy
      • Use of student agenda planners conducted on a formal basis
      • Increase student use of computers, add variety of languages to software
      • Increase extensions to program: guest speakers, and activities

(B6)  • Develop 'helper notes' for students receiving ESL support
      • Enlist student mentors to assist with program and remediation
      • In-service teachers on new student needs, i.e. to speak slower to those learning English

(C6)  • Communicate syllabus and levels of expectations to parents
      • Address concerns regarding level of program versus level of student comprehension and ability
      • Address language needs: first language practice opportunities, orientation program basic skills program, pacing of class program
      • Consider student placement in French classes on an individual needs basis
      • Address concerns regarding student placements; grade and age in comparison to
language and ability
• Address concerns regarding school stance on student retention if program not complete by end of school year.
• Design programs for family interaction based on perceived need and accessibility, i.e. design language-based lessons incorporating television as a motivator for program activities

7. Communication and Participation

(A7) • Increase frequency of school-home communication and information regarding: student progress school activities, functions syllabus content and level of expectations; and school policies such as behaviour and homework
• Increase frequency of telephone calls from school to home
• Increase teacher-to-home visitations
• Increase frequency of translated written communication
• Increase accessibility to translators for school information and interviews
• More detailed information about upcoming school meetings and ensuing minutes
• Invite parents to teach staff about different ethnic group traditions
• Invite 'stay-at-home' grandparents to assist at school, i.e. first language classes, craft classes, and remediation groups
• Offer child care when school-parent meetings are scheduled
• Invite parents to participate in community pot-luck meals prior to meetings
• Continue to offer focus group opportunities for parents to provide school input

(B7) • Parents require more information regarding school operations and activities
• Parents have restricted time schedules which impede their interactions with the school
• Parents experience difficulties interacting with school due to language barriers, a lack of proficiency in English language exists
• Assist new students with adjustment and orientation to the school

(C7) • Offer courses to parents regarding school operations, policies and procedures
• Offer parents sessions and outings related to Canada, i.e. culture and climate
• Address language barriers to communication via translators, translate written correspondence and community liaison personnel
• Establish a 'common ground' of interaction; activities where parents can interact within the school that require minimal language and/or minimal background knowledge
• Personally invite parents, already known to staff, to participate in activities and to invite other parents to become involved
• Make accommodations for those areas felt to be barriers to partnerships: time, language and knowledge of the system
• Provide opportunities to receive parent input and develop a community 'grapevine' for purposes of sharing information
• Smaller class sizes, where possible would permit teachers more time to address individual student concerns
• Monitor frequency and expense of fundraisers

8. Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

(A8) • Increase student knowledge of history and geography
  • Provide small, basic skills classes to new students, especially in English and mathematics either during day or in evenings, on weekends or in summer months
  • Provide classes in additional languages to enhance student facility in mother tongues
  • Establish a qualified ESL teacher, on staff, as a cultural representative for staff, students and parents
  • Provide students with opportunities to learn about the traditions and beliefs of other cultures
  • Offer ESL and first language support to newly registered students in kindergarten and grade one

(B8) • Incorporate student mentors to assist with translations, where needed
  • Provide opportunities to speak mother tongue, either through remediation classes, or extra-curricular programs
  • Develop a new student orientation program

(C8) • Establish in-house translators at the school, whenever possible
  • Strive to reflect communities cultural and language profile when hiring new staff
  • Support efforts to change staffing formulas to increase support of school’s ESL population
  • Provide short-term, basic skill classes to children, where possible to enhance English and mathematics understanding
  • Consider modifications to individual student timetables, i.e. whether or not a newly registered child should be enrolled in French classes when only at introductory stage of learning basic English skills
  • Consider regrouping classes to reflect ability and language needs rather than age and grade, i.e. cross-grade or vertical groupings of students
  • Investigate program needs with respect to individual student completion of syllabus and possible retention at a particular grade level


(A9) • No response in this area

(B9) • No response in this area
(C9) • Purchase additional resources to support student learning, i.e. low vocabulary, high interest
• Purchase resources for library reflective of community cultural profile
• Purchase resource written in various languages
• Purchase computer software programs, for student use, in various languages
• Enlist input from parents when selecting additional resources for classrooms and library
• Provide information to staff regarding special accommodations for student needs, such as areas for prayer
• Provide new staff with information regarding community profile and needs
• Encourage information sharing between schools, cross-school intervention, with respect to diverse school settings; such as differences in language, culture, traditions, as well as similarities that exist between children from any school
Chapter Five: The Language Policy

5.1 Background Information

A school language policy or a school department's language policy may need to support different students at different times, and in different settings, with recommendations directed at specific areas of their expressive, transactional, and affective use of oral and written language (Corson, 1993, p. 175).

Data gathered from this school community illustrated a culturally diverse population, a plethora of minority immigrant and refugee groups representative of numerous countries, cultures, traditions languages and educational experiences. The profile of this neighbourhood was one of a multiethnic community, that is, many marginalized groups immersed in a society and educational system based on a white bourgeois foundation. Numerous students exhibited little or no proficiency in English, the language of instruction; they reflected the many faces evident today in Canada's pluralistic society. These youngsters are learning together in settings that are both multicultural and multilingual, a situation that educators must recognize and address in their efforts to support student learning. Education is undergoing a transformation: teachers are being asked to develop programs to address the unique needs of the children with respect to their learning and acculturization within the school community. "Working with minority children is often more than a skill, it is an act of cultural fairness." (Corson, 1993, p. 179)

During the data gathering sessions with staff from this school board, a sense of obligation was revealed, in conjunction with a frustration level, where teachers wanted to provide the optimal programs for children to enable them to perform at their best levels, while meeting with success. Difficulties were noted in various capacities; however, the impact of language upon student performance and interaction were pivotal concerns to each group interviewed. All
community members acknowledged the personal struggle to succeed and the need to establish a level of power for the facilitation of program and social interaction.

It is in the classrooms that the real issues and complexities of responding positively to ethnic diversity in society are emerging and being confronted constructively. (Willey, 1984, p. 33)

At the time of the study, the numerous languages represented by the school's population were not recognized in program, nor in daily interactions of the teaching and learning situations. English was the only language given any power or dominance within this school culture.

Schools and other symbolic institutions contribute to the reproduction of inequality by devising a curriculum that rewards the 'cultural capital' of the dominant classes and systematically devalues that of the lower classes. (Mehan, 1992, p. 4)

With respect to Mehan's (1992) reference to rewarding cultural capital, this school operated as a white bourgeois educational system. The experiences, background knowledge and cultural norms of white children born, raised and educated in Ontario formed the foundation of the school norms and style of program implementation. Staff concerns extended beyond student success in the classroom, and student proficiency in English, to the community at large; appreciation of family histories and an increase in parental involvement toward the development of shared understandings and expectations for students.

The school's ability and willingness to recognize the cultural and linguistic experiences that students bring to school and that give meaning to their lives encourage all students to develop positive attitudes towards minority languages and their communities. (Common Curriculum, 1993, p. 31)

The staff and community of this school worked together, collaboratively, at the school's inception to develop a philosophy, or mission statement. The mission was developed solely for this school as, "...each school's context of community is so different and will ask for different
approaches." (Corson, 1990, p. 23) Together they established four aspiration statements: developing positive attitudes; respecting individual differences; creating cooperative environments and reaching one's highest potential. Essentially, student self-esteem and success drove the premise for the mission statement. Pursuant to working with the community, the researcher suggested that the staff consider the statement of respecting individual differences be broadened to include group differences due to the expanse of cultural representation in the school "...teachers need to be clear about the school philosophy before policy making begins." (Corson, 1990, p. 3) Thus, establishing a written language policy to further enhance and support the vision for this school could be recognized as a viable mechanism in furthering student growth and community partnership.

The very act of making a policy then, can, ...attend to the essential 'aimlessness' that most of us feel for a good deal of the time and replace it with a rationally based commitment. (Corson, 1990, p. 57)

The formulation of this language policy will serve to encompass needs that extend beyond acquisition of standard language to a degree of proficiency. Many facets of language and its impact upon student learning were investigated during the data gathering processes with this community. Staff at this school need to continue to be flexible and committed to student growth and learning.

The benefits of a policy address sociocultural interactions and standard language acquisition. Furthermore, the policy should be established to recognize the students' first languages and the need to develop strong foundations in one's mother tongue.

...teachers should place value upon the language that children bring to school, and use that as a starting point for education, not as something to be changed or eliminated. (Corson, 1990, p. 76)
The policy has to be acknowledged as a mechanism for change at this school, a way by which to facilitate student success in language and academic achievement. Recognizing the student's first language can serve to better the pupil's performance not only in gaining a solid foundation in their first language, but in their acquisition of the second language. The staff at this school need to appreciate the importance of first language maintenance and its direct relation to student achievement. Teachers, as leaders, have the potential to change the culture of the school.

This study showed that when students of non-standard English registered at this school, they were assigned to a class where additional resource staff (ESL) were available to offer support. The amount of service, or assistance, was determined primarily by two factors, age and perceived proficiency in English. Although students do progress in their personal acquisition of language, it does take time.

Research shows that newly arrived immigrant students achieve conversational fluency in the language of their receiving environment in approximately one and a half to two years, but require a minimum of five to seven years to become proficient in abstract thought in the language to be learned and to function academically like native speakers. (Cummins and Swain, as cited in Ministry of Education and Training, 1993, p. 14)

The need for an established written language policy at this school is supported by the very nature of the student population, the characteristics of the students' backgrounds, the diversity of cultures and mother tongues represented. The complexities of educational and ethnic histories of the children contribute to a policy to prevent systemic barriers and the inequitable treatment of one group over another. This school requires a policy to support student learning and beyond. As Corson (1990) stated a language policy across the curriculum can serve,
...as an instrument for improving service to children; taking steps to understand unique language situations that prevail in schools and language needs of students. (p. 21)

Having assembled the data about this school's setting supportive of the construction of a language policy (see Table 4.6 in Chapter 4) the subsequent action is to define a process by which to formulate the ensuing policy into a working document for the community.

5.2 Policy Development

To implement a newly designed language policy, staff have to concur that change is warranted. The suggestions and areas of concern identified by all participants, as reported in Chapter Four, are supportive to the formation of a set of guidelines, or policy. Essentially, the comments demonstrated a movement towards action. The willingness of staff, students and parents to participate in the study reflected their interest and concern for their school community.

The policy, then has been designed to include community participation by all participants in a constructive fashion. At this school, involving the parents in the participation of the policy will be vital to its effectiveness both for the benefit of increased parental partnerships and to support student learning. As stated in one of the staff interviews, the school has discovered that selective invitations for parental involvement have been beneficial. Therefore, a starting point could be to encourage those influential members of this ethnic community, who have demonstrated their interest in one capacity or another, to come forth and participate. The ensuing policy suggests that the primary source of this encouragement, or invitations to participate, should be the responsibility of the school's administration. This community, demonstrated a sincere interest in being able to take part in the data gathering sessions. The high return of the
surveys, 45.8%, in addition to 124 requests for interviews illustrated the parents' desire to participate in their children's school through their willingness to offer input, concerns and suggestions. Ultimately, their suggestions, as per Table 4.6 in Chapter 4, suggest a policy of this design to: foster communications within a multilingual student body; support student achievement and encourage an active partnership between the school and its diverse community.

Pursuant to gathering the data, suggestions for change, leading to a document of this nature, were identified by all participants in this educational community. In demonstrating their interest and by participating in the data gathering sessions, members of this community demonstrated an interest in incorporating change in their institution and community as a method by which to best meet student needs.

Furthermore, although it is suggested that one person oversee the policy, effective implementation can occur when the efforts are collaborative. To be most effective, the people who put the plan into effect should peruse the sections and choose those which they feel are most pertinent at this time and begin to work on just a few. As facets of the language policy are incorporated into the school's operation and progress is favourable, then other strategies can be implemented and developed. Caution should be exercised in that the selected areas should be seen as needed at this point time and will thus be well-received by others. Otherwise, the school community may balk at attempts to go forward with the policy, feel overwhelmed or attempt to undermine the process. To enlist the support of others, the policy must be seen as both necessary and beneficial. The purpose is to create a process by which to decrease obstacles, not create them. All stakeholders will want to feel the policy is there to support them in their efforts to grow in this community. The policy should support a sense of shared responsibilities and shared
directions. As set out below, the policy itself appears in italics, with reference notes, pointing to
the evidence supporting each set of guidelines, shown in normal typeface.
5.3 The Policy

5.3.1 Background Information

5.3.1.1 This school is built upon four aspiration statements:

* Developing Positive Attitudes
* Respecting Individual and Group Differences
* Creating Cooperative Environments
* Reaching One's Highest Potential

These statements are the footings that support the school's philosophy upon which all policies are constructed. This school's population represents a highly multiethnic community.

5.3.1.2 Policy development results from a collaborative design created by staff, students and community. Additional support staff and external individuals with expertise in this area are called upon, as required.

5.3.1.3 All policy development fulfills Board policy procedure and approval prior to implementation.

The information source for 1.1 was the school's mission statement referred to by one of the school's principals, SI-9, during the interview stage of data collection. Further background information, regarding the participants, was taken from survey, interview and focus group data as summarized in Table 4.6, chapter 4, A1, B1 and C1.

We've had people coming this year from China, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Kuwait, Korea, U.S.A., Pakistan, Jamaica, Guyana and Hong Kong. SI-14

5.3.2 School Organization and Management

5.3.2.1 Coordination of policy development for implementation and review will be the responsibility of a school-based committee of interested teachers and community members,
ultimately as formulated via the School Council. This committee will be chaired by a school staff person, who will co-ordinate meetings to facilitate components of the policy on a timely basis, as appropriate and agreed upon by committee members. All initiatives require final approval by the Principal of the school.

5.3.2.2 Registration Procedures will be simplified by:

a) translation of forms, letters and newsletters of importance,

b) developing and calling upon a network of parents available to translate and interpret registration forms,

c) facilitate the development of a student reception area where newly arrived students will receive intensive intervention and assessment from the school's support staff.

Activities will also include orientation sessions regarding school expectations, routines and procedures,

d) develop a Parents' Resource Directory outlining services available, explanations of program and directions regarding how to access information. These booklets will be provided in various languages and will also be made available in a section in the school's library dedicated to parents in the community.

5.3.2.3 The Support Service team, responsible for overseeing all special education services at the school, will investigate the possibility of having all forms and letters reproduced in the languages most prevalent in the school; for example, Cantonese and Hindi.

Interviews with staff resulted in the formation of the aforementioned guidelines. Specifically, the data as summarized in Table 4.6, C2 reports that staff identified registration procedures as an area in need of revision to ease the work for the office staff. Furthermore, changes to the procedures could also simplify the process for the parents with respect to
paperwork and language.

We should have a central registration place where we have people that speak different languages and go over all the forms. SI-14

5.3.3 Staffing

5.3.3.1 Coordination of staffing needs will continue to be the responsibility of the school's administration, as per the Board of Education's directives. However, particular attention will be given to the unique circumstances of the school and the recommendations and suggestions from the Board's Race Relations/Equity Coordinator, as well as input generated from the community.

5.3.3.2 In accordance with Board policy, all additional hiring will be selected from any existing surplus lists. Qualified staff fluent in non-standard languages and who may represent members of this diverse community will be given first consideration.

5.3.3.3 Present staff deployment will be reviewed annually and re-assigned to meet program needs. If necessary, factors to be considered will include the community profile of the student body at the time. If there has been a significant change in the groups represented then there may be a need to alter first language classes, increase resources and broaden, or decrease, the vertical groupings with respect to class size and subject area.

5.3.3.4 The implementation of this policy will require additional support through funding and staffing. Therefore, program alterations will only occur as needed, supported and feasible.

Monitoring and review of the program, are essential and should occur on a regular basis (yearly, if not more frequently, as required).

Both parents and staff supported policy guidelines to address hiring concerns, as reported
in Table 4.6, A3 and C3. Essentially, both groups expressed an interest in having more teachers on staff preferably representative of the diversity within the community.

...if you could find teachers who speak that language, for language classes ...That would be a real benefit. SI-6

5.3.4 Staff Development

5.3.4.1 Staff will continue to be provided with Board of Education in-service program training, as scheduled.

5.3.4.2 Language consultants, Community Group representatives and Race Relation officers will be invited to present workshops to staff, based on needs. These sessions will be offered in a variety of formats. In-School workshops to be held after school and on Professional Development Days, Train-the-Trainer workshops (where appropriate), guest speakers at general meetings for the community, such as School Council or Parent-Teacher meetings noon hour lectures, and when available, staff representation at conferences outside of the school setting and, or, visitations to other schools and related settings. In-service workshops will be offered on a continual basis as deemed necessary by individual or group requests and as determined by changing school dynamics, Board directives or Ministry mandates.

5.3.4.3 Where comparable programs are being offered, interested staff may be provided opportunities to visit other locations, and, in turn, share information upon their return to their own school location. In-school class coverage will be provided, in lieu of hiring supply teachers when these visits occur. Information sharing will take place through train-the-trainer format workshops, at the school. Classes will be covered or rearranged in a manner to permit teachers to attend these sessions being offered by their colleagues. In some instances, if appropriate,
information will be shared at the regularly scheduled staff meetings or at the school's administrative meetings, attended by representatives of each teaching division who are, subsequently, then responsible for relaying pertinent information to staff at their individual divisional meetings. Other information-sharing formats may include: memos to staff in a weekly notice coordinated by the principal; articles in the school newsletter, or notices posted in the appropriate areas of the teacher workroom in the school.

5.3.4.4 The committee on school/community partnerships will continue to operate within the school to develop programs, research, resources and strategies, that will, in turn, be shared with all staff. It is recommended that a member of the support staff oversee this committee, suggested individuals would include a guidance counsellor, a DART (Diagnostic and Resource Teacher), an ESL teacher, and so forth. This committee will be charged with transmitting information regarding their efforts in program, research, and other areas of concern, to all school personnel.

Suggestions for staff development activities were voiced by both parents and staff as stated in Table 4.6, A4 and C4. Primarily, in-service workshops with a focus on multicultural awareness were recommended.

...Our board has not been proactive in making staff aware of the kinds of strategies they should have when they enter a school that is so diverse in its population. SI-6

5.3.5 Resources

5.3.5.1 Supervision of students during non-class time will be reviewed and re-structured, as needed. Staggered entry and/or recess times will be examined as alternatives. As well, a designated detention room will be established.
5.3.5.2 Student Conflict Mediator programs and buddy groupings of older classes with younger will be developed as a proactive discipline strategy.

5.3.5.3 A school staff member will solicit the support and involvement of a community member to evaluate safety concerns at, to and from the school. Supervision schedules will be re-assessed, and programs such as The Walking School Bus, will be considered for implementation. (The Walking School Bus is a parent-organized group who share the responsibility of walking children who are neighbours, to and from school. This project was designed by Greenist City, a non-profit organization in Toronto).

Supervision was identified as an area of concern by all participants. The issues included: safety on the schoolgrounds; in the classes and on the neighbourhood streets. Further to the guidelines, to reflect data summarized in Table 4.6, A5, B5 and C5, the researcher would suggest that community members may want to investigate a Block Parent program in their neighbourhood. This municipal program shows parents how to organize their community as safe homes; places where children can go if they do not feel safe while walking down the street, for any reason. The parents who participate identify their homes with signs that are visible to the children on the street. This suggestion is put forth to support a concern brought about during the student narrative, SN-1, that some children do not feel completely safe walking through their neighbourhood.

I hadn’t noticed in the before year, but there were more stealing, more fights after school, etc. I no longer felt safe to walk the streets alone. SN-1

5.3.6 Consultation and Involvement

5.3.6.1 Peer Tutors and Reading Buddy programs will be maintained. Older students will work as mentors with younger pupils to provide remediation, in various subject areas, and to promote literacy.
5.3.6.2 Staff will meet with board of education personnel and community members to determine student needs with respect to French classes in the school. This group will analyze needs and, if needed, develop guidelines for possible exemptions.

5.3.6.3 a) Staff and community members will investigate the possibility of first language homework, or remedial rooms, being set-up in the school. Community members may be asked to volunteer their assistance and translation services, during noon hour or on an after-school hours basis.

b) Staff will co-ordinate a homework strategy whereby students are expected to attend to their studies at home, on a nightly basis. In addition to the use of a daily planner, expectations may include: completion of assignments; preparation for tests; organization of notes; as well as review of subject content notes.

c) Support staff will co-ordinate various subject area, context-based, 'Helper Notes' which students may access for study or remedial purposes.

5.3.6.4 Computer use will be extended by:

a) student creation of a school web page,

b) student personal input on cultural/heritage information for cross-grade and individual pupil access,

c) student-made cultural slide shows for in-service use with students, staff, parents and community members,

d) incorporation of a student-buddy, cross-grade, e-mail system within the school where 'buddies' would be encouraged to 'talk' at least once a week.

5.3.6.5 Staff will offer workshops for parents to share information regarding the school
syllabus and pedagogy.

5.3.6.6 Staff will develop programs for families to incorporate in the home that are supportive of classroom curriculum. For example, language activities based on material from television programs deemed to be appropriate.

Curriculum concerns raised by each group who participated in the study, as outlined in Table 4.6, A6, B6, and C6, have been developed into program specific guidelines for this policy.

We like homework and we favour that the teacher give homework because the kids become so busy they don't have time to sit in front of the T.V. To complete their work is good, it is a responsibility. PFE-8

5.3.7 Communication and Participation

5.3.7.1 School Administration will review fundraising efforts to reduce frequency and overlap of these programs.

5.3.7.2 Administration will adjust scheduled times of parent meetings to reflect both daytime and evening sessions. Provisions will be made, as required, to have translators attend these sessions.

5.3.7.3 A list of students who have babysitting certification will be organized and kept on file in the school's office. This list will be accessed and services called upon when parents with pre-school children scheduled meetings or participate in in-school volunteer activities.

5.3.7.4 The school budget will be adjusted according to financial needs for the hiring of translators for both meetings and written transcriptions. In this light, members of the community will be hired wherever possible. Additional monies will be allocated for occasional teacher needs. The means by which to reorganize the set budget to accommodate these efforts will be
done by the school's administration in consultation with the committee responsible for this facet of the language policy. However, translators will be encouraged to volunteer their time, if possible. Enhancing community involvement while addressing translation needs will be a key objective when enlisting community member services.

5.3.7.5 Representatives of the community will be invited to participate on the School Council, the First Languages Committee and the Resource Centre Book Selection Committee. Where individuals do not come forth to run for elected positions on the School Council, or to volunteer time on the aforementioned committees, school personnel will initiate personal contact with individuals who have demonstrated interest, concern or involvement in the school, at one level or another, and invite them to participate.

5.3.7.6 Community members' suggestions and involvement will be solicited for Heritage Clubs, International Day activities and similar learning opportunities, such as intergenerational programs.

5.3.7.7 Community members will be invited to: volunteer in classroom activities; first language programs, such as reading to children in their first language; or offering students subject remediation in their mother tongue; accompany staff on professional development outings designed to increase cultural understanding; and to offer presentations during staff in-service workshops in this area.

5.3.7.8 Community members will be invited to provide translation services, as required, at meetings, for letters, memos and student registration procedures etc.

5.3.7.9 Community members will be assisted in the development of a first language grapevine telephone system to facilitate parental interactions between one another and the
school.

5.3.7.10 Community members will be invited to accompany teachers on class trips. The purpose for their attendance will serve three needs: supervision, language translations and an opportunity to support their children's educational experiences through direct involvement.

5.3.7.11 The school will develop and advertise an 'open door' policy to welcome and encourage participation of community members.

5.3.7.12 Community members will be invited to attend curriculum planning sessions. Input regarding first language modifications, or adjustments, to program will be encouraged in an effort to adjust the syllabus to best support student learning.

5.3.7.13 Community members will be encouraged to design, develop and implement student clubs and interest groups which would be conducted during non-instructional times. Language classes, crafts, cooking, dancing, games and sessions in sharing cultural traditions represent topic areas to develop.

5.3.7.14 Annually, community members will be invited to participate in school-organized focus groups, information-sharing sessions. Translators will be enlisted to interpret for those groups.

5.3.7.15 School representatives will contact the local Community Centre staff to co-ordinate facets of this policy regarding student programs and community involvement:

a) Suggested program offerings for parents and students are as follows:

Parent and Seniors Courses

* Adult ESL

* Parenting
Subject & Program areas - French, Computer, Special Education, Extended Student Absences, Helping with Homework, Staying Informed, How to get Involved, Safe Arrival Program, and so forth.

* Accessing Services and Agencies

* Setting-up a Block Parent Program

* Setting-up parent communication networks

Parents and Seniors and Experiential Learning

* Museums

* Galleries

* Symphonies

* Theatres

* Student 'school day shadowing' opportunities

* Social Opportunities: Potluck dinners, evening get-togethers.

Students

* Babysitting Certification Courses

* Academic tutorial sessions

* Playground games and opportunities

* Language immersion classes

* Socialization: Making Friends

5.3.7.16 As curriculum guidelines are developed by the Board of Education to support program, as well as the 1997 Ministry of Education guidelines for mathematics and language expectations, staff and community members will meet to review materials and plan
implementation strategies reflective of the community profile. Where program expectations are not felt to be appropriate nor feasible at a particular time, staff will seek consultant input prior to making changes. However, the objective to best meet student learning will be held at the forefront of all decisions to alter program or adjust standards for expectations and accountability.

5.3.7.17 The staff will work closely with the Race Relations consultant to ensure that curriculum guidelines and expectations are being delivered in the classroom programs. A 'Curriculum Preview' will be sent home monthly, summarizing that month's syllabus and objectives for each subject area with suggested supportive strategies showing how parents can help.

Community partnerships were pivotal to the objectives of the study. Ultimately, increased school-home partnerships were seen to enhance and support student learning. The areas of involvement are extensive and the policy guidelines have been developed to address very specific concerns, as illustrated in a summary of the data in Chapter 4, Table 4.6, A7 and C7. As programs and needs may change, policy guidelines will then require modifications to continue to address concerns effectively.

I would like to find some way of developing more rapport with parents in the community. SI-18

5.3.8 Language Needs: A Multicultural Focus

5.3.8.1 The present model of age appropriate grade placement will be maintained for elective programs (Arts, sports, and others).

5.3.8.2 Staff will work collaboratively to develop cross-grade or vertical groupings of students for Language Arts and Mathematics. (Other subjects will be modified, as required, over a staggered timeline).
Vertical Groupings will be established in an effort to:

* accommodate individual student levels of ability and achievement

* enhance the length of time for student-teacher association

* facilitate opportunities for students to progress into the next grouping level, while working at their own rate of learning (and rate of language acquisition, where necessary). Time, date or month of year will not be the determining factor for student advancement in these areas,

* coordinate curriculum resources suitable for particular groupings, such as high interest low vocabulary materials or perhaps the incorporation of first language materials. A Resource Centre Book Selection Committee will be organized and coordinated by the teacher-librarian in conjunction with the staff member overseeing the implementation of the Language Policy for the school.

5.3.8.3 First language remedial groupings will be initiated as warranted, and as can be accommodated via staffing and community volunteers. These sessions will be coordinated by a First Languages Committee whose members will represent teaching staff, support staff and community members. A teaching staff member will serve as chairperson for this committee.

Sessions may be offered:

* to provide academic remediation classes, at all grade levels or through cross-grade groupings

* for reading or discussion groups

* to provide opportunities for a sharing of different cultural backgrounds, practices and languages.
5.3.8.4 Present staff will be invited to share personal subject and language expertise, as needed, in cross-grade groupings and first language classes. Organization of these classes and groupings will be determined with the staff in a collaborative fashion. Timetables will then be arranged by the school’s administrative team consisting of representatives from each of the divisions, support staff and administration. Efforts will be made to control or limit class sizes in general.

5.3.8.5 Staff will collaborate to determine the necessary in-service and training required to support and facilitate newly developed cross-grade programs and first language classes. The school staff representative, overseeing the language policy development, will then relay the staff requests for in-service to the school’s administration for approval of topic and costs plus feasibility.

5.3.8.6 The school will continue to make application to the board of education’s central office staff responsible for Race Relations and Ethnocultural Equity to receive project funding for school-based endeavours pertaining to the support of student learning through awareness of multiethnic programs and partnerships.

5.3.8.7 Parent/Teacher meetings will be led by two or three speakers, dependent upon language needs. Where required, each leader will meet with parents in small groups, all using the same agenda but translating to the mother tongue of the particular groups.

5.3.8.8 The staff will investigate the possibility of increasing the frequency and availability of first language assessment at the school. This will be the responsibility of the individual responsible for overseeing student support services division in the school. Coordination of assessments and evaluative instruments will be done in consultation with the
consultant stationed at the area office.

5.3.8.9 Staffing redeployment will require revised timetables and possibly individual job assignments. All staff should be notified of any new directions and offered the opportunity to stay on the staff roster or submit a request to transfer to another school.

5.3.8.10 The policy directives require increased communication with the main board of education office, the area office and the consultants in various subject areas, special education and ESL.

The time required to reorganize and implement phases of the policy should be acknowledged and provisions should be made to accommodate the efforts of the staff. Administration and Student Support Services individuals should consider designing a new model for the deployment and effectiveness of the ESL staff in servicing students. Present data indicates, that, on average, one-third of the student population is eligible for ESL assistance, at one level or another. To meet the needs of these students, while they are also attending regular classes, may necessitate a regrouping of some services presently available.

The theme encompassed by ‘Language Needs’ was significant to the study and essential to the language policy. Repeatedly, inadequacy of time, information and language were cited as barriers to furthering school-home interactions in this diverse community. Language needs permeated all facets of interaction more so than any other data gathered in the study. The preceding guidelines were developed to address concerns and issues resulting from the research. A summary of the data regarding language needs was compiled in Table 4.6, A8, B8 and C8, Chapter 4.

I came from India... I bought a home in Scarborough and then I moved to this area. ...We speak Punjabi at home; the children can speak the language fluently.

PFP-1
5.3.9 Resources and Special Provisions

5.3.9.1 A request will be made for additional funds to be channelled to the school's library and textbook budget lines. These extra monies will be directed to the purchase of first language resources to support classroom program and for general reading materials in the library. These resources are to include books, at a variety of reading levels, as well as tapes, videos and other visual materials or educational games.

5.3.9.2 The office budget will be reviewed to consider the purchase of computer software in language representative of the mother tongues spoken within the community. Newsletters, Special Education documents, emergency notes and confidential letters will then be translated, as needed. The purpose of these translations will be to ensure that information conveyed to parents is fully understood. At the time of this policy's inception, it is recommended that the school purchase software applications in Cantonese and Hindi. The language selections may need to change, in time, dependent upon the evolution of the population representation of the community.

5.3.9.3 First language committees, as per section 8.3, will contact community services, local groups and agencies to solicit ideas and materials supportive of classroom curriculum and program directives.

5.3.9.4 Administration will review criteria to determine the status of this school in terms of eligibility for exceptional recognition, additional funds, breakfast programs, corporate support or donations of consumable items or computer equipment, additional personnel beyond the limit as prescribed by the board of education's staffing formula.

Although the Resources and Special Provisions guidelines address issues gleaned by
staff, Table 4.6, C9, the researcher would like to emphasize that as policy guidelines are implemented needs for additional resources may surface. The aforementioned guidelines are not exhaustive; to fully implement a language policy as this, resources must come from many sources and be accessed, as required.

...there aren’t enough dual language books... There’s a shortage in getting those resources. SI-18

5.4 Conclusion

A review of the services model offered, in conjunction with the diversity of the school community’s population, will serve to indicate when and where revisions to this policy will be required. The document is a fluid, working, practices model, a vehicle to carry information between community and school to support students in their educational careers.

This language policy has been designed specifically for this school to reflect its unique needs as illustrated through the data gathered from representatives of this educational community. The policy should continue to remain unique to this school community via a constant review of needs and ensuing changes. While working within the inherent boundaries of the board of education, the essential determinants for the success of this policy will include: the recognition and accommodation of student needs; responses to parental requests for programs to broaden their understanding of various culture groups, values and traditions; increased efforts to share system information and a request for parental input to support student growth and education.

...the school favours interactions in which all partners (including parents, students and members of the community) are involved... (Changing Perspective, 1992, 11)
Chapter Six: Summary

6.1 The Problem and Research Orientation

The purpose of this study was to identify a process by which a policy could be designed to address relationships within problematic school areas (Appendix F). The premise was that a policy be developed for the study population, the school and its community responsive to the wishes and interests of the stakeholders.

This study examined the unique characteristics and needs of a community comprised, primarily, of refugees or immigrant minority groups. These individuals spoke of their personal histories, and the experiences they encountered, while en route to this country. Together, with the researcher, they investigated the impact of their travels on their acculturization process into Canadian society. The participants' comprehension of the Ontario educational system and level of involvement with their child's school were two key areas of inquiry. Their struggles of relocation and adjustment were further complicated as they were not conversant in the English language, thus, an overriding investigation of language needs permeated each level of the research.

Regardless of the obstacles encountered by members of this school community, the parents' sentiments revealed that they subscribed to the same objective as the school staff; both groups conveyed a shared sense of purpose in striving to support student learning. A school-based language policy, designed from evidence provided by the participants, was developed with the intent to translate concerns and requests into action strategies. Thus, the aim of the research was to formulate a policy reflective of the identified needs, a policy that could be implemented in a fashion to further support student learning. A second objective was to enhance the shaping of partnerships between the school and community.
A variety of methods were utilized in gathering the data for this practices model, the language policy. A community survey was distributed to the study population, in conjunction with interviews, focus groups and narratives. As well, translators were employed to assist with each stage of data collection, where required. The resulting guideline, located in Chapter 5, is meant to serve as a vehicle which school and community members can implement to address identified needs, constructively. The format of this working document is unique to this school population; a fluid process which should be modified as the needs of the population change.

6.2 Results

The framework for the policy resulted from an analysis of information collected from community members, parents, students, school staff, and board of education personnel. At the initial stage of research, a survey was sent to members of the community to develop a profile of the area. The surveys were sent home with the 'oldest and only' children in each class at the school in the study. Upon request, these surveys were sent home in Cantonese or Punjabi. Included in the survey was an invitation to join a focus group, or be interviewed on an individual basis. Once again, participants were given the opportunity to be interviewed in their preferred language. These surveys, interviews and focus groups formed the foundation for the data collection.

Representatives of board of education personnel, school staff and students participated in interviews and focus groups. Further to these methods, one student submitted a personal narrative account of her experiences in this educational community. Participation in any segment of the research project was always voluntary and all names were kept confidential. The response
at the participants was favourable: they welcomed the opportunity to state their perceptions, observations and concerns.

The study was remarkable in several respects. It was framed by a community of individuals who were actively involved in the setting, one where the researcher had been employed prior to the initiation of this project. Relationships between some participants were familiar: a few reported having worked together at some point in their career prior to this investigation.

The community itself was unique to this board of education in that most schools had primarily homogeneous, not diverse, communities. The community and the school were, at the time of the study, in the formative stages of development, striving to determine needs and establish partnerships. Very few studies of this nature were available and no other schools had developed a language policy. Thus, the participants had to forge ahead without a preexisting framework to guide their investigations. This study served to clarify the needs of the community for all stakeholders. Subsequently, the language policy delineated action strategies designed to impact favourably upon student learning and school-community partnerships.

6.3 Implications

In keeping with the fast pace of today's society, it is essential that educators strive to provide students with every opportunity to achieve and to meet with success. As global dynamics change, so do educational institutions. Schools are charged with the responsibility of staying current, of identifying directions as they pertain to the learning needs of students. Graduates of the school system need to be well-equipped to function effectively in their lives and in their
communities. All of us live in a far broader community than we ever have; with increased technology and understandings, the world has become much closer. Today, it is an integral part of our fabric to be interconnected to anyone, anywhere, at anytime. Barriers and obstacles to communication and interaction have been removed at a global level. So, now, we need to continue to put forth similar efforts in our school communities. Developing partnerships and striving to work together toward shared goals cannot occur if differences impede, rather than facilitate this process.

Educators are encouraged to experiment with strategies to further communication and understanding within their school communities. By gathering data from all stakeholders, parents and teachers can develop a more intimate level of understanding, as well as, a deeper level of communication. The ensuing rapport contributes to the fostering of shared goals and the construction of strategies to address student and community needs. The language policy developed for this school serves as a model, an identifying process that could be duplicated by other communities regardless of their cultural characteristics. The strategies developed through this process become unique to each school, as they reflect the features of one specific community. Each time a school engages in this process and develops a school policy, a deeper insight into individual needs, as they contribute to continuous improvement, evolves.

Therefore, it is recommended that schools evaluate their present situations and consider tapping into the wealth of information and insight their communities can offer. By implementing a process to extract information and develop a school-based policy, educators can further community partnerships and provide opportunities for student learning. As our appearance changes on a global level so it changes on a smaller, more intimate level within our immediate
surroundings. Taking the time to delve into one's community can enhance partnerships and the quality of service provided to the students.

Meeting with the community is a personal experience that commands respect for all participants. Time, patience and understanding are essential when providing for languages and cultural differences toward establishing a level of mutual respect. Members of a diverse educational community may experience negative feelings if an inability to communicate hampers efforts to be integral members of their immediate societal groups. However, an alienated immigrant minority individual could feel a sense of invitation when provisions and accommodations are made for their unique needs. Many parents interviewed, for this study, expressed a degree of appreciation for their inclusion in the process that, otherwise, would not have been available because of language barriers. Although a language policy is recommended for any school setting it may have the strongest impact within a multiethnic, multicultural milieu.

To paint a comprehensive picture of the community requires an impartial approach to data collection. It is recommended that, in situations where educators initiate data collection, experienced research personnel from the board of education review surveys and interview questions for significance and potential areas of bias. With cautions in place, the researcher establishes a comfort level with the participants, explaining the study's objectives and research methods, prior to initiating the process. All participants should be assured that their input, comments and opinions will be recorded in a non-judgmental fashion. Sensitivity, empathy and respect for individual and group differences, as stated in this school's aspiration statement, are critical to interaction with community members on such an intimate level.
6.4 Conclusion

The investigation of this school community required a significant length of time in order to gather data from all participants. As well, the organization of the project necessitated the support of those who contributed and those responsible for granting approval to the project. Each stage of development required flexibility due to individual schedules, cancelled meetings and changes to staffing and administration. Added to this, the researcher was working with hundreds of individuals in this study population which, therefore, demanded many hours for the organization of interviews and focus groups, as well as survey distribution and collection. To facilitate data gathering methods with non-English speaking individuals required the talents and skills of translators. As previously discussed, the researcher recommends that these people also come from an educational background. Having a knowledge base of the system and language eases explanations and interpretations during information sharing sessions.

The observations, suggestions and recommendations are presented for other school communities who may consider conducting a similar process. To establish a policy requires a thorough investigation of the many facets of the school community. The process should be one where all factors are considered and accounted for. To conduct an investigation of this nature in a highly diverse community is of benefit if the process can be implemented in a smooth and orderly fashion.

The policy, as designed, will now go forth to the school and the school’s board of education for acceptance and implementation. The researcher will first arrange to meet with the director and the research officer of this board of education to share the results and the policy. The objective of this meeting will be to seek approval of the policy for presentation to the school’s
administration, staff and community.

Following this, the school principal will determine which facets of the policy are suitable for implementation at this time. The researcher will offer support, including presentations to staff and community, sharing results and facets of the policy, as requested by the principal.

Using a school-based language policy as a guideline would serve to help any school in moving forward toward meeting goals. Research results can provide more comprehensive understanding which could assist staff in supporting student academic and social needs. In addition the information collected from an investigation into the community could provide staff with clearer directives toward developing partnerships and shared responsibilities for student learning. Educators should take the time to discover what is beyond the front steps of their school and enjoy the benefits of sharing, learning and supporting one another in their community.

Furthermore, in this era of fiscal restraint, a reorganization that is more inclusive and efficient is needed; working smarter not harder means making the best of the situation for everyone involved. Sometimes, when asked to work with less we become more creative and thus feel a sense of pride in our discoveries. To stay current and effective, the policy requires annual review and modification, as necessary. The fluidity of a school-based language policy serves to keep partnerships and learning goals alive.
Appendix A: Community Survey Information

(i) Covering Letter-English

PUBLIC SCHOOL - COMMUNITY SURVEY

Dear Parent and/or Guardian,

You are invited to participate in a school-community survey. The purpose of the study is to develop an accurate profile of the community in order to assist in meeting children's needs and developing parent-school partnerships.

As you may be aware, is a former Vice-Principal of Public School. is gathering this information for Public School in conjunction with her Doctoral studies at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Your name does not go on the survey because your participation is voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Please return this survey to the school by Friday.

will be collecting follow-up information through personal interviews and group discussions with community members, school staff and students. If you would be willing to participate in an interview or group discussion, please complete and sign the form at the bottom of this page, seal it in the envelope and return it with the survey.

The permission slip for interviews and group discussions must be signed and sealed in the envelope if you wish to participate in either of those activities.

Interviews and group discussions will be conducted in English, Hindi and Cantonese.

Your participation and feedback is greatly appreciated. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey. If you have indicated that you are willing to participate in the interviews or group discussions, will contact you to arrange a convenient meeting time.

Thank you for your support in this Public School - Community Survey.

Sincerely,

Principal

PUBLIC SCHOOL - COMMUNITY SURVEY

Please sign and return this section in the attached envelope by Friday.

YES, I am willing to participate in the School - Community Survey.

Please Print
Parent's Name:

Child's Name and Class:

Telephone Number: Home: ( ) Work: ( )

Preferred language for interview or group discussion: English Cantonese Hindi

I am interested in: A Personal Interview A Group Discussion

Participant's Signature:
(ii) Covering Letter-Cantonese

公立學校—社區問卷調查

敬啓者：本校誠邀老師 貴家長參予學校—社區問卷調查。此項調查的主要目的乃是建立一個正確的社區形象，使學校能適切的照顧各學生的需要，並加強家長與學校的合作性。

相信 貴家長都知道， 貴校前任副校長 ：現正替本校收集本問卷的各項調查資料，以便應用於她在安省教育學院修課的博士學位課程。

由於各位可自由參予本問卷調查，所以 貴家長的姓名及各項資料將會絕對保密：

請於五月廿六日 (星期五) 或以前將本問卷交回學校

的跟進工作包括個別面談及會見本區居民、教師、學生，並舉行座談會。請填妥並簽署下列回條，連同問卷放於信封內封口郵回。

如欲參加個別面談或小組座談會，請填妥並簽署回條，並將表格放於信封之內，封密交回。

個人面談及小組座談會將以英文、印度語及粵語舉行

謹此致謝 貴家長撥冗參予填寫本項調查，倘欲 貴家長已答允參加面談或座談會，將於日內再行聯絡。

謝謝 貴家長支持 公立學校—社區問卷調查

此致

貴家長/監護人

校長

一九九五年五月十九日

公立學校—社區問卷調查

敬請簽署此表，並附上附上的信封內於五月廿六日 (星期五) 或以前交回

本人願意參加 學校的個人面談或小組座談會

(以下請以英文正楷填寫)

家長姓名：

學生姓名及班級：

電話號碼：(宅) - ( ) _____________ (辦) - ( ) _____________

個人面談或小組座談會所用語言： 英語 □ 粵語 □ 印度語 □

本人有意參加： 個人面談 □ 及/或 □ 小組座談會

參加者簽名：______________
(iii) Covering Letter-Punjabi

Public School - Community Survey

ਤਸਵੈਰੀ ਮਧ੍ਰਤਰਨ ਜ਼ਿਲਾ - ਸਮਾਚਾਰ ਸੜੀਕਤ

ਸਵਾਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬਾਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਹਮਣ ਦੇ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਦੀistical ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਦੀ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੈ ਇਸ ਸਮਾਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਤਿਲਾਕ ਜ ਹੁਣ ਨਵਾਂ ਕਾਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਮਿਲੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮਾਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤੀ ਦੀ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੂੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ।

ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਕਰਮ ਦੀ ਸਕਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ। 


g proceed
PART ONE: PARENT - SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Section One

* If you have more than one child at the school, please answer the survey thinking about your oldest child.

Code:
VS - Very Satisfied  S - Satisfied  U - Undecided  D - Dissatisfied  VD - Very Dissatisfied  DK - Do not Know

Please circle the code that best represents your answer for each of the following questions.

How satisfied are you with:

- how well your child is doing in English (reading, writing & speaking)?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- how well your child is doing in mathematics?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- how well your child is doing in other subject areas?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- information you receive about the school's curriculum (what your child is expected to learn)?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- information you receive about the school's activities (parent nights, concerts, and so on)?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- the amount of extra help that your child receives at school?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- the extra curricular activities offered at the school (sports, clubs, teams)?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- your child's use of computers as part of the curriculum?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- your child's use of the school library as part of the curriculum?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- the school's homework policy?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- the school's rules and code of behaviour?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- the frequency of communication from your child's teacher (e.g. telephone calls, interviews, newsletters)?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
- the present system of report cards in meeting your needs of how well your child is progressing at school?
  VS  S  U  D  VD  DK
Section Two

Do you belong to the school's Parent - Teacher group?  
YES  
NO

Do you attend Parent - Teacher group meetings/presentations? 
YES  
NO

If you do not attend these meetings, please state why:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Would you attend these meetings at the school if they were conducted in your own language? 
YES  
NO

How do you mainly learn about the school's activities (what your child tells you, talking with the teacher, newsletters, meetings, other)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Would you prefer to receive information from the school in your own language, whenever possible? 
Preferred language -  
YES  
NO

In what areas do you feel parents are currently involved in decision-making at Public School (e.g. curriculum, fundraising, policies, and so forth)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In what areas do you feel parents should play a more active role in decision-making?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

In what ways do you feel Public School could be improved?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What is Public School doing well (strengths)?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
PART TWO: PARENT BACKGROUND INFORMATION
The information gathered from this section will provide an overview of those living in the Public School community.

Please state your country of birth - ________________________________________________________

If not born in Canada, please indicate year you immigrated to this country - ________________

What factors influenced you to settle in the community? (Please circle as many as apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relatives</th>
<th>Place of Worship</th>
<th>Choice of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Networks</td>
<td>Place of Employment</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What is your first language? ______________________________________________________________

Do you speak English? YES ☐ NO ☐

If yes, how long have you spoken English? ________________________________________________

Where and/or how did you learn to speak English? _________________________________________

What are the ages and grade levels of your children? AGE GRADE DO THEY ATTEND PUBLIC SCHOOL?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>YES ☐ NO ☐</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>YES ☐ NO ☐</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>YES ☐ NO ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What language do you speak to your child at home? _________________________________________

What language does your child speak when with friends? ________________________________

Does your child attend language classes outside of the school? YES ☐ NO ☐

If you answered YES, which language _________________________________________________

Do you work outside of the home? YES ☐ NO ☐

What is your occupation (optional)? ________________________________________________

YOUR INPUT TO THIS SURVEY IS APPRECIATED. IF YOU WISH TO MAKE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW.

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for completing the survey. Please have your child return it to his/her teacher at the school.

If you would like to participate in one of the conversation groups or personal interviews, please complete the information slip at the bottom of the covering letter. This slip should be placed in the envelope provided and returned to the school along with the survey.
第二題（可以中文作答）

你是否本校家長教師委員會委員？ 是 ☐ 否 ☐

你是否會參加家長——教師會會議？ 是 ☐ 否 ☐

若你未曾參加，請舉出原因：

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

若該等會議能在學校以你的母語舉行，你是否參加？ 是 ☐ 否 ☐

你如何得知學校的各項活動？（是否由你的子女告訴你，或由教師通知，或透過學校書信、會議或其他？）

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

你是否願意收到以你的母語寫成的學校資料及函件？ 是 ☐ 否 ☐

所選擇的語言：

你覺得在下列那一項家長能在學校有決定性的參與？（如課程、編班、政策……等）

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

你認為在那一項目家長應有更多具決定性的參與？

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

你認為 公立學校在那一方面應予改善？

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

__________________________________________

公立學校在那一方面是表現優異的？

__________________________________________

__________________________________________
第二部份：家長的背景資料  (可中文作答)

本部份的資料將使本校對於本區的家長能有一個較佳的概覽。

你的出出生地點 -

如你非在加拿大出生，請填上移加加拿大的年份 -

是何種原因促使你在社區內居住？（可選擇多選一個答案）

親戚  敬拜地點  選擇學校  文化聚居地  工作地點  購物

朋友  交通  房屋  其他 -

你的第一語言（母語）：

你能否說英文？  能 □  無 □

若答案是「能」，請填上你已說了英文多少年？ __________年

你在何處及/或如何學習英文？

______________________________________________________________

你的子女的年級及班級：

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>年級</th>
<th>班級</th>
<th>是否在 Public School 就讀？</th>
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<td></td>
<td>是 □  無 □</td>
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<td>是 □  無 □</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>是 □  無 □</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

你在家與子女談話是用什麼語言？

子女與朋友談話是用什麼語言？

子女是否在學校參加語文班？

若答「是」，是什麼語言？

你是否在外工作？

你的職業（簡意填寫與否）：

感謝你的資料，若你有其他意見，請於此處填寫

______________________________________________________________

多謝你填寫這問卷調查，請交貴子弟帶回校交給班主任

若你希望參加小組座談會或個人面談，請填妥第一頁的回條，該回條當放在你的信封內，連同問卷交回學校。
Public School - Community Survey

Survey Punjabi

(6) Survey Punjabi
<table>
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<tr>
<th>(very satisfied)</th>
<th>(satisfied)</th>
<th>(undecided)</th>
<th>(dissatisfied)</th>
<th>(very dissatisfied)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. The school was clean, had enough space, and was not crowded.
2. The teachers were knowledgeable.
3. The school had enough resources.
4. The school had enough books.
5. The school had enough space for outdoor activities.
6. The school had enough books.
7. The school had enough space for outdoor activities.
8. The school had enough books.
9. The school had enough space for outdoor activities.
10. The school had enough books.
11. The school had enough space for outdoor activities.
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27. The school had enough space for outdoor activities.
28. The school had enough books.
29. The school had enough space for outdoor activities.
30. The school had enough books.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>(very satisfied)</th>
<th>(satisfied)</th>
<th>(undecided)</th>
<th>(dissatisfied)</th>
<th>(very dissatisfied)</th>
<th>(do not know)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;गर्म दी पाकर सेम 24 रो गली जा।&quot;</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;नौकरी है खाली जाने का जोर है पटकाना।&quot;</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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ਦੋਵਾ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰ ਨਵਾਬ ਦੇ ਮਸ਼ਹੂਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਲਾਨਾ ਨਵਾਬ ਸੜਕ ਵਿਚ ਲੱਖੀਆਂ ਹਨ?
Appendix B: Parent Interviews
(i) Consent Letter

RESEARCH CONSENT LETTER

I understand that this research study is being conducted by [Name], an Educational Doctoral candidate at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The research concentrates on community-school relationships, specifically in the community.

I agree to participate in this research with the understanding that I will be involved in:

(a) a one-to-one interview
(b) completing a survey
(c) a focus discussion group

I am aware that all of the information I provide will be kept confidential and will become the property of the researcher until it is disposed of, once the research is completed. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from this study at any time and that my participation is voluntary.

_________________________  __________________________
NAME (Please print)          SIGNATURE

_________________________  __________________________
WITNESS                  DATE
QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWING PARENTS

1. Family Profile:
   - What is your place of origin? (If not born in Canada)
   - What is your first language?
   - Do you speak English? If so, how long have you spoken English? Where (how) did you learn English?
   - How many children do you have?
   - What are the ages and grade levels of your children?
   - What language do you speak to your child in the home?
   - What language does your child speak with friends?
   - Does your child attend heritage language classes?
   - Does your child receive English lessons beyond what is offered at the school?
   - When did you immigrate to Canada?
   - What factors influenced you to settle in the community? (Factors may include cultural networks, place of worship, choice of school, accessibility to work, etc.)
   - Do you own or rent your home? (optional)
   - Do you have relatives nearby that you stay in contact with?
   - Do you work outside of the home? If so, approximately how much time do you have to interact with your children (before and after work)? Your occupation? (optional)
   - Do you have any religious or cultural traditions/customs that you celebrate and teach your children?
   - Do you have any religious or cultural traditions/customs that impact upon your child's attendance or interactions at school?

2. Parent-School Partnerships:
   - What is doing well? Why?
   - Do you feel welcome at ? Why? Why not?
   - How do you mainly learn about the school's activities:
     - What your child tells you
     - Talking with school staff
     - School and/or classroom newsletters/meetings and presentations/other?
   - Does the school staff telephone you on a regular basis?
   - Does the school staff frequently arrange interviews?
   - Does the school staff ever meet with you at your home?
   - Is it easy for you to contact the school to receive information regarding your child, or other issues?
   - Do you consider your communication with the school to be frequent enough? effective?
   - Does the present system of report card system meet your need in terms of knowing how your child is progressing at school?
   - Are you satisfied with:
     - Information you receive about the school's curriculum
     - Information you receive about the school's activities
     - The amount of extra help that your child receives?
     - The extra-curricular activities offered at the school?
- student accessibility to computers?
- student accessibility to the resource centre?
- the school's homework policy?
- the school's code of behaviour?
Are the school rules and behavioural expectations different in comparison to schools where you come from? In what way?
Is the school's curriculum different in comparison to schools where you come from? In what way?
Are there significant cultural differences between and schools where you come from?
- Do you belong to the school's Parent/Teacher Group?
- Do you attend Parent/Teacher Group meetings/presentations?
- If you do not attend these meetings, please state why.
- Are you aware of school policies?
- What would you like to know more about? (Parent Education/fundraising/discipline/fair trips/homework/communication between parents/communication between teachers/ special days/program/french/lunch schedules/extra-curricular costs and activities/ Special Education - children who have special needs/social events/percentage of program emphasis in various subject areas, i.e. the arts/teacher specialization and rotation versus one teacher for all subject areas/parent councils/liaison advocate groups - culturally based).
- How would you like to receive that information? (newsletters, Parent-Teacher meetings, curriculum nights, telephone calls)
- Would you prefer to receive information from the school in your own language whenever possible? (Specify language)
- Do you advocate parent advisory councils? Would you like to see parents actively involved in making school decisions?
- If so, in which areas would you like to see parental involvement? (budget, hiring, program, etc.)
- Do you feel that parents are presently welcomed and invited to take part in decision making at ? In what capacity?
  How do you feel parents can influence policy and school reform? Do you feel they should?
In what ways do you feel could be improved?

3. Parent Educational Support At Home
Please describe your educational background (place of schooling, pedagogical style, discipline, homework expectations, extra-curricular activities, grade level)
What are your expectations for your child's learning?
(Both present practices and future goals)
How involved are you with your child's learning at home?
(helping with homework, projects, studying, monitoring exercise books, communication books with teachers)
Do you have established routines and procedures/expectations for your children when they do schoolwork at home?
Do other family members help your child with schoolwork?
Do you specifically give your children morals and values lessons? Do you feel that your value systems differ from those of the school? In what ways?

4. Parent Involvement At School
Do you actively participate at the school? If so, in what ways are you personally involved at the school?
In what ways are any of your neighbours or relatives involved at the school?
In what ways would you like to see parents involved at the school?
What barriers do you feel impede your involvement or others?
In what ways could the school facilitate increased parental involvement at the school?
Appendix C: Student Interviews

(i) Questions for Interviewing Students

QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWING STUDENTS

Please provide some background information about yourself:

- where you were born, first language, family make-up
- if you immigrated to Canada, when you arrived
- family traditions/culture - special celebrations
- family routines (household responsibilities,
  homework routines,
  lessons - language, religion, etc.
  language spoken with parents, relatives, friends

When did you first start school at ?

What was your first year like at ?

Did you feel welcome? Did people help you with the language?

Did your parents help you with work or language?

Was it difficult or easy to make new friends?

Did you feel accepted by the teachers? the community?

Did you feel that you were different? Why or why not?

Did you find the schoolwork the same or different? How?

Are you satisfied with: mathematics, language, gym,
  computer accessibility, extra-curricular activities,
  sex education, French, art, ESL (Explain)

Do you think your parents are involved at ? (Explain)

What have you found to be the least valuable experience at ?

What is the best thing that you have learned at

Describe one way that you would change
Dear Parents,

In continuing with the Public School - Community survey, your child is invited to participate in an interview with their schoolmates. The purpose of the interview is to have the children discuss their experiences and perceptions of their days at Public School.

The interview will be conducted by , a former student at . She has been working with me this summer on various aspects of the project. Therefore, the interview will be conducted at home on . The interview will take place at . The interview should take no longer than one hour. All names are kept confidential.

Please sign below.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Vice - Principal

My Child, , has permission to participate in an interview for the Public School - Community Survey. I understand that is overseeing this project and that the interview will be conducted by , at her home.

Parent Signature

Date
Dear Parent/Guardian,

This letter is to request your permission to allow your son/daughter to contribute to a survey being conducted at Public School. A former vice-principal at Public School has been gathering information for this parent-school community survey.

At this time, some of the students are being asked to meet with a few of the teachers to discuss their experiences while at the school. This information will be taped for use, but all information will be kept confidential. As well, all names will be kept confidential when the material is being reviewed. The discussion will take place in your child's first language.

The discussion will take place at the school during the day and will last no longer than an hour.

If you give your child permission to take part in this survey, please sign the attached form and have your child return it to the school, as soon as possible.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

PARENT - SCHOOL COMMUNITY SURVEY

My son/daughter __________________________________________ has my permission to take part in the Parent-School Community Survey.

__________________________________________  ____________
Parent/Guardian Signature  Date
Appendix D: Student Narrative
(i) Personal Diary

Dear Diary,

Hello, my name is and this is my diary!
Now that we have been introduced. Let's begin!
I was born on October 23, 1980 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. My parents were also born in Sri Lanka. My mom was born and raised in Colombo and my dad was born and raised in Jaffna. We lived in Sri Lanka, but because of communist problems (war) we decided to leave Jaffna, our home.

My parents decided Nigeria, Africa would be a good place to live, we moved there when I was at the age of one. After about eight months I had a new sister named . My mother hired one maid, and one nanny to look after us. Even though Nigeria was a great place, my parents were still not happy with the educational system, health care, resources, and they found it lonely because they didn’t have any family living over here. I remember my Dad telling me that he had to go for an hour long drive just to get milk powder (milk wasn’t pasteurised).

We then went back to Colombo, Sri Lanka (this area didn’t have communal problems). I stayed with my grandmothers while my dad and mom went to India. Like before the place did not appeal to them.

I think it was 1983 when my family went to England. My parents really liked England and decided to make there life there. Since half of my dad’s family and most of my mom’s family were living there, also since my Dad had gone to a University in England we thought we were a shoe in. But that was not the case, unfortunately we had been rejected because there were to many immigrants coming into the United Kingdom and there was no space for us. We returned to Nigeria disappointed.

We lived in Nigeria for another year. I don’t remember much about Nigeria. I do remember my next door nanny’s son. My nanny lived in our house. She had one son and I think two girls. I don’t think she had a husband. Well anyway the boy I think was two years older than me. I remember him coming after school in his white shirt and black shorts (uniform). My dad said that in Nigeria Blacks and Whites were treated differently. There would be separate schools for whites and coloured. The white schools had better facilities, better resources etc…. While the black people had to sit on the floors and work. Well, at least the place we were living wasn’t as bad as the other places in Africa.

I guess this was the year my dad asked for residency in Canada. I guess he heard Canada was a good country. Well anyway we moved to Montreal, Quebec in 1984. There my sister and I attended Preschool. I don’t remember much about that school, only that My sister and I had picked up some French words.

I think my parents found it difficult to speak French and adjust to Quebec life style because we moved to Scarborough, Ontario after one year.

This concludes how I came here............................
Dear Diary,

Continuing..... Well, now my Sister is 3 years old and I am 5 years of age. I went to a Catholic school, because my mom thought it was the nicest around here. Even though I am Hindu, I knew more about the Catholic religion than mine. I never before spoke or understood Tamil. My mom decided to enrol me for language classes.

Most of my class were white's, there were a few coloured people in my class, but not many. I didn't seem bothered by this. In fact I never heard any racist comments when I was there. I remember once a week we use to all gather in the auditorium, to sing songs of Praise, worship the beloved, and here preachings of the priest. After this the teachers and older children would get up and receive bread. Every morning, before lunch, and before we leaved we said our prayers. The teachers will tell us biblical stories every once in a while. I remember every time the priest came we had to all stand up when he entered until he said we can be seated. He wore a large white robe whenever I saw him.

My days here were nice, the teachers treated everyone the same, and I felt comfortable in the school environment (children, teachers). I went to the school for a year and a half. Now I was at the age of seven when we moved to our new house in

Since wasn't built yet, I attended Public School. I making new friends here was a little difficult. I found this school unlike my old school very multicultural. I remember seeing all the Indian children staying together in a group speaking there language, the Chinese, the Jamaicans etc. doing the same. This made me feel a little odd since I couldn't speak there language.

After one year I was transferred to . The school was located behind. . At this school there were more white people than coloured, in fact there were very few coloured people here. Like my Catholic School there were no racist comment, the teachers and students didn't treat me any differently. Here found it easy to make new friends. The kids here were really polite and kind, unlike the . The school environment was very nice here. There students uttered "every word". I stayed here for one year, then I was transferred again to .

Since the school had not been completely built yet, the . students went to Public School and stayed in Portables. I had Mrs. she was really nice to me. I had a class of 30 students in grade four. This school was very multicultural compared to my former schools. It wasn't hard for me to make new friends since I knew some of the kids already from and . I don't remember much happening this year, except when we transferred from the portables to our new school in May. This is where the stories begin........
Dear Diary,

In grade five I had Mr. as my home room teacher. I really liked him, he always made learning fun. I remember him setting us up with computer buddies from: We wrote to them as well as used the internet program on the computers to communicate with them.

There was one teacher who I felt didn't have very good teaching methods. Our new French teacher. She would give us pages of French work and expect us to know everything using a dictionary, then she would test us. When the class was below average she would complain that we don't study enough.

Since was a new school there wasn't much extra curricular activities going on. Most people in the my class spoke English fairly well. That's about all I can remember about grade 5.

Grade six I had Mrs. as my teacher. I was in a split class grade 6/7. Mrs. was a very good teacher. She made math always fun for us. We would play Cribbage or other math games after our lessons. Besides being a good maths teacher she was the best English teacher I had in Elementary school. We would do work that was meant for older kids. The things she taught me are very useful, I am still using them to this present day.

The concerts were always very well performed. I had to admit Mr. was a very good music teacher. In fact I think Mr. and Mrs. were the best music teachers I've had in

I remember this new kid coming into our classroom that year his name was Riyadh He was from Ghana. I remember he having this very strong accent. I think because of this, he had to go for ESL classes. He seemed to fit in quite quickly, making new friends etc...

We use to play out back near the park. In the wintertime we would slide down the hill. At that time nobody thought this act could be dangerous. It was to late, a kid had broken his arm sliding down the hill standing up.

In my former schools we never had fights that were as "big" as the ones here. I remember one fight that led to a person taking a baseball bat and swinging to another kid. Unfortunately this resulted in a head injury.

I guess it was after this accident that the teachers decided to have conflict mediators at the school. I think this program went very well, because there were less fighting going on in the school yards.

In grade seven I had Miss. as my home room teacher. That year we had a couple of new teachers. Miss. was really nice, she was the best Drama teacher I had in . This year our Drama programs were quite good.

We had a lot of new kids come into our school this year. Most of them were new to Canada. Therefore the ESL program had to be larger. There was one Spanish student who couldn't speak English. Since no one in the school spoke Spanish the teacher assigned a person to use the Spanish dictionary to communicate to her in Spanish. It was hard for us to try to be her friend because she didn't understand a word we said. I guess this made her feel uncomfortable.

I remember all the Chinese people in our class who always spoke in Chinese. This made other students feel uncomfortable because we didn't understand
many kids wore their traditional costumes to school. It was really nice seeing all these
clothes from other countries besides my own.

That year we had more new kids come to our school. There are two names that
come to my mind Farine & Dana.

Unlike other boys in our school Farine had an attitude. That even on the first
day he brought two knives and kept in his pocket to scare everyone in class. Luckily
Miss. Yr. caught him at the end of the day with a knife. This act really scared the
kids. Before we had considered a very safe place, until now.

He caused many problems for us. He would get into fights, fail his grades, steal
from other children etc. I remember once the police coming into the classroom to look
into Farine's desk, after taking him to the police station. I don't remember what he
actually did. If that wasn't bad enough he would make the boys in our class change
their ways. Some of the kids were so peer pressured into doing something, that they
felt if they don't do it no one will like me anymore etc..These acts usually got them in
very big trouble.

I hadn't notice in the before year, but there were more stealing, more fights after
school etc...I no longer felt safe to walk the streets alone.

There was this other new kid named Dana. She was one of the very few white
kids in grade eight. She was really nice to everyone. She met this friend named Kelly
in our school, they were very close. Until when I saw them in the grounds fights and
mouthing off. After this Dana got into a lot of arguments with the kids in our school. I
thought this was really unfair because she was really nice person to be with. I couldn't
understand why so many kids had turned against her.

This year the Drama club was outstanding, thanks to Miss. and all the
other teacher who helped with the production. That's what I really love about this
school was the dedicated teachers. The costumes were fantastic, the musicals were
well rehearsed, the stage crew did a great job etc. I truly think this show was the best
we've done so far.

What also went well this year was the Bistro. I really liked participating in it. I
know many students and teachers really liked the food, decorations, and the fashion
show. I think it was one of the best fund raisers we've done in school.

This year the teachers planned a trip to Ottawa. I really enjoyed the trip, it was
fun, as well as educational.

It was sad to leave the school by the end of the year. The graduation was
really nice, and so was the dinner. Another chapter had ended that day, while one
was just beginning.
Dear Diary,

I've decided to add some more to what I have already about my life in Canada. Being the forgetful person I am, I left my disk in the office. I know this Title is boring but here it comes... "Part Two of Diary," sappy eh?!

"New Kids" There were new kids coming and old kids leaving. I've basically grown accustomed to it. People who come from different countries we called them Fresh of the Boat. There were many different people coming here Chinese, Indian, Africans etc... One of these new kids became my closest friend. She was from somewhere in the middle-east (bad memory) the country started with an "S". She was Muslim, even though she didn't wear a shawl around her hair she was a still a strong believer. Well anyway, she came here in grade seven. She had a strong accent, but she didn't have to go to ESL. She had no problem making friends and adjusting to the school. Kids. What really astounded me was why she came here. Like me her country had communal problems. Of course I was only age of one when we left Jaffna, Sri Lanka, therefore I don't remember what happened. She would tell me stories about how scared the children were. Whether or not if the bombers will come today or tomorrow. Most kids liked her because she was so nice and had a great personality.

I know of another girl Tammana K. She came here in grade seven. She was from South Africa. She didn't have a strong accent. She would talk about how life was like in Africa. About how people were treated differently because of their colour. Tammana's religion was Hinduism and her second language was Hindi. Apparently the African standards are much higher than ours. That is probably why she found the work in Canada to be so easy. While everyone either complained there was too much of homework, or the tests were too hard.

I found the Chinese kids also to be very intelligent. I think the Canadian educational standards are lower compared to other countries in the world. Even though most of the Chinese kids couldn't speak English very well, there written English was quite good. Some Chinese kids complained the work was too easy for them. I know the maths standards here are very low compared to the standards in China. I knew this boy named Jacky. He came to Canada when he was in grade 7. He was very poor n speaking English. Whenever he did speak no one understood him. I think it is because of the ESL program that made him what he is today: Now he can speak English quite good with few mistakes.

"Community". When we came here there was a lot of construction going on. After a year or so everything here was built. I felt very safe in my neighbourhood, there were no fights, violence, etc... Maybe after three years I began to saw kids smoking late in the nights at the park, I heard houses were getting robbed all the time, etc. That was not the least of my problems. I was in grade 6 and it was the week before Halloween. The elderly man across my street was murdered! That was a major surprise for everyone. What was even worse, we found out two weeks later it was the murderer was the person next door. Our community no longer was considered safe. Now our community is better. I haven't heard of any such thing lately, thank goodness. During that period when a lot of things happened here, many parents were concerned about the safety of their children. (Refer to Diary for Kidnapping) I remember
my mother would not let me out of the house unless I was with a someone either my sister or a friend.

"Safety at the school". During grade 7 & 8 many of the parents were concerned about the safety of their kids. I remember when I was in grade eight there was an incident where there was a small fire in the boys bathroom. In the wintertime children would fall slipping on the ice sometimes this resulted in twisting our ankle etc. Some of the little children would get scared when older boys would bully them for their money etc.

"Contests". I really liked the school contests. It was fun to watch and hear the speeches, and see the science fair. I really liked participating in them as well as watching the contests being done. It was a fascinating to see what other people have created or hear what people have to say about whatever.

I wasn't too impressed with our resources in the library. We lacked a few things. I did like all the audio equipment we used. I think computers and watching videos are very beneficial to our learning. I learned a lot about computers here and many other things by using the resources in the library. Now there are more resources in grade eight then there was in grade four. I thought it was pretty cool when the library brought caterpillars and kept it until they became butterfly though the year. I liked it when the guest speakers would come and speak about what they do etc.: It was very interesting to hear what they had to say.

Field trips were what I was probably the most excited about at my days at school. I never felt bored on an of the trips whether it be going to the zoo, the beach, the desert, the museum, the zoo, the planetarium, etc. The experience was very worth while. I could never forget what I learned and how much I had fun on these trips. Some of the trips got a bit costly, but I can always manage to still go.

I like the variety of sports played here. I wished there more sports teams instead of just basketball, volleyball, and baseball. After a while you want to try something new. I know teachers didn't have much time to conduct so many teams, therefore I didn't mind it much. Overall I was quite content with our physical activities. Once the teachers decided to hold a marathon. I had a great time. I really enjoyed Track & Field day, and Sports Activity Day. Gym class was always fun! The problem was the Gym periods were too short. By the time we got dressed there would be only a half an hour left not including the time we have to change back into our before clothes. Besides that everything was great!

Fund raisers were a major event in our school. They would come three or four times a year. Our cookie sales didn't go as well as we hoped and so we with selling the wrapping paper. What did work our good was the Bistro, the Bake Sale, and the Poster Sale.

Besides what I have said Diary the teachers here are very dedicated! That's what I probably missed most about this school, our teachers.
Appendix E: Staff Interviews
(i) Questions for Interviewing School Personnel

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL
Do you feel satisfied with: (please explain why or why not)
the extent of communication with parents in the community?
the level of communication (depth of discussions - student progress, school activities, programs, policies)
the formats of communication with parents? (Please specify ways in which these communications take place)
the level of language used when communicating with immigrant minority parents?
the level of language used when communicating with immigrant minority students?
translator services that the Board provides?
The present level of service the ESL model offers?
your understanding of immigrant minority children’s educational backgrounds?
your understanding of immigrant minority children’s cultural histories, needs, traditions, religious practices, value structures, other?
the immigrant minority child’s educational progress, understanding of the work presented, extent of assistance and support from parents, understanding of English?

What frustrations do you experience when working with immigrant minority children and their families?
What barriers do you feel exist and should be addressed?
What would you like to see in place to make your work with immigrant minority children easier?
To what extent would you like to see parents involved in their child’s schooling? (Homework, parent meetings, policy decisions, other)
Do you feel that a staff member should be appointed to serve immigrant minority students? At school level? Area level?
What demands/expectations/concerns do you receive from immigrant minority parents?
Dear Parents and Guardians,

As teachers our goal is to provide each student with the optimal learning conditions to support student success. Our main objective is that all students successfully achieve the essential criteria required to progress in their learning. The present outcome-based model of learning provides these specific expectations for student achievement at each grade. Upon occasion, parents may request an extended student absence for their child(ren) for reasons other than illness. Although teachers recognize the value of experience beyond the classroom as it pertains to student learning, we become concerned with extended student absences and the implications for student learning as these absences may jeopardize the successful completion of the program outcomes.

For each week of absence, a child would be missing approximately 25 hours of instructional time. This time would include class and small group lessons; opportunities for group interaction, practice under teacher supervision and support, presentations, demonstrations, and various assignments; and many tests and other opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the required learning. As well, with the teacher monitoring progress, intervention programs can be quickly put in place for any student experiencing difficulty. Students achieve their best when the instructional focus is paramount with students taking responsibility to meet high expectations, teachers monitoring student achievement and putting in place suitable intervention programs when required, and teachers, parents/guardians, and students working together in partnership to promote student success.

Because of the value of instructional time, please be advised that, under the Education Act, principals have the authority to grant permission for student absences for the following reasons only: Illness, Music Instruction, Religious Observation, and in response to Written Parental Request. Provision of learning experiences to support student achievement of grade level expectations for extended student absence is the responsibility of the parent/guardian who has withdrawn the student from school. Specific grade level outcomes are outlined in parent copies of the Working Together booklets.

Under the Education Act, it is stated:

a) After 15 consecutive days of absence, a pupil shall be shown as retired on the sixteenth day.
b) Notwithstanding (a), a pupil may be maintained on the register beyond fifteen consecutive days of absence, but less than thirty days if the principal has,
   (i) documentation from the pupil/parent which indicates an expected date of return, or
   (ii) evidence of a referral to the attendance counsellor

c) further to (b), the retention of a non-attending pupil on a register in any subsequent 15 day period requires a report from the attendance counsellor at the beginning of each subsequent 15 day period. Where for any reason there is no such report from the attendance counsellor, the pupil is to be shown as a retirement.

We are committed to working with you in the planning of your child/children’s education. Please give us the opportunity to support you in providing suitable education plans should an extended absence be necessary.

Sincerely,

Principal
(iii) Significant Religious Holidays

Replacing Memo: S10 - April 23, 1997

MEMORANDUM TO: All Supervisory Officers
All Principals
Federation/Union Presidents
Athletic Association Presidents
Race-Relations Advisory Committee
All Consultants
Staff Development

COPY: All Trustees

FROM: Director of Education

DATE: January 5, 1998

REFERENCE: Significant Faith Days

This memo indicates an effort to provide clear guidelines for the observance of significant faith days by all schools and worksites.

The dates listed below are some faith holidays of particular significance to members of the major faith communities in our Board. We are committed to affirm and value equally the faith diversity in our schools, therefore, subject to paragraph three of this memo, events such as conferences, meetings, workshops, other professional events, co-curricular activities, and exams/tests will not be scheduled on these dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baha’i</td>
<td>RIDVAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>LUNAR NEW YEAR/CHINESE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>CHRISTMAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Gregorian)</td>
<td>GOOD FRIDAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Julian)</td>
<td>CHRISTMAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HOLY FRIDAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>DIWALI*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>ROSH HASHANAH**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YOM KIPPUR**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PASSOVER/PESA**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>EID-AL-FITR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EID-AL-ADHA*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>BAISAKHI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Tentative dates subject to the sighting of the moon each month.
** All Jewish Holy Days commence on the preceding evening at sunset i.e. Yom Kippur starts on September 30, 1998 at 5:00 p.m. (approximately)
THE YORK REGION BOARD OF EDUCATION and THE YORK REGION PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Initial Entry To School System Data Collection Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7) School:</th>
<th>1) ID#:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>60) Class:</th>
<th>64) Age Verification: (Please Circle One) B C R N O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>371) Teacher:</th>
<th>285) Bus:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>206) Entry Date</th>
<th>61) House Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Office Use Only

Has your child ever attended a York Region Board of Education school? Yes ☐ No ☐

PLEASE PRINT

STUDENT INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2) Name to be used in school - Surname, First Name and Middle Names</th>
<th>11) Legal Name - Surname, First Name and Middle Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6) Grade</th>
<th>Kindergarten - if the school offers a half day program, which do you prefer? A.M. ☐ P.M. ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If the school offers a full day/alternate day program which do you prefer? Mon./Wed./FRI. ☐ TUE./THUR./FRI. ☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24) Street #</th>
<th>25) Street Name</th>
<th>28) City</th>
<th>29) Province</th>
<th>30) Postal Code</th>
<th>26) Apt. #</th>
<th>27) P.O. Box or RR#:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>31) Phone #:</th>
<th>32) Listed ☐ Unlisted ☐</th>
<th>95) Special Custody Yes ☐ No ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>96) Custody</th>
<th>97) Living With</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mother/Father/Other only/Father only/Father/Mother Only/Other)</td>
<td>(Both Parents/Other/Legal Guardian/Grandparent/Other)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8) Legal Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Parents/Father/Mother/Grandparent/Other)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST PARENT/GUARDIAN</th>
<th>SECOND PARENT/GUARDIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100) Relationship</th>
<th>130) Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>101) Title (Mr., Mrs., etc)</th>
<th>131) Title (Mr., Mrs., etc)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>102) Name (Surname, First Name and Middle Name)</th>
<th>132) Name (Surname, First Name and Middle Name)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>104) Street #</th>
<th>106) Apt. #</th>
<th>134) Street #</th>
<th>136) Apt. #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>105) Street Name</th>
<th>135) Street Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>107) P.O. Box or RR#:</th>
<th>137) P.O. Box or RR#:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>120) Municipality/Town/City</th>
<th>138) Municipality/Town/City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>110) Postal Code</th>
<th>111) Home Phone #: ( )</th>
<th>140) Postal Code</th>
<th>141) Home Phone #: ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>113) Business Phone #: ( )</th>
<th>114) Extension #: ( )</th>
<th>143) Business Phone #: ( )</th>
<th>144) Extension #: ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>175) Car Phone #: ( )</th>
<th>178) Pager #: ( )</th>
<th>176) Car Phone #: ( )</th>
<th>179) Pager #: ( )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>178) Pager Ext.</th>
<th>179) Pager Ext.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

Form NPS654-04 (Revised January 97)
**EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

Attach a true photocopy of the immunization record card to this registration form. Collection of this information is authorized under the Immunization of School Pupils Act. This information is used by the medical officer of health to maintain an immunization record on this student and to take appropriate action to prevent certain vaccine preventable diseases in the health unit.

- Is there a medical, religious or philosophical reason why your child should not receive immunization? Yes ☐ No ☐
- If "yes", is this information on file with Public Health? Yes ☐ No ☐ Explanation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>240</th>
<th>Emergency Contact Name (Not Parent or Guardian)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>241</th>
<th>Contact Phone #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>242</th>
<th>Extension #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>244</th>
<th>Sister’s Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>245</th>
<th>Sister’s Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>246</th>
<th>Sister’s Phone Number #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>247</th>
<th>Sister’s Ext. #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>247</th>
<th>Sister’s R.F. #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>248</th>
<th>Medical Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>249</th>
<th>Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>250</th>
<th>Health Card Revision #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>254</th>
<th>Health Card Number #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>255</th>
<th>Date Immunization Record Card Copy Received (YY/MM/DD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>264</th>
<th>Doctor’s Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>266</th>
<th>Doctor’s Phone #</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADMINISTRATIVE/SYSTEM INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>201</th>
<th>Resident Yes ☐ No ☐ Specify: ______________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>204</th>
<th>Name of Previous School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>206</th>
<th>Home School (if attending on transfer)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>207</th>
<th>Transfer Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>209</th>
<th>Full Mailing Address of Previous School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>210</th>
<th>Phone Number of Previous School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>211</th>
<th>Date Last Attended Previous School (YY/MM/DD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>322</th>
<th>School Tax Support of Present Residence: Public School ☐ Separate School ☐</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>330</th>
<th>Year Entered Canada (YY/MM/DD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>331</th>
<th>Language First Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>65</th>
<th>Citizenship Status (Canadian/Landed Immigrant/Visa/Other)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U54 Visa Expiry Date (YY/MM/DD) ( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTICE TO PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

Has your child ever been expelled from another school? Yes ☐ No ☐

The information collected on this school registration form is collected pursuant to the Education Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Immunization of School Pupils Act. It may be disclosed beyond the Board for the following purposes:
- Parent/Teacher Association class lists, emergency phone networks, Student Council, etc.
- In case of an accident or witness to an accident, the student’s name and home address will be released to the Board’s insurer.
- The release of names, ages, grades, with photographs, artwork, writing or other school work to the media for publicity.
- The use of names, photographs, etc. used for displays in the school, newsletters and yearbooks.

If you do not consent to the release of information for these purposes, please inform the principal in writing within 20 days.

I hereby certify that the above information is accurate to the best of my knowledge and give my permission to enter any of the above information in or on my child’s Ontario School Record and to use the information for the purposes stated above.

Signed (Parent/Guardian) ____________________________
Date ____________________________

Form NP645-04 (Revised January 97)
An application must be made to the Assessment Authority to include or re-include school support on the assessment roll.
Pour s'assurer que votre enfant est inclus dans l'évaluation, il faut soumettre une demande au ministre d'éducation.

**HOW TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION (see reverse side)**
**COMÉTÉ RÉSPRER LA DEMANDE (voir le verso)**

Please note that the completed application must be signed by the owner of the property and the owner of the school support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Owner</th>
<th>Date of Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Property</th>
<th>Amount of School Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Property Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Identification</th>
<th>Description of Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School Support Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Support Identification</th>
<th>Description of School Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Other Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Details</th>
<th>Source of Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

**Signature**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*NOTICE TO PARENTS*

The Executive members will be holding a meeting for the **EXECUTIVE** members on **Monday, November 29th** at 7:30 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting will be to establish positions, plan the next General meeting, and determine topics for discussion.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Executive, please leave a message at the school or contact your Council president, let her know that you will be attending the meeting.

Please note that this meeting will be conducted in English and babysitting will not be available. The meeting will run approximately one hour and will be held in the staff room.

We appreciate your continued support.

**JUST A REMINDER**

Parent interviews will be held at **on Dec. 2nd and 3rd.** If you would like a translator to attend please notify the office a.s.a.p.

Sincerely,
家長通告

家長學校議會（前「家長教師聯誼會」）將於
一九九三年十一月廿九日（星期一）晚上七時半舉行委員會會議。

是次會議議程包括選舉職員，籌劃下次會員大會及決定研討會題目。
若貴家長有意成為委員會一員，請通知本科或聯絡議會主席

d女士

屆時出席會議。

是次會議將採用英語舉行，亦未設有托兒服務，請各家長注意。

會議約需一小時，並將於教員室舉行。敬請各家長支持。

備忘

教師將於十二月二日及三日約見各家長，如有任何家長

需要翻譯，請從速通知本校辦事處。
اٹلارع پیرس کے خلاف

رس کیم ڈیرریکٹر سیری ڈرییما درتلین سر پر ۲۴ چیکا کھیلرن کی

\[
\text{سن ۹۳۰۰۰ دوڑی / ۹۳۰۰۰ دوڑی}
\]


"*L*INK*S"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>اطلاع پیرس چالیں</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

رس کیم ڈیرریکٹر سیری ڈرییما درتلین سر پر ۲۴ چیکا کھیلرن کی

\[
\text{سن ۹۳۰۰۰ دوڑی / ۹۳۰۰۰ دوڑی}
\]


"*L*INK*S"
अभिभावकों की सूचना

आमेडुल अभिभावक स्कूल परिषद् (APSC)
(जिसे पहले प्रस्तुत हैं) कार्यकारी समिति के लिए एक सम्मान स्मृति आयोजका को नवम्बर 29 के आम के साउंड मात (7:30) बजे आयोजित होना गई है।

कार्यकारिणी के पास स्थापित करना, अगले जीनरल सम्मान की आयोजना करना और बाद-निवाद के लिए विषय चुनना सम्भव का उद्देश् होना।

अगर आप कार्यकारिणी के मेन्सर होते हैं, तो उसे अनुमति दीए गुरुमा स्कूल के साथ सुन्दर हथयोग सदरी हमारे टर्निपर सत्कार से निवृत्त किया मकड़ीन्द्र(2)
का स्थिति करें चौंक, जब आप इस सम्भव में उपस्थित होते। उन्हें तुरन्त लें और आप लांब करना पड़े।

यदि सम्मान अंग्रेजी में होगा और अगर किसी दृश्यपत्र की आयोजना नहीं हो जा रही हो । स्कूल
में टैप, समूह में समान करें। आप लांब रहो।

आप की उपस्थिति के लिए हम आभारि हैं।

केन्द्र स्कूल स्टूडी् एि अभिभावक मुलुकाल
आमेडुल स्कूल में पुजो सम्मान 2 और 3 तारीख
को है। अगर आप की अनुयुक्त की आयोजना है।
कुंडल स्कूल कार्यकर्ताओं का नवंबर सूचित किया.
Appendix F
Process Leading to Language Policy

The process evolved through problem identification, via a backward mapping strategy. Initially, staff members, and the researcher, expressed concerns regarding a lack of school-community partnerships. These individuals had met to discuss possible strategies for increased parental involvement to further support students in the learning environment.

Subsequently an investigation into the problematic area of partnerships between the school and its community of immigrant minority groups was initiated. Stages of the process implemented, for the ensuing policy development, subscribed to Popper's (1972) fundamental evolutionary sequence of events schema,

\[
P_1 \rightarrow TT \rightarrow EE \rightarrow P_2 \tag{297}
\]

\(P_1\) represents problem identification. In this study, school/community partnerships were perceived as problematic when staff attempted to interact with immigrant minority group families regarding issues of student learning. Their informal discussions, ad hoc committees and individual efforts to address the issues had not been successful. This concern for increased parental partnerships, to support student learning, generated the first formal stage of the process; problem analysis via data gathering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Gathering:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Literature review of studies conducted in the area of investigation</td>
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<td>- Information sessions with staff, board personnel and community members</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Survey distribution to glean a profile of the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Focus group sessions and interviews with staff, students and parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Narratives from staff and students</td>
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<tr>
<td>- This process was inclusionary of staff, students and parents in the administration of some focus groups and interviews, where appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Analysis:</th>
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<td>- Various staff, students and parents were enlisted to assist with translations and transcriptions of data, where appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Coding and analysis of survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Coding and analysis of interviews, focus groups and narratives to identify emergent themes</td>
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<tr>
<th>Policy Development:</th>
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<tr>
<td>TT represents the stage of tentative policy development. The policy is reflective of issues revealed throughout the study. The document is a fluid vehicle to be modified when deemed appropriate by staff and community. The role of the researcher at this stage is to support the school in the implementation of the policy, where required.</td>
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</table>

Further to implementation, the stakeholders involved are charged with identifying the elements of the next stage in the process, EE, Error Elimination. It is through this stage that adjustments can be made to further reform and improve the policy to meet the specific needs of this school community, thus formulating P2, the official policy. However, as this policy is not intended to be static, it should continually flow between the stages of error elimination and official policy to reflect the school community population's needs at any given time.
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