THE OUTSIDE OF TOWN: AN ANALYSIS OF HOUSING CONDITIONS FOR LATINO FARM WORKER CHILDREN IN WASHINGTON, AND THEIR IMPACT ON EDUCATIONal SUCCESS

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Politics 458
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November 19, 2006

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is one of the most prominent features of Washington. Not only does it breath life into our economy, provide jobs to nearly 75,000 people,[1] and feed millions more throughout the world, but it's a distinct part of our physical landscape. The expansive low lands and desert climate east of the Cascades make Central and Eastern Washington as unique in their own right, as the West's towering evergreens. And yet, what is said about where the food on our plate or the dollars in our economy is coming from? How many hands did this apple have to pass through before it reached mine? At the root of this process are people who work long hours for little pay, the majority of whom are Latinos. And, as in any community or family, there lives are connected with their friends, family, and children. We talk about children as investments in the future of our economy and culture. But how are we planning our investments? When we think about investing, we think about education. But are there deeper factors associated with the way children become educated? One such factor that has been raised in literature and by researchers is the role housing quality plays in the educational success of children, which is where I will turn my attention.

Specifically, what is the relationship between Latino farm worker's housing conditions, and the educational success of Latino farm worker children in Washington State, and does the children's health affect this relationship? To carry out my research I examined scholarly accounts concerning the relationship between health and education, and reports documenting national and state trends in the health and housing conditions Latino farm workers face. In addition, I looked at qualitative accounts and quantitative data from several municipalities in Washington (Mabton, Mattawa, Granger, and Woodland) that link my three variables (housing conditions, educational success, and health) together. My research has been done with the support and resources of Barbara Guzzo, Organizational and Staff Development Specialist with Beacon Development Group. My case studies follow qualitative research Beacon undertook last summer in these locations, and information from that research forms a portion of my study.

The children of migrant farm workers are one of the most disadvantaged populations in the United States. A myriad of barriers stands in the way of their success in school—barriers endemic amongst farm worker youth, both nationally, and within Washington State. Among them are substandard housing conditions.[2] I have found that substandard housing conditions in Latino farm worker households pose several threats to Latino farm worker children's education. First, are the health risks, which not only can keep a child home from a day of school, but also can cause life-long damage. A second risk to Latino farm worker children is the negative environment their housing creates. This hinders both their ability to complete schoolwork, and

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[1] U.S. Census Bureau, *American Factfinder*, 2005 Census, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ADPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-qr_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_DP3&-ds_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_&-_lang=en&-_sse=on

[2] Arceo, Ramiro, and Joy Kusserow and Al Wright, "Understanding the Challenges and Potentials of Migrant Students." in *The Human Cost of Food; Farmworkers' Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*, ed. Charles D. Thompson, Jr., and Melinda F. Wiggins (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 222

become integrated into the school community. In the following section I will open discussion on these topics by examining some of the scholarly literature and national data on this topic.

SCHOLARLY LITERATURE DISCUSSION

Vital to understanding the relationship between farm worker children's quality of housing and educational success, is understanding both the impact their housing has on their physical health, and the environment it creates around them, both of which can hinder their success in school.

HEALTH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH SUBSTANDARD HOUSING AND AFFECTING EDUCATION

The United Nations has declared both "the human right to adequate housing," and that the "the adequacy of one's housing and living conditions is closely linked to the degree to which the right to environmental hygiene and the right to the highest attainable level of mental and physical health can be enjoyed."[3]

Unfortunately, for most farm workers, the low quality of housing they must endure exposes them and their children to many physical health risks, endangering their children's chances of success in school. The Housing Assistance Council, a nonprofit corporation that assists in developing low-income housing in rural areas, with a special focus on farm worker housing,[4] conducted a national survey from 1997-2000 of 4,625 migrant farm worker housing units, revealing many trends in the migrant farm worker landscape. The most foundational of these was that there are many migrant farm worker households living in grossly sub-standard conditions. The HAC classifies substandard housing in two different ways: "moderately substandard" and "severely substandard." Moderately substandard units "have complete plumbing but quite a few interior and exterior physical deficiencies," while severely substandard units "lack complete indoor plumbing and/or have a substantial number of interior and exterior problems."[5]

The survey found that 17 percent of the units surveyed were severely substandard while another 16 percent were moderately substandard. Figure 1 examines the extent to which different types of housing were found to be substandard. A list of different conditions the HAC looked follows, as well.

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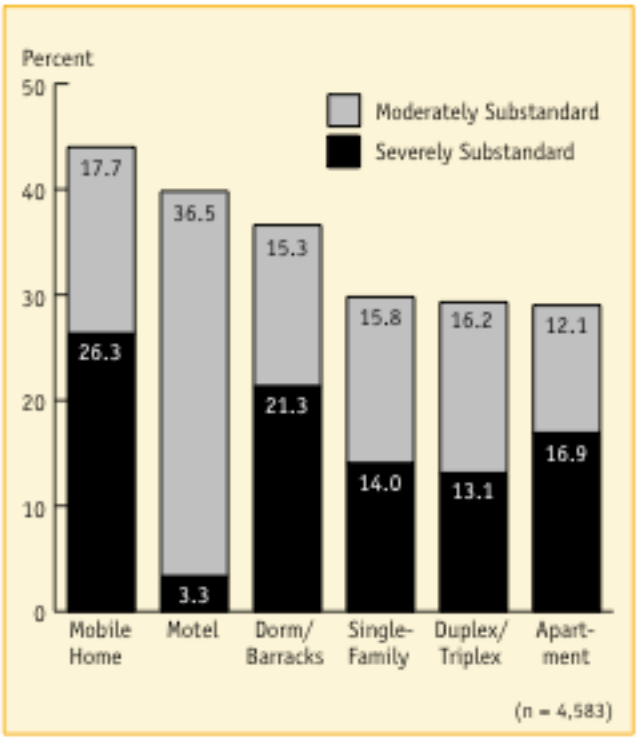
[3] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Fact Sheet No. 21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing*, http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/publications/docs/fs21.htm

[4] Housing Assistance Council, *What is HAC?* http://www.ruralhome.org/about.php

[5] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields; Findings from a Survey of Farmworker Housing Conditions in the United States*, 23

Figure 1[6]

Substandard Units by Structure Type



* "A unit is classified as severely substandard if any one of the following problems was noted.

- *Plumbing*. Lacking a working toilet and/or tub/shower. HAC's survey noted the presence of toilets and/or tub/shower fixtures, and whether these fixtures were broken. In cases where there was no hot water or the water supply was contaminated, survey workers marked tub/showers as "broken."
- *Electricity*. Having frayed wiring, exposed wiring or other electrical problems and any two of the *Hallway and Structure* problems below.
- *Hallways and Structure Problems*. Having all four of the following problems: loose or missing exterior steps, loose or broken steps inside the unit, sagging structural features, and holes in the floor.
- *Upkeep*. Having all six of the following problems: evidence of water leakage, unsanitary conditions, trash in the yard, broken plaster or peeling paint, holes in the walls, and any three of the following problems—sagging structural features, damaged roof or shingles, damaged windows or windows missing screens, damaged or missing siding, or damaged foundations."[7]

** "A unit is classified as moderately substandard if any one of the following problems was noted."

- *Hallway and Structure*. Having any two out of four of the following problems: loose or missing exterior steps, loose or broken steps inside the unit, sagging structural features, and holes in the floor.
- *Upkeep*. Having any three of the following six problems: evidence of water leakage, unsanitary conditions, trash in the yard, broken plaster or peeling paint, holes in the walls, and any three of the following problems—sagging structural features, damaged roof or shingles, damaged windows or windows missing screens, damaged or missing siding, or damaged foundations."[8]

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[6] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 23
[7] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 66
[8] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 66

Mobile homes were found to be both the most severely substandard (26.3 percent of mobile homes surveyed were severely substandard), and, overall, the most substandard type of housing (44 percent substandard), with apartments the least substandard type of housing, overall (29 percent substandard).

While the kinds of problems listed above range from aggravating to dangerous, what specific effects do these type of problems have on Latino farm worker children's health, and how have they been shown to impact the education of Latino farm worker children? Among the most common health problems associated with substandard housing conditions in Latino farm worker children are lead poisoning, exposure to pesticides, and respiratory and dermatological problems, as well the increased spread of disease found in overcrowded housing. And with each of these health risks come serious risks to the education of Latino farm worker children

Lead Poisoning

Long-term exposure to lead can have damaging effects on the blood, brain, and reproductive system, severely decreasing IQ and motor function. A second national study by the Housing Assistance Council, entitled, *Why Housing Matters; HAC's 2000 Report on the State of the Nation's Rural Housing*, concluded that, "Children with increased levels of lead were seven times more likely to drop out of high school and five times more likely to have disabilities."[9]

Lead poisoning in Latino farm worker children has two major sources. The most common is in housing whose walls are painted with lead-based paint, and it is often contrived in children as the result of paint chip consumption.[10] Additionally, the HAC's *No Refuge* report concluded that peeling paint was the most common interior and exterior problem found in migrant farm worker homes, with interior peeling affecting 29 percent of the units surveyed, and exterior peeling affecting 41 percent of the units.[11] A statistical breakdown of these and other common interior and exterior conditions can be seen in Figures 2 and 3.
Why Housing Matters also found that, children under the age of six are more likely to develop lead poisoning if they are low-income renters, living in a unit built before 1960. Nationally, there are over 2.8 million rural housing units occupied by children and built before 1960, only 8% of which have been tested for lead.[12] This figure is particularly troubling for Latino farm workers, the majority of whom are both low-income and renters. The *No Refuge* study found that 58.6 percent of farm worker households live in poverty (with incomes at or below 80 percent of Area Median Income (AMI)), and the U.S. Department of Labor's, *National Agricultural Workers Survey* 2001-2002 found only 20 percent of farm workers to own or be in the process of buying a home.[13]

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[9] Housing Assistance Council, "Why Housing Matters," *Rural Voices* 6, no. 1 (2000-2001): 4
[10] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 22
[11] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 23
[12] Housing Assistance Council, "Why Housing Matters," *Rural Voices* 6, no. 1 (2000-2001): 4U.
[13] U.S. Department of Labor, *Findings from the National Agricultural Survey (*NAWS), 2001-2002, 47

The other source of lead poisoning has to do with a child's proximity to the fields. A study published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which surveyed 705 children ages 6 to 72 months in rural areas cited that the close proximity migrant farm worker children live to the fields to put them at additional risk of lead poisoning, because they are more likely to come into close contact with leaded gas-powered farm equipment.[14]

Exposure to Pesticides

Another condition the close proximity of farm worker housing units to the fields also imparts is exposure to pesticides. Latino farm worker children face this risk for several reasons. First, "housing sites directly adjacent to fields can receive fallout or run-off from pesticide applications."[15] This puts children who play in their yards or the yard of a neighbor at risk of pesticide exposure.[16] Second, pesticide containers, or "drums" are often housed around these units. The *No Refuge* report found drums present at 5 percent of units surveyed (Figure 2).[17] Finally, pesticide residue left on the clothing of farm workers also poses a threat, and makes quick access to laundry facilities imperative to the health of the whole household.[18] Unfortunately, a survey conducted by the Housing Assistance Council between 1997-2000 found that "almost 52 percent of the surveyed units lacked access to working laundry facilities."[19]

[14] Schaffer, Stanley and others, "Lead Poisoning Risk Determination in a Rural Setting," *Pediatrics*, no. 97 (1996): 29
[15] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 21
[16] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 23
[17] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 22
[18] Early, Julie, Stephen W. Davis, Sara A. Quandt, Pamela Rao, Beverly M. Snively, and Thomas A. Arcury, "Housing Characteristics of Farmworker Families in North Carolina," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 8, no. 2 (2006): 174
[19] Housing Assistance Council, *Migrant Housing Factsheet*, 2003

Figure 2[20]

Prevalence of Exterior Problems

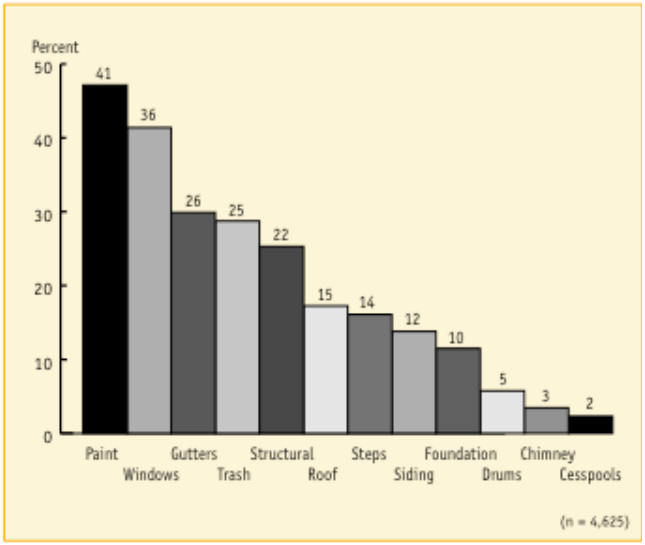
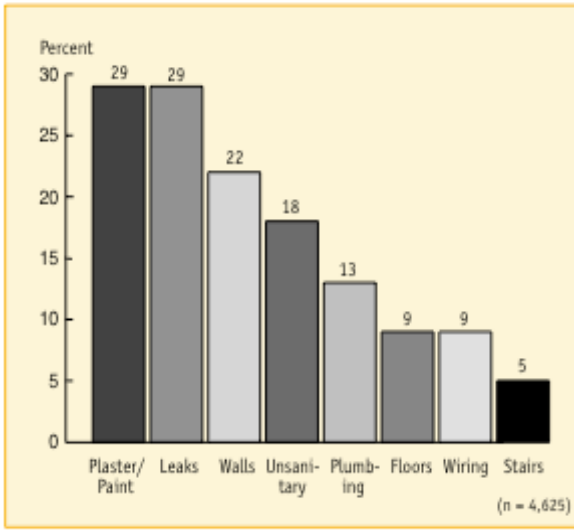


Figure 3[21]

Prevalence of Interior Problems



Respiratory and Dermatological Problems

Poor quality housing has also been shown to increase a child's risk of respiratory diseases, such as asthma and dermatological problems. Both of these can be triggered through heightened exposure to allergens, such as dust and mold from water leakage and broken windows, smoke, and insect and rodent infestations, substandard housing often poses.[22] As the above HAC findings illustrate, these problems are endemic in farm worker housing units. Damaged or missing gutters, which increases the risk of water leakage into units were found in 20 percent of units surveyed; leaks were found in 29 percent of units; damaged or broken windows were in 36 percent of the units; and rodent and insect infestation, or "unsanitary conditions," whose risk is heightened by damaged windows and the presence of trash around the premise, were present in 18 percent of units.[23] 1997 New England Journal of Medicine study found that children with allergies who are exposed to cockroaches in the home visit health care providers more often, and miss more school than children who do not face this risk. Additionally, exposure is 4.2 times more likely to occur in the homes of poor children than non-poor children, which, as I have already mentioned is characteristic of farm worker children.[24]

Overcrowding

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[20] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 22
[21] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 23
[22] Early, Julie, Stephen W. Davis, Sara A. Quandt, Pamela Rao, Beverly M. Snively, and Thomas A. Arcury, "Housing Characteristics of Farmworker Families in North Carolina," *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* 8, no. 2 (2006): 173, HAC – Housing Assistance Council, "Why Housing Matters," 4
[23] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 22-23
[24] Housing Assistance Council, "Why Housing Matters," *Rural Voices* 6, no. 1 (2000-2001): 4

Overcrowding in farm worker households endangers farm worker children by elevating certain health risks and providing a disruptive environment for completing schoolwork. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines overcrowding as "units with 1.01 or more persons per room,"[25] It can aggravate the spread of disease, which is troublesome not only because of the threat the common cold poses, but because the nature of farm work makes farm workers disproportionately susceptible to influenza, pneumonia, and tuberculosis. Tuberculosis is particularly threatening for farm workers. In her Master's research, Laurie Oettinger found that farm workers are six times more likely than others to develop tuberculosis.[26] A farm worker quoted in a Migrant Health Program report sardonically asked, "If we go to a field, we can see a cabin with eight or nine men living together, and these people have to cook and sleep in one single place, do you that makes us susceptible to illness or not?"[27]

Unfortunately, overcrowding affects the vast majority of farm worker households. It was prevalent in almost 85% of the units surveyed by the HAC and FHSI. And this figure does not excuse children. Of the overcrowded units, children were found present in over 50 percent of them.[28] Many overcrowded units are also substandard and cost-burdened ("paying more than 30 percent of their monthly income for housing"[29]). The *No Refuge* report found that 20.2 percent of the units surveyed were substandard and overcrowded. This means that 61 percent of the 33 percent of total units that were deemed substandard (see Table 1) were also overcrowded. Children were present in 63.1 percent of the units found to be both overcrowded and substandard. In what may be considered the worst of circumstances, children were present 93.8 percent of the time in units that were all three, substandard, overcrowded, and cost-burdened, (see Table 1 [30]).[31] The effects of these figures are staggering, and demonstrative of how connected these issues are. Farm worker children (along with their families) are not merely living in overcrowded houses, or merely suffering the effects of substandard housing, but facing, as I said, a myriad of conditions. The extent Latino farm worker households are overburdened is also important within the context of the low wages they earn, because not only would their low wages keep them from responding to these conditions, whether by making repairs, seeking medical care, or moving into new housing, but the level they are overburdened makes this end even more difficult by further limiting the amount they have to spend.

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[25] U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Sec. 5302.* General provisions [* Section 102 of the Act],"
http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/rulesandregs/laws/sec5302.cfm
[26] Laurie J. Oettinger, "The State of Washington's Agricultural Housing Crisis: Towards More Feasible and Affordable Farmworker Housing" (MPA diss., University of Washington, 2001), 28
[27] Holden, Christopher. "Bitter Harvest," in *The Human Cost of Food; Farmworkers' Lives, Labor, and Advocacy*, ed. Charles D. Thompson, Jr., and Melinda F. Wiggins (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 173
[28] Holden, "Bitter Harvest," 171-172
[29] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 10
[30] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 24
[31] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 24

Table 1
Substandard, Crowded and Cost-Burdened Units with Children

Combined Problems	*Percent of All Units*	*Percent with Children*
Substandard & Crowded	20.2	63.1
Substandard & Crowded	20.2	70.4
Substandard & Cost-Burdened	10.6	87.6
Substandard, Crowded, & Cost-Burdened	5.9	93.8

(n = 3,897)

OTHER ISSUES MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO EDUCATION

While I have illustrated some of the health concerns Latino farm workers and farm worker children face as a result of substandard housing conditions, there are several other common features of the Latino farm worker household that have been shown to more directly limit educational success among Latino farm worker children. I will address these concerns in this section. As I have previously mentioned, one of these is the disruptive environment overcrowding poses for children trying to do their school. Additionally, the residential instability often associated with Latino farm worker households also hinders the educational success of these children.

Overcrowding

Not only does overcrowding pose direct health risks to Latino farm workers, but it also creates competition for space between children trying to complete their schoolwork and the rest of the household.[32] This problem is made worse by the relative abundance of common space in place of private areas, such as bedrooms, in many migrant farm worker units. The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) and Farmworker Health Services, Inc. (FHSI) examined this problem by conducting a study on farm worker housing in ten states in the eastern United States, surveying 1,566 different units. Their report found that, "Despite the large number of occupants, more than 40 percent of the units had one or no bedrooms, meaning farmworkers had to sleep in living rooms or even on kitchen floors."[33] It is this type of behavior that is not conducive to the study habits of farm worker children.

Residential Instability and School Attendance

For seasonal farm workers, relocation of work and home can be anywhere from periodic to frequent, posing numerous challenges to the education of the children they bring with them. In his study of a rural school district in Ohio, Michael H. Romanowski found that migrant

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[32] Arceo, Kusserow, and Wright, "Understanding the Challenges and Potentials of Migrant Students," 232
[33] Holden, "Bitter Harvest," 172

children miss as much as two weeks of school per move. Additionally, 25 percent of migrant children end up enrolling in school more than thirty days after the start of the school year. These issues are only exacerbated by the fact that "'some migrant families move in and out of school districts as many as ten times during a single school year.'"[34] This behavior creates a major barrier for the education of migrant students, not only from the standpoint of adapting to continuous changes in curriculum, social atmosphere, rules and expectations, and English accents and dialects among their peers and teachers[35] but, as Loida C. Velazquez points to, it influences teachers and school officials' perceptions of migrant students. Many of the teachers and administrators she interviewed were "unaware of their own beliefs about migrant students, and were influenced by stereotypes that guided their behavior and actions." Stereotyping entailed viewing migrant parents and children as disinterested in education and the opportunities that schooling provides.[36]

Along a similar vein, Donna Anderson and Ann Cranston-Gingras describe how low attendance levels (caused by migratory lifestyles) in migrant students create disinterest in teachers and school administrators in addressing the needs of migrant students. Their findings come out of an intensive 24 hour-a-day workshop in Florida, which featured 62 students and educators, who they describe as previously being "indifferent to the needs of migrant students."[37] The workshop was intended to help the migrants complete their graduation requirements, while "sensitizing educators to the cultural and educational characteristics of the migrant students."[38] Time was spent both inside and outside the classroom, providing the two groups an opportunity to connect on various levels. Over the course of the workshop, the educators, reflecting on the past teaching methods, opened up more about the need to give greater sensitivity to cultural differences in the definition and goals of learning by integrating more personal experiences into learning. They saw this experience as a way to bridge differences in culture and learning, promote migrant student's acceptance into school culture, and show sensitivity towards the way migratory work conflicts with traditional models of education in the United States.[39]

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[34] Romanowski, Michael H., "Meeting the Unique Needs of the Children of Migrant Farm Workers," *The Clearing House* 77, no. 1 (Sep/Oct 2003): 27
[35] Romanowski, Michael H., "Meeting the Unique Needs of the Children of Migrant Farm Workers," 27
[36] Velazquez, Loida C, "Voices from the Fields: Community-Based Migrant Education." In A Community-Based Approach to Literacy Programs: Taking Learners' Lives into Account. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, no. 70 (Summer 1996)
[37] Anderson, Donna J., Cranston-Gingras, Ann. "Sensitizing Counselors and Educators to Multicultural Issues: An Interactive Approach," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 70, no.1 (Sep 1991): 91-92
[38] Anderson and Cranston-Gingras, "Sensitizing Counselors and Educators to Multicultural Issues: An Interactive Approach," 91
[39] Anderson and Cranston-Gingras, "Sensitizing Counselors and Educators to Multicultural Issues: An Interactive Approach," 91-92

The remainder of my report is intended to demonstrate how the national trends and scholarly writing I have already discussed are very much connected to what is happening in Washington State today. I will do this by examining both qualitative accounts and statistical data from specific Washington municipalities, and the state as a whole. First, I will present research taken by Beacon Development Group in four communities: Mabton, Mattawa, Granger, and Woodland. As you will see, many of the same factors I identified as forming the basis of the relationship between Latino farm worker housing conditions and education are mentioned throughout these accounts, as they are in different forms throughout the body of my research. In addition, though, I have included a section entitled "Residential Meeting Area," which I feel complements the section on geographical isolation nicely.

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"In the opinion of the Superintendent, it is impossible to educate farm-workers' children to the highest standard when they are forced to live in substandard housing…'That place (La Casa De San Juan Diego) was a gift from God'"

– Sarah Dunsky's "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm-Worker Housing Interview Project," referring to a discussion she had with Bill Hundley, Superintendent of Woodland School District)

During the summer of 2006, Sarah Dunksy of Beacon Development Group toured four Beacon projects around Washington state, conducting interviews with school administrators, law enforcement officers, healthcare providers, community organizers, and migrant farm workers about the impact Beacon developments have had on the Latino farm worker residents, and their surrounding communities. As I have already mentioned, Beacon Development Group is "committed to working with organizations that serve low and moderate income households (individuals and families at or below 60% median income)."[40] The four developments are located in Mabton, Mattawa, Granger, and Woodland. Each has been developed within the last four years, and provides one of the few or the only decent housing option agricultural workers at their income levels (all serve farmers 50% or below AMI[41]) have in each municipality. New Life Villa, in Mabton, contains 26 permanent homes and 10 seasonal units; Villa Santa Maria, in Mattawa, offers 44 apartments; and La Casa de San Juan Diego, in Woodland, offers 50 apartments. Each development also offers community center for meetings and recreation.[42]

The response Ms. Dunsky received from the various community members resembles a lot of what the data and arguments I have presented so far have suggested—essentially, housing conditions matter to the success migrant farm worker youth have in school.

HEALTH PROBLEMS RELATED TO HOUSING AFFECTING EDUCATION

Not only did many of Dunsky's interviewees expound on the relationship between housing and education, but many also identified health as a primary feature of this relationship.

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[40] Beacon Development Group, "Mission," http://www.beacondevgroup.com/about/about.html
[41] Beacon Development Group, http://www.beacondevgroup.com/index.html
[42] Beacon Development Group, http://www.beacondevgroup.com/index.html

Similar to the national data I presented, those she interviewed commonly identified respiratory and dermatological problems, and health conditions associated with overcrowding as features of Latino farm worker housing in each municipality.

Respiratory and Dermatological Problems

Rosa Cervantes, Executive Director of the Woodland Community Service Center remarked that La Casa de San Juan was unlike "typical farm-worker camps" in that its tenants avoided the range of illnesses and conditions that often result from sub-standard migrant farm worker housing. In particular, she mentioned problems that arise from poor insulation, broken windows, and generally poor protection from the weather, as well as non-functioning toilets, and rodent and insect infestations. In her interview with Dunsky, Cervantes recalled "[having] to take several people to the hospital over the years for rodent bites and infestations of cockroaches in their ears."[43]

Superintendent Bill Hundley expressed his past concern with the absence of decent housing available to farm workers in Woodland prior to La Casa's construction. He reiterated the problems of infestation and irregular access to running water residents regularly had to face.[44]

Chief Rob Stephenson of the Woodland Police Department reaffirmed this concern, remarking that the alternative to La Casa for farm workers consisted of several apartment buildings on the east side of Woodland, which have deteriorated over the years. Several of the apartments had been declared uninhabitable by the health department due a variety of problems, including "cockroach infestation, rotting carpet, disintegrating walls, and water and sewage leaking through the ceilings of upstairs apartments into apartments below."[45]

An employee at Wahluke Family Heath Center, Lourdes Pelido, described farm workers in Mattawa as vulnerable to many health concerns because of poor housing conditions. In particular, she spoke of the inability of the majority of units to withstand the weather, leading to upper respiratory illness, and increase aggravation in asthmatics. In contrast, she described a lower rate of incidence of these ailments in Villa Santa Maria.[46]

Overcrowding

Both Stephenson and Ildia Jackson, a Public Safety Administrator in Mabton identified overcrowding as an issue farm workers all over faced. Stephenson remarked that the alternative to La Casa De San Juan for farm workers in Woodland were apartments where he "often saw 3-4

[43] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 2003, 3
[44] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 6
[45] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 10
[46] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 11

families living in a single family apartment."[47] Jackson recalled problems in the alternatives to the Beacon community where, "Water issues in camps had drawn health inspections because of the problems resulting from insufficient numbers of toilets being shared between overcrowded camps, and these toilets not being cleaned properly." In one situation a well that provided water for one of these camps became contaminated as a result.[48] This report of the housing alternative to Beacon in Mabton reflects how overcrowding can unfortunately often lead to the spread of disease, as Oettenger found.[49]

OTHER HOUSING ISSUES MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO EDUCATION

As I have already discussed, the quality of a child's housing can affect many dimensions of his or her formal educational experience. When discussing the plight of migrant farm worker children, though, this relationship is compounded by other circumstances most other children do not face, such as residential instability, and geographical dislocation. Both of these topics appear frequently in Dunsky's research.

Residential Instability

Dunksy' generally found that the residential stability provided by enterprises such as the Beacon developments can dramatically increase a student's success in school.

Superintendent Sandra Pasiero-Davis has seen increased enrollment in Mabton schools since the 26 permanent and 10 seasonal housing units of New Life Villa were constructed. "As she put it, if these children were in town before, they weren't at school, and she blamed that fact on inadequate housing. In addition, she asserted, poor housing generally leads to poor attendance and health, both of which contribute to poor school performance."[50]

Rosa Cervantes, Executive Director of the Woodland Community Service Center sees permanent housing allowing children a greater opportunity to build friendships, specifically for Spanish-speaking migrant youth to become friends with Anglo English-speaking children. This enables them to develop English language skills more quickly (as well as share their own language), which significantly helps them academically.[51] Pasiero-Davis echoed the importance of building friendships, remarking it was a necessary component of a student's self-identity within the school (therefore, establishing a relationship with the school community, which Anderson and Cranston-Gingras identified as very important[52]). "Children who lack such groups

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[47] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 10

[48] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 5

[49] Laurie J. Oettinger, "The State of Washington's Agricultural Housing Crisis: Towards More Feasible and Affordable Farmworker Housing," 28

[50] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 7

[51] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 2

[52] Anderson and Cranston-Gingras, "Sensitizing Counselors and Educators to Multicultural Issues: An Interactive Approach," 91

become more isolated, may not form strong identities, and are more susceptible to drugs, (use of methamphetamine has recently become a problem in the area), gangs, and other destructive behaviors."[53] Being able to invite friends over is an important step in this process, which sub-standard housing often prevents, as children living in sub-standard conditions are ashamed to invite their peers over.[54] Finally, Cervantes remarked that when families remain more stable, their children are more likely to become involved in school sports, which requires a certain level of academic achievement to participate, potentially propelling students to achieve higher than they might otherwise.[55] The social stability and language acquisition Cervantes and Pasiero-Davis associate with stable housing appear in Romanowshi research as gateways to academic success.[56]

Geographical Isolation

Farm labor communities have traditionally been pushed to the outskirts of the town, creating both metaphorical and physical isolation for migrant farm workers and their children from the rest of the town. In contrast, the developments Beacon has been involved with in these areas are more centralized, not only increasing resident's access to services, but also the town's access to the farm worker community. As Pasiero-Davis has seen, "the San Juan housing development provides a safer, more centralized location for such meetings than other areas of farm-worker housing, which means that the school district is better able to connect with farm-worker parents than they were before. In Mabton, a City/Public Safety Administrator, Ildia Jackson, remarked that, "Kids living in town are less likely to spend their days working on a farm in violation of labor laws."[57] A residents of Villa Santa Maria also noted that living in town has made it easier for her children to make friends than when they were living on the outside of town.

Pasiero-Davis has seen geographic isolation of farm labor communities in Mabton contribute to physical health problems. "Because they are located outside of the city limits, they are charged 1.5 times the in-city rate for water, which is, by all accounts, already expensive. This means that paying the water bill is a continual struggle, the family drinks less water than is good for their health, and they consequently can't wash clothes, bodies or hair as often as might be optimal. This, in turn, has resulted in chronic head lice for the children of the family, which has driven down their school attendance, created ongoing physical discomfort, and has proven

[53] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 7
[54] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 7
[55] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 2
[56] Romanowski, Michael H., "Meeting the Unique Needs of the Children of Migrant Farm Workers," 27
[57] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 4

emotionally painful both because of the embarrassment of being continually sent home from school, and of being unable to have friends over to a house deemed 'infested.'"[58]

Communal Meeting Area

A particularly salient theme in Dunsky's research is the positive effect the availability of a community meeting space within a migrant farm worker housing community can have on their children's educational success. This type of space, which is present at all three of these developments, is used both for health education and school organizing. At La Casa, the community center has been used by both the Health Department, and the site-manager, who led pest-control classes.[59] As I have already mentioned, the more central location of La Casa has made the community there more accessible to the school district, but this has been facilitated in part by the meeting space, which allows interaction between farm workers and school officials to occur more easily. As Dunsky reports, "The school district has worked in recent years to provide better outreach to the parents of bilingual students, hiring a teacher/facilitator 2 years ago to promote that process. Both the Superintendent and the new facilitator have found the community room at La Casa de San Juan Diego to be instrumental in connecting with a population with whom it is sometimes difficult to communicate. Because it is in a central, immediate location for a large number of farm-worker families, the San Juan community center provides an accessible, non-threatening environment in which to hold parent meetings or organize around important student-related issues such as bond elections."[60]

THE STATE OF WASHINGTON AND MY CASE STUDIES WITHIN A STATISTICAL PERSPECTIVE

The following section is devoted to following up of the qualitative accounts of Latino farm worker housing conditions in Washington with quantitative data from my case study communities, and Washington as a whole. I am organizing it this way for two reasons. First, because of the limited local data that is available on many of these topics. After extensively searching the Washington Department of Health and other online resources, I contacted I Wahluke Family Health Center, Sunnyside Hospital, and Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic, which serve Mattawa, Mabton, and Granger, respectively. None of the clinics were able to give me information on farm worker health, though. After also not finding information housing conditions in these areas online, I called the Housing Authority of Sunnyside, and the Housing Authority of Grant County. Grant County could not provide me with any help, while Sunnyside directed me to the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing (ORFH), which could not help me,

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[58] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 8

[59] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 3-4

[60] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 6

either. By combining these two sections I will also allow me to remain consistent with the way I have laid out my report thus far, by separating data based on its primary relevancy to either housing, health, or education. I now turn to back to trends in housing.

HOUSING

Looking back at the *No Refuge* study, while Washington figured way below the national average of moderately substandard units for Latino farm workers (9.6 percent), it was above the national average of severely substandard units (30.5 percent), with the third highest average amongst the twenty-one states surveyed (see "Table 2"). It also had the third highest rate of "Severe Substandard Units with Children" (94.9 percent) and the fourth highest rate of "Moderate Substandard Units with Children (96.5 percent), each falling way above their respective national averages of 66 and 65.2 percent.[61] Together, these numbers indicate that the total percentage of substandard units in Washington is 40.1 percent, which is also above the national average of 34.6.

Table 2[62]

Prevalence of Substandard Units and Substandard Units with Children, by State

State (n=4,625)	Percent Substandard Units		Percent Substandard Units with Children	
	Severe	Moderate	Severe	Moderate
WA	30.5	9.6	94.9	96.5
Totals	19.9	14.7	66.0	65.2

While I think the Beacon research illustrates that substandard housing is a problem for Latino farm worker children in Washington, these figures demonstrate how prominent children are in Washington's substandard housing. In other words, if one is to think about substandard housing in Washington, he or she cannot not do so without considering the effect it is having on the children, who are almost always present.

Overcrowding

The prevalence and negative effects of overcrowding for Latino farm workers have already been noted on a national level; however, the Beacon research reveals the need to pursue the problem in Washington State. I did this using 2000 U.S. Census data.

With an average household size below the national average (2.53 people compared to 2.59, respectively), Washington may be overlooked as being potentially overcrowded.[63]

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[61] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 46
[62] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields,* 46
[63] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder,* 2005*, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=&_cityTown=&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010*

Looking specifically at my case study municipalities, though, these numbers change drastically. As Table 3 below indicates, all have large Latino populations working largely in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining that are comparatively large to other local industries (in each municipality, agriculture is by far the largest industry). In Mabton, 35.8 percent of the Latino working population was employed in this area; in Mattawa, that figure is 70.3 percent; and in Granger, it is 34 percent. In Mabton, the average Latino household size is 5; in Mattawa, it is 6; and in Granger, it is 5. While one could not suggest, based on these figures alone, that just because there was is large average household occupancy in each municipality, Latino farm worker families must have large household; however, it would appear that, with so great a proportion of migrant Latino agriculture workers in each town, the household sizes of Latino agricultural workers are going to greatly influence the average household size of each municipality considerably. Using the same Census figures, it is possible to apply roughly the same standard HUD uses for overcrowding (1.01 or more persons per room), by finding the percentage of houses in each municipality that have fewer rooms than the average household size of the municipality. In Mabton, where the average Latino household has five people, 46.4 percent of households have four rooms or fewer.[64] In Mattawa, where the average household has 6 people, 86.5 percent of households have five rooms or fewer.[65] And in Granger, where the average household size is five, 48.9% of households have four rooms or fewer.[66] These figures reiterate the concern over overcrowding found in HAC report, as well as the personal accounts in the Beacon research and my own interviews (which I will get to shortly) that identify overcrowding as a serious problem. While my rough findings do not consistently demonstrate overcrowding to be as extreme in my municipalities as the HAC report did nationally (85% percent overcrowding, nationally), given the harmful effects overcrowding can have on a child's health and school performance, these figures are still quite alarming.

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[64] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=&geo_id=16000US5340980&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5340980&_street=&_county=mabton&_cityTown=mabton&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

[65] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=16000US5340980&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5340980&_street=&_county=mattawa&_cityTown=mattawa&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

[66] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=16000US5344165&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5344165&_street=&_county=granger&_cityTown=granger&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

I thought the relationship between household occupancy and room numbers should be qualified by income level, though, because a household of five or six would not be that uncomfortable if the household salary was great enough that it could afford to provide those five or six people with adequate space. I chose to compare the per capita incomes of the Latino populations in my case study municipalities to that of national average among Whites. While this does not take in account differences in the regional standards of living, I think the discrepancy it reveals is large enough that it would more than account for any such difference. The per capita income among Whites nationally is $23,918. In comparison, per capita income among Latinos in Mabton, Mattawa, and Granger is $6,563,[67] $6,964,[68] and $6,660, respectively.[69] These numbers suggest that, even though having relatively few rooms in Latino housing should not presuppose overcrowding, their low income levels would make it likely that they would not be able to buy the adequate space necessary to compensate for fewer rooms, making the problem of overcrowding among Latino farm worker households in Washington all the more evident.

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[67] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=&geo_id=16000US5340980&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5340980&_street=&_county=mabton&_cityTown=mabton&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

[68] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=16000US5340980&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5340980&_street=&_county=mattawa&_cityTown=mattawa&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

[69] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=16000US5344165&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5344165&_street=&_county=granger&_cityTown=granger&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

Table 3

	Mabton[70]	Mattawa[71]	Granger[72]	Washington[73]	U.S.[74]
Population	1,891	2,609	2,530	5,894,121	281,421,906
Population of Latinos	1,683	2,343	2,164	441,509	35,305,818
Percent of Population Latino	89%	89.80%	85.50%	7.50%	12.50%
Average Latino Household Size	5	6	5	4	4
Average Latino Household Median Income (in 1999 dollars)	$26,438	$30,966	$24,965	32,757	33,676 Whole 41994
Per Capita Income amongst Latinos	$6,563	$6,964	$6,660	$11,293	$12,111
Percent of the Latino working Population employed in Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	35.8	70.3	34	2.5	1.9

[70] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=&geo_id=16000US5340980&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5340980&_street=&_county=mabton&_cityTown=mabton&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

[71] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=16000US5340980&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5340980&_street=&_county=mattawa&_cityTown=mattawa&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

[72] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder*, 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFIteratedFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=16000US5344165&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53%7C16000US5344165&_street=&_county=granger&_cityTown=granger&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160&_submenuId=factsheet_2&ds_name=DEC_2000_SAFF&_ci_nbr=400&qr_name=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160&reg=DEC_2000_SAFF_R1160%3A400&_keyword=&_industry=

[73] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder,* 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=&_cityTown=&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010

[74] U.S. Census, *American Factfinder,* 2005, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/ACSSAFFFacts?_event=&geo_id=01000US&_geoContext=01000US%7C04000US53&_street=&_county=&_cityTown=&_state=04000US53&_zip=&_lang=en&_sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=&_useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=040&_submenuId=factsheet_1&ds_name=ACS_2005_SAFF&_ci_nbr=null&qr_name=null&reg=null%3Anull&_keyword=&_industry=

Percent of Latinos that speak a language other than English at home					
Average White Household Size	80	90.4	78.5	14	17.9
Average White Household Median Income (in 1999 dollars)	$24,453	$35,288	$31,429	$47,044	$44,678
Per Capita Income Amongst Whites (in 1999 dollars)	$10,928	$11,245	$15,289	$24,674	$23,918

EDUCATION

Again, although it is difficult to find data that specifically describes Latino farm worker housing and health conditions, and educational success in my three municipalities, the large Latino and agricultural worker populations in each area lead me to believe it is possible to predict the Latino farm worker children's school performance in each municipality based upon municipality-wide data. Table 4 presents data on school performance from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) "Report Card." The top box illustrates student performance on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in different subjects, and at different grade levels. Table 5 examines data on several other indicators of school performance: Unexcused absence rate, annual dropout rate, on-time graduation rate, and extended graduation rate. The data is taken from the entire school district, with the results from Mattawa listed under the Wahluke school district.

2005-2006 WASL RESULTS

Table 4

	MABTON[75]	*WAHLUKE*[76]	*GRANGER*[77]	*STATE*[78]
READING (%)				
3rd	50	33.6	51.4	68.2
4TH	65.6	48	49.6	81.1
5TH	66.1	38.9	57.9	76.2
6TH	60	51.5	36.5	66.6
7TH	29.5	38	44.6	61.5
8TH	53.2	53.4	57.4	70.1
10th	61.7	77.4	66.7	81.9
MATH (%)				
3rd	41.3	37.4	47.3	64.2
4th	27.4	21	31.3	58.9
5TH	31.6	21.5	30.9	55.8
6TH	12.7	26.2	14.2	49.4
7TH	17.7	15.4	20.7	48.5
8TH	23.7	15.1	22.6	48.8
10TH	20.4	32.2	27.7	51
WRITING (%)				
4TH	41.3	39.1	24.3	60.3
7TH	47.5	45.1	41.3	64.5
10TH	66.7	54.2	63.3	79.7
SCIENCE (%)				
5TH	20.7	4.9	9.1	35.7
8TH	4.1	10.2	7.5	42.9
10TH	4.5	16.7	7.4	34.9

[75] Office of Superintendent of Public Institution (OSPI), *Washington State Report Card*, 2005-2006, http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/?schoolId=297&reportLevel=District&orgLinkId=297&yrs=

[76] Office of Superintendent of Public Institution (OSPI), *Washington State Report Card*, 2005-2006, http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/?schoolId=69&reportLevel=District&orgLinkId=69&yrs=

[77] Office of Superintendent of Public Institution (OSPI), *Washington State Report Card*, 2005-2006, http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/Summary.aspx?schoolId=302&reportLevel=District&orgLinkId=69&yrs=

[78] Office of Superintendent of Public Institution (OSPI), *Washington State Report Card*, 2005-2006, http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/

Table 5

	MABTON	*WAHLUKE*	*GRANGER*	*STATE*
Unexcused Absence Rate (2005-2006)	0.3	0.1	2.8	0.4
Annual Dropout Rate (2004-2005)	2.8	6.9	2.4	5.1
On-Time Graduation Rate (2004-2005)	87	69	83	74
Extended Graduation Rate (2004-2005)	87	71	89	79
Hispanic Student Population (%)	93.9	89.9	85.6	13.7

These WASL scores indicate that all three municipalities are performing way below the state average in each subject. While the scores within a single municipality and between municipalities do not follow any consistent trends in comparison to the state data, there is not a single data point from one of the municipalities that matches or exceeds the corresponding state data point. In many cases, the school districts do not even come close. The unexcused absence, dropout, and graduation rates do show each district performing better than the state average in one or more categories, though. Mabton and Wahluke have a lower unexcused absence rates, and Mabton and Granger have lower annual dropout rates, and higher on-time and extended graduation rates than the state averages. Because of this interesting relationship between the two sets of data, I contacted school officials in each district to determine what could be accounting for them. Although I was unsuccessful in setting up an interview in Mabton, I managed to meet with the Federal Programs Directors in the two other districts. Both interviews were very informative, providing me with a lot of information about housing, health, and education among Latino farm worker children in each district. Each interview is described in greater detail later in my paper.

Both Directors cited language proficiency problems among Latino farm worker children as the primary cause of low WASL scores in their areas. Given the high percentage of migrant students in each district (19.1% in Granger, and 32.5% in Wahluke) this information is consistent with Romanowski, who identifies language proficiency as among the most significant barriers to education migrant students face. At the same time, they each recognized other conditions that negatively impact their students' education. Ms. York identified overcrowding and other substandard conditions, such as poor heating, poor lighting, and poor cooking facilities, which hinder homework completion, while Mrs. Lopez remarked that poor heating, cooling, and insulation often led to increased illness, and therefore, greater absenteeism among their students.

In terms of the unusually low unexcused absence rate in the Wahluke district, Ms. York attributed that to an error in data collection deriving from differences between the schools in the district in how they define excused and unexcused absences. Mrs. Lopez on the other hand, attributed Granger's low dropout rates and high graduation rates to the persistent support school officials and teachers in the district show their students. While this may seem unlikely to some who would argue that in any given district enough teachers are going to continually show support of their students that their support alone could not elevate graduate rates that much, and

keep drop-out rates that low, Velazquez and Anderson and Cranston-Gingras would argue otherwise. Their studies found a lack of support for migrant students to be one of the greatest challenges residential instability poses for a Latino migrant's education, suggesting that a concerted effort to reach out to students in a district with a considerable migrant population, like Granger's, (19.1%[79]) could have very positive effects.[80]

HEALTH

Finally, I will examine the prevalence of several health conditions in Washington previous sections of my report have shown to be associated with substandard housing, and poor educational attainment: lead poisoning, exposure to pesticides, and asthma.

Lead Poisoning

Although the state data that has been collected about lead poisoning does not pay special attention to Latino farm worker children, discrepancies it finds in lead levels between Washington's Latino population and the rest of the state, as well discrepancies between Washington's agricultural areas and the rest of the state appear to support the national data I presented earlier, which found lead poisoning to be a significant threat in the lives of Latino farm worker children.

In 1999, the Epidemiology Office of the Department of Health surveyed statewide blood levels of one- and two-year old children, and compared them against the blood levels of Hispanic children of the same age from nine counties in Central Washington. The results found that 0.9 of one- and two-year olds statewide had elevated lead levels compared to 3.8 percent of Hispanics from the nine counties.[81] Given the prevalence of agriculture in Central Washington, this data would support the national data that shows high levels of lead poisoning in Latino farm worker children nationally. I found another survey to be even more revealing of this trend.

The Environmental Health Division of the Department of Health conducted a survey that accounted for differences in the age of housing and income levels of the household being surveyed, which found a similar discrepancy Latino youth in Central Washington, and other around the state. Between 1994 and 1997, the group surveyed 581 children, under the age of three, in five cities throughout the state: Bellingham, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, and Yakima. In each city they targeted neighborhoods the U.S. Census had identified as having old housing, and low-income residents. The results are shown below in Table _____.

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[79]Office of Superintendent of Public Institution, *Washington State Report Card*, 2005-2006, http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/?schoolId=302&reportLevel=District&orgLinkId=302&yrs=

[80] Velazquez, Loida C, "Voices from the Fields: Community-Based Migrant Education." Anderson and Cranston-Gingras, "Sensitizing Counselors and Educators to Multicultural Issues: An Interactive Approach."

[81] Washington State Department of Health, *Washington Childhood Blood Lead Screening Recommendations*, 2000 (Olympia, WA), 8

Table 6. Blood lead test results from the Five Cities surveys.

City	Number of children	Number above 10µg/dL	Percent above 10µg/dL
Bellingham	126	1	0.8
Seattle	109	0	0
Spokane	86	0	0
Tacoma	106	4	3.9
Yakima	154	13	8.4
All five cities	581	18	3.1

As the figures show, despite accounting for differences in income and the age of units, Yakima, the most heavily farmed and densely Latino-populated city still demonstrated a higher percentage of children with elevated lead levels (measured as above 10ug/dL) than all other cities combined.

This may support two things my national data already suggests: First, that "low-quality housing," as determined by age and level of income is comparatively lower for Latino farm workers than others living in low-quality housing. Second, referring back to the American Academy of Pediatrics study, it could also reflect the additional threat of lead poisoning farm work poses for Latino farm worker children, who are often in are in close contact with leaded gasoline-powered farm equipment. These findings are very troubling, considering the devastating effects lead poisoning has been shown to have on a child's health and education.

Exposure to Pesticides

Farm worker children are often exposed to pesticides, both from residues left on farm worker clothing, and also because of the close proximity of many farm worker housing units to fields sprayed with pesticides. Fortunately, this trend is not as prevalent in Washington as it is in other states. The HAC's *No Refuge* report found that, of the units surveyed in Washington, only 1.5 percent of them were adjacent to pesticide-treated fields, compared to 26.3 percent nationally (see Table ___). Among these units, children were present in 50% of them. [82] But even the relative lack of adjacent housing to the fields among Latino farm workers in Washington still leaves many Latino farm worker children (among others) at risk.

The Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking (PIRT) Review Panel, a group created out by law under Chapter 280, Laws of 1989, and RCW 70.104,[83] which presents individual and combined data from several state agencies, including the Washington State Departments of Health, Agriculture, Ecology, Labor and Industries, and Washington Poison Center found that, in 2004, of the 54 agricultural incidents reported, 11 were non-occupational, each the result of

[82] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 45
[83] Washington State Department of Health, "Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Review Panel," 2005, 3

drift.[84] And it is quite possible that the actual numbers from both occupational and non-occupational pesticides incidents were higher than this. A Washington Department of Health news release reported that pesticide-related illness among farm workers often goes unreported. Checking DOH data against records from the Yakima-area hospitals and clinic, they found that only 60 percent of the illnesses were reported to the DOH.[85]

As my national findings discussed, an important combatant of pesticide exposure is laundry equipment and facilities for washing. The *No Refuge* study also found that, among the units adjacent to pesticide-treated fields in Washington, 33.3 percent lacked one or both of these items, compared to 53 percent nationally (see Table 3). While that is positive, children were found present in all of the pesticide-adjacent units that lacked one or both of these items.[86] This behavior could reflect a similar trend to that my national data, that found that children were almost always represented in overburdened households, as both of these situations reflect the cost of rearing children. In the one case, the cost of raising a child would take away from the money a household would have to spend on items like laundry facilities. In the other, not only is a child going to use a lot of the family resources, but a child also means the need for more space, increasing the amount that is going to have to be spent on rent, which increases the tendency a household with one or more children is going to be overburdened.

Table 7[87]
Units Adjacent to Pesticide-Treated Fields, by State

State (n=4,625)	Percent Adjacent	Percent Adjacent Lacking Tub and/or Laundry	Percent Adjacent with Children	Percent Adjacent Lacking Tub and/or Laundry, with Children
WA	1.5	33.3	50.0	100.0
Totals	26.3	53.0	59.6	52.0

Asthma

The poor quality of Latino farm worker housing has been shown nationally to elevate the risk of asthma in Latino farm workers. In Washington, limitations in data collection make it difficult to extract and analyze Latino farm workers from other populations. Even data focusing specifically on Latinos in Washington is difficult to find, because surveying techniques with the state have been shown to disproportionately exclude Latinos, and, in particular, Latino farm workers. Two reports by the Washington Department of Health reveal that asthma surveying is often done in English, over the phone, which jeopardizes the quality of the sample, because many Latinos do not speak English, and others are not listed under a telephone number (Latino

[84] Washington State Department of Health, "Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking Review Panel," 54
[85] Washington State Department of Health, "Pesticide-Related Illness Among Farmworkers Often Unreported," June, 17, 2004.
[86] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 45
[87] Housing Assistance Council, *No Refuge from the Fields*, 45

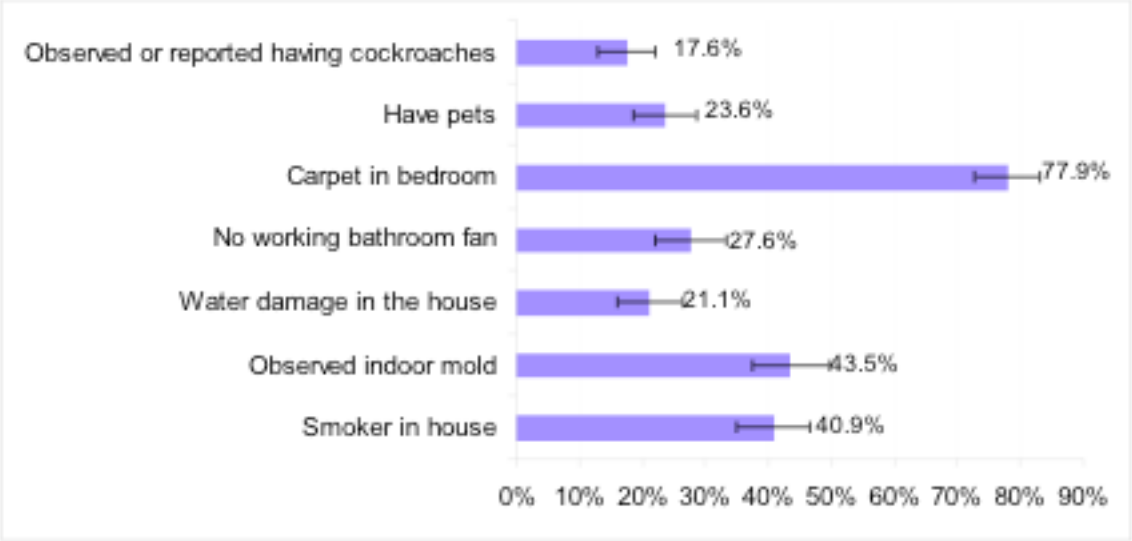
farm workers in particular).[88] One such example of this is the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), which was initiated by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to document heath conditions and risk behaviors, and provides the Wasington DOH with some of its information. Unfortunately, the BRFSS only began administering surveys in Spanish in 2003, and continues to use phone surveying, describing itself as "the world's largest, on-going telephone health survey system."[89] [90].

What has been shown, though, is that many of the same factors that contribute to higher levels of asthma in farm workers nationally, have been found to be endemic in low-income populations in Washington. These concerns become of particular importance to Latino farm workers in Washington, given that Latino farm worker households in Washington are chronically low-income.

The Washington Asthma Initiative, under the Department of Health describes a survey conducted by the Seattle-King County Healthy Homes Project of low-income asthmatics in King County, which tried to identify what most often induced their asthma. Along with pets, carpeting, and the presence of a smoker in the house, among the most common triggers were several of the prominent causes of asthma associated with substandard housing: cockroaches, water leakage, and mold (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Baseline prevalence of home triggers for asthma, among Seattle-King County asthma study participants



[88] Washington State Department of Health, *Washington State Asthma Plan 2005*, 79; Washington State Department of Health, Washington Asthma Initiative, *The Burden of Asthma in Washington State*, 2005, 104-105

[89] Center for Disease Control, "Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System," http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/

[90] Washington State Department of Health, Washington Asthma Initiative, *The Burden of Asthma in Washington State*,66,

Once again, although this data does reflect the condition of Latino farm workers in particular, the connection it makes between many of the national substandard conditions associated with asthma in Latino farm workers and low-income asthmatics in Washington is important. Because much of the Latino farm worker population in Washington is also low-income, it is quite likely they face similar problems within the State.

INTERVIEWS

Below is a summary and analysis of the interviews I gave with Kelly York, of the Wahluke School District, and Margarita Lopez, of the Granger School District.

KELLY YORK

My interview with Kelly York ended up addressing many of the same topics that appear throughout my research: language acquisition, overcrowding, asthma, and geographic isolation. Our discussion was quite informative, as it focused on health and non-health problems associated with poor quality housing, while locating each issue within the realm of education.

Because the vast majority of the school district is composed of the children of farm workers, Ms. York said the district did not collect any information about the farm worker students in comparison to the other children. This made her unable to provide me with specific information about the academic achievement in Latino farm worker children. When asked if she thought such a difference existed, though, she replied, "Probably not necessarily the academic performance, but where we might see the differences is in the language acquisition." When asked about what contributed to the district WASL scores, which are considerably below the state average, she identified limited English proficiency in many of her students as the "biggest factor" they were dealing with.

She also identified certain housing conditions that led to "the difference in the ability for homework completion based on the availability of proper facilities to do homework." These included poor heating and lighting, poor cooking facilities, a lack of supplies, and overcrowding. Ms. York described "[doing] battle with frequent outbreaks of head lice," due to overcrowding. Other prominent findings include the way Latino farm worker children in the district are limited in their sports participation because the lack of transportation the school provides outlying areas for those activities. She also mentioned the district had a high rate of asthma she contributed to burning in the fields, but she did not tie this to any outcome in the children's education.

Because I already discussed Ms. York's comments on language proficiency in my case study section, I am going to forego any further discussion of this topic. I would like to note, however, the connection she draws between overcrowding and difficulty completing homework reflects the same trend Arceo, Kusserow, and Wright have found in their research. The other thing that particularly stands out about Ms. York's interview is her discussion of the way sports participation in Latino farm worker children is hampered by the lack of transportation the district provides to outlying areas. Although discussion of this topic is limited to qualitative accounts, it

is an issue that was addressed both by Margaria Lopez, and in Dunsky's research,[91] and something that should be kept in mind for future consideration.

MARGARITA LOPEZ

Margarita Lopez touched on many of the same topics as Kelly York did, such as language proficiency, overcrowding, and geographical isolation, but she placed special emphasis on this last issue, as well as on the districts success in achieving high levels of parental involvement, due in part to a parent center

Similar to Ms. York, Mrs. Lopez identified language proficiency as one of the greatest problems facing, farm worker children. She identified substandard housing conditions, such as poor heating, cooling, and insulation leading to increases in the number of colds and flues farm worker children contracted, and therefore, increasing the amount of school they missed. Ms. Lopez also cited overcrowding as another common feature of farm worker households.

The two areas she seemed to give specific attention to, though, were geographical isolation, and parental involvement. I asked Mrs. Lopez about the location of most farm worker housing, and she told me it was on the outside of town. Keeping in mind the data and personal accounts my project has already turned up about this topic, I asked if that created any problems for students who wanted to participate in after-school activities, to which she answered that it did. Although I did not ask her anything further about the topic, when I asked her later if there was anything else she would like to see happen at the school for the kids, she brought the problem of transportation up again: "I would like something to help these students after school, to also help with transportation, and their ability to participate in more of these activities, because that's another issue, you know? If students are able to participate in extracurricular activities it tends to help them with their schoolwork, too; to help their scores increase, and they're more apt to continue in school. So, we're looking into that. It's pretty difficult, because transportation's an issue. A lot of programs don't want to pay transportation. They want to pay other kinds of services, but not transportation." Again, given the attention that both school officials gave this topic, as well as a lot of supporting evidence from Dunsky's research, it is something that should probably be explored more.

Another topic that Mrs. Lopez reverted back to several times was parental involvement. Many of the accounts from Dunsky's research emphasize the importance of a communal meeting space as a way for parents to mobilize, and Mrs. Lopez seemed to be doing to the same here. Not only does it provide the parents ESL classes (with free childcare), as well as a place to learn about what community resources exist for them and their families (such as the those the local Hispanic radio station offers), but "it helps them feel more comfortable." This type of area appears to be instrumental part of both the school and housing communities it is in, and should also be kept in mind in future development of Latino farm worker housing.

SYNTHETIC DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

[91] Dunsky, Sarah, "Notes on Information Acquisition—Farm Worker Housing Interview Project," 2

Housing, health, and education are three of the most important features of every person's life. People sometimes ask one another, "If you had to give up one sense, what would it be? Your sense of sight? Of touch? Of taste?" Well, I am now posing the same question to you, except over these three things. "If you had to live in poor housing, poor health, or with a poor education, which would you choose?" This decision may be even harder than deciding between your senses, because giving up any one of these luxuries would probably be much more painful than giving up your sense of smell.

Now imagine you have to give up all three at once. That is what life is like for many Latino farm worker children. The substandard housing conditions these children face not only make their present uncomfortable, but their future uncertain. Certain conditions, such as asthma or the flu may only keep a child from school every now and again, but other conditions, such as lead and pesticide exposure can seriously damage the brain, leaving a much longer effect.

But physical health is not the only determinant education success. The social environment Latino farm worker children experience also influences their success in school. Overcrowded homes limit students' performance by making it difficult to find a space where they can focus on their work. The migratory lifestyle of many farm workers also makes it difficult for students not only to settle in to schools, learn English, and build social relationships, as Velazquez and Anderson and Cranston-Gingras have shown us, schools can be the ones that are slow to integrate the students. And the physical location of Latino farm worker communities on the outside of town make this process of integration harder, by limiting the activities Latino farm worker children can participate in because of limited transportation.

So what do we do?

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to overcome conditions of the Latino farm worker children described in this report, three needs must be met:

1. *We must improve the housing conditions of Latino farm workers.*

2. *We must promote opportunities for stability in the lives of Latino farm workers.*

3. *We must do what we can to make their integration into the school community possible and smooth.*

Numbers one and two really must happen together. We must provide more stable housing options for Latino farm workers, but this must be done through a more controlled public market. A problem I have found in both research, and talking to Housing Development Specialist at the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing is that, in contrast to the many restrictions placed on groups that seek funds from sources such as the Washington State Housing Trust Fund, private renters face much looser restrictions.[92] In addition, what restrictions are in

place often go without enforcement. For example, the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Protection Act of 1983 provided basic housing standards for the Occupational and Safety and Health Administration to use in regulating housing for farm workers. However, states have a lot of leeway in how they interpret and implement these standards, and many have regulations that are even weaker than the AWPA's.[93] Another problem associated with private ownership is price-gouging in the market in rural areas where there is usually a shortage of housing. This means that, not only do housing costs go up, but the quality of the unit can go down as greater competition creates less incentive to make the housing attractive to buyers.[94]

In response, we need to promote a socially-conscious buy-out of the corrupt private market by continuing to support initiatives like low-income housing tax credits, which provide incentives for investing in low-income housing. Referring back to what I said in my introduction, it's time we expand our definition of what it means to invest in education to include investment in low-income housing.

Not only did Dunsky's research demonstrate how providing more housing in an area will increase the number of stable Latino farm workers, Ms. York also mentioned a new plan by the Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) that provides up to six months of rental credits to migrant farm worker families that are willing to stay in Washington during what is considered the off-season.

While the third recommendation could include quite a variety techniques, including reforming teaching techniques to embrace cultural differences more (as Anderson and Cranston-Gingras would suggest), I would like to see a communal meeting space a permanent feature of all Latino farm worker developments. Accounts throughout my report identify this type of space as an excellent way to for a farm worker community to connect with the school district, as well as one another. In addition, until farm work housing is redeveloped to entail geographical isolation from the rest of the community, a greater effort needs to be made to provide Latino farm worker children with the same opportunities the rest of the school district's children have, whether that means sports participation, or some other after-school activity.

[93] Holden, "Bitter Harvest,"182
[94] Holden, "Bitter Harvest," 182

Appendix A: Interview Question List

1. Could you state your name, position, and how you came to work in the your school district?

2. Would you describe your position?

3. How large is the Latino population within the school district?

4. Could you describe the performance of Latino students in comparison to others students in the district.

5. Within the Latino population in the district, do you see a difference in the performance of Latino farm worker children, and other Latinos?

6. Are the housing conditions of Latino farm worker youth generally different than other students?

7. Does the district take measures to address any special needs Latino farm worker youth might have, or any other subsection of the Latino population might have?

8. Are you aware of any state or federal programs that serve this cause

    a. How difficult are they to get/ implement?

9. (If yes, or no) Do you feel that might could or should be done for Latinos in general in your district, or Latino farm worker children, and if so, why?

10. Questions about district WASL data

Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

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[redacted]

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