Migrant Students

Resources for Migrant Children Similar to Other Students but Achievement Still Lags

February 2007

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Letter of Transmittal

Florida Advisory Committee to the
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

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The Florida Advisory Committee (Committee) submits this report, *Migrant Students: Resources for Migrant Children Similar to Other Students but Achievement Still Lags*, as part of its responsibility to study pressing civil rights issues in the State and report on its findings. The Committee discussed its concerns about civil rights issues facing the migrant community in Florida and equal education opportunity in a series of planning meetings, and from those meetings decided to examine the educational resources provided to migrant children in the State. This is a report by the Florida Advisory Committee as to their fact-finding on whether resources are equally allocated to migrant children in Florida. The report was unanimously approved by the members of the Florida Advisory Committee at a meeting of the Committee on February 13, 2006, by a vote of 13 yes, 0 no, and no abstentions.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has focused national attention on the importance of ensuring each child's access to equal educational opportunity. The law seeks to improve the performance of schools and the academic achievement of all students, without regard to economic or other disadvantage. The heightened challenge of meeting the act's new accountability requirements underscores the necessity of ensuring that all schools have the support they need to provide students with a quality public education.

Migrant students have various risk factors in common with other disadvantaged students, such as poverty, poor health, and also face additional challenges exclusive to their situations in the form of disruption of education, cultural and language difficulties, and social isolation. Additional resources are designated for migrant children through Part C of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act, as amended in 2001 by the No Child Left Behind Act. In addition, there are Migrant Education Programs (MEP) within the Department of Education and various state governments. These Migrant Education Programs have the stated purpose to ensure that all migrant students reach challenging academic standards and graduate from high school with an education that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment.

In Florida, the state level Migrant Educational Program allocated $21 million during the most recent school year to local school districts to help execute the goals of the federal MEP and ensure that the special educational needs of migrant children were identified and addressed. In local school districts a MEP coordinator is funded to oversee these services. This includes the recruitment of migrant children and youth for MEP services, identification of migrant children and youth for MEP eligibility, assistance with school placement and identification and retention training programs, provision of interstate and intrastate coordination as well as advocacy and family support. In addition, the MEP supports comprehensive educational programs specifically designed to help reduce the educational disruptions and other education related problems that result from frequent moves, working to ensure that migrant students who move between states are not put at a disadvantage because of disparities in curriculum, graduation requirements, content, and student academic achievement standards.

Comparing the performance of children at migrant schools with matching schools in two county school districts, our analysis shows migrant children consistently achieving at lower levels than their counterparts. However, our analysis does show professional staffing levels generally higher at schools with large numbers of migrant children. We also found that schools with large numbers of migrant children engaged in a number of special schooling initiatives. Other educational resources, such as computers and physical facilities, were found to be similar between those provided schools with large numbers of

migrant children and schools without migrant children. We also found a similarity in opinion among the principals of schools with large numbers of migrant children that the resources provided to their schools were not unfavorable compared to other schools in the same school district.

Nevertheless, it remains evident that migrant children still underachieve academically in comparison to their peers. It is commendable that government entities are providing additional personnel and resource support for migrant children; however, such additional resources might not be the answer. As long as the achievement gap between migrant children and other children persists, there is a critical need to examine and consider different institutional and structural changes from what has been offered in the past in order to truly provide this group of children true equal education opportunity in our public schools.

Respectfully,

Elena M. Flom, Ed.D., *Chairperson*
Florida State Advisory Committee

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All 13 members of the Florida State Advisory Committee voted, and all 13 members approved the report. It is a unanimous reporting by the Florida State Advisory Committee, all members participating.

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Background

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001[1] focused national attention on the importance of ensuring each child's access to equal educational opportunity. The law seeks to improve the performance of schools and the academic achievement of all students without regard to economic or other disadvantage. The heightened challenge of the act's new accountability requirements is ensuring that all schools provide all children with a quality public education.

Research has shown that socioeconomic status is a predictor of student achievement and that students living in high poverty areas are more likely than other poor student to fall below basic performance levels.[2] Research shows that migrant students are often from low-income families and often live in high-poverty areas. In addition, they often have other risk factors in common with other disadvantaged students, such as poor health and language difficulties. However, migrant children are among the most educationally disadvantaged children in the country and face additional academic challenges particular to their situation, such as disruption of education, poor record-keeping between schools, cultural and language barriers, and social isolation.[3] These challenges are even more acute for schools and school districts serving large numbers of migrant children. Such concentrations of academic challenges combined with social isolation within both schools and districts may strain available resources even in circumstances where additional resources are provided.

Migrant agricultural workers and their children tend to migrate along three principal streams, the eastern stream, mid-continent stream, and the west coast stream. The eastern stream includes the southern states and the Eastern seaboard. For the eastern stream, most of the workers are based out of southern Florida, with the result that Florida—after Texas and California—has the largest concentration of migrant children in

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[1] Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2001) (codified as amended in scattered sections of 20 U.S.C.).

[2] See for example, U.S. General Accountability Office, *School Finance: State and Federal Efforts to Target Poor Students*, GAO/HEHS-98-36 (Washington, D.C., 1998).

[3] Salerno, A., *Migrant students who leave school early: Strategies for retrieval*, ERIC Digest, ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (Charleston, WV, 1991).

the United States.[4] Since migrant farm workers and their families often move across state and even national boundaries, it is difficult to know the exact number of migrant children in a state at a given point in time. Moreover, exact counts of migrant children are complicated by differing identification and record-keeping practices within different states, resulting from repeated moves and irregular attendance, language barriers, and poverty with the result that estimates can vary widely.[5]

In Florida it is estimated that there are approximately 120,000 total migrant farm workers. Three-quarters of Florida's farm workers were born outside of the United States; two-thirds of those workers (half of all Florida workers) were born in Mexico. Another one-sixth of the Florida workers were born in Central America. Five counties in the state are estimated to have more than 8,000 migrant workers, these are: Collier, Dade, Hillsborough, Palm Beach, and Polk.[6]

Part C of Title I of ESEA Provides Education Support for Children of Migrant Workers

Since the mid-1960s Congress has been providing substantial funding to schools with low-income students through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Assistance Act, as amended in 2001 by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).[7] Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the largest federal program supporting elementary and secondary education. Created in 1965 as part of the War on Poverty, the purpose of Title I is to provide supplemental funding to help educate disadvantaged children. Part A of Title I provides additional resources for children who

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[4] Kindler, Anneka, *Education of Migrant Children in the United States*, National Clearinghouse of Bilingual Education, vol. 1, no. 8, Fall 1995.

[5] Strang, E. W., et al, *Services to migrant children: Synthesis and program options for the Chapter I Migrant Education Program*, prepared under contract for the U.S. Department of Education by Westat, Inc., (Rockville, MD, 1993).

[6] Larson, Alice C., *Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study—Florida*, prepared for the Migrant Health Program, Bureau of Primary Health Care, Health Resources and Services Administration, at http://www.bphc.hrsa.gov/migrant/enumeration/final-fl.pdf.

[7] Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2001) (codified as amended in scattered sections of 20 U.S.C.).

are economically disadvantaged. However, due to the fact that migrant students usually account for only a small percentage of the total student population and that many schools and districts find it difficult to dedicate the level of resources that may be necessary to ensure the best educational experience possible for their migrant students, Part C of Title I specifically targets migrant children. Funds under Part C provide resources to school districts to enable them to design programs to help migrant children overcome educational disruption, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that might impair academic performance in school.[8]

For purposes of the act, a migrant child is defined as a child who is, or whose parent, spouse, or guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent, spouse, guardian in order to obtain, temporary or seasonal employment has moved from one school district to another.[9] Part C funds are distributed by the federal government to the states through the Migrant Education Program (MEP) within the U.S. Department of Education. The federal MEP has the stated purpose to "ensure that all migrant students reach challenging academic standards and graduate with a high school diploma (or complete a GED) that prepares them for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment."[10]

In Florida, a state-level Migrant Educational Program works with the federal MEP program with the state MEP making sub-grants funds to school districts. Of the 67 school districts within the state, 63 either individually or as part of a consortium, received MEP funds. The state MEP distributed $21 million to local school districts during the 2005-06 school year to help execute the goals of the federal MEP and ensure that the special educational needs of migrant children were identified and addressed. At the local level this included the identification and recruitment of eligible migrant children and youth for MEP services, identification of migrant children and youth for MEP eligibility, assistance with appropriate placement in school, provision of interstate and intrastate coordination as well as advocacy and family support.

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[8] U.S.C. § 6394 (2006).
[9] 20 U.S.C. § 6399(2) (2006); 34 C.F. R. § 200.81(d) (2006).
[10] 20 U.S.C. § 6391 (2006).

At the school district level MEP programs are administered by local coordinators who provide leadership and technical assistance to local school districts with regard to the implementation of programs and services for migrant children.[11] In addition, at the local level the MEP supports comprehensive educational programs specifically designed to help reduce the educational disruptions and other education related problems that result from frequent moves, working to ensure that migrant students who move between states are not put at a disadvantage because of disparities in curriculum, graduation requirements, content, and student academic achievement standards.[12]

No Specific Research on Equity of Education
Resources for Florida's Migrant Children

Research shows a persistent achievement gap exists between migrant children and non-migrant children. Despite a substantial body of research on the achievement gap between migrant children and other children, in recent decades there has been no published study regarding possible disparities in educational resources between migrant children and non-migrant children. Instead, the few recent studies on the education of migrant children have generally aggregated demographic data and reported that migrant children have higher poverty rates and perform lower academically than their peers.

For example, the U.S. Department of Education published a report on migrant education entitled, *A Snapshot of Title I Schools Serving Migrant Students, 2001-01*.[13] The study compared student characteristics of schools with migrant children that received Title I funding to Title I schools with no migrant students as well as the academic progress of students at these schools. The study reported that 25 percent of Title I schools served some migrant children, and schools with no migrant children had a lower student poverty levels and lower proportions of minority students and students with limited English proficiency than those schools with migrant children. The study also noted that less than 30 percent of teachers who taught migrant students in Title I schools had

[11] Ibid.
[12] Migrant Education Program, Florida Department of Education.
[13] U.S. Department of Education, Policy and Program Studies Services, Washington, DC (2003) at http://www.ed.gov/schlstat/eval.

received professional development in instructional strategies specifically designed to teach migrant students. The study, however, did not examine the equity of educational resources between migrant children and non-migrant children.

Two other recent studies focused on issues related to migrant children within specific school districts. In 2002, a study appraised the MEP of the Austin (Texas) Independent School District.[14] The study examined the use of Title I funds the school district received for migrant programs and then rated the effectiveness of the program with recommendations for improvement. The study noted that in the Austin Independent School District 50 percent of the identified migrant children were designated limited English proficient, 40 percent were from a low-income family, two percent were designated special education, and one percent were classified as gifted. As a group, the overall score of migrant students taking the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) was lower than the standard score in the district. One recommendation of the study urged greater effort to identify migrant children needing special services in order to provide such children with appropriate resources. However, there was no comparison of the amount of resources provided to migrant children in the district compared to non-migrant children.

In Michigan, a policy analysis class at Michigan State University explored the status of the state's MEP and issued a report that contained a cumulative look at migrant education programs in the state in comparison to programs in other parts of the country.[15] Specific to Michigan, several areas for improvement were noted. First, school systems with migrant children need to recruit teachers and administrators who understand the special needs of migrant children, and existing programs need to create a relationship between the school and the parents in order to increase communication between the two parties. In addition, technologies used in the schools for migrant students should be evaluated for appropriateness as well as their contributions to a quality education, higher

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[14] Washington, Wanda, *AISD Title I (Part C) Migrant Education Program Summary Report 2001-2002*, Office of Program Evaluation, Austin Independent School District, October 2002.

[15] Michigan State University, *The Education of Migrant Children in Michigan*, 2000, JSRI Research at http://www.jsri.msu.edu/RandS/research/ops/oc 72abs.html.

achievement rates, and lower dropout rates. Similar to the other previously cited studies, this study did not examine the equity of educational resources being provided to migrant children in comparison to those being provided to other children.

Florida Public School Districts Have Large Numbers of Migratory Children

There are sixty-seven (67) county public school districts in Florida. According to the U.S. Department of Education, only six county school districts in the state have more than 2,500 enrolled migrant students. They are, in descending order: Palm Beach (5,551), Collier (4,992), St. Lucie (4,144), Hillsborough (3,996), and Miami-Dade (2,950).[16]

Palm Beach County is located in southeast Florida along the Atlantic Coast and just north of Miami. According to the 2000 census, there were about 1,130,000 people living in the county, making it the third most populous county in the state.[17] The county school district has a total enrollment of about 170,000 students and operates 213 schools. Enrollment in the school district generally reflects the racial and ethnic demographics of the county, as Latinos are approximately 20 percent of the general population and comprise about 20 percent of total enrollment. Migrant children are about 3 percent of total enrollment.[18]

Collier County is located in southwestern part of the state and borders the Gulf of Mexico; the coastal city of Naples is the largest city in the county. The 2000 census reported that there were approximately 250,000 people residing in the county, with 20

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[16] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Survey," 2003-04. Note, the number of migrant children actually enrolled as students may be substantially lower than the actual number of migrant children residing in a particular county. For example, Earl Wiggens, coordinator, Migrant Education Programs, Collier County School District, reported that the number of migrant children in Collier County approaches 9,000, though only 4,900 may be listed as enrolled. The discrepancy in large part is often attributable to older migrant children not enrolled and working. (Earl Wiggens, interview, December 12, 2006.)

[17] 2000 Census; http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/1202.html.

[18] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Survey," 2003-04.

percent of the population Latino.[19] The school district has an enrollment of nearly 40,000, and Latinos are nearly 40 percent of total enrollment—twice their percentage of the general population in the county, and migrant children are more than 12 percent of total enrollment. [20] The disparity is likely due to the large migrant population living in the interior part of the county away from the coast, Imakolee being the largest of these towns.

St. Lucie County is located in the central and eastern part of Florida. It is a relatively small county, and the 2000 census reported less than 200,000 residents.[21] The St. Lucie County School District operates 43 schools with a total enrollment of approximately 33,000 students.[22] Almost all adult Latinos in the county are migrant workers, and they are about 10 percent of the general population in the county; proportionately similar, migrant children comprise about 12 percent of total district enrollment.

Hillsborough County is located along the Gulf Coast in west central Florida, and includes the City of Tampa. The 2000 census reported almost one million persons living in the county, with 18 percent of the population Latino.[23] The Hillsborough County School District is one of the largest districts in the state with 237 schools and a total enrollment of about 182,000 students. Though whites are the largest racial group of students, Latinos are more than one-fourth of the district's total enrollment with the migrant student population about 2 percent.[24]

Dade County is located in southeast Florida and encompasses the City of Miami. It is the most populous county in the state, and as of the 2000 census there were more than two and a half million residents in the county. Latinos are the majority of the county's population, and two-thirds of the county's residents speak a language other than

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[19] 2000 Census; http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/1202.html.
[20] U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Survey," 2003-04.
[21] 2000 Census; http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/1202.html.
[22] U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Survey," 2003-04.
[23] 2000 Census; http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/1202.html.
[24] U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Survey," 2003-04.

English at home.[25] The Miami-Dade County School District is the largest school district in the state, with a total enrollment of almost 400,000 students and is the only district in the state that is majority Latino. Migrant students, however, are less than 1 percent of the district's enrollment and are concentrated in the rural Homewood area in the western part of the County. [26]

Table 1: County School Districts in Florida, Total Enrollment (in Thousands), and Percentage of Migrant Students

COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL STUDENTS (thousands)	PERCENTAGE OF MIGRANT STUDENTS
ALACHUA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	29,400	less than 1pct
BAKER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	4,600	less than 1pct
BAY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	26,700	less than 1pct
BRADFORD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3,900	less than 1pct
BREVARD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	73,900	less than 1pct
BROWARD COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	272,800	less than 1pct
CALHOUN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2,200	less than 1pct
CHARLOTTE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	18,300	less than 1pct
CITRUS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	15,500	less than 1pct
CLAY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	31,300	less than 1pct
COLLIER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	40,100	12.4
COLUMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	9,800	less than 1pct
DADE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	371,700	less than 1pct
DESOTO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	4,900	11.8
DIXIE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2,200	2.7
DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	129,600	less than 1pct
ESCAMBIA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	44,000	less than 1pct
FLAGLER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	8,600	less than 1pct
FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1,300	less than 1pct
GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	7,000	8.7
GILCHRIST COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3,000	3.4
GLADES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1,000	18.4
GULF COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2,100	less than 1pct
HAMILTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2,000	3.4
HARDEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	5,200	31.1
HENDRY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	7,600	30.0
HERNANDO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	19,600	less than 1pct
HIGHLANDS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	11,700	10.9

[25] 2000 Census; http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12/1202.html.

[26] U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, "Local Education Agency Survey," 2003-04.

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	181,900	2.2
HOLMES COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3,400	less than 1pct
INDIAN RIVER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	16,700	4.8
JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	7,200	less than 1pct
JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1,500	less than 1pct
LAFAYETTE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1,000	7.0
LAKE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	33,000	less than 1pct
LEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	66,500	2.4
LEON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	32,200	less than 1pct
LEVY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	6,200	4.4
LIBERTY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	1,400	1.1
MADISON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3,200	less than 1pct
MANATEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	40,300	4.3
MARION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	40,400	less than 1pct
MARTIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	17,800	2.2
MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	9,100	less than 1pct
NASSAU COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	10,500	less than 1pct
OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	31,500	less than 1pct
OKEECHOBEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	7,300	16.6
ORANGE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	165,000	less than 1pct
OSCEOLA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	44,000	less than 1pct
PALM BEACH COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	170,000	3.3
PASCO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	57,500	less than 1pct
PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	114,500	less than 1pct
POLK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	84,000	2.2
PUTNAM COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	12,200	3.4
SANTA ROSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	24,400	less than 1pct
SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	39,500	less than 1pct
SEMINOLE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	65,000	less than 1pct
ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	23,200	less than 1pct
ST. LUCIE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	32,800	12.6
SUMTER COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	6,800	5.0
SUWANNEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	5,900	2.7
TAYLOR COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3,600	less than 1pct
UNION COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	2,200	less than 1pct
VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	64,000	1.8
WAKULLA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	4,800	less than 1pct
WALTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	6,500	less than 1pct
WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	3,400	less than 1pct

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data, 2004 school year with Percentage Migrant computed by Florida Advisory Committee.

Objective, Scope and Methodology

The objective of this study is to examine similarities and differences in educational resources provided to migrant children compared to those provided similarly situated non-migrant students. For this study, the following question is posed: Are provided resources to migrant children equal to those provided to non-migrant children? As research is consistent in showing a persistent achievement gap between migrant children and other children, it is of particular interest to learn whether migrant children receive a lower level of educational resources compared to other children. Using a within school district school-to-school comparison design, this study compares the educational resources provided to the two groups of children for the following resources: (1) teacher-student ratios, (2) staff-student ratios, (3) computer technology, and (4) library resources.

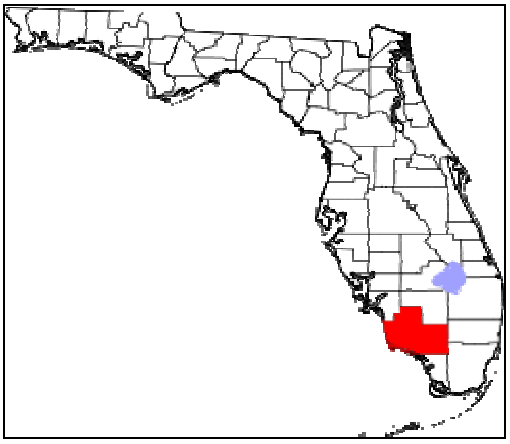
This study is not an attempt to assess the adequacy of resources, but rather an examination restricted to the equity of resources. The study of adequacy is a different issue from equity and there have been a number of lawsuits in several states throughout the country regarding this issue, most recently in Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, and Nebraska. In these cases, individuals and groups have argued that funding for building programs, interpreters for the students in the district who speak different languages, and the general level of resources necessary to provide a quality education to low-income students is inadequate.

In this study, to ascertain whether educational resources are between migrant children and non-migrant children are equitable, the educational resources at schools with high numbers of migrant students were compared with matching schools in the same district that had no migrant students. As resources precluded an examination of all school districts in the state, the scope of consideration was narrowed to those school districts with a migrant student population of at least 2,500 students. There were five such school districts, and from among those school districts two representative districts were selected—Collier and Hillsborough, the two districts with the 2nd and 4th highest numbers of migrant children. Additionally, the selected school districts are the 3rd and 16th most populous school districts in the state (out of 67 school districts) and have substantial populations of migrant children. Whites are about 85 percent of the county residents in

Collier County, and 75 percent of Hillsborough County, while Latinos are between 10 and 20 percent of the population in the two counties.

In the Collier County School District there are 28 elementary schools with a total enrollment of approximately 40,000 students. There are about 5,000 migrant students in the school district, and migrant students are about 12 percent of the district's total enrollment. The percentage of Latino students, about 40 percent, is nearly double the percentage of Latinos in general population of the county.

Figure 1: Location of Collier County, Florida



Source: Florida Advisory Committee.

The Hillsborough County School District has a total enrollment of approximately 160,000 students and operates 126 elementary schools. There are almost 4,000 migrant students in the district, and they comprise more than 2 percent of total enrollment. Though the percentage of Latinos in the general population is less than 20 percent, Latinos as a percentage of total enrollment is about 25 percent.

Figure 2: Location of Hillsborough County, Florida

Source: Florida Advisory Committee.

The basis of comparison in this study are resources at the school-level. This design was adopted because of the difficulty to precisely assess the exact level of educational resources that are provided to an individual child. The study was further restricted to a comparison of educational resources at elementary schools, as a comparison between elementary schools provided a more straightforward comparison than high school programs. Finally, the study attempted to limit itself to include all schools where migrant students were at least 50 percent of total enrollment. That restriction was possible in Collier County, but in Hillsborough County no schools met the criteria and in that district all schools were selected where migrant students were at least one-third of the total enrollment.

In Collier County, the following three schools were selected and identified as "migrant" schools for the study (percent migrant enrollment in parenthesis): Village Oaks Elementary (51.5 percent), Pinecrest Elementary (50.1 percent), and Lake Trafford Elementary (48.7 percent). In Hillsborough County the selected "migrant" schools were: Wimauma Elementary (40.8 percent), Dover Elementary (41.5 percent), and Cypress Creek Elementary (34.3 percent).

In each district, three matching schools were selected for comparison with the migrant schools. The matching schools were regular schools with no migrant children and located in neighborhoods that reflected an average income level for the county. That was done so that the study would be a comparison of the educational resources of "migrant" schools with regular, typical schools—as opposed to schools with extreme wealth or poverty.

To select the matching schools, the addresses of all elementary schools in the school district with no migrant children were obtained. The median household income of the zip code was identified from census data and ordered.[27] The schools in the three zip codes with the median household incomes for the county school district were selected as the matching schools.[28] In Collier County, the matching schools were: Lake Park Elementary, Sable Palm Elementary, and Pelican Marsh Elementary. In Hillsborough County, the matching schools were: Chiaramonte Elementary, Folsom Elementary, and Knights Elementary.

For each of the selected schools, from public sources and school district information sources we obtained the following data for the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years: (1) school staffing, (2) student characteristics, (3) library facilities, (4) computer facilities, and (5) physical building size. In addition, student achievement scores were obtained for each of the schools by sub-group. The obtained information was confirmed through interviews with building principals. School staffing included: (1) teachers to include regular education teachers, special education teachers, English as a second language instructional staff, and other specialized instructional staff; (2) teaching assistants to include all regular classroom teacher assistants, special education teacher assistants, and other instructional staff teacher assistants; (3) student support professional

[27] In statistics, the median is one measure of average and is the statistic representing the middle value of an ordered set or the point in an array of data that has an equal number of observations above and below it. The advantage of the median as a measure of an average is that it is insensitive to extreme observations and skewed distributions, both of which are general characteristics of household income.

[28] If more than one elementary school shared a selected zip code, the elementary school in the zip code with the median child poverty rate (as determined by free and reduced lunch eligibility) for all elementary schools in that zip code was selected.

and nonprofessional staff by job title; (4) administrators and administrative assistants by job title; and (5) operations staff by job title. Student characteristic information included total enrollment, number of students with disabilities, number of students with limited English proficiency, race and ethnicity of students, and the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch. For student achievement, the Grade 4 reading scores on the Florida Reading Assessment was used and for those schools identified as migrant schools the scores of the migrant children at the school were used as the basis of comparison with the overall score for the matching school.

The methodology employed to compare educational resources between the migrant schools and the matching schools was a matched-pair design. Specifically, in each school district the three migrant schools and three matching schools were ordered and paired. That is, for each educational element being measured, the migrant school in the district with the highest measure among the migrant schools was identified and paired with the matching school with the highest measure. Then the migrant school with the second highest measure among the migrant schools was identified and paired with the school havng the second highest measure among the non-migrant schools. Finally, the migrant and non-migrant schools with the lowest measures were paired. The results were examined in a heuristic manner rather than with statistical analysis.[29] This design was employed to compare student-teacher ratios, student-staff ratios, computers per student, and library books per student.

Because different schools had different levels of particular resources, the order of the particular schools shuffled with respect to one another depending upon the educational resource being measured. To illustrate, migrant school A and non-migrant school Z might be highest in their groups with respect to student-staff ratios. For that comparison migrant school A would be matched against non-migrant school Z. However,

[29] Formal statistical analysis, even non-parametric analysis, was not determined appropriate for this study as it would more likely obscure the results than illuminate them. Statistical theory rejects relationships without established significance, and significance is constructed mathematically from the standard deviation. Sample designs that create large standard deviations are poor instruments for statistical analysis and in such cases the reliance on significance can result in reporting false positives, i.e., saying something is not true when it is in fact true.

for a different resource, e.g., library books, migrant school B might be the highest ranked school among the migrant schools while the non-migrant school Z might remain as the highest ranked school among the non-migrant schools. Then for the comparison of library books, migrant school B would be matched against non-migrant school Z.

In addition to obtaining and comparing quantifiable information, informal assessments about educational resources were solicited from each building principal. These assessments were an attempt to discern if building principals, particularly those at the migrant schools, noted a difference in educational resources between those afforded migrant children and other children. In addition, the principals were asked about special programs for migrant children, parental involvement, and turnover rates.

Though confident that the design, methodology, and findings of this study likely reflect the general situation in the state regarding the equity of educational resources for migrant children, without confirmation the results of this study are limited to the specific schools and counties examined. Moreover, to the extent the findings can be generalized to other districts, it is more likely that similar results hold for districts with similar characteristics to the two studied with respect to numbers of migrant children and the migrant percentage of total enrollment.

Migrant Students Perform Poorly Compared to Other Children

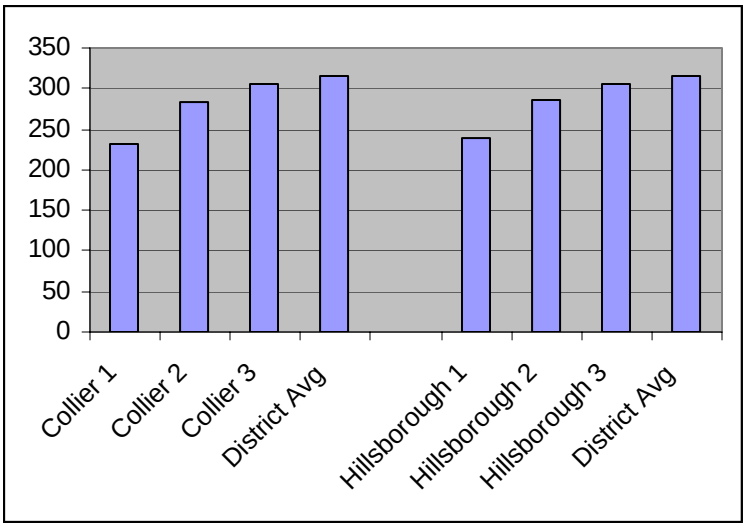
As previously reported, research shows a persistent achievement gap existing between migrant children and non-migrant children. In the two selected counties, migrant students at the selected migrants schools performed lower academically than other children in the school district.

In Collier County the average scores of migrant children on the Florida 4th Grade Achievement Reading Assessment at the three selected migrant schools were 232, 283, and 306 for the 2004-05 school year. In contrast, the average reading scores for all children in the district was 317.[30] So for each selected migrant school, the average scores of the migrant children were lower than the overall district average.

[30] Florida Department of Education, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, at http;//fcat.fldoe.org/results.

Similarly in Hillsborough County, migrant children performed substantially lower than other children in the district. At the three selected migrant schools, the average scores for the migrant children on the Florida 4th Grade Achievement Reading Assessment were 240, 286, and 305. This was lower at every school than the district average of 316.[31] (See Figure 3.) Thus, at all six migrant schools in both counties the migrant students on average in each instance performed at a lower than their peers in the same school district.

Figure 3: Comparison of Reading Scores for Migrant Children at Selected Schools in Collier and Hillsborough Counties with District Average Score



Source: Florida Advisory Committee from Florida Department of Education, Collier County School District, and Hillsborough School District.

[31] Ibid. School data for the 2004-05 school year could not be obtained, so the comparison is for the school year 2003-04.

Teacher and Professional Staff Levels Higher at Migrant Schools, Library and Computer Resources Vary Across Schools

Migrant schools in both the Collier and Hillsborough County School Districts had smaller class sizes than the examined non-migrant schools. Migrant schools also had larger professional staffs than the regular schools in their districts. Regarding library books and computer technology, there was no consistent pattern that favored either group of children.

Student-to-Teacher Ratios Lower at Migrant Schools

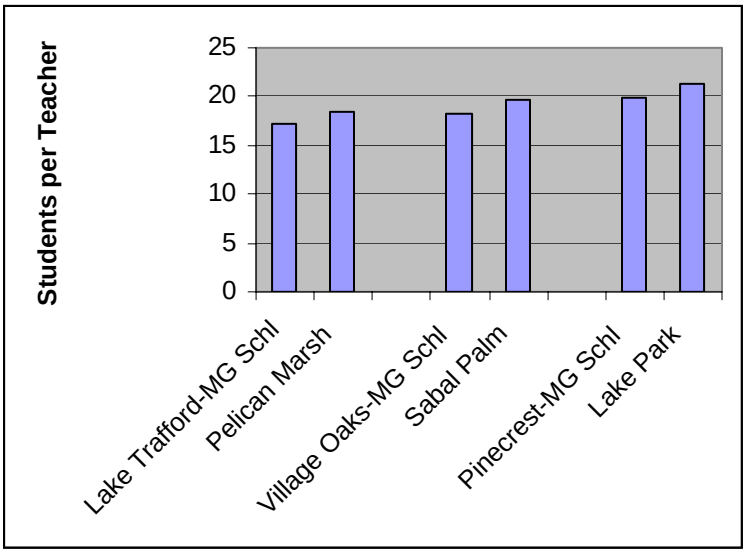
The migrant schools in Collier County had smaller class sizes than the examined non-migrant schools. Student-to-teacher ratios at the migrant schools ranged from 17 students to 20 students. In contrast, student-to-teacher ratios at the non-migrant schools were higher and ranged from a little more than 18 students to 22 students.[32]

Comparing the two groups of schools on an ordered pair basis, the student-to-teacher ratio at migrant school were always lower than at the non-migrant school.[33] In Collier County, Lake Trafford Elementary was the migrant school with the smallest class size, 17.3, which was lower than the smallest class size of the non-migrant matching school, Pelican Marsh Elementary, at 18.5. The two other ordered pairs showed a similar pattern. Village Oaks Elementary was the migrant school with the second lowest class size, 18.2, which was lower than the class size at the non-migrant matching school, Sabal Palm Elementary. Among all examined schools, the non-migrant matching school, Lake Park Elementary, had the highest student-to-teacher ratio at 21.8, while class size at the paired migrant school, Pinecrest Elementary, was lower at 19.9. (See Figure 4.)

[32] By teachers, we mean both classroom teachers as well as area specific teachers, such as art and music teachers.

[33] The "ordered pair" design and methodology employed to compare migrant schools with non-migrant schools is explained on pages 14 and 15 of this report.

Figure 4: Student-to-Teacher Ratios for Selected Schools in Collier County for the 2005 School Year

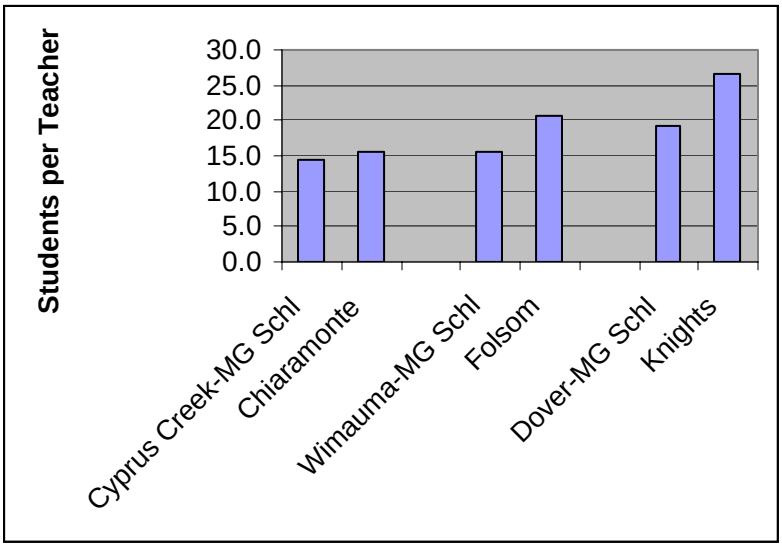


Source: Florida Advisory Committee from Collier County School District data.

In Hillsborough County, among the examined schools, classroom sizes were generally smaller than in Collier County, yet similar to Collier County class sizes at the migrant schools were smaller than at the non-migrant schools. In Hillsborough County, at the migrant schools class size ranged from 14.5 to 18.8 compared to a range of 15.6 to 22.2 at the non-migrant schools.

Similar to Collier County, comparing the two groups of schools in Hillsborough County on an ordered pair basis showed the student-to-teacher ratio at the migrant school always lower than at the non-migrant matching school. The migrant school in Hillsborough County with the lowest student-to-teacher ratio was Cypress Creek Elementary, with a ratio of 14.5. In contrast, the lowest student-to-teacher ratio among non-migrant matching schools was higher at Chiaramonte Elementary, with15.6. The pattern of lower class size at the migrant schools followed for the other two ordered pairs as well. Student-teacher ratios at the other two migrant schools, Wimauma Elementary and Dover Elementary, were 15.6 and 18.8 respectively. These were lower than the student-to-teacher ratios at the matching schools, Folsom Elementary with a ratio of 20.7 and Knights Elementary at 22.2. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5: Student-to-Teacher Ratios for Selected Schools in Hillsborough County for the 2005 School Year



Source: Florida Advisory Committee from Hillsborough County School District data.

Migrant Schools Have More Professional Staff

Not only were class sizes found to be smaller at the migrant schools, but the migrant schools also were found to have more professional staff per child than the regular schools. For purposes of this study, professional staff refers to all employees with a direct or indirect instructional role to include principals, classroom teachers, specialty teachers, teacher aides, librarians, special education teachers, social workers, counselors, testers, LEP teachers, and health professionals. So in both Collier County and Hillsborough County there were substantially more educational support staff at the migrant schools.

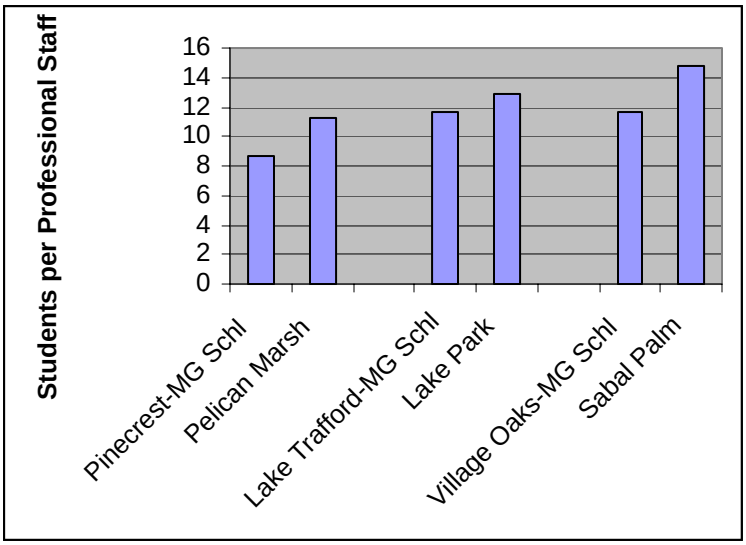
In Collier County, the ratio of students-to-professional staff at the migrant schools ranged from 8.7 to 11.5, compared to a range of 10.5 to 15.0 at the non-migrant schools. Regarding professional staff, according to Earl Wiggins, local MEP coordinator in Collier County, the three migrant schools examined as part of this study, Village Oaks, Lake Trafford, and Pinecrest, "have a full-time migrant paid home-school liaison at the school. The migrant paid staff at each school are: Lake Trafford – 4 teachers, 1 tutor;

Village Oaks – 1 teacher, 3 tutors (100 percent migrant paid) and 4 tutors (split funded migrant); Pinecrest – 5 tutors."[34]

When the two groups of schools were compared on an ordered pair basis, the student-to-professional staff ratio at the migrant school was always lower than at the non-migrant matching school. For example, the non-migrant matching school with the lowest student-to-professional staff ratio was Pelican Marsh Elementary, with a ratio of 11.2. In contrast, Pinecrest Elementary, the migrant school with the lowest ratio had one professional staff person for every 8.7 students.

This professional staff advantage for the migrant schools also held for the other ordered pairs. The migrant school with the most students per professional staff was Village Oaks Elementary with a ratio of 11.7, which was lower than the student-to-professional staff level at the non-migrant matching school, Sabal Palm Elementary, which had a ratio of nearly 15. Similarly for the median ordered pair, the student-to-professional staff ratio at the migrant school was 11.6, which was more advantageous than the 12.9 ratio at the non-migrant matching school. (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6: Student-to-Professional Staff Ratios for Selected Schools in Collier County for the 2005 School Year



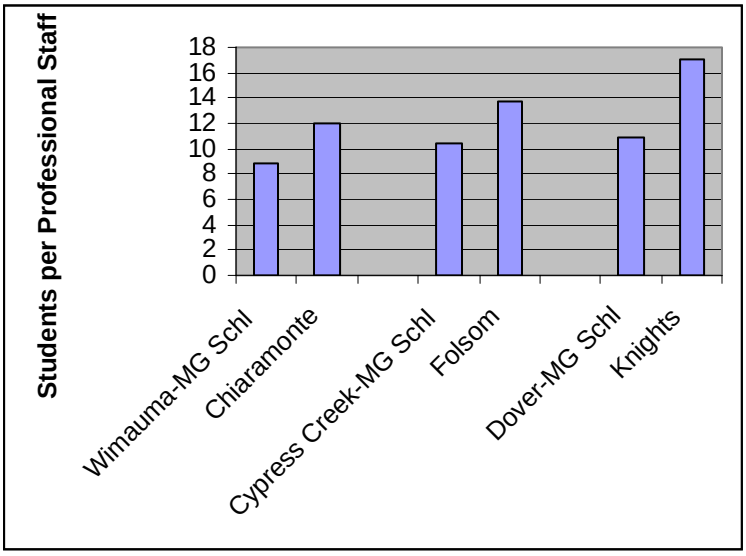
Source: Florida Advisory Committee from Collier County School District data.

[34] Earl Wiggins, Collier School District, Office of Federal and State Grants, letter to Southern Regional Office, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Dec. 12, 2006.

In Hillsborough County, student-to-professional staff ratios were lower at each and every migrant school than at any of the examined non-migrant schools. The ratio of students-to-professional staff at the migrant schools had an approximate range of 9 to 11, substantially less than the range of 12 to 17 at the non-migrant matching schools.

For the three examined migrant schools in Hillsborough County, Wimauma Elementary, Cypress Creek Elementary, and Dover Elementary, the student-to-professional staff ratios were 8.9, 10.4, and 10.9, respectively. In contrast, the student-to-professional ratios at the three non-migrant matching schools, Chiaramonte Elementary, Folsom Elementary, and Knights Elementary, were 12, 13.7, and 17.1. So each migrant school had more professional staff per child than any of the non-migrant schools. (See Figure 7.)

Figure 7: Student-to-Professional Staff Ratios for Selected Schools in Hillsborough County for the 2005 School Year



Source: Florida Advisory Committee from Hillsborough County School District data.

Computer and Library Resources Vary Across Schools

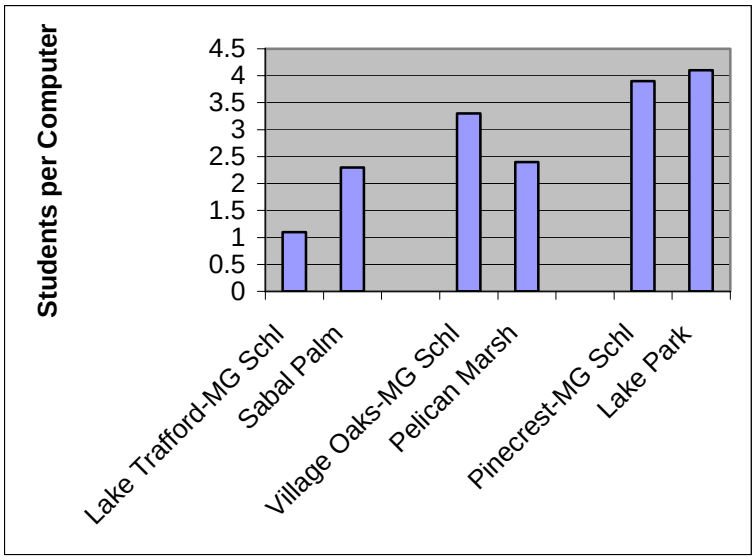
Computer and library resources in Collier County and Hillsborough County did not show an advantage to either the migrant schools or the regular schools.[35] Regarding computers, slightly more computers were available to migrant students in Collier County,

[35] Part C of Title I does not allow for the purchase of library books.

whereas in Hillsborough County migrant students had slightly fewer computers per child. The situation was reversed for library books. In Collier County, migrant students generally had access to fewer library books than students at the regular schools, whereas the migrant students in Hillsborough County had more library books available to them than their non-migrant counterparts.

In Collier County, generally speaking, at the migrant schools fewer students shared a computer than at the examined non-migrant schools. For instance, the lowest computer-to-student ratio was found at the migrant school, Lake Trafford Elementary, which had almost one computer for each child. At Sabal Palm Elementary, the paired non-migrant matching school with the most computers per child, two children shared a computer. The least favorable student-to-computer ratio in Collier County for a migrant school was Pinecrest Elementary, where about four students shared a computer, and this was similar to the non-migrant matching school, Lake Park Elementary. At the median comparison level, the non-migrant school had an advantage in computers over the migrant school. At the regular school, Pelican Marsh Elementary, two children shared a computer, while at the migrant school, Village Oaks, there was one computer for about every three children. (See Figure 8.)

Figure 8: Students per Computer for Selected Schools in Collier County for the 2005 School Year

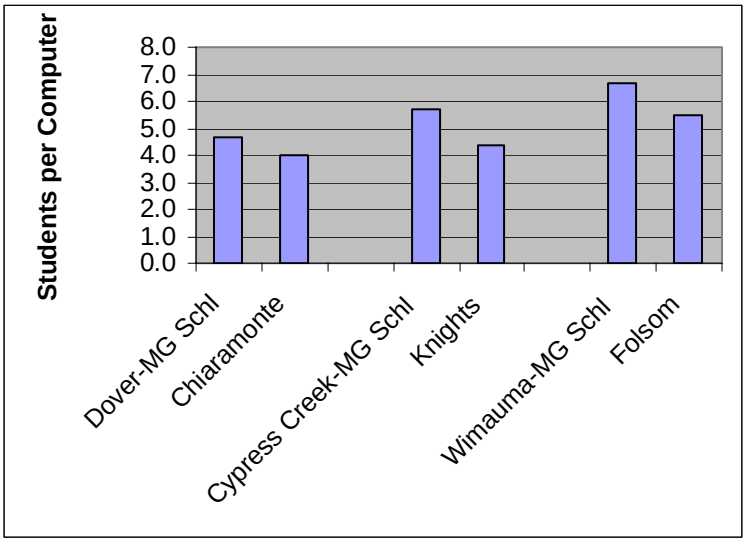


Source: Florida Advisory Committee from Collier County School District data.

In Hillsborough County, migrant students were at a disadvantage with respect to computers. Access to computers at the migrant schools ranged from about one computer for about every 5 students at Dover Elementary to one computer for about every 7 students at Wimauma Elementary, while student-to-computer access at the non-migrant schools ranged from about 4 students per computer to 5.5 students per computer.

Moreover, when the migrant schools were compared on a paired basis to the non-migrant matching schools, students at the migrant schools were always at a disadvantage in terms of computer access. For example, the lowest student-to-computer ratio at a non-migrant matching school was 4 at Chiaramonte Elementary, compared to about 5 at the migrant school, Dover Elementary. This pattern continued for the other paired observations in Hillsborough County. For the median paired comparison, 4.4 students at the non-migrant matching school, Knights Elementary, shared a computer compared to 5.7 students at the migrant school, Cypress Creek Elementary. The highest student-to-computer ratio among the examined non-migrant schools was at Folsom Elementary, 5.5, which was lower than the migrant school with the highest number of students sharing a computer, Wimauma Elementary, at 6.7. (See Figure 9.)

Figure 9: Students per Computer for Selected Schools in Hillsborough County for the 2005 School Year



Source: Florida Advisory Committee from Hillsborough County School District data.

. With respect to library resources, in Collier County children at the migrant schools had a lower number of library books per child than students at regular schools. However in Hillsborough County, children at the migrant schools had more library books per child than the children attending regular schools.

In Collier County, the average number of books per child at the three migrant schools was about 23, whereas the non-migrant schools had only about 20 books per child. A paired examination of library resources also showed that the migrant schools generally had more library books. For example, for the paired schools with the largest number of library books per child, the migrant school Village Oaks Elementary had 32 books per child compared to Lake Park Elementary that had 23 books per child.

In Hillsborough County, the average number of books per child in the three migrant schools was about 18, compared to about 19 for the matching schools. Comparing library resources by paired observations, there was no consistent pattern. For example, the migrant school with the lowest ratio of books per child was Dover Elementary, with about 15 books per child. This was lower than the lowest ranked non-migrant matching school, Folsom Elementary, which had about 18 books per child. However, at the schools with largest library resources, the migrant school Wimauma Elementary had about 23 books per child, which was higher than the non-migrant matching school, Chiaramonte Elementary, which had only about 20.

Opinions of Principals Regarding Resources Similar for Both Migrant Schools and Regular Schools

Opinions concerning resources available to the school were solicited from each principal at the migrant schools as well as from the principals at the non-migrant schools in both school districts. In general, there was no difference of opinion regarding the level of resources provided to the schools between the principals at the migrant schools and the principals at regular schools without migrant children. Further, principals at the migrant schools acknowledged that their schools were receiving additional resources specifically targeted for migrant children and that at their schools there was a large bi-lingual staff .

Opinions of Principals in Collier County

In Collier County, the principals at the migrant schools were supportive of the level of resources provided to the school by the district, and two of the three principals said resources were adequate to provide a quality education. Pamela James, principal at Pinecrest Elementary, responded: "We are resource rich."[36] Dorcas Howard, principal at Village Oaks Elementary, expressed a similar sentiment.[37] Irma Miller, principal at Lake Trafford reported to the Advisory Committee, "We are a resource rich school with respect to migrant educational funding and staffing, but since we are located in an isolated rural area, recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers is challenging."[38] She added that "this issue appears to remain a challenge for schools similar to (hers) across the nation," and she does not want her students to think that they are second class because of the resultant faculty turnover.[39]

Regarding bi-lingual staff, principal James told the Advisory Committee that, with respect to her school, "two of (her) instructional staff in the classroom are bilingual, and 12 additional staff are bilingual who deal with children and work with the parents who visit the school."[40] She also discussed extra academic programs in her school to help migrant students. These include a Saturday program for 3rd-5th graders and one for K-2nd grade, an additional learning center for migrant children, and extra reading programs with special technology for migrant children. In addition, in her school there are migrant tutors who track and target students who need special support and a special migrant Kindergarten program.[41]

Village Oak also has a large bi-lingual staff. Principal Howard told the Advisory Committee that in the school there were 22 staff members who were bi-lingual. I have "three Kindergarten tutors that are bi-lingual, four 1st grade teachers, three second grade tutors, one teacher and three tutors in the 4th grade, a fifth grade teacher and fifth grade tutor, one arts teacher, the two assistants in the media center, one ISS assistant, and a

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[36] Pamela James, telephone interview, May 23, 2006.
[37] Dorcas Howard, telephone interview, Sept. 23, 2005.
[38] Irma Miller, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005 and clarified on Dec. 15, 2006.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Pamela James, telephone interview, May 23, 2006.
[41] Ibid.

parent aide."[42] The school also has a number of additional programs outside the regular classroom; extra tutoring is available in reading and writing and math and the school has a *Miracle 2* educational program available for the children.[43]

Irma Miller also acknowledged the presence of a large bi-lingual staff in her school. "As far as bi-lingual staff, we have at least one bi-lingual staff member at each grade. That includes 13 teachers and nine teaching assistants."[44] In addition, the school operates several after school programs, including day care and a special instructional program targeted to migrant children. Miller said that she also "has established an Internet Café after school program that allows the children to take laptop computers home. The program started in the Spring with 30 students and in the third week of the current school year it will increase to 70 students. The students are placed in the after school program in groups of seven with the best teachers and then are allowed to take the computers home. This has served to improve the test scores of the entire school population by giving the students a head start on preparing for the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test)."[45]

Responses regarding resources from the principals at the regular schools in Collier County with no migrant students were similar. James Gasparino, principal at Pelican Marsh, thought resources were adequate, and stressed that the teaching is the strength at his school. He said, "resources for the school are adequate, but teaching is the strength of the school. The staff is well prepared and they go above and beyond to help the students." He added that there was support from the parental community, and the parents have underwritten an after-school program. He also noted that Pelican Marsh is a Choice school for Title I migrant students, and the school receives about 150 children from outside the attendance area and the district provides Title I funds for transportation in order for these students to participate in our after school programs.[46] Susan Barcellino,

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[42] Dorcas Howard, telephone interview, Sept. 23, 2005.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Irma Miller, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005.
[45] Ibid.
[46] James Gasparino, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005, and clarified on Dec. 15, 2006.

principal at Lake Park, had similar comments, and said that she was "more than pleased with (the level of) provided resources."[47]

Opinions of Principals in Hillsborough County

Similar to Collier County, there was general approval from the principals at the migrant schools regarding the level of resources. However, Lisa Trevney, principal at Cypress Creek, said that her school could use more staff. "Our main problem is the people resources we get. We could use more personnel, especially a guidance counselor who would work with the almost 1,000 students that are in my school. This is a problem because the students need a lot of guidance. Right now we have 400 migrant students, and I expect another 200-300 in the near future. Also, there is only one assistant principal for a school of 1,000 students. We need more technology at the school, too. There are donations that help out with supplies and clothes for the needs of the children, but the bottom line is that we need more personnel to reach out to the children and their families."[48]

In contrast, the principals at the other two migrant schools did not express concern regarding the level of resources. Eric Cantrell, principal at Wimauma Elementary, said that resources and personnel were adequate to provide quality instruction to the children. He acknowledged, however, that he would like to have more resources for the physical campus, which is outdated, and that is the biggest barrier facing the school.[49] Cathy Carr, principal at Dover Elementary, talked about the extra resources her school received to help the migrant children. "We are very fortunate. We receive the extra funds that are needed to help the migrant population, particularly the Migrant Advocate and Migrant Aide programs as well as Title I dollars that are provided assist lower-income children. We could put extra resources to good use, but we have the resources to provide a quality education to all the children."[50]

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[47] Susan Barcellino, telephone interview, Sept. 22, 2005.
[48] Lisa Trevney, telephone interview, Sept. 9, 2005.
[49] Eric Cantrell, telephone interview, Oct. 28, 2005.
[50] Cathy Carr, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005.

Principals at the regular schools in the district without migrant students had similar opinions regarding the level of resources at their schools. Linda Bailey, principal at Knights Elementary, reported that at her school there was a whole school effort that is able to provide a quality education to every child with high quality teachers, and there are no children or any group of children who are not provided a sound education.[51] Marie Valenti, principal at Chiaramonte Elementary, for the most part agreed, and said the school was fortunate to receive Title I funds and that extra funding allows for tutoring programs in the school. She added that the school has the books and computers and other supplies to provide a good education to all the children, with one exception and that is Kindergarten. There are only two aides for the four classes, and that is not enough. There should be one aide in each of those classrooms.[52]

Karen Bass, principal at Folsom Elementary, only expressed disappointment that her school was no longer receiving Title I funding as an additional source of resources. "In past years, all schools in the district received an equal amount of Title I funding per poor child. This school year, the district is awarding $650 per poor child to schools with more than 75 percent poverty. Since Folsom is at 73 percent poverty it only qualifies for $350 per poor child. That change mandated that the school lose the equivalent of $100,000, which in the past funded two reading resource teachers."[53]

Parental Involvement and Student Mobility Similar for Migrant Schools And Matching Schools

In Collier County, school principals generally assessed the level of parental involvement to be high regardless of whether the school is a migrant school or a non-migrant school. In Hillsborough County, principals at both groups of schools generally considered parental involvement to be low. Principals also reported a wide range of student mobility at their schools, still according to the principals there was no discernible difference in mobility between migrant children and other children.

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[51] Linda Bailey, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005.
[52] Marie Valenti, telephone interview, Aug. 29, 2005.
[53] Karen Bass, telephone interview, Aug. 31, 2005.

In Collier County, each of the principals at the migrant schools assessed the level of parental involvement as high. They reported this even though the overall rate of parent-teacher participation at their schools was lower compared to the regular schools.[54] Two of the three principals estimated the rate of parent participation at about 50 percent and one principal set it at about 70 percent, and all three principals said that the rates of participation were similar for parents of migrant children and other children attending the school.[55] At the regular schools with no migrant children, the principals also considered parental involvement to be high. These principals estimated the percentage of parents attending parent-teacher conferences to be about 90 percent.[56]

Parental involvement was generally assessed to be lower by the principals in Hillsborough County. The principals at the migrant schools said that parental involvement at their schools was low, though the percentage of migrant parents that attend parent-teacher conferences was high even thought it varied widely by school.[57] At one school, the participation rate was about 90 percent, but at the other two migrant schools the participation rate was estimated to be between 60 and 75 percent.[58] As in Collier County, the principals at the migrant schools considered the attendance rates between parents of migrant children and parents of other children to be similar.[59]

Similarly, among principals at the regular schools in Hillsborough County, two of the three principals considered parental involvement to be low,[60] with only one principal asserting that parental involvement at her school was high.[61] Of interest, the percentage of parents attending parent-teacher conferences was generally estimated to be lower at the regular schools than at the migrant schools. The principals at the matching schools

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Dorcus Howard, telephone interview, Sept. 23, 2005; Pamela James, telephone interview, June 5, 2006; Irma Miller, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005.
[56] Susan Barcellino, telephone interview, Sept. 22, 2005; James Gasparino, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005.
[57] Eric Cantrell, telephone interview, Sept. 8, 2005; Cathy Carr, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005; Lisa Trevney, telephone interview, Sept. 9, 2005.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Karen Bass, telephone interview, Aug. 31, 2005; Marie Valenti, telephone interview, Aug. 29, 2005.
[61] Linda Bailey, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005.

estimated that the percentage of parents that attend conferences was 30 percent, 60 percent, and 80 percent, respectively.[62]

Student mobility appeared to be slightly higher at the migrant schools in Collier County, but was similar among the two groups of schools in Hillsborough County. According to the building principals at the migrant schools in Collier County, between 15 percent and 25 percent of students were new to the school each year and about three out of every four students had been continuously enrolled at the school for three or more years.[63] For the regular schools in the county, the principals estimated that between 10 and 20 percent of all students were new each school year, and 80 to 90 percent of all children had continuously attended the school for three or more years.[64]

In Hillsborough County, mobility rates were generally the same for migrant schools and regular schools. At the three migrant schools, the percentage of new students each year was estimated to be between 15 percent and 25 percent, and similar to Collier County about three out of every four students had been continuously enrolled at the school for three or more years.[65] For the regular schools, school principals estimated that the percentage of new attending students each year was between 10 percent and 25 percent, and only 50 percent of the children had continuously attended the school for three or more years—a much lower percentage of continuous enrollment than noted at the migrant schools in the county.[66]

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[62] Ibid 6 and 7.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Susan Barcellino, telephone interview, Sept. 22, 2005; James Gasparino, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005.
[65] Eric Cantrell, telephone interview, Sept. 8, 2005; Cathy Carr, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005; Lisa Trevney, telephone interview, Sept. 9, 2005.
[66] Linda Bailey, telephone interview, Aug. 18, 2005; Karen Bass, telephone interview, Aug. 31, 2005; Marie Valenti, telephone interview, Aug. 29, 2005.

Findings and Recommendation

This is the first study of which this Committee is aware that specifically compares the equity of education resources provided to migrant children and their peers. In this study we examined staffing and other education resources at migrant schools to that provided to a matched set of typical schools within the same school district. This study was designed to compare educational resources provided to schools with large numbers of migrant children with typical schools in the same school district, and not a study of whether funding to such schools or for migrant education programs is adequate.

Finding 1. We find that the academic performance of migrant children is lower in comparison to that of other children in the same school district. Migrant children are consistently performing less well academically than their counterparts.

Finding 2. We find that special support services and additional funding are being provided to schools with high numbers of migrant children. This support includes federal dollars. As a result and not surprisingly, our analysis shows that both instructional staffs and professional support staffs are generally higher at schools with large numbers of migrant children. We also find that every school in this study with large numbers of migrant children was engaged in a number of special schooling initiatives specifically targeted for migrant children.

Finding 3. We find that within the same school district there are no differences regarding per-child library books or computer resources between schools with large numbers of migrant children and schools with no migrant children.

Finding 4. There were no reports from the principals of schools that children at schools with no migrant children were being afforded disproportionate resources by the district at the expense of migrant children.

Recommendation. Although it is commendable that government entities, school districts, and individual schools appear to be taking initiatives to provide additional personnel and support for the education of migrant children, differences in academic achievement between these children and their peers persist. As such, given the growing numbers of such children in this country there is a critical need to forthrightly examine whether the present level of resources and types of programs being provided are appropriate to provide an equal educational opportunity to migrant children. An achievement gap between migrant children and other children persists, and has persisted over decades despite additional resources and special initiatives. It may be time to consider other and different institutional and structural changes apart from what has been offered in the past in order to truly provide migrant children true equal education opportunity in our public schools.

Appendix I—School District Comments

A draft of this report was provided to the Collier County School District, the Hillsborough County School District, and the Florida Department of Education Migrant Education Program for review and comment.

The Migrant Education Program coordinator of the Collier County School District and the director of the Florida Department of Education Migrant Education Program offered specific comments that were incorporated into the report. Several principals in the two school districts offered changes to their original statements, and these were incorporated into the report.